THE FACEBOOK QUESTION: SOCIAL MEDIA AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT HR PRACTICES

By

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Executive Summary

This paper fills a gap in the public sector human resources literature by examining how municipal and county governments are using social media in recruiting, hiring, monitoring, and disciplining their employees. Many of the local governments surveyed are not taking advantage of Facebook, Twitter, and other social media as a potential tool for recruitment and screening because of concerns about potential liability. On the other hand, many of the same organizations are conducting workplace monitoring and dealing with disciplinary issues around social media, often without guiding policies in place. In light of these concerning findings, this paper offers legal context and guidance for developing a consistent, clear approach to addressing social media use by local government employees.

In the last two decades, the availability and ease of use of electronic communications have helped reshape global culture. Recent years have seen particular growth in the area of social media, a group of web applications that provide platforms for individuals to create and exchange personal content (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). More than half of the U.S. workforce uses Facebook, the most popular social media platform, and new applications and sites come online every day (Lenhart et al., 2010).

Unfortunately, both local governments and their employees may be struggling to navigate social media use (Hrdinová et al., 2010). Local government human resource (HR) professionals face distinct challenges in balancing organizational priorities—including accountability and public perception—with employee rights and needs. At the same time, recent news stories about scandals sparked by social media use suggest that many public employees may be confused about appropriate conduct. One government technology blogger sums up many employees' feelings: "We've all heard the Facebook and Twitter horror stories while sitting by the virtual campfire. They normally go something like this: So and so from such and such was fired because his boss saw a picture on his Facebook page where so and so was shaking the hand of a person who was holding a beer!" (Soto, 2012)

PURPOSE

Though the body of legal advice and best practices guidance around social media use is growing, most discussions of the topic rely primarily on anecdotal examples. Little empirical research has been done regarding social media, with the exception of the Society for Human Resources Management's (SHRM) social media survey in 2011. SHRM's survey was heavily dominated by private sector organizations (SHRM, 2011).

This paper fills a gap in the public sector human resources literature by examining how local governments are currently using social media throughout the employee life cycle—including in recruiting, hiring, monitoring, and disciplining their employees. An examination of current practices may help both academics and practitioners better understand how local governments are currently addressing employee use of social media. In turn, this understanding could help identify training needs and shape future policy development. In addition, several specific "action points" are highlighted to inform future practice.

BACKGROUND: KEY CONCERNS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT HR DEPARTMENTS

First Amendment Issues   Public employee First Amendment rights have long been a hotly contested point of law, but courts have been fairly consistent in applying general employee free speech protections to social media communications, using the three-prong *Pickering* test (McLaughlin, 2010; *Pickering v. Board of Education* (1968)). In general, courts have been much more likely to find that employee social media use is protected if employees are using social media from home, rather than in the workplace (Nolo, 2011). Employee posts or blogs that reveal confidential information or directly discuss work duties typically are not protected speech—just as a similar letter to the local newspaper would not be protected, based on *Garcetti v. Ceballos* (2006; Nolo, 2011). Local government social media policies should thus clearly affirm that standard speech guidelines apply to personal social media use in the same way they apply to any other kind of speech.

Recruiting   Popular HR and public management websites have promoted the use of social media platforms for recruiting and job advertising, citing social media's "bigger bang for the buck" and greater potential for reaching Millennials (e.g., Mechling, 2011). Many of these websites, as well as private consultants, are hosting webinars or workshops to train recruiters in the use of social media (e.g., sessions of GovLoop's popular webinar series, DigitalGov University; Nelson, 2012). Social media postings are usually free and relatively easy to manage. They also allow recruiting organizations to target particular existing social networks, which may be advantageous in recruiting for specific skill sets or qualifications.

Hiring & Screening   The practice of using Facebook, Twitter, and other social media to screen job candidates has generated significant attention in the popular press, particularly when employers ask for

applicants' login information for social media platforms during the hiring process (e.g., Kravets, 2013; HuffPost, 2012). Social media profiles often offer information about protected characteristics, however, creating possible discrimination issues (Brandenberg, 2010). Legislatures are also taking action to protect employee privacy; as of January 2013, six states have outlawed asking for login information.

