



www.chuka.ac.ke library@chuka.ac.ke

SOCIAL MEDIA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: A FRAMEWORK FOR SUCCESS IN COUNTY GOVERNANCE

Otieno, C.O.

*Faculty of Information Sciences and Technology, Kisii University
Correspondence: otienopondo@gmail.com, Mobile: 0723 024 057*

Citation: Otieno, C.O (2017). Social Media for Sustainable Development: A Framework for Success in County Governance. In: Isutsa, D.K. and Githae, E.W. *Proceedings of the Third Chuka University International Research Conference held in Chuka University, Chuka, Kenya from 26th to 28th October, 2016.408-418 pp.*

ABSTRACT

The promulgation of the Constitution of Kenya in 2010 ushered in a raft of reforms key among them devolution. The major tenet of devolution is citizen participation in governance; decision-making and implementation factors, functions, responsibilities and resources have been transferred to 47 county governments across Kenya. Since its inception, devolution has faced a myriad of challenges. One of these challenge is that of communication; involving citizens in the decision making process. For devolution to be sustainable, a communication strategy has to be adopted that allows for the citizen and county government to interact in an environment free of the bureaucratic red-tape that characterized governments prior to devolution. Social media enables new approach to county governance that allows stakeholders across board to engage in consensus building and implementation process. This paper explores a framework through which social media can impact on devolution for sustainable development through citizen participation. Specifically, this paper sought to; determine the factors that have influenced the adoption of social media to enhance citizen participation, find out if social media are indeed useful tools for sustainable development and how they can be harnessed to live up to their full potential. The paper applied mixed methodologies and key informant interview was the Principal Information Officer of Migori County, and survey of residents. Despite remarkable efforts in the use of social media to communicate, county governments have failed to fully harness them to guarantee sustainable development. County governments are urged to initiate a social media strategy to enhance dialogue with their stakeholders, create interesting and engaging content as well as monitor and evaluate the performance of these social media strategies.

Keywords: *Social Media, Government, Sustainable Development, Devolution*

INTRODUCTION

Communication is at the heart of every institution. For any institution to succeed in achieving its objectives, it must communicate effectively with its stakeholders. Governmental institutions the world over have embraced communication with their citizens and stakeholders. Traditionally, this communication has been one-way, leaving no room for the recipient to participate. These traditional modes of communication include newspapers, radio and television (Mishaal and Abu-Shanab, 2015). The one-way model of communication resulted into a breakdown of communication between the government, its citizens and stakeholders as it did not allow for citizen participation. In Kenya, the promulgation of the 2010 constitution introduced devolution that allowed for citizen participation in governance. Additionally, the County Governments Act 2012 provided a framework for citizen

participation that is based upon the principle of timely access of information, data, documents and other relevant or related to policy formulation and implementation. The platforms for citizen participation established by county governments since the inception of devolution include; information communication and technology based platforms; town hall meetings; budget preparation and validation fora; noticeboards that announce importance information of public interest; establishment of citizen fora at county and decentralized units. More so, public communication has been based on the principle of integration of communication in all development activities and the establishment of a county media that creates awareness on devolution and governance; promote citizens' understanding for purposes of peace and national cohesion; as well as undertake advocacy on core development issues such as agriculture, education, health, security, economics, sustainable environment among others.

This means that advocacy on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 169 indicators lie squarely on the lap of devolved units that must come up with a communications framework and clear pathways that will ensure the implementation of the SDGs is successful at the county level. Currently, most county communication frameworks include established mechanisms to facilitate public communication and access to information in the form of media with the widest public outreach in the county, which may include television stations; information communication technology centers; websites; community radio stations; public meetings; and traditional media. Additionally, county governments have adopted social media as a new tool that enables a fresh approach that allows stakeholders across board to engage in consensus building and implementation process. These social media tools, especially Facebook offer particular utility to a government that wants to embrace citizen participation. Unlike traditional media campaigns, social media provides novel opportunities for counties to embed and interject sustainable development messages into the daily conversations of county residents.

