Public Involvement Online: Planning Meets Facebook© and Twitter©

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Abstract The use of social media is on a meteoric rise, as is the need for government and private corporations to consult with the general public and their relevant stakeholders. This paper analyses the use of Facebook© and Twitter© as contemporary public involvement tools for improving planning policies, plans or projects due to their popular nature and their potential for improving engagement in planning processes. This paper evaluates how these two social media platforms are used to inform or consult with different stakeholders and the public, and if used how, they can be true participation tools. An analysis of the literature and discourse relevant to both public involvement and social media use reveals how the planning industry could use Facebook© and Twitter©. This study draws on research conducted on 250 NSW state government agencies and other public and private organisations' use and management of Facebook© and Twitter© to engage with the general public and industry stakeholders. From this research, recommendations are given for the best use of social media, especially Facebook© and Twitter©, for public involvement purposes in planning.

Introduction

It is clear that social media networking and online communication platforms are gaining popularity within the planning industry as forms of public involvement, with many organisations integrating social media networks with existing promotion and advertising strategies. Planning organisations are beginning to identify the potential value of social media as interactive public involvement tools. Despite the growing adoption of these social media tools, organisations are struggling with their application and often apply these tools in ineffective ways. There are very few well-documented best practice methods or guides for successfully establishing and maintaining Facebook© or Twitter© applications as public involvement tools, particularly within the planning industry. Planning authorities are not using Facebook© and Twitter© to their full potential for public involvement. As a result, the potential effectiveness of online dialogue between the public and planning authorities or organisations may be lessened. It may also be difficult for organisations to determine which social media applications would be most appropriate to employ for different levels of public involvement. Thus, the need to develop a best practice guide for the establishment and maintenance of organisation Facebook© and Twitter© arises, in conjunction with understanding why, how and the extent to which public involvement happens.

Public Involvement: A Brief Overview

Public involvement has been seen as a component of urban planning for almost 50 years in response to the inadequacies of the 'rational or blue-print planning models' of the 1950s and 60s. Public involvement represents a shared responsibility by authorities, the general public and specific stakeholders in the making of cities to achieve better social and environmental outcomes (Innes & Booher 2004). As such, there is a distinct need to inform, consult and actively involve the public in decision-making processes. Parker (2002), amongst many, describes public involvement as a process that provides citizens with an opportunity to influence public decisions. Done with integrity, public involvement is based on the idea that those affected by a decision have the right to participate in the discussion process of making of that decision (Parker 2002). Democratic concepts lie behind these 'co-design' and 'co-governance' conversations. They enable debate and hopefully allow the best decisions to be made for our cities and citizenry (Gordon & Manosevitch 2011).

Healey (2012, p.19-20) suggests the planning industry is centred on "collective efforts to shape place qualities and connectivities" and has "a long history of normative interest in richly participative democratic processes." Through continued use of public involvement processes, those engaged have recognised the importance of embedding policy- and decision-making in everyday, modern community life (Healey 2012). Public involvement has become ingrained in best planning practice and is often a key requirement of much planning legislation, encouraging co-governance and decision-making as mentioned above.

Despite the problems associated with public involvement (including, but not limited to, data overload, time consumption, flaws in technique and a potential lack of organisational coordination), the process of actively engaging the public is widely considered a worthwhile venture (Healey 2012; Marshall & Zehner 2007; World Bank 1993). When translated into practice, the Queensland Department of Communities (2013, p.5) explains, "engagement allows governments to tap into wider perspectives,

sources of information, and potential solutions to improve decisions…it also provides the basis for productive relationships, improved dialogue…and ultimately, better democracy." Other Australian States and Territories have similar approaches to public involvement and departmental policies directing their strategies and practice.