Policies   The HR and IT communities expect that many employers have reacted to the explosion of social media use by hastily tacking on amendments to their current HR or IT policies, which may not be either effective or fully enforceable (Heaton, 2011). Others have taken no action at all (Jacobson & Tufts, 2012). When in place, however, social media policies can provide important guidance for online conduct and help address concerns about violating employee rights (Hrdinová et al,. 2010).

Monitoring & Blocking   Some studies have suggested links between workplace computer monitoring and various psychological problems such as anxiety, depression, and stress (Brown 1996; Fairweather 1999), as well as increased tension between employers and employees (Oz et al. 1999). In the Internet age, many public employers have also struggled to adequately protect employees' rights to privacy, "as employees' expectations of privacy can extend to computers, electronic devices, stored communication, etc., by virtue of allowing password protections and the like" (Jacobson & Tufts, p. 7). On the other hand, employees who feel that their employer respects their privacy report higher levels of job satisfaction and trust in their employers (Tabak & Smith, 2005). The Supreme Court's recent ruling in *City of Ontario v. Quon,* 130 U.S. 2619 (2010), demonstrates that employers can head off potential Fourth Amendment issues by providing formal policies and notifying employees of the possibility of monitoring.[i]

Discipline   As representatives of governments, public employees must avoid the appearance of impropriety in the performance of their duties. Employee use of personal social media during the workday may be distracting from the tasks at hand and waste productive time. The hyper-public nature of most social media communications also makes public employees' off-duty activities fair game for public scrutiny. Little empirical research has been done about the extent to which these issues have led to disciplinary action.

METHODOLOGY

In order to identify current practices and experiences of local governments, an online survey was distributed to HR directors in a sample of medium-to-large local governments in Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina. The survey included a mix of 43 open-ended and multiple choice questions. These focused on the frequency and effectiveness of specific practices associated with each stage of the employee life cycle (e.g., recruiting, hiring/screening, monitoring, policies, and discipline).[ii]

The final sample included 172 organizations (70 counties and 102 municipalities, including 3 consolidated city-counties). Valid responses were received from 24 municipalities and 24 counties, for an overall response rate of 27.9 percent (n = 48).[iii] The survey results were analyzed using basic descriptive statistics, including coding of the open-ended responses.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Recruiting   In a September 2012 international study, 43 percent of companies with less than 500 employees used social media for recruiting and identifying candidates (2012 HR Beat, 2012). By contrast, while the majority of governments participating in this study have some kind of social media presence or page (59%), only seven use those pages to post job opportunities (14%). Most of these respondents were neutral about the effectiveness of social media as a recruitment tool (57%).

> *Action Point 1:* <u>Posting to a social media page can be a cost-effective way to publicize job opportunities</u>, particularly if the organization already maintains an active social media presence. Some larger organizations may even have enough ongoing recruitment to justify creating a <u>separate social media account specifically for posting job openings</u>. HR departments should

consider working with public information or community relations staff to make effective use of these channels.

Hiring and Screening   While HR and corporate law blogs frequently address the "growing trend" of using Google and social media for screening job applicants (Brown et al. 2011), this trend is not pervasive among the local governments in this study. Nearly three-quarters of the HR departments surveyed never or seldom use online search engines for screening (74%), and another 23 percent do so only occasionally. Similarly, only six departments report using social media for screening (14%). These findings are consistent with SHRM's 2011 study, which found that 68 percent of organizations had never used online search engines and 78 percent of organizations had never used social media for screening job candidates (SHRM, 2011).

The 86 percent of respondents who report *not* using social media for screening most often cited the following reasons:

- Concerns about legal risks and uncovering information about protected characteristics (74% of this group)

- Information may not be related to work-related potential, performance, or organizational fit (55%)

- Not all candidates have social media sites (50%)

These concerns reflect the cautions of the HR and legal literature about using online searches and social networking sites (Davison et al., 2009). Since these sites often include photos, religious or political affiliations, marital status, and so on, they provide the potential employer with information protected under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and a host of other federal provisions. Organizations that use this screening method may have a harder time combating discrimination charges, if accused. Fortunately, this survey's results suggest that many HR departments, at least, are aware of the risks associated with social media screening.