When the right communication strategy is employed, it will enable people to understand important factors of their physical, social and economic environment and how they link together so that issues of sustainable development can be addressed effectively. Sustainable development as proposed by the Brundtland Commission is "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (United Nations General Assembly, 1987). Though this definition is brief, subsequent paragraphs of the report are clear on environment and development. On development for instance, the report states that human needs are basic and essential; that economic growth – but also equity to share resources with the poor – is required to sustain them, and that equity is encouraged by effective citizen participation (Kates, Parris, and Leiserowitz, 2005). Since citizen participation is at the core of devolution, county governments stand a better chance of effecting sustainable development. County governments are organized into sectoral ministries and departments including, health, environment, natural resources and disaster management, agriculture, livestock, fisheries and water development, trade, tourism and cooperatives, roads, transport, public works and energy among other departments. For sustainable development to take root in counties, these sectoral departments need to work together and involve citizens through communication.

Through employing social media, a government can improve its sustainable development communications significantly. Governments can leverage social media for effective communication by employing the Five Es; engagement, education, efficiency, elevation and entertainment (Maria, 2012). By using social media, the county government engages citizens on issues of sustainable development in a multi-way model that will lead to a better understanding of the issues being raised. Residents can also be educated on the importance of conserving the environment and adopting best practices that will promote sustainable development. The government can promote events and highlight its achievements thus empowering the citizenry with information regarding sustainable development. Social media is efficient. Governments incur little cost when using social media to spread messages and inform many people thus saving money that can be used elsewhere.

Social media elevates a citizen's needs to the fore where governments can see and respond to them. Governments can use social media to promote entertainment activities within their areas of jurisdiction. These entertainment activities can include– a county's Agricultural Show where the county government

can educate citizens on sustainable development. Bertot, Jaeger, Munson, and Glaisyer (2010) agree that indeed social media can offer a government immense opportunities as far as sustainable development communications is concerned. They list the opportunities as follows; Democratic participation and engagement, using social media technologies to engage the public in government fostering participatory dialogue and providing a voice in discussions of policy development and implementation; Co-production, in which governments and the public jointly develop, design, and deliver government services to improve service quality, delivery, and responsiveness; Crowdsourcing solutions and innovations, seeking innovation through public knowledge and talent to develop innovative solutions to largescale societal issues.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Brief Overview of Social Media

As a term, “social media” is believed to have been used for the first time in 1997, when the then AOL executive Ted Leonsis proposed that organizations needed to provide their stakeholders with “social media, places where they can be entertained, communicate, and participate in a social environment” (Bercovici, 2010). According to Boyd and Ellison (2007), SixDegrees.com which is believed to be the first publicly popular Social Networking Site (SNS) that let users create online personal profiles and lists of friends was launched in the same year. In 2000, social media received a great boost with the ‘witnessing of many social networking sites springing up’ (Hudson, 2010). This was a major boost to the interaction of individuals and organizations that share common interest in music, education, movies, and friendship based on social networking. Junco, Heiberger and Loken (2011) found that around this time, other social networking sites were also launched. They included; Fotolog, Sky Blog and Friendster launched in 2001; MySpace, LinkedIn, LastFM, Tribe.Net, Hi5, and others created in 2003. In 2004, popular names like Facebook, Dogster and Mixi emerged.

The term “social media” refers to a group of internet based applications that have been built on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 that allow creation and exchange of User Generated Content (Mishaal and Abu-Shanab, 2015). They include Facebook, Twitter, blogs, Google plus, wikis and YouTube, all of which are based on Web 2.0 technology. Web 2.0 technologies are characterized by interactivity, user generated content and multi-directional communication flows. They mark a shift from a “one-way conversation” model to a “two-way conversation” model where users participate as both creators and consumers of content (Hudson, 2010).

