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Government 2.5: The Impact of Social Media on Public Sector Accessibility

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Abstract

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MPA, Walden University, 2009

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Abstract

Innovative approaches to communicating with the masses continue to evolve in the private sector, while accessibility of goods, services, and public information within federal, state, and local government organizations has been declining for decades. This situation has resulted in a lack of trust and sense of isolation from communities. At the same time, the implementation and use of social media have increased exponentially. Despite the simultaneous occurrence of these events, limited research has explored the connection between them. Specifically, the purpose of this case study was to address the central research question of whether the adoption of social media platforms results in increased accessibility of goods and services within the public sector. Rogers's diffusion of innovations theory founded the framework for this study. Data were collected within a local government organization through semistructured interviews with 15 employees and 15 clients, observations of daily operations, and analyses of postings made on selected social media platforms. Inductive coding and a comparative method of analysis generated emerging themes and patterns. Key findings of this study indicated significant increases in public accessibility of goods and services as the result of the implementation and use of social media. Relative to diffusion of innovations theory, findings illustrated the spread of new technology through certain channels among employees and clients. Recommendations focus on establishing strategies to ensure widespread diffusion of social media and to address socioeconomic disparities. Government agencies can use this research as a means to advance social change through open communication, an engaged workforce, and increased transparency.

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my supportive family and friends who have provided me with guidance and encouragement throughout my scholarly journey, particularly my sister, Connie L. Woods. She has been there for me throughout life's challenges and instilled in me the perseverance and tenacity to conquer the many obstacles that I have encountered along my journey. Thank you so much for your love and support. I would also like to dedicate this dissertation to dreamers and visionaries who have paved the way so that I can have opportunities for success. For those who believe it cannot be done, I encourage you to keep the faith and dream big.

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First, giving honor to God. It has been a long, challenging journey, and I am eternally grateful for His grace and mercy, which guided me through this matriculation. I would like to thank my committee chair, Dr. Richard Worch. He has worked with me over the years, provided invaluable support, and instilled in me the determination to become a true scholar. His motivation and wisdom have guided me through this journey. I would also like to extend sincere appreciation to my dissertation committee member, Dr. Mark Stallo.

I must also thank my mother, who and has been the epitome of strength and wisdom. Moreover, I would like to thank all of my friends, family, and colleagues along this journey. Your encouraging words and motivation gave me hope that this day would come.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

The study of the impact of social media on public sector accessibility addresses a

crucial gap in the knowledge of approaches to initiate community stakeholder

involvement, satisfaction, and trust. The ability for a citizen population to be aware of the

information, goods, and services offered by local, state, or federal government (public

sector) organizations and to understand their benefits and drawbacks allows the public

sector to be accessible to the community. Social media platforms offer "government

agencies new opportunities to improve the quality and efficiency of their interactions

with constituents" (Falco, 2011, p. 2).

According to Young and Clark (2010), "Information sharing and behavioral

changes are key objectives for public sector organizations. Their aim is to educate,

influence, enable, or service the general public or a specific subset of the public" (p. 2).

Many organizations within the public sector have not modified their operations to include

the use of social media platforms or researched the impact of how such phenomena can

be beneficial to developing trust, engagement, and a credible reputation. The Human

Capital Institute (HCI) indicated in a 2010 study that despite the growing consensus that

social networking tools can improve service to the affected public, government agencies

lag behind the private sector in their adoption of social networking tools. In HCI's

investigation (2010) of hundreds of federal, state, county, and municipal government

organizations, more than half had not implemented social networking tools in their

communications or outreach processes. Serrat (2010) stated that the public sector bears

responsibility for embracing change, or else it faces reputational risk. Social media can

play a major role in defining how public sector organizations are perceived by the public.