> *More than 18% of the organizations sampled require police applicants to provide their personal social media login information.*
>
> *Nationally, state legislatures are moving to outlaw this practice, as it blurs the line between on-duty and off-duty activity and raises issues of employee privacy and free speech.*
>
> *HR and public safety leaders should carefully consider the legal implications for their organizations before collecting this information.*

Though only a small group of respondents report using social media for screening, these organizations share similar motivations and strategies for this practice. They agree that checking out candidates on social media offers more information than a resume or cover letter (83% of this group) and takes little time and effort in relation to information gained (66%). They also report using screening more frequently for positions higher in the organizational hierarchy. None report rejecting any candidates on the basis of information found in this way. Taken together, these findings suggest HR departments primarily use social media as a kind of supplementary background check for key positions. Social media screening seems to be far from a standard hiring practice among even these organizations.

> *Action Point 2:* Though many of the HR staff who responded to this survey report concern about the risks of social media screening, it is important to recognize that this awareness may not extend to everyone in their organizations. <u>HR staff should work to educate everyone involved in their government's hiring process</u>—particularly hiring supervisors—<u>about the legal risks involved in tracking down photos, family information, and other personal data</u> likely to be found on a candidate's Facebook page or other online profile.

Policies   The HR departments in this study vary widely in their approaches to addressing personal social media use by current employees: 39 percent have formal, written social media policies, while 27 percent have not addressed social media use by their employees with any kind of formal or informal

policy. Others address social media use specifically within another policy (18%) or rely on informal reminders and training (16%).

The organizations with formal, written social media policies all address on-duty use of personal social media. Half of them also address off-duty use. The most common elements included in these policies are codes of conduct for personal social media use (11 policies), guidelines for using social media in the workplace (13 policies), and notice of the organization's right to monitor employees' social media (9 policies).

> ***Action Point 3****:* Social media policies were most often created by IT (48%), public information (21%), or HR (14%), but primary enforcement of these policies is divided evenly between IT, HR, and management (30% each). <u>Managers/HR and IT may have different focuses in addressing social media</u> (for instance, lost work time vs. system security), and this disconnect may affect policy implementation. The clearest, most consistent social media policies will address the concerns of both IT and HR staff and include mutually acceptable enforcement standards.

Blocking and Monitoring   Many of the responding local governments make use of blocking software to restrict access to at least some social media sites (57%) and multimedia platforms (54%) on work computers. Almost half also monitor or track on-duty personal social media use by employees (47%). These findings, together with respondent comments, suggest that lost work time is a key concern about employee social media use for these organizations. Though blocking access to Facebook and YouTube is likely not the best way to manage significant motivation or performance problems, this regulation of on-duty activity is clearly within the employer's scope of authority.

> ***Action Point 4****:* Of the 20 organizations who track employees' personal social media use, only 6 notify employees about this monitoring in a formal policy. Monitoring introduces potential Fourth Amendment concerns, particularly if employees are not adequately notified of workplace monitoring. Though employers may be taking other steps to ensure that employees are aware of monitoring, <u>well-publicized written notification is a key way to manage employees' expectations of privacy</u>.

Fewer respondents report monitoring employees' off-duty social media activities—70 percent say they never monitor this use—but those that do report some concerning practices:

- Six HR departments at least occasionally log into employee's accounts using voluntarily-provided passwords.

- Eleven HR departments at least occasionally "friend" (or otherwise connect with) employees in order to monitor their personal activities.

- Six HR departments at least occasionally log into employee's social media accounts using passwords saved on work devices or obtained from keystroke capturing.

These activities are troublesome because they blur the line between on-duty and off-duty activities and create strong opportunity for violating employees' Fourth Amendment rights. Even if employees have explicitly waived their privacy rights, surreptitiously monitoring or secretly logging into personal accounts is legally questionable at best. These practices also do little to foster an atmosphere of trust and mutual accountability in the workplace.