These salient features of social media have revolutionized government communication. As defined by Pasquier (2012), government communication refers to all the activities of public sector institutions and organizations that are aimed at conveying and sharing information, primarily for the purpose of presenting and explaining government decisions and actions, promoting the legitimacy of these interventions, defending recognized values and helping to maintain social bonds. It was not until after the 2008 U.S. Presidential elections that governments began embracing social media as a tool for communication. In that election, President Obama utilized social media in a way never witnessed before. Many people even believe that was the major factor that contributed to his win (Qualman, 2011). This proved that indeed, social media tools are not only powerful, but influential as well. It encouraged the federal government to utilize these tools to strengthen its relationship with the public. A short while after, the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) set up the Office of New Media to utilize social media on a national level (U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, 2009). In 2009, the agency signed terms of agreement with multiple social networking sites and opened up regional offices in the U.S that used social media to communicate with local communities and stakeholders (Guida, 2011).

After the 2008 U.S. Presidential elections, social media grew to become a must have for any vibrant government communication strategy. The social media tools improve interactivity between a government and the public and they reach populations that do not consume traditional media as frequently as others (Bertot, Jaeger, Munson and Glaisyer, 2010). This new technology allows officials in governments to build relationships with key stakeholders, in this case the citizens it represents. The relationship-building potential of social media is especially valuable to public relations professionals in

government institutions since building relationships is at the core of public relationships (Ledingham, 2003). In addition, social media also enhances a government's ability to interact with and engage citizens as well as to meet their expectations for transparency. Government officials now have more tools at their disposal to engage and communicate with the public than ever before. A recent survey showed that two-thirds of online adults use social media platforms (Smith, 2011). Also, 40 per cent of Internet users go online for data about government operations, and social media users are more tied to civic groups (Raine, 2011).

The importance of government communications in engaging the public remains a critical element to building relationships with citizens and addressing the public interest. Previously, government communication was characterized by a one-way communication between a government and its stakeholders. Dixon (2010) also concurs that historically, governments have relied on this one-way communication model which is just the dissemination of information to the public. This one-way communication model often hindered effective government communication. Added with the bureaucratic layers that characterize government institutions, governments could not communicate with their citizens in an engaging, collaborative forum. But with the incorporation of social media in government communication strategies, the bureaucratic thinking in governments has been modified thus paving way for the government to incorporate a two-way communication model.

Social Media Usage by Migori County Government

Social media exists in different forms. Mayfield (2008) for instance categorize social media into social networks, blogs, wikis, podcasts, forums, content communities and micro-blogging. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) split social media into three levels. The first level consists of collaborative projects such as Wikipedia. The second level consists of content communities like YouTube and Facebook that enable users to share multimedia content and lastly online games and social worlds which can create virtual worlds that imitate all dimensions of face-to-face interactions. Though these social media tools vary dramatically in their purposes and approaches, they share an emphasis on enabling users to communicate, interact, edit, and share content in a social environment (Porter, 2008; Tepper, 2003). Migori County Government has a Facebook Fan Page called Migori County Government, created with the sole aim of engaging with the public in a direct manner as well as making government communication more open. The page has 3,000 followers.

With an online community of 1 billion users worldwide, Facebook is the leading global social media platform. The same applies locally. Kenya has 5.2 million monthly Facebook users spending six hours and 38 minutes daily on the internet, according to the head of Facebook for Africa Nunu Ntshingila (Wainainah, 2016). This huge number of the Kenyan community participating on the Facebook platform gives county governments in Kenya the opportunity to interact effectively with and inform citizens without adding additional expenses to already strained government budgets. Strecker (2001) avers that the sites' features have been changing since its inception to not only accommodate the growing number of users but also adapting its features to serve different interests. In 2004, only Ivy League college students could join until it opened to the public in 2006, where individuals were able to create their profiles. Organizations however could only create groups but this changed in 2007 when Facebook added the Fan Page model that allowed organizations to create a Fan Page with the same look and feel as a Facebook profile and to generate content that would post into a Fan's newsfeed. Fan Pages provide organizations with an opportunity to interact with Facebook members by; prompting members to join a Fan Page by choosing to click "like" and demonstrate their affinity for an organization by becoming a member of "Fan" of the specific Fan Page; Encouraging organizations to share information such as news stories, updates, meeting announcements, event invitations, website links, photos and videos by posting these items to the Fan Page. These types of information are called "posts"; allowing Fans to comment or ask a question responding to a post on a Fan Page; allowing Fans to "like" a post on a Fan Page by clicking the like button on each post and; allowing Fans to share Fan Page content with their personal Facebook communities (Strecker, 2001).

