

The smart way to control social media risk

Case study: local government

The huge take up of social media in the local government sector is a good indicator of its usefulness. Social media is used predominantly by the communications team to inform residents of entertainment, sport and leisure activities happening in the local area, and has proved to be extremely popular as a means to engage with the local community. The most common reasons for residents to engage with a council's social media accounts are to request information about transportation and entertainment, as well as requests for waste and housing services.

Challenges

Local authorities' social media accounts are often managed by the communications team, which means that many of the incoming messages they receive don't relate directly to their own areas of expertise or knowledge. Councils can benefit greatly from encouraging residents to use social media to report problems and ask for help, and by using social media themselves to deliver services, build communities and campaign however doing this effectively requires control of the social media channels to be moved from the comms team to the relevant operational teams.

Devolving social media control to departments such as housing, customer service and transportation offers big benefits but also comes with risks. Done poorly, it can lead to bottlenecks, delays and ultimately the loss of control of the organisation's social media accounts which can then put the organisation's reputation at risk of damage or abuse. There's also the risk that a council's social media channels become little more than a public complaints mechanism for residents.

North Lanarkshire Council's story

The council had never used Twitter before the winter of 2010, the harshest winter of the last 50 years. As a few other councils had realised, social media proved to be the best way to keep residents up-to-date with school closures, gritting updates and changes to council services.

Engaging directly on Twitter was not without difficulties, as the team had to take in and respond to a great volume of tweets, many of them containing criticism from frustrated residents. However Twitter soon proved its worth, and took pressure off the customer contact centre, which remained busy, but without the call queues that the council would expect to experience during such a busy time.

Two years later, North Lanarkshire's use of Twitter during winter is making people feel more positive about the council overall.

"As more people were asking us questions on Twitter, we started to realise this was a job that had to go beyond the comms team," said Stephen Penman, head of corporate communications & marketing, "When someone would ask about garbage collection days in a certain area, the comms person had to go and ask someone else. Soon we realised it could all be streamlined if the customer contact team had direct access to respond on Twitter."

As North Lanarkshire realised, there are a number of issues and risks which need to be considered before granting multiple users access to the organisation's social media accounts, all of which CrowdControlHQ has been able to help it to manage.



For further information about CrowdControlHQ or to talk about how we can help you manage your social media presence more effectively:

Visit abavus.co.uk/products/crowdcontrolhq/

Email info@abavus.co.uk

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How CrowdControlHQ helped

By using CrowdControlHQ North Lanarkshire has a tool that allows it to expand social media usage across the council while maintaining central control. Departments can monitor online conversations and gauge the audience's reaction even when they are not addressing it directly. This has improved services and avoided issues that might have serious consequences.

Security is no longer an issue as using CrowdControlHQ allows North Lanarkshire to secure passwords and limit access, supplies an audit trail, analyses activity of users and alerts. By setting up keyword dictionaries, accounts are monitored constantly and offensive or abusive content is either removed automatically or sent for review by members of the team.

CrowdControlHQ's Buzz Monitor enables North Lanarkshire to listen and respond directly to conversations across blogs,

Facebook, Google+, news sites, Pinterest, and Twitter. In a crisis situation such as an accident or a natural disaster, social media is the fastest channel to mobilise the public. With CrowdControlHQ, messages can be pushed out at the same time on all channels.

CrowdControlHQ's specialist team provided key support throughout the implementation, offering high quality of training and after care.

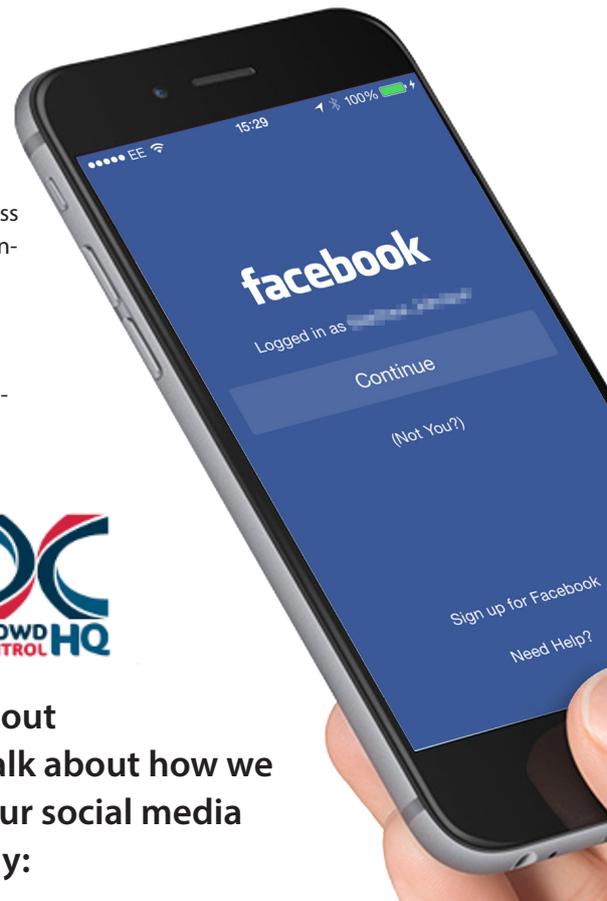
“Delivering services via social media is efficient and rewarding.”

About CrowdControlHQ

CrowdControlHQ is the leading social media risk management and monitoring platform. We are a UK company with a prestigious client list, which includes many organisations in the public and private sectors.

Our deep understanding of social media and the impact it can have on an organisation's reputation and brand enables our clients to implement an integrated environment across the entire organisation from marketing to customer services. This approach allows organisations to manage multiple social media accounts centrally, protect passwords, monitor conversations and buzzwords, schedule posts, analyse data and engage with fans and followers.

We provide marketing and operational teams with efficient tools, while ensuring IT compliance and information governance.



About Abavus Ltd

Abavus is a partner to CrowdControlHQ and its exclusive public sector partner. Together with our key technology partners we invest in delivering enterprise strength solutions that encompass all aspects of social media risk management, customer digital access, operational CRM, mobile working and case management.



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