As the level of technology has increased over time, the public sector has not been as adaptive to these changes as its private sector counterparts have. According to Serrat (2010), "on the social technographics ladder, most public sector organizations are inactives that continue to rely on yesterday's technology to address tomorrow's problems" (p. 5). Public sector organizations face daunting tasks of not only delivering quality goods and services while meeting growing client demand, but also ensuring that the public has the most efficient and innovative means to gain access, be informed, and comprehend information. The EMC Corporation (2010) indicated in its best practices planning for public sector communications that constituents, government policy makers, regulators, and citizens now expect better, faster, and more secure communications, delivered in more ways: by email, over the web, in print, and via mobile devices. It is imperative that public sector organizations adopt the most effective ways to use digital channels such as social media.

Accessibility is pivotal to public sector organizations' efforts to build positive reputations. In this case study, the use of various social media platforms was explored within a large county government organization that provided services to hundreds of thousands of households to determine if it led to increased accessibility. This chapter provides significant detail concerning the background of social media and the public sector to connect the need for increased accessibility of citizens. In addition, this chapter provides an in—depth explanation of the problem, the need for analysis, the research questions, and the research approach applied in an attempt to answer the research questions.

A significant amount of literature related to the public adoption, influence, and benefit of innovations such as social media was examined to provide a guiding perspective for the qualitative research conducted for this study. Key terms that were central to the study are defined in this chapter. An explanation of the extensive planning required to study the research topic is provided within the scope as well as assumptions and limitations. This chapter concludes with an explanation of how this study fills a gap in present literature regarding this topic, the study's benefit to the public policy and administration professions, and the study's potential impact in generating social change. The following section provides background information and a brief overview of literature regarding the role of social media and the impact that it could have in enhancing an organization's ability to become more accessible to the public. Chapter 2 presents a more extensive discussion of literature.

Background of the Study

Social Media

Local, state, and federal government organizations provide beneficial goods and services to the public in several forms. To effectively provide accessibility of the community and awareness of organizational offerings, there must be outlets that can not only inform, but also engage and connect organizations to the public. In the current era, social media have become technological phenomena. Social media are Internet and mobile—based applications that allow the creation, engagement, and exchange of interactive dialogue. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) stated that "social media are groups of Internet—based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and allow the creation and exchange of user—generated content" (p. 61).

Bryer and Zavattaro (2011) indicated that the Federal Web Managers Council, a group of

federal government practitioners charged with developing best practices for agency

websites and related service delivery, developed a definition of social media that

information technology units across federal agencies have incorporated:

> Social media and Web 2.0 are umbrella terms that encompass the various
>
> activities that integrate technology, social interaction, and content creation. Social
>
> media use many technologies and forms such as blogs, wikis, photo and video
>
> sharing, podcasts, social networking, mash—ups, and virtual worlds. (U.S.
>
> General Services Administration, 2009, p. 1)

As indicated, social media are built on the ideological and technological

foundations of Web 2.0. *Web 2.0* is a term developed within the last decade that refers to

a structure that encourages active information sharing and collaboration among Internet

users. The first use of the term has been credited to an electronic information design

consultant, Darcy DiNucci (1999). DiNucci predicted that the web would be understood

not as screens of text and graphics but as a transport mechanism through which

interactivity happens. Today, Web 2.0 is directly associated with social media in addition

to relative terms such as *blogs* and *web applications*.

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) classified platforms of social media by stating that

there are six different types: collaborative projects (e.g., Wikipedia), blogs and

microblogs (e.g., Twitter), content communities (e.g., YouTube), social networking sites

(e.g., Facebook), virtual game worlds (e.g., World of Warcraft), and virtual social worlds

(e.g. Second Life). The examples that Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) referred to in their

classification are web—based social media services that process user dialogue as well as

engage the public. Internet World Stats (2015) indicated that the most used platforms of social media are Facebook, with more than 213 million users, and Twitter, with more than 150 million users in North America. The evolution of social media has revolutionized not only modern communications, but also functions of daily life, such as finding a job, sharing opinions, and dating. Enabled by increased accessibility and exchange of dialogue and information, social media have substantially changed engagement and communication in the Western world.