Social Media Challenges

Marc Hudson of the Public Health Agency of Canada identified the following challenges communicators face in implementing a social media strategy (Hudson, 2010). First, government agencies are slow in adapting to change. This is mainly brought about by the bureaucratic layers of government and by the time they adapt and implement strategies for new media, user behaviors have already evolved, and the public mood has shifted to a new thing. Second, multiple layers of policies and processes governing information flow in governments impairs rapid responses to public mood or individual information needs or requests. When a resident raises an issue, he/she expects a response in hours or days on the maximum and not weeks or months. If this information they seek delays, they will look for it elsewhere.

Need for the Study

Social media offer opportunities for governments and citizens, who have the ability to communicate with each other through an extra communication channel. As a result, governments can reach citizens that they would not have reached through traditional media; governments can also communicate with citizens more directly and they can be more transparent about their activities. Governments can also build strong relationships with citizens and they can easily monitor the state of affairs on social media and act on this. Despite these benefits that social media can offer when it comes to educating citizens on issues of sustainable development, challenges still remain. One of these challenges is the lack of a proper social media strategy that can ensure sustainable development succeeds hence the need for this study. This study will be significant for government employees using social media for official government communication purposes and also for the same employees when they are using social media personally when their government affiliation is identified, known or presumed. Government organizations will also use the research findings to measure and improve their performances. It will contribute to a better understanding of the role of social media in promoting issues of sustainable development at the county level. This, in turn, will offer insights to the formulation of effective social media strategies to county government information officers. The study will also be scientifically significant since there is a paucity of research in Kenya in the field of social media and sustainable development. It will be enriching to researchers and academic institutions. Media scholars will benefit from these findings and add to the general body of social media and sustainable development research.

Research Objectives

Building on the previous works mentioned above, the research was designed to examine the impact of social media on ensuring the success of sustainable development at the county level. Specific objectives of this paper are to; determine the factors that have influenced the adoption of social media to enhance citizen participation, find out if social media are indeed useful tools for sustainable development and how they can be harnessed to live up to their full potential.

METHODOLOGY

Being a case study of Migori County government, the county government offices was the main research site as it administrative center of Migori County. Additionally, the county government headquarters has the largest population of staff and also accommodate the Communications Office which primarily discharges government communications functions that were of interest to this study.

Migori County is one of the forty-seven counties in Kenya. It is situated in the South-Western part of Kenya. It borders Homa Bay County to the North, Kisii and Narok Counties to the East and the Republic of Tanzania to the South. It also borders Lake Victoria to the West. The county is located between latitude 0° 24' South and 0° 40' South and Longitude 34° East and 34° 50' East. The total population of Migori County according to the 2009 population census was 917,170 comprising of 444,357 males and 472,814 females or 48.6% male and 51.4% female. The population is youthful, with 49% are children aged below 15 years while 78% is aged below 30 years. (Migori County Integrated Development Programme, 2013).

In order to understand how Migori County government uses social media to communicate with its key clients, a key informant interview was conducted with the Communications Director who is responsible

for the management of Migori County’s corporate social media accounts. Data was also collected through a survey of 80 residents from Migori Town center. Study sample was arrived at by selecting 20 individuals from each of the 4 outlying areas adjacent to Migori Town (Oruba, Total, Banana and Apida). The study used convenient sampling. Target areas for the sampling were chosen conveniently within the environs of Migori Town. To ensure comprehensive data validity the subjects were randomly selected from each area or zone, making them 80 in total. Random sampling was done with care taken to ensure that 50 percent were males and another 50 percent females for gender parity.