Healey (2012, p.32) notes that a "people-centred approach is a richer one for generating a polity in which conflicts can be understood and the grounds for them respected". This approach, strongly based on a culture of practice (a way of doing instead of just saying), "can generate transformative change" (Healey 2012, p.20). This process "encourages people to develop…a sense of a shared political community, while still maintaining awareness of diversity and conflicts which differentiate and divide people" (Healey 2012, p.24). Marshall & Zehner (2007, p.251) identify that increased involvement of the public to develop co-governance strategies helps to "bridge the gap between representative democracy…and participatory democracy". From this, a higher level of public involvement results in better decision-making, improved relationships between those in power and the general public, and more effective future practice (Innes & Booher 2004).

The World Bank (1993) presents a useful model for understanding the increasing levels of public/stakeholder influence, identifying three levels of involvement, namely *Information*, *Consultation* and *Participation* (see Figure 1). The key difference across the levels of involvement is the degree to which the public or stakeholders are able to influence, share or control the decision-making (World Bank 1993). These are streamlined and updated from Arnstein's (1969) first conceptualisation of public involvement as a 'ladder of citizen participation.'

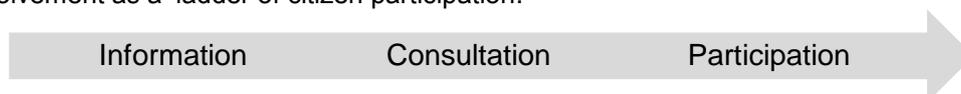Information   Consultation   Participation →

Figure 1. Levels of Public Involvement (World Bank 1993)

The *Information* level allows the presentation of information from officials to the public/stakeholders, where they are informed about upcoming plans or decisions made. *Consultation* allows for conversation between officials and the public/stakeholders, but the ultimate decision remains with the officials. The *Participation* level ensures active involvement by both officials and the public/stakeholders, each holding some of the decision-making power (World Bank 1993). Some examples of methods used to involve the public/stakeholders include:

Table 1. Some Examples of Public Involvement Techniques by Level of Engagement

Information Examples	Consultation Examples	Participation Examples
Plans, technical reports	Small group interviews	Workshops
Fact sheets, Briefs, Bill stuffers	Surveys(all formats)	Commissions of inquiry
Brochures, Newsletters, Leaflet	Public hearings/inquests	Joint authority/public Boards
Advertisements, News stories	Written submissions	Working parties
Public open houses	Informal & formal meetings	Decision-making surveys
Information booths, 'Hot lines'	Focus groups	Decision-making focus groups
Shop fronts, Field offices	Workshops	Design Charettes
Public meetings of all formats	Samoan circles	Deliberative polling
Interactive websites	Trade-off games	Citizen panels
2D mapping	Coffee klatches	Advisory Committees
3D visualisations	Delphi surveys	Self-government
Social Media Facebook© Twitter©	Social Media Facebook© Twitter©	

(sources: Marshall & Zehner 2007, Queensland Department of Communities 2013, IAP2 2015)

Several scholars and agencies (e.g. Arnstein 1969; World Bank 1993; International Association of Public Participation 2015) use of a ladder or scale-model to explain the varying levels of public involvement. Given its widespread adoption, this ladder concept of public involvement is used in this paper as an appropriate conceptual frame from which to guide or assess different public involvement techniques and their level of influence. It is especially useful in understanding the public's [potential] engagement in planning processes and its contemporary physical and social outcomes.

A planning authority with an interactive public involvement process will assume that open participation leads to better decisions, will be committed to adding value and will measure success and achievement on agreement on action between the public and the power holders (Parker 2002). Public involvement practices in the planning process should be supported by well-developed, frequent

monitoring and review procedures, based on key indicators of success devised and applied early in the process (PlanningNSW 2003). Beyond traditional measures of success (e.g. the quality and amount of public input, cost, time, range of stakeholders involved, and the quality of final decisions made) one other key indicator may include the level of engagement or the extent to which the stakeholders were involved. This includes using a variety of techniques to engage the public for different purposes, including social media platforms.