Social Media and the Public Sector

Perlman (2012) stated that "social media platforms are becoming increasingly important for many citizens in the roles they play in their daily lives as friends and consumers; it is in fact impossible to access some commercial Internet products or services without using them" (p. 67). The delivery of goods and services within the public sector is multifaceted, ranging from federal, state, and local urban planning and development to the delivery of benefits and assistance to citizens.

> Driven by internally focused objectives, rather than a service delivery mentality, bureaucratic in decision—making, traditionally slow to change, saddled with top—down hierarchical structures in which positional authority no longer compels, the public sector is a relative newcomer to social media. (Serrat, 2010, p. 5)

As its popularity continues to grow, there is great opportunity to analyze the impact of social media on public sector accessibility. Perlman (2012) added that "because of the relative recentness of wide—spread participation in social media technologies, research on social media use in government has been limited" (p. 67).

Social media platforms were initially adopted in the private sector. Serrat (2010) stated that "elements of the private sector have begun to thrive on opportunities to forge, build, and deepen relationships with people both internally and externally" (p. 5). Serrat added that "from the early adoption of Web 2.0, applications, such as blogs and wikis, are expanding the mix of tools and shifting from using them experimentally to embedding them in business processes" (p. 5). Building on the benefit of Web 2.0 technologies, Government 2.0 was developed as a facilitator of information sharing and engagement within the public sector. William Eggers (2005) is credited with the term *Government 2.0*. Eggers (2005) indicated that unhyped, and therefore unnoticed, technology is altering the behavior and mission of city halls, statehouses, schools, and federal agencies across America, and Government 2.0 is a form of digital revolution that transforms government. This governmental transformation through increased technology has alluded to a cultural shift as citizens have been encouraged to seek out new means of communication and interaction. The convergence of social media with the elements of Government 2.0 has evolved into the implication and ideology of Government 2.5.

Perlman (2012) indicated that social media are increasingly being used, or at least experimented with, in the day—to—day tasks of state, regional, county, and municipal governments. Perlman added that "most of this use is for operations: the communications, direction, and coordination of service delivery and the numerous specific tasks and activities that make it up" (p. 44). Ensuring that the public is informed and has the ability to use public sector organizations and understand their functions is vital in order to gain support and engagement from the community. This study is needed to develop and implement plans and policies that will increase use of public sector programs and

services; initiate community outreach, support, and engagement; and build public trust. A review of the background of social media in the public sector is relevant to its rapid evolution and a more comprehensive understanding of its impact on the public.

Statement of the Problem

Public sector organizations are tasked with delivering quality goods and services while meeting growing client demand. As the level of technology has grown tremendously through the years, the public sector has exhibited deficiencies that present challenges to clients in accessing information and understanding organizational policies and procedures. These factors could affect the public's perception of government organizations, resulting in decreased community engagement and trust. In a conference presentation on organizational reputation, brand identity, and competitiveness, Da Camara and Money (2007) indicated that "many commentators agree in detecting a decline in trust and confidence in public institutions, and a parallel decline in civic engagement and democratic participation, across the developed world" (as cited in Heitzman & Marson, 2005, p. 550).

Large—scale research on current Internet and technological developments is needed to effectively respond to the fast—moving, high—demand structure of the public sector. La Porte et al. (2002) stated that important attributes of governance may be captured by tracking and evaluating the use of networked information systems in public organizations, both internally, in terms of bureaucratic structure and functioning, and externally, in terms of service delivery and citizen contact. Innovative technologies such as social media have provided the means to not only gain information, but also share the experiences and needs of diverse audiences. The issue explored was whether the use of

social media within the public sector had an impact by increasing accessibility, improving public trust, initiating public engagement, and building a positive reputation. There has been little scholarly examination of the impact of social media on public sector accessibility. This study examined the perspectives of clients and employees within a large county government organization to determine whether the use of social media platforms was beneficial in addressing administrative and informational disconnects. The investigation of the impact of social media on public sector accessibility addressed a gap in current research literature on modern approaches to enhancing public awareness, understanding, and engagement and improving trust and reputation for government organizations.