Written questionnaires were distributed to the Communications Director and Online Reporters from the Communications Department. These Online Reporters are charged with the responsibility of managing websites and social media accounts of the county government. Thus, they are reliable professionals who have firsthand knowledge and experience with developing social media frameworks that can ensure the county government succeeds in mobilizing residents to achieve sustainable development goals. The feedback presented from the respondents’ questionnaires were analyzed and interpreted with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Findings were subjected to descriptive analysis

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Background Information of Research Respondents

The research focused on Migori County residents and key informants from the county government’s communication department who are authorities in the area of social media. The sample was made up of 80 respondents ranging from 21 to 51 years old. A total of 80 questionnaires were distributed. Of these, 70 were returned putting the response rate at 90%. Out of the 70 respondents, 50% were males and another 50% females for gender parity. The distribution of respondents according to age was as follows; 42.5% were between 21-30 years, 30% were aged between 31-40 years, 17.5% were aged between 41-50 years while 10% were aged over 51 years. The researcher also wanted to know if the respondents had a social media account. Out of the respondents sampled, 97.8% of them owned social media accounts while the remaining 2.2% did not own any.

Widely used Social Media Tools

In this section the researcher sought to establish the most widely used social media tools by Migori County residents and why they chose that particular social media tool. When asked to mark the social media tools they use, 62 respondents (89%) said they use Facebook, 6 respondents (9%) used Twitter while the least used social media tool were the blogs with 2 respondents (2%) acknowledging using it. When asked why they use that particular social media tool, many attributed their preference to ease of use and the fact that most of their friends and organizations are on it. County governments with strong presence on Facebook communicate with the majority of their citizens on matters of sustainable development as compared to those without a strong presence on Facebook. As the most popular social media tool, Facebook should be utilized by counties to advocate issues of sustainable development.

How Respondents Frequently Posted Statuses on Facebook

The researcher attempted to find out how often the respondent posted a status on Facebook and the following observations were made: 5% have never, 13.3% of them indicated that they post on Facebook monthly, 15% indicated fortnightly, 25.8% indicated that they post on daily basis ,40.8% of them post on weekly basis.

Table 1: Displays information on how often respondents post status on Facebook

Period	Frequency	Percentage
Daily	20	28.6
Once a Week	32	45.6
Fortnightly	9	12.8
Monthly	8	11.4
Never	1	1.4
Total	70	100

From the table above it can be gleaned that Facebook is still a popular communication channel since majority of residents samples use it either daily or on a weekly basis. It is therefore important for county governments to aggressively engage stakeholders on Facebook frequently in order to promote issues of sustainable development.

How Often the Respondents Visit Migori County Government’s Facebook Fan Page

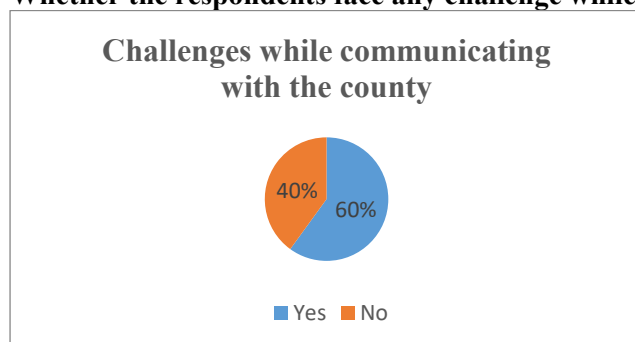
Table 2: Describes how often respondents visit Migori County Government’s Facebook Fanpage

Period	Frequency	Percentage
Daily	36	51.4
Once a Week	20	28.6
Fortnightly	7	10
Monthly	5	7.1
Never	2	2.9
Total	70	100