Social Media: A Brief Overview

The internet began as a bulletin board system in the early 1990s, whereby users exchanged software messages, news and data with each other but soon saw a surge in popularity. People began to share information about their lives in what would today be considered a web log or 'blog' (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010). It was not long before more 'social media' formats were created and used by growing numbers. Popular social media application Facebook© has over 800 million users; Twitter© has over 100 million, increasing annually (Mussell 2012). Pallis et al. (2011) note that social networks have become a fundamental part of using the Internet, with 'social networking' being the third most popular online activity behind YouTube© (a video-sharing application and website) and Wikipedia® (a publicly created encyclopaedia) (eBizMBA 2014a and b). While some argue that social media is a fun information system for private use, social media tools are now being used in the work arena (Schlagwein & Prasarnphanich 2011). An extensive range of social media platforms now exists worldwide, used predominantly for social networking, blogging and sharing of various forms of media and news (Grahl 2014).

Facebook© and Twitter©

Harvard computer programmer Mark Zuckerberg founded Facebook© in 2004 after developing a number of other social networking sites (Phillips 2007). 'The facebook', as it was originally termed, was based on the paper profiles of staff and students distributed to Harvard freshmen upon commencing study (Phillips 2007). The site was initially only available to Harvard students and became instantly popular, with 1,200 students (over half of the Harvard population) registering a profile within 24 hours of the site's launch (Phillips 2007). The main feature of this social networking site is its 'wall', where the user or the user's friends can leave messages in text, photo, or video form. In this way, Facebook© can most closely be compared to a virtual bulletin board system, which was one of the earliest forms of social media (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010).

Twitter© began in 2006 as a communication platform designed to keep track of friends based on their status update message or 'tweet' (MacArthur 2014). Being a mobile short messaging tool, Twitter© limits tweets to 140 characters per message, based on the mobile phone SMS (short message service) protocol standard (MacArthur 2014). Despite growing into a wider web platform, the 140-character limit remained and has become a trademark-like characteristic of the service.

Social Media in Planning Practice

Recently, scholars and planning practitioners have turned their attention to how engagement with the public can take place online (Bittle et al. 2009; Gordon & Manosevitch 2011; Gordon & Schirra 2011; Schroeter & Houghton 2011; Wallin et al. 2010; Williamson & Parolin 2012). Options include using an online submission tool, a digital communication tool, or social media. Bittle et al. (2009) explain that the use of social media encourages public participation and allows members of the public to become and remain involved in local planning policies, development decisions, and problem solving. Gordon & Schirra (2011, p.180) further assert that participants who engage in conversation on social media platforms do so "through the shared experience of inhabiting a virtual space," allowing individuals to immediately understand the entire community's planning issues. Williamson & Parolin (2012) assess that social media tools provide local councils with the opportunity to engage with their community about decisions made as part of the planning process via existing practices and computer infrastructure. These scholars also identify that "the use of interactive tools for responsive dialogue and mutual discourse communication is a challenge" (Williamson & Parolin 2012, p.59) in that it requires staff to maintain these tools. Gordon & Manosevitch (2011, p.76) state that, "social web media, while designed to be social, are not necessarily designed to be deliberative" and may be more closely classified as for the dissemination of *Information* (World Bank 1993) than for public involvement. Wallin et al. (2010, p.56) conclude, "little consideration has so far been given in planning theory to the impact of social media on urban planning expertise and on the future of the planning institution." In this way, it is clear that consideration must go into how each planning authority prepares for, implements and operationalises social media tools like Facebook© and Twitter©.

Facebook© and Twitter© as Public Involvement Tools: Best Practice Principles
This paper employs a case study methodology to examine the use of online public involvement across planning as well as other industries, by triangulating in-depth interviews, content analysis and review of relevant literature and public discourse (conducted in late 2014). Each are discussed below.

In Depth Interviews: To gain a fuller understanding of online engagement practice, in-depth qualitative interviews and an in-depth written questionnaire were conducted with the relevant social media experts of three chosen state government departments: the NSW Department of Planning and Environment, the NSW Department of Education and Communities and the NSW Rural Fire Service. The interviews and questionnaire provided insight into the aims, objectives and processes of Facebook© and Twitter© as public involvement tools, at a state government level.