Nature of the Study

This study used the qualitative research paradigm—in particular, the case study research approach. Prior literature and research that presented views in support and critique of the indicated theories were reviewed. In addition, literature and research related to platforms of social media, social media's benefits and drawbacks, its usage, and the impact of its usage by large groups were analyzed. Based on the nature of this study, it was determined that the case study approach would be the most appropriate for this investigation. The case study approach was based on theoretical arguments that developed the framework of this study.

In the development of this study, particular attention was given to potential design and/or methodological weaknesses. Interviewing was used as a data collection tool, and participants were selected based on who would provide the most comprehensive and honest responses based on their knowledge and experiences. Interview questions were

developed that generated data most beneficial to the investigation of the research questions. Potential biases were alleviated by selecting participants of various backgrounds and the types of goods and services rendered from the research site organizations within the public sector. From the components of the approach discussed, a comprehensive investigation of the topic was conducted to satisfy the following research questions.

Research Question

Does the adoption of social media platforms result in increased accessibility of goods and services within the public sector?

Subquestions

1. What is considered a point of sustainability for social media usage in public sector organizations?

2. Does the use of social media provide better comprehension of goods, services, and programs offered to clients?

3. Does the increase in the usage of social media result in improved engagement between the public sector and the community?

Purpose of the Study

The main goal of this research was to discover how the use social media within public sector organizations could make an impact on the availability of goods and services offered to the public, the initiation of community engagement, and the enhancement of public trust to build a positive reputation. The purpose of this exploratory research was to examine the impact of social media on accessibility of public sector organizations. This study investigated the specific research problem area of lack of

accessibility, awareness, and understanding of goods and services by citizens who use

public sector organizations. This issue has led to diminishing rapport within the public

sector.

> Administrative and political environments have become far more complex than in
>
> the past, and existing structures and practices are failing to provide adequate
>
> services to communities and nations and depriving citizens of adequate levels of
>
> engagement in public affairs and government. (La Porte et al., 2002, p. 412)

In addition, this study was developed to increase understanding of (a) themes that

indicate that social media are effective for public sector organizations to enhance

accessibility; (b) significant differences in gaining accessibility, awareness, and

engagement within public sector organizations as a result of the use of social media; and

(c) social media platforms that can be used to connect public sector organizations to

community stakeholders. There is a direct link between the public having knowledge and

understanding of goods and services offered within the public sector and the public

having trust and confidence in an organization. This study was unique because it

addressed an under researched area: public sector accessibility, awareness, and

understanding, which are leading factors in building trust and confidence in an

organization.

Heitzman and Marson (2005) stated that "citizens' trust and confidence in public

institutions is one of the liveliest subjects of current debate among academics and

practitioners in the fields of government, politics, and public administration" (p. 549).

Public sector organizations must also promote a positive reputation in order to initiate

community outreach and engagement. "Citizens' trust and confidence are, in many ways,

the bottom line for the public sector or a reasonable proxy for it" (Heitzman & Marson, 2005, p. 552). The intent of this research was to make an original contribution in explaining how innovative approaches such as the use of social media can effectively link goods and services that are provided by public sector organizations.

Theoretical Foundation

It is important to understand how specific ideas and theories relate to social media and their impact on public sector accessibility. The viability of a public sector organization is dependent on the delivery of its mission, which more than likely involves providing particular goods and/or services to the public. In most cases, these goods and services are in critical demand by the public and fulfill a need that contributes to an individual's or family's sustainability. It is vital that clients of public sector organizations have the ability to have a cost—effective method to not only find out how to access the goods and services they need, but also the ability understand organizations' qualifications, benefits, and drawbacks. Additionally, it is important that public sector organizations have the ability to engage with the public to determine best practices of service and to handle client questions, concerns, or complaints.