The researcher wanted to find out how often the respondents visit Migori County government’s Facebook Fan Page. The following observations were made: 3% do not visit Migori County government’s Facebook Fan Page, 51% visited on a daily basis, 29% visited once a week, 10% fortnightly and 7% once a month. The findings indicate that majority of residents visit the Facebook Fan Page several times a day proving that the sites are helpful. The onus is on the county government to make maximum use of its Facebook Fan Page to encourage communication with its citizens on a regular basis. The county government’s social media team should also promote the Facebook Fan Page using Facebook Ads to ensure it reaches a wider audience. This will translate into success in the government’s efforts to engage the public on issues of sustainable development.

From the pie chart above 40% of those who participated in the study indicated that they encounter challenges while communicating with Migori County government through Facebook while the remaining 60% have never encountered any challenges. Those who faced challenges while communicating with Migori County government on Facebook bemoaned the lack of immediate feedback from the county government’s social media administrators. They said the county government took a long time to respond to their queries. Others also said that slow internet connections impeded their communication with the county government on social media.

Whether the respondents face any challenge while communicating with the county on Facebook



Pie Chart 1.0 Displays information on whether the respondents had any challenge communicating with the county government on Facebook

Factors That Have Influenced the Adoption of Social Media by Migori County Government

The researcher conducted a 30-minute key informant interview with the Communications Director of Migori County government. The responsibility of the Communications Director is to initiate and develop Migori County government’s social media communications initiatives. For this reason, he has first-hand knowledge and experience with the use of social media. The interview was done with the

possibility of follow up emails on issues that needed further clarifications. This study reveals that Migori County government viewed social media as a progressive communications technology and a way to connect with residents who were already using social media to communicate. The study also revealed that Migori County government mainly used Facebook as its social media channel of communication. However, the county still maintained other social media channels including Twitter and blogs.

During the interview, the Director said that the Communications Department of Migori County government was very strategic in the way it packaged information for various social media audiences and that this always guaranteed immediate success in the county's communications efforts:

"We normally simplify and package our information depending on our target audience. For example, information on county government projects launched by the governor in different wards across the county attracts a lot of shares and interaction on our social media platforms by Migori County residents both living in the county and abroad." (Research data, 2016)

Migori County government uses social media tools alongside other communication modes like radio, television, newspapers, websites, newsletters, notice boards and brochures. This presented a win-win situation as those who did not get information from the aforementioned channels still get the same information from social media sites. On whether the county government measured and evaluated their social media activities, the communications director said there was no such thing. This has prevented the county government from coming up with a successful social media framework that will ensure success of informing residents on sustainable development. Burson-Masteller (2012) opines that organizations must monitor their own social media presence to ensure a consistent brand message and to measure the impact of their social media engagement. Migori County for instance should use the free social media monitoring tools available online such as; TweetReach, Hootsuite, Socialmention, TweetDeck among others.

The Communications Director said that Migori County government adopted social media because it enabled the county government to access a wider audience:

"Facebook, being the widely used social media tool, allows us (Migori County government) to reach a wider audience thus improving the accessibility of government communication. It allows us to post on different topics that are relevant to the audience, topics such as sustainable development and to get immediate audience feedback and input on the same. It is also cheap, thus saving the county government funds that would have been used to book space in traditional media like radio, television and newspapers." (Research data, 2016)

The Director also agreed that once in a while, the social media team carries out sustainable development education by updating the official Migori County government Facebook Fan Page with messages that create awareness, provide county residents with knowledge on sustainable development. The Communications Director acknowledged the importance of such information in not only changing the attitude of residents but also motivate them to actively participate in sustainable development activities.