> ***Action Point 5****:* Though monitoring may be intended to preserve citizen trust by protecting the public image of the organization, it may also incur liability in the case of an employee lawsuit. <u>HR departments should carefully evaluate their monitoring practices</u>, ensuring that they do not create opportunities to either abuse employee rights or allow misbehaving employees to avoid disciplinary action.

Discipline   While local governments in this sample are not using social media extensively for recruiting and screening applicants, they are dealing with significant disciplinary issues related to social media. More than half of the responding organizations have taken disciplinary action because of an employee's social media use or behavior (57%). The kind of actions initiated for social media behaviors have run the gamut from oral warnings (22% of respondents), through formal warnings and reprimands (39%), all the way to suspension (15%) and termination (17%).

Wasting work time has been the leading on-duty cause for action (11 respondents), while off-duty behaviors included harassing other employees through social media (4) and posting comments, photos, or videos that called the employee's character or judgment into question (7). Making negative comments about the organization has been another key issue for both on-duty and off-duty social media use (7 respondents in each category). This latter behavior should be addressed with great care, given the potential for perceived or actual violations of employees' First Amendment rights.

> ***Action Point 6****:* The majority of departments who have taken disciplinary action have either a formal standalone policy or a section about social media in another policy. It is concerning, however, that 6 of the 12 organizations who have not addressed social media at all have disciplined employees for social media use, including issuing 5 formal warnings and 3 terminations. <u>Without at least an informal social media policy in place, it may be needlessly difficult for (a) employees to understand expectations for appropriate social media conduct and (b) supervisors to justify disciplinary action</u>.

CONCLUSION

Social media platforms can be both useful tools and potential liabilities for local government HR departments. Many of the local governments in this study are not taking advantage of Facebook, Twitter, and other social media as potential tools for recruitment and screening, often citing legal concerns as their key reason not to do so. At the same time, however, many of the same organizations are conducting workplace monitoring and dealing with disciplinary issues around social media, often without guiding policies in place.

As with many other areas of HR practice, clear expectations and consistency are key to effectively addressing employee use of social media. Several of this paper's action points highlight the need for specific, documented social media guidance, which may be easiest to provide in the form of a written policy. No matter what form it takes, this guidance should be consistent with the broader goals, values, and culture of the organization.

While the novelty of social media may be disorienting or confusing, the bigger issues social media use implicates—including hiring protections, employee free speech and privacy, morale, and transparent disciplinary practices—are not. In dealing with social media, local government HR departments should use the same good judgment, careful documentation, and consistent approaches they are already applying in the other areas of their practice.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

[^i] In 2010, the Supreme Court ruled on a Fourth Amendment claim by a public employee for the first time in many years. In *City of Ontario v. Quon,* 130 U.S. 2619 (2010), the Court determined that a police department's audit of an officer's (Quon) text messages did not violate his Fourth Amendment rights. This case reapplied the *O'Connor* analysis to the increasing use of electronic monitoring by government employers. Quon, a SWAT team officer, had used his work cell phone to send dozens of sexually explicit text messages to a number of women. This situation bears obvious parallels to public employees accessing personal social media sites on workplace computers.

[^ii] The majority of the questions mirrored elements of the 2011 SHRM survey, while the others tested unsupported claims or assumptions in the literature. See appendix B for the full text of the survey instrument.

[^iii] The sample was defined by the population size of the jurisdiction each government served, on the theory that larger jurisdictions were more likely to employ full-time HR staff. Using the NC Rural Center's "medium to large" municipal size classification, municipalities serving populations greater than 20,000 were included in the sample. A population of 75,000 was used as the threshold for county governments, as this figure generated a county sample roughly proportional to the municipal sample. Organizations for which an email address could not be located were excluded. See appendix A for a table of response rates by state and organization type.

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APPENDIX A: Response Rates

Table 1: Response Rate Statistics by Government Type and State

Response Rates (n)	North Carolina	South Carolina	Georgia	Total
Municipal	20.9% (9)	25% (4)	25% (10)	23.2% (23)
County	44.8% (14)	11.7% (2)	38.1% (21)	34% (24)
Consolidated City-County	--	--	33% (1)	33% (1)
Total	30.7% (23)	18.2% (6)	29.7% (19)	27.9% (48)

APPENDIX B: Text of Survey Instrument

Thank you again for taking the time to complete this survey about the use of social media by local government human resources departments. Your feedback will help provide crucial information about the ways this technology is affecting local governments.