For public sector organizations, developing a system with the capacity to share information, send and receive messages, and interact with various audiences can be difficult. The innovation of social media has created a phenomenon in the business world (public and private sectors) due to its ability to expand accessibility of its products and services to large audiences. There are theoretical ideas that prompted the development of questions for researching the impact of social media on public sector accessibility. To conduct this study, it was important to understand how this new technology can be

adopted by the public, the point at which it reaches sustainability, and gratifications acquired from adopting the new technology.

Due to the multifaceted and ever—changing technology associated with social media, there is no particular perspective that encompasses the concept and impact of social media on public sector accessibility. It can be viewed from different theoretical lenses. This research study was grounded in the theoretical framework of diffusion of innovations (DoI) theory, critical mass theory, and uses and gratification theory. Elements of the frameworks are discussed below.

The basic tenet of DoI theory, according to Rogers (2003), is based on the process in which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system. Everett Rogers, who conducted decades of research regarding diffusion, developed this framework in his book entitled *Diffusion of Innovations*, originally published in 1962. Although DoI theory was formulated many years ago, before the emergence of social media, it provided a framework for this study in explaining the rationale and frequency of the adoption of new ideas and technology by various cultures. Social media are 21st—century phenomena that have been adopted worldwide across all generations. DoI theory was used to guide this research as it examined the impact of the adoption of social media platforms in the public sector. Client perspectives, as well as the roles and perspectives of employees within public sector organizations and the tenets of social media, served as variables in this study.

Critical mass theory emphasizes that if one person or group tunes into a new phenomenon, that new phenomenon will be acquired by everyone at some point. Rogers (2003) credited the creation of this theory in his writings to fellow theorists Thomas

Schelling (1971) and Mark Granovetter (1978), who both discussed the theory extensively in their literature. Oliver, Marwell, and Teixeira (1985) adopted critical mass theory in a more collective role by indicating that the actions of the theory would continue to achieve a common good for the public. Critical mass theory provided a framework in explaining that users of phenomena such as social media can influence each other by the frequency of their usage and the technology's interactive capabilities. Once the use of social media is adopted by a person or group, it is likely that the phenomenon will be acquired by others. Critical mass theory was used to guide this research as it examined the benefit, utility, and value of social media for clients within this case study.

In this technologically advanced era, people continuously look for the most expeditious, efficient, and effective methods to access and deliver information, and to become informed. Social media platforms have the capabilities to address those needs interactively. Uses and gratifications theory provided another critical framework in explaining why people actively seek out specific media outlets and content for gratification purposes. The history of this theory can be referenced back to the early 1940s, and it evolved from a number of communication theories from various theorists. Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch (1974) developed a structured model of the theory to understand how and why people use media for personal satisfaction. The multiple varieties and platforms of social media provide users the opportunity to not only select their preferred source, but also use and gain gratification and benefit. Uses and gratifications theory was applied to guide the research and examine how clients select social media platforms that are beneficial to their needs, enhance their accessibility, and

understand goods, services, and programs provided by a large county government organization in this case study.

A synthesis of DoI theory, critical mass theory, and uses and gratifications theory was beneficial in understanding the impact of social media on public sector accessibility. These theories were particularly valuable in collecting data that are relevant to client perspectives on their use and frequency of usage of social media platforms. The research questions for this study were developed as a result of analyzing these theories. The flexible nature of the theoretical framework guided the qualitative research design**.** Client interviews, observations, and social networking data were the data collection instruments. The cited information served as a basis for the need to implement social media platforms within public sector organizations and demonstrated the impact of social media on accessibility for the public.