"Mostly we post news items regarding issues and problems of sustainable development like proper waste management, sustainable agricultural practices, planting of trees among others." (Research data, 2016)

The interview also revealed that in as much as the county government strives to educate the residents on matters of sustainable development, the online reporters charged with updating the official government social media pages do not comply with the Communication Director's policy. The Communications Director indicated this as one of the challenges he faces while trying to adopt a communications strategy that will ensure the success of sustainable development. Findings from the interview revealed that most of the time the online reporters don't consult him before posting on Facebook. Consequently, the content that they post is not aligned towards embedding sustainable development messages into the daily conversations of county residents. In the unlikely event that they consult the Communications Director, the online reporters are not consistent with posting sustainable development messages on Facebook. Consequently, the attention of the residents is not captured and sustained on issues of sustainable development. Additionally, most officials in the county government

do not understand the power of social media and as such see no need of funding the director to run sustainable development campaigns on social media.

Harnessing Social Media for Sustainable Development

Table 3: Opinions of the respondents regarding whether social media is an effective tool for promoting sustainable development

Opinion	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	31	44.3
Agree	27	38.5
Not Sure	6	8.6
Disagree	4	5.7
Strongly Disagree	2	2.9
Total	70	100

From the table above, it is evident that most of the respondents were of the opinion that social media especially Facebook is proving to be useful in sensitizing residents on sustainable development. An overwhelming majority of 44.3% of the respondents strongly agree while a paltry 2.9% strongly disagree with the statement that social media can be useful in promoting sustainable development.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the research findings, observations, and respondents' standpoints, some suggestions and recommendations are made. It goes without saying that social media is a great platform if governments are to achieve success as far as promoting sustainable development at the county level is concerned. They improve reach and promote messages, they can rapidly capture the public mood, sentiment and knowledge about sustainable development issues and more importantly, social media tools offer an inexpensive way for county governments to carry out sustainable development messages. But as county governments are embracing social media to communicate with their citizens on issues of sustainable development, it is important for them to identify the specific social media tools commonly used by their citizens and stakeholders as well as factors that influence the adoption of these technologies. Once a social media tool, say Facebook has been adopted, it is also important for the communications staff to have a social media strategy in mind before using the medium. If county governments adopt a blind, non-strategic use of social media, they will fail to embed and interject sustainable development messages into the daily conversations of county residents. The CPEM and E (Content, Promotion, Engagement, Measuring and Evaluation) strategy is recommended as one that will promote sustainable development through social media at the county level.

- **Content:** Social media management teams at the county level need to package content, which in this case are sustainable development messages in an appealing way so that when its posted on Facebook, it leaves a lasting impression. The content should not only be text based but should also include short videos and creatively designed infographics that appeal to the audience.
- **Promotion:** In order for any meaningful change to occur, the sustainable development messages should reach a wider audience. Counties therefore need to promote their Facebook Fan Pages to reach many people. This can be done by utilizing Facebook ads. For as little as Ksh.300/= a Facebook post can be promoted to reach about 7,800 people.
- **Engagement:** The major strength of Facebook is that it provides a platform for the sender and the receive engage in a two-way communication model. Social media managers at the county level therefore need to utilize this by engaging the audience by not only listening, but also responding to questions raised by the citizens about sustainable development on Facebook.
- **Measuring and Evaluation:** The communications departments at county levels need to invest in social media measuring tools to measure the impact of their social media engagement. Free online measuring tools available include HootSuite, SocialMention and Tweetdeck among others. This should be done regularly, preferably every week. Once this is done, the county social media teams will be able to take stock of the sustainable development messages they post on Facebook. Consequently, they will be able to either improve the existing strategy or come up with a new social media strategy depending on the results.

- There is need to conduct a social media training workshop involving all the county government employees (both senior and junior) that will educate them on the importance of embracing social media as an important tool for communication. This will change their perception of social media and enable the senior county officers to avail funds for running social media campaigns.