This survey should take 5-10 minutes to complete. Your participation in this study is voluntary, and you may refuse to answer any question or end the survey at any time. There are no foreseeable risks to you as a participant in this project.

Your individual responses will be completely confidential. Averages or generalizations about the responses as a whole, but no identifiable responses, will be presented in the final form of this study. All data will be stored in a secure location only accessible to the researcher.

If you have any questions about the survey, please contact me at (706) 825-7756 or mattie.stevens@unc.edu. You may also contact my faculty advisor, Willow Jacobson, at (919) 966-4760 or jacobson@sog.unc.edu.

All research on human volunteers is reviewed by a committee that works to protect your rights and welfare. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a research subject you may contact, anonymously if you wish, the Institutional Review Board at (919) 966-3113 or via email at IRB_subjects@unc.edu with study number 1941054.

By clicking the "next page" button below, you agree to participate in the survey.

-- NEW PAGE --

INSTRUCTIONS:

This survey will use the terms "social networking websites" and "social media" interchangeably. Both of these terms refer to services like Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, but <u>not</u> to email or intranet services.

Most questions will ask you about the practices of your HR department specifically. A few will ask about organization-wide policies, and will refer to practices used by your whole government. All questions use "employees" to refer to full-time equivalent employees.

<u>Please answer all questions to the best of your knowledge. Feel free to estimate when necessary.</u>

If you have any questions about this survey, please contact me at <u>mattie.stevens@unc.edu</u> or 706-825-7756. You may also contact my faculty advisor, Willow Jacobson, at (919) 966-4760 or jacobson@sog.unc.edu.

Recruiting

This section will ask about your HR department's use of social media for recruiting new employees.

1. Does your government have accounts on one or more social networking websites for interacting with the public?
   - Yes
   - No
2. **[If YES to 1]** Do you post job openings on these social networking websites?
   - Yes

- No
3. **[If YES to 2] Please indicate your level of agreement to the following statement:** "Using social media sites for organizational recruitment is a highly effective strategy for our government."
   - Strongly Disagree
   - Disagree
   - Neutral
   - Agree
   - Strongly agree
4. **[If YES to 2]** Do you track where applicants found your job posting?
   - Yes
   - No
5. **[If YES to 4]** In your estimation, how many applicants indicate they learned about job openings through social media?
   - 0-25% of applicants
   - 25-50% of applicants
   - 51-75% of applicants
   - 76-100% of applicants

Hiring and Screening
This section will ask about your HR department's use of social media in the hiring process. Please respond to the best of your knowledge, estimating when necessary.

6. How often do job candidates include their social networking websites on their resumes?
   - Never / Seldom / Occasionally / Frequently
7. To your knowledge, how frequently does the HR department require login information for personal social media accounts (for example, applicants' Facebook passwords) during the application or hiring process?
   - Never / Seldom / Occasionally / Frequently/Always
8. [If response other than NEVER to 7] For what types of positions do you require personal social media login information? (Open text entry)
9. Does your organization currently have a formal or an informal policy regarding the use of social networking websites to screen job candidates?
   - Yes, we have a formal policy prohibiting the use of these sites
   - Yes, we have a formal policy allowing the use of these sites
   - There is no formal policy, but there is an informal policy/practice prohibiting the use of these sites
   - There is no formal policy, but there is an informal policy/practice allowing the use of these sites
   - No, there is no formal or informal policy regarding use of these sites in screening

10. To your knowledge, how frequently does the HR department use online search engines (for example, Google) to screen job candidates?
    - Never / Seldom / Occasionally / Frequently/Always
11. **[If YES to 10]** When does the HR department commonly initiate screening of job candidates using online search engines (for example, Google)?
    - After the completion of a job application but before the job interview
    - After the job interview but before a job offer
    - Varies by job level
    - Other: [text entry]
12. Does the HR department ever use social networking websites (for example, Facebook or LinkedIn) to screen job candidates at any point in the hiring process?
    - Yes
    - No
13. **[If NO to 12]** We have chosen not to use social networking websites to screen job candidates because: (check all that apply)
    - A concern about legal risks/discovering information about protected characteristics (e.g., age, race, gender, religious affiliation)

