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# Trapping Matters Workshop

## ***Communication Tips for your Agency's Social Media Efforts***

There are many general-interest sites that recommend strategies for social media. Some of the best tips were written by Scott Kleinberg, former social media editor for the Chicago Tribune, and can be Googled. In fact, many of these ideas are based on his writings. But here are some tips for those who maintain social media networks for wildlife agencies:

**In many ways, social media is no different from print or verbal communication.** Deal in facts, not opinion. Be polite and upbeat. Too often, people use social media only as a way to promote something. Have a conversation instead. It's a *social* network, and that means engaging with your audience.

**Your audience is universal.** What may be perfectly appropriate to send to a friend with common interests – a trophy picture to memorialize a hunt, for instance – could well offend the general public. Blood, gut piles, tongues lolling out of mouths are all bad ideas on social media.

**Use every tool at your disposal.** Video, photos, Twitter, new stuff like Periscope. Stay abreast of the market, and try out the new networks. Your audience probably is doing the same.

**Study analytics to build your audience.** Figure out why a tweet or post was popular – it could be anything from the time of day it was posted to the fact that you used a photo well.

**Watch your language.** The beauty of social media is also its danger. You can post anytime, anywhere. Remember that whatever you say – especially in anger – can be used against you or your organization. Scott Kleinberg suggests thinking about whether you'd be comfortable sharing your posts with your grandmother. Good idea.

**Your words will live on.** Stuff posted to public sites has a way of surviving, even if you try to delete it (which usually is a bad idea). Double-check your words and attitude before posting. Look closely at photographs. Don't be silly, and use proper grammar.

**Stay above the fray.** Sometimes it's tempting to fire back in a flame war. It usually doesn't end well. Have a thick skin and deal in facts. Trolls want to make you angry. If you get angry and respond in that vein, they win.

**Don't pass on information without checking it out.** Your credibility matters.

**Have a plan for each social network. Your Twitter feed should be different from Facebook, which should be different from Instagram. People should follow all of your accounts; if they overlap they likely will follow only one.**

**Respond to negative comments. But do not delete them until you investigate and resolve the issue. Follow what Kleinberg calls the "3 C's" – calm, cool and civil. Blocking a commenter sometimes has unintended consequences, such as allegations of censorship.**