REFERENCES

- Bercovici, J. (2010, December 9). Who coined “social media”? Web pioneers compete for credit. Retrieved from HYPERLINK "<http://blogs.forbes.com/jeffbercovici/2010/12/09/who-coined-%20social-media-web-pioneers-compete-for-credit/>"
<http://blogs.forbes.com/jeffbercovici/2010/12/09/who-coined-social-media-web-pioneers-compete-for-credit/>
- Bertot, J. C., Jaeger, P. T., Munson, S., and Glaisyer, T. (2010). Engaging the public in open government: The policy and government application of social media technology for government transparency. *IEEE Computer*, 43(11), 53–59.
- Bertot, J. J. (2010). *Social Media Technology and Government Transparency*. IEEC Computer Society, 50-62.
- Dixon, B. (2010). Towards e-government 2.0: An assessment of where e-government 2.0 is and where it is headed. *Public Administration and Management*, 15, 418-454.
- Edosomwan, S., Prakasan, S. K., Kouame, D., Watson, J., and Seymour, T. (2011). The History of Social Media and its Impact on Business. *The Journal of Applied Management and Entrepreneurship* , 16 (3), 2.
- Guida, M. (2011). *The Utilization of Social Media: A Case Study of the U.S. General Services Administration Experience*. Georgia: Dissertations, Theses and Capstone Projects.
- Hudson, M. (2010, June 17). Web 2.0 and Social Media; Lessons Learned Retrieved from IPAC: http://www.google.ca/#hl=enandq=HUDSON+social+media+lessons+learned+pptandaq=fandaqi=andaql=andoq=andgs_rfai=andfp=e152ff60f580dc26.
- Junco, R., Heiberger, G., and Loken, E. (2011). HYPERLINK "<http://reyjunco.com/wordpress/pdf/JuncoHeibergerLokenTwitterEngagementGrades.pdf>" \t "_blank" [The effect of Twitter on college student engagement and grades](#) . *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, 27(2), 119-132. doi:10.1111/j.1365-2729.2010.00387.x
- Kates, R., Parris, T. M., and Leiserowitz, A. A. (2005). What is sustainable development? goals, indicators, values, and practice. *Environment: Science and Policy for Sustainable Development*, 47(3), 8-21.
- Ledingham, J.A. (2003). Explicating relationship management as a general theory of public relations. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 15. 181-198.
- Maria, J. M. (2012, August 23). *Government Technology*. Retrieved from CIOs Flock to Social Media; Why maintaining a social media presence is important, and how it benefits governments and citizens.: <http://www.govtech.com/pcio/CIOs-Flock-to-Social-Media.html>
- Mishaal, D. A., and Abu-Shanab, E. (2015). The Effect of Using Social Media in Governments: Framework of Communication Success. *The 7th International Conference on Information and Technology* (pp. 357-364). Jordan: ICIT .
- Pasquier, M. (2012). *Government Communication*. *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Public Administration* , 1-3.
- Porter, J. (2008). *Designing for the Social Web*. Thousand Oaks, CA: New Riders Press.
- Qualman, E. (2011). *Socialnomics: How Social Media Transforms the Way we Live and do Business*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons, Inc.
- Raine, L. (2011). *Social media and civic life*. Retrieved from <http://www.pewinterest.org/Presentations/2011/Oct/NASGO.aspx>
- Smith,A. (2011). *Why Americans use social media*. Retrieved from <http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2011/why-Americans-use-social-media.aspx>
- Strecker, A. (2001). *Flocking to Facebook: How local governments can build engagement*. Carolina: UNC Chapel Hill.
- Tepper, M. (2003). The rise of social software. *NetWorker*, 7(3), 18–23.
- U.S. National Archives and Records Administration. 2009. Office of the Federal Register. Memorandum for the heads of executive departments and agencies: Transparency and

- open government. Federal Register 74(15): 4685.
- United Nations General Assembly. (1987). Report of the world commission on environment and development: Our common future. Oslo, Norway: United Nations General Assembly, Development and International Co-operation: Environment.
- Wainainah, D. (2016, April 15). Kenyans spending six hours on Facebook everyday – survey. Nairobi news. Retrieved from <http://nairobinews.nation.co.ke/life/kenyans-spending-six-hours-facebook-every-day-study/>