- Inability to verify with confidence the information from an applicant's social networking page
- Information about job candidates taken from these sites may not be relevant to their work-related potential, performance, or organizational fit
- Not all job candidates have information on social networking sites
- Concerns about invading the privacy of job candidates
- It takes too much time and effort in relation to information gained
- Job candidates might be less likely to apply if they knew the organization screened job candidates in this manner
- Other: [text entry]

[If NO to 12, skip to end of section here]
[If YES to 12, display questions 14-20]

14. We have chosen to use social networking websites to screen job candidates because: (check all that apply)
    - Ability to obtain more information about an applicant than would be provided by just a resume, cover letter or curriculum vitae
    - Takes little time and effort in relation to information gained
    - Ability to easily verify information from an applicant's resume, cover letter or curriculum vitae
    - Ability to assess the applicant's work-related potential, performance, or organizational fit
    - Less expensive than other methods of screening job candidates
    - Job candidates include their social networking websites on their resumes
    - Other: [text entry]

15. For the following job levels, please indicate how often the HR department uses online social networking websites (for example, Facebook or LinkedIn) to screen job candidates at any point in the hiring process? (Matrix, with options: Never / Seldom / Occasionally / Frequently / Always)
    - Executive/upper management
    - Other management
    - Non-management salaried employees
    - Non-management hourly employees

16. When does the HR department usually initiate screening of job candidates using social networking websites (for example, Facebook or LinkedIn)?
    - After the completion of a job application but before the job interview
    - After the job interview but before a job offer
    - Varies by job level
    - Other: [text entry]

17. What social networking websites has the HR department used to screen job candidates? (Check all that apply.)
    - LinkedIn
    - Facebook
    - MySpace
    - Twitter
    - Professional or association social network
    - SHRM Connect
    - Foursquare
    - Second Life
    - Other: [text entry]

18. Are job candidates given the opportunity to explain questionable information found on social networking websites?
    - No, not at any time
    - Yes, after the screening is conducted but prior to the decision to hire or not hire is made
    - Yes, after the decision to hire or not hire has been made

19. To your knowledge, in the past 12 months, has the HR department rejected a job candidate because of information found: (yes/no for each)
    - About the candidate on someone else's social networking page
    - On the candidate's own social networking page

20. How useful has the HR department found screening social networking sites for making quality hiring decisions?

- Very useful
- Somewhat useful
- Useful only in rare instances
- Not at all useful

Policies and Monitoring

This section will ask questions about your government's organization-wide policies regarding employee social media use. Please answer to the best of your knowledge, remembering that the terms "social networking websites" and "social media" refer to services like Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, but not to email or intranet services.

21. In what ways has your government provided guidance for its employees about personal use of social media? Personal use refers to any social media actions that are not job responsibility related (i.e., not official government posts). (Check all that apply)
    - We have a formal social media policy that includes employees' personal (on-duty, off-duty, or both) use of social media
    - Social media is specifically addressed in a section of another policy
    - Giving informal (written or verbal) reminders that general employee codes of conduct apply to social media issues
    - Providing specific instruction about social media use as part of ethics training, orientation, or other training sessions
    - None—our organization has not addressed personal social media use by employees
    - Other [text entry]

[If NONE for 21, skip to 27]

22. [If first or second bullet for 21] What kinds of behavior does this policy address? (Check all that apply)
    - On-duty
    - Off-duty

23. What was the impetus for your government's formal employee social media policy?
    - A specific disciplinary issue within the organization
    - Questions or concerns from employees
    - A preventative measure
    - Other: [text entry]

24. Which of the following elements are included in your government's written employee social media policy? (Check all that apply.)
    - A code of conduct for employee use of social media for personal purposes
    - A note regarding the organization's right to monitor social media usage
    - Guidelines about using social media in the workplace
    - Guidelines for responding to citizen communications in social networking environments
    - Requirement for employees to be transparent about their social media use
    - Guidelines for configuring account or profile settings in social networking environments
    - Other [text entry]