Content Analysis: The organisational adoption of Facebook© and Twitter© by 250 NSW state government agencies and departments, NSW local councils, private planning consultancies, private companies and not-for-profit organisations were closely examined. Investigation into the manner in which each organisation utilises their Facebook© and Twitter© pages and the level of engagement of their respective audiences was measured against the literature and discourse collected as part of the research process of this paper. Observation of the online conversations held by each organisation, and responses of participants was used to assess each department's level of engagement.

Literature and Public Discourse Review: This paper is strongly grounded in both traditional and current literature and discourse relating to public involvement and social media, interconnecting the two fields as related to the planning profession. Information gathered was drawn from a range of sources, including, but not limited to, scholarly literature, consultant reports, conference papers and blogs, as well as state government reports, plans and policies.

The six key thematic areas and series of 'Dos and Don'ts' below contain a number of recommendations for planning organisations to adopt and maintain Facebook© and Twitter© for the purpose of public involvement. The Dos and Don'ts are not exhaustive lists but certainly cover many operational and content issues and opportunities of using Facebook© and Twitter© as engagement tools The recommendations below are based on the findings of the case studies, as well as traditional public involvement approaches that have been adapted for the online social media environment. For the purpose of these recommendations, 'the public' refers to any individual or group with access to social media and the willingness to participate in community engagement initiatives online.

1.   Coordinated Framework
A coordinated framework provides a comprehensive organisational guide for public involvement – a 'how to' and 'who to' guide for all forms of traditional and new social media public engagement practices (Marshall & Roberts 1995). Company or departmental ideals should underpin any approach – these might include sincerity and integrity of the organisers and their processes, ethics, trust, and a commitment to hearing the public voice using a variety of techniques. Triangulated techniques, coordinated through this framework, allow those without access to social media to continue being involved in planning decision-making through traditional forms of public participation. This offers a solution to the problems of social isolation and exclusivity, commonly associated with the use of social media (Kanter 2001, Kaplan & Haenlein 2010). A coordinated framework can create: consistency in procedures to coordinate, communicate and collaborate on individual involvement events; internal 'readiness' to facilitate public involvement; and ongoing relationships with clients, stakeholders, general public. Such a framework allows for a greater level of support across the organisation, increases efficiency and effectiveness of public involvement techniques and reduces the risk of staff overload and duplication of work and public contact, which are common problems associated with public involvement processes. Organisations that make the time to establish such a framework of public involvement will create a solid base for future public involvement initiatives (Marshall & Roberts 1995).

Do…	Don't…
Update visitors on any new/other ways to provide input into decision-making. This promotes effective and efficient public involvement.	Restrict public knowledge of all public involvement tools.
Invite the public to participate in discussion on upcoming development via Facebook© and Twitter©. This reinforces an inclusive public involvement process.	Exclude the public from discussion, especially when resulting decisions may affect them.
Use both Facebook© and Twitter© to update the public on projects unrelated to the public involvement event. This keeps the public informed about the organisation, generally.	Keep progress on current projects out of the public eye.
Host a variety of community engagement events. This will interest and capture the views of more members of the public.	Reduce the number of participants online by using only one public involvement tool, if any.
Provide brief, occasional educational excerpts relevant to the organisation amongst regular posts. This educates users on the context of the organisation.	Overload the public with educational posts.
Attach other social media applications to Facebook© pages. This allows for multi-faceted interaction.	Disregard other social media platforms used by the organisation.

2.   Organisational Policy

Staff who carry out public involvement events should have an adequate legislative or at least, policy framework to support these processes (World Bank 1993). Planning authorities often develop policies in relation to the use of traditional media and communication tools when addressing or responding to contentious issues. However, rarely do planning authorities develop an organisational procedure for handling these issues via Facebook© or Twitter©. This could be due to the contemporary nature of the communication tools, combined with organisation-wide trepidation to invest time into the tools (Clark 2014, pers. comm.). As an example, NSW planning legislation covers almost every aspect of the planning process, including techniques such as face-to-face public involvement, but does not yet cover public involvement via Facebook©, Twitter© or other new social media tools. Amending legislation to include new media is a costly procedure in terms of time and money. Hence, it is recommended that [at least] policies on the use of social media guide organisational processes – ideally, legislation should be amended.

Roles and responsibilities according to employee positions should be assigned, specifically in relation to which staff members are authorised to post content on Facebook© or Twitter© on behalf of the organisation (and to what extent), when to coordinate with other teams (such as other media teams and planning staff) and when not to post at all (NSW Department of Education and Communities 2014, pers. comm., Pathak 2014, pers. comm., Clark 2014, pers. comm.). This forms an organisational hierarchy of staff which ensure a consistency of communication and removes complicated procedures which are especially important when urgent or contentious planning issues arise and the conversation with the public is required immediately.

Do…	Don't…
Provide an easily accessible, brief guideline for users of social media pages, based on the organisational media policy. This informs users how to effectively and efficiently use the tools.	Hide guidelines and social media policies so online users cannot refer to them.
Include a historical account of the organisation and its foundation. This legitimises the organisation.	Ignore the historical background of the organisation.
Publicise the correct procedure(s) for formal feedback on Facebook© and Twitter©. This reinforces a coordinated framework.	Hide access to formal feedback procedures.

3. Social Media Preparation

A number of scholars and industry professionals have expressed the need for significant preparation prior to implementing social media platforms for the purposes of public involvement (Weber 2009, Kaplan & Haenlein 2010, Kietzmann et al. 2011, Clark 2014, Pathak 2014). Besides the organisational policies and roles, understanding the involvement's purpose and objectives is critical to establishing who the desired audience is, timing of the involvement, and which techniques would be most appropriate (Clark 2014, pers. comm.). Once these have been identified, the organisation should determine the appropriateness of Facebook© and Twitter© for online public involvement. For example, should the planning organisation wish to conduct a yes/no or short response poll, Twitter© may be an appropriate social media platform, given its 140-character limited short message system. Twitter© may be appropriate for *Information* dissemination and some limited *Consultation*. If the planning authority is aiming for more in-depth *Consultation* or *Participation*, Facebook© may be appropriate. This would be suitable in situations where the opinions of the public are integral to decision-making and cannot be limited to Twitter's© 140 characters. It is also possible for planning organisations to employ both Facebook© and Twitter© in conjunction with each other to gather a greater spectrum of public content. As with all techniques, social media has its limitations with capturing different perspectives, cost, timeliness, quality of material gathered, data processing challenges etc. – these must be considered in the preparation phase of public involvement processes.

If social media is going to be used, full data management processes and administration must be determined before the tools are launched. That is, how will potentially thousands of 'submissions' be managed by the organisation if the public really responds to the Facebook© and Twitter© public involvement media? Submissions in the digital age will be both text and graphic, which will need to be considered. The content will come from government organisations, private industry and the public which all need to be considered before any public involvement process starts. The NSW Rural Fire Service has developed software with the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation [CSIRO] to undertake keyword monitoring during event and for data archiving for both its Facebook© and Twitter© platforms (Ryan 2014).

Traditional legislative and strategic planning policies are reviewed regularly; typically every two to five years. This regular review practice should be continued with any policies prepared in relation to communication (PlanningNSW 2003), including communication via social media tools. Given the ever-changing and contemporary nature of Facebook© and Twitter©, policies relating to the use of the online communication tools in the planning industry should be reviewed more regularly than general planning policies to allow the policies to remain up-to-date alongside the social media tools to which they relate. Review of policies and social media should coincide with internal education of all staff on any changes made to policy (Pathak, 2014 pers. comm.). This ensures that planning staff and media staff alike are consistent in their approach to using social media to address planning issues and the public.