25. Which function had the primary responsibility for creating your government's employee social media policy?
    - Human Resources
    - Information Technology
    - Management
    - Public Information
    - Other (please specify)

26. Which function has the primary responsibility for enforcing your government's employee social media policy across the organization?
    - Human Resources
    - Information Technology

- Management
- Public Information
- Other: [text entry]

27. Does your government block access to any social networking websites on government-provided computers or handheld devices?
    - Yes
    - No

28. Does your government block access to any multimedia platforms (e.g., photo-sharing applications, YouTube, other video-sharing sites) on government-provided computers or handheld devices?
    - Yes
    - No

29. To your knowledge, does your government commonly monitor or track the <u>on-duty</u> personal social media activities of your employees on government-provided computers or work handheld devices?
    - Yes
    - No

30. To your knowledge, how often does your government monitor the off-duty personal social media activities of employees in the following ways? (Matrix, with options: Never / Seldom / Occasionally / Frequently / Always)
    - Logging into their personal accounts using their voluntarily-provided login information
    - Logging into their personal accounts using login information saved on work devices or obtained from keystroke capturing
    - "Friending" or otherwise connecting with employees through social media
    - Searching for employees through online search engines (e.g., Google) or social media websites
    - Other: [text entry]

31. To your knowledge, does your government commonly monitor personal social media "mentions" (e.g., post, tweets, or comments) about your organization by employees?
    - Yes
    - No

32. **[If any options selected for 30 or YES to 31]** What does your government seek to achieve by conducting this monitoring? [open response]

<u>Employee Discipline</u>
This section will ask questions about disciplinary actions your government has taken related to social media use by employees. Please answer to the best of your knowledge, estimating if necessary.

33. Has your organization ever taken disciplinary action because of an employee's personal social media use or behavior?
    - Yes
    - No

[If NO to 35, skip to end of section]

34. Within the last 12 months, to your knowledge, how many of your government's employees have had disciplinary action (ranging from oral warning through termination) initiated because of the following <u>on duty</u> behaviors? (select from "None," "1-2 employees," "3-5 employees," "6-10 employees," "More than 10 employees")
    - Wasting work time by using personal social media
    - Harassing or making inappropriate comments to other employees through social media
    - Using social media to conduct inappropriate political activity
    - Making negative comments about the organization through social media
    - Sharing confidential information through social media
    - Other social media activity [text entry]

35. Within the last 12 months, to your knowledge, how many of your government's employees have had disciplinary action (ranging from oral warning through termination) initiated because of the following <u>off duty</u> behaviors? (select from "None," "1-2 employees," "3-5 employees," "6-10 employees," "More than 10 employees")

- Harassing or making inappropriate comments to other employees through social media
- Using social media to conduct inappropriate political activity
- Making negative comments about the organization through social media
- Sharing confidential information through social media
- Making comments or posting photos or videos on social media that called the employee's character or judgment into question (e.g., racist or sexist comments, images of the employee participating in illegal activities, etc.)
- Other social media activity [text entry]

36. What kinds of disciplinary actions has your government taken in reaction to social media behaviors? (Check all that apply.)
    - Oral warning
    - Formal warning or reprimand
    - Suspension
    - Termination
    - Other: [text entry]

Comments and Demographic Information

37. Are there other ways that your department uses social media in providing HR services to your organization that have not been covered in this survey? If so, please describe them below. [open text entry]
38. Is your organization facing any challenges related to employees' personal use of social media? If so, please describe them below. [open text entry]
39. What is your title?
    - HR/Personnel Director
    - HR/Personnel Technician or Analyst
    - Manager or Assistant Manager
    - Other Department Head
    - Other (please specify): [text entry]
40. What kind of government do you work for?
    - Municipality
    - County
    - Consolidated City-County
41. In what state is your government located?
    - North Carolina
    - South Carolina
    - Georgia

Thank you for taking time to complete this survey. Your response is appreciated. If you have any questions about this survey, please contact me at mattie.stevens@unc.edu or 706-825-7756.