Do...	Don't...
Use Facebook© and Twitter© to instantly and publicly advertise upcoming public events. This provides an inclusive environment.	Prevent the public from participating in the organisation's public events.
Update the public on new engagement strategies it may be launching. This may encourage new participants.	Hide all new engagement strategies from the public.
Build a strong rapport with visitors to social media pages by personally signing off each piece of correspondence. This helps the public feel respected and welcome.	Reduce all personal touches to online communication.
Have detailed data management structures in place before any social media platform is launched. This includes have ethical reporting guidelines and privacy policies in place.	Treat the data received frivolously. If Facebook© and Twitter© are used at techniques, they should be treated with the same rigour as other more traditional ones.

4. Social Media Operations

Effective engagement with the public relies on a strong enabling environment with sufficient capacity and resources to carry out work for the duration of the public involvement process (World Bank 1993). The application of all good engagement techniques, whether traditional or based in social media, needs adequate budget and staffing capacity. To ensure the implementation and ongoing maintenance of Facebook© and Twitter© infrastructure, planning organisations should set aside an

adequate budget for a specific digital media team (Pathak 2014, pers. comm.). This budget [and responsible personnel] could be linked with general media or planning staff, as each of these teams should be working closely together as part of a coordinated communication framework.

Many organisations, including government departments and private companies struggle with branding, consistent messaging, public profile and public relations. Facebook© and Twitter© allow for a semi-customisable page appearance. Customisable elements include the 'cover photo' (a banner across the top of the page) and the 'profile picture' (photographs that appear as the page's avatar or icon representing the person or organisation). As with organisational websites, planning authorities' Facebook© and Twitter© pages should customise these elements to ensure they adhere to the organisation's official colour scheme, design and format. This simple, uniform format across media platforms, policies and plans reflects the consistent, coordinated approach taken throughout any online or traditional public involvement processes (Ryan 2014).

The text-heavy nature of planning legislation and policy can become overwhelming for the layperson which could lead to important messages or information being lost in *Information* or *Consultation* processes. It is important to retain the public's interest and engagement with content being presented online via Facebook© or Twitter© with supporting photographs, figures, tables, infographics and other images (Clark 2014, pers. comm.). This provides an easy way for planners and media staff to combine their knowledge and present the public with comprehensive information on new plans, policies or developments. These pictorials 'can paint a thousand words.' Planners and media staff should also provide an avenue for the public to submit images with a view to posting these contributory submissions on Facebook© and Twitter©. This digital opportunity allows a graphic dimension to public involvement processes that do not exist as easily when traditional methods are used.

Do...	Don't...
Use infographics to clearly display facts and statistics. This provides visual relief for the reader.	Constantly post text-heavy content.
Provide links to their own media releases and websites for more information for visitors. This supports a coordinated framework.	Exclude links to other digital and traditional media platforms.
Show support for similar organisations by 'sharing' relevant pages' posts. This simultaneously reinforces your organisation's key messages and supports other organisations.	Refrain from 'sharing' content from other organisations.
Where appropriate, use humour while presenting information to create a lighter tone. This is a refreshing way to deliver content for readers.	Make fun of individuals or groups, especially those within the organisation's desired audience.
'Like' (Facebook©) and 'Follow' (Twitter©) organisations with similar interests and objectives. This extends support to similar organisations.	Be unsupportive of other similar organisations.
Organise competitions or games over social media to encourage participation and involvement. This encourages further participation.	Create a boring, exclusive online environment.
Participate in interagency conversation. This indicates a coordinated industry.	Isolate the organisation by refraining from external conversation.
Maintain a visual theme across social media platforms. This reinforces organisational branding.	Confuse users by using different visual themes across social media platforms.
Attach relevant and lawful photographs to text messages for more eye-catching posts. This provides visual relief to users.	Post photographs of people in private places without their permission.
Post frequently and regularly across social media platforms. This demonstrates attentiveness and enthusiasm.	Post infrequent, irregular content on Facebook© and Twitter©.

5.   Markers of Success and Evaluation

When assessing engagement events, planning authorities should set markers of success and evaluate processes to ensure objectives are met, techniques were appropriate, resources were used

efficiently and effectively and the public feels valued (Fredericks & Foth 2012). Markers for success should be included in the social media policy to be adhered to by all relevant planning and communications staff (Ryan 2014). An example of a marker of success would be to identify a goal number of 'followers' for a Minister for Planning's Twitter© account. A great advantage of using social media techniques is that they are relatively inexpensive to respond to new information, stakeholders, and changing political or social contexts.

Do...	Don't...
Offer visitors incentives for providing their regular input, such as discounts to local attractions. This encourages the return of participants.	Discourage participants from returning to Facebook© and Twitter© with further input.
Monitor engagement levels through native Facebook's© Insights and Twitter's© Analytics tools. These 'behind the scenes' tools provide further information on participant demographics and locations, on tracking the 'tweets' or 'likes' and follow participants' other, relevant posts. This provides a clear way to review the engagement of your audience.	Ignore tools that offer insights into public engagement details. This information can be instructive to the organisation about who is participating, to what level and context on their content submissions.
Allow the public to post comments and queries to Facebook© and Twitter© pages. This ensures open and transparent conversation.	Prevent the public from posting enquiries on Facebook© and Twitter© pages.

6. A Focus on People

Public involvement processes blend people with decision-making processes. Public involvement in any planning process should be an open, transparent and people-centred practice (Marshall & Roberts 1997, Parker 2002, Healey 2012). Brought to an online setting via Facebook© or Twitter©, open conversations allow for easily and immediately sharing different perspectives, experiences, localities often between those who may have never interacted otherwise, especially a younger age group (Bittle et al 2009, Gordon & Schirra 2011, Williamson & Parolin 2012). When done well, a high level of co-governance occurs between citizens and those in public and private industry.

Do...	Don't...
Allow public Facebook© Reviews, to create an open feedback channel. This is an easy way to gain feedback while being transparent with the public.	Privatise any and all feedback provided via Facebook© and Twitter©.
Provide timely, informed responses to vocal minorities. This can reduce the escalation of potential problems.	Ignore comments from groups or individuals with a negative sentiment towards the organisation.
Use both Facebook© and Twitter© to engage a larger, wider audience. This provides a greater level of input.	Adopt just one social media tool for public involvement, if any.
Promote new products or policies publicly on Facebook© and Twitter© pages. This keeps the public informed about the organisation's progress.	Conceal new products or policies from public view by omitting their mention on Facebook© and Twitter©.
Thank visitors personally and individually for participating in discussion on social media. This also helps the public feel respected and welcome.	Dismiss discussion from the public.
Strictly manage 'trolls' or those using social media as a tool to personally vilify other individuals or the organisation. These individuals are not engaging with 'the spirit of public consultation' and must be removed and blacked from the platforms.	Allow 'trolls' or other organisations to publically denigrate individuals using your Facebook© and Twitter© platform. There is a legal justification for removing such content as it is not 'relevant' to the public discussion on offer.

Future Conjectures

Now and in the future, planning organisations (amongst other industries) need to employ public involvement tools to engage a large number and wide array of people in the most effective and efficient ways. It is also clear, given the presence of public involvement in planning legislation and policy, as well as in the way that people demand it, public involvement will remain a key part of the planning process. While Facebook© and Twitter© have only been available for a relatively short time when compared to traditional public involvement tools, these social media tools have made an undeniable impact on the way many people interact. It is therefore imperative that planning organisations remain up-to-date with modern technologies and the new tools that become available in terms of public involvement, as there will undoubtedly be more to come.

It is established in this paper that both Facebook© and Twitter© can be worthwhile online public involvement tools, but only when used effectively and efficiently, and when organisations are properly prepared. These social media tools are most closely classified as a way to distribute *Information* and *Consultation*, but not yet for full *Participation* (World Bank 1993). This paper has provided some guidance and clear recommendations for the use of Facebook© and Twitter© as public involvement tools with untapped potential. Organisations should use, and continue to develop, Facebook© and Twitter© and other social media tools for the purpose of public involvement to remain current in this contemporary, fast-paced, technological world.

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