Operational Definitions

Several terms found in the literature are used throughout the study to provide a greater understanding of the central topic and its importance for analysis. It should be noted that the term *social media* is actually the plural version of the word *social medium*. As indicated, various terminologies have been derived from the term *social media*. *Social media* and *social networking* are synonymous terms and are used interchangeably throughout the study.

Application programming interface (API): Refers to the ability for users to obtain a data feed directly into their own sites, providing continually updated, streaming data (e.g., text, images, video) for display.

Application (App): Refers to a feature that performs a specific function on a computer or handheld device.

Blog: Refers to an editorless, chronologically ordered journal of commentary and descriptions of events, written in a conversational tone, sometimes accompanied by other material such as graphics or video, that is frequently updated with permanent links to other sources and contains entries inviting comments.

Blogosphere: Refers to the existence of blogs together as a connected community or social networking community where users can publish their opinions.

Chat: Refers to an interaction on a website with users adding text items in sequence into the same space at almost the same time.

Folksonomy: Refers to a system of classification, sometimes visualized as word clouds, derived from the method and practice of collaboratively creating and managing user—defined labels or tags to annotate and categorize content.

Image and video sharing site: Refers to a user—generated website that allows users to upload pictures or videos and view and comment on those of others.

Message board: Refers to a discussion area on a website where users can discuss issues with asynchronous posts.

Metadata: Refers to structured information that describes and allows users to find, manage, control, and understand information.

Microblogging: Refers to web service that allows users to write *tweets* (definition included below) and publish them to be viewed and commented upon by their network.

Mobile text messaging: Refers to short messages of text exchanged between mobile devices.

Mobile web: Refers to a mobile device that incorporates a web browser to access the Internet.

Podcast: Refers to an audio or video "show" made available on the Internet, usually through a subscription, for downloading to personal computers or mobile devices.

Really Simple Syndication feed: Refers to a file that contains regularly updated information such as news headlines or blog posts and can be subscribed to using aggregators or newsreaders.

Social bookmarking: Refers to a method enabling users to store, organize, search, and manage bookmarks of websites.

Social networking: Refers to the process of engaging in online communities, typically through "groups" and "friends lists," that allows users to connect and interact with like—minded parties.

Tweet: Refers to a single message or status update of up to 140 characters that can be read by users following individuals on Twitter, a microblogging service, or to the act of posting it in a real—time feed.

Virtual world: Refers to a computer—based simulated game environment in which users interact with one another via avatars or lifelike virtual representations of themselves, typically in the form of two— or three—dimensional cartoonish representations of humans.

Wiki: Refers to collaborative publishing technology, often taken to mean a collection of webpages that allows users to work on and modify content online with appropriate version control.

Assumptions

There were three basic assumptions underlying this study that were not addressed while during analysis. The first assumption was that the research site had the capabilities to accept the implementation of technologically advanced collateral such as social media. Second, it was assumed that the research site did not have a comprehensive strategic plan for the implementation and use of social media by its clients and employees. The final assumption was that this study of the impact of social media on public sector accessibility was relevant and applicable to local, state, and federal organizations throughout the country.

Limitations

Limitations that developed from the execution of this study included the use of qualitative data that represent a limited sample size of clients and employees from the research site and participants' access to the Internet. Thousands of individuals and families use the departments within the Fulton County Sheriff's Office, and the cumulative employee base of the organization numbers more than 500. It was impossible to sample all of the clients of the selected public sector organization due to constraints of time and resources.

It was assumed that some of the research participants would have limited access to the Internet and accessibility of social media due to economic status. Selected participants who experienced these circumstances agreed to find access to the social media platforms within the research site at least twice per week during the period of data collection to effectively provide responses to the interview questions presented. Based on the limited availability of technology to some research participants, their interview

responses might reflect their periodic experiences with the selected social media platforms.

Scope and Delimitations

This case study focused on the impact of social media on public sector accessibility. The sample for this study was limited to (a) clients who received goods and/or services or participated in programs offered by the selected public sector organization, (b) clients who were in need of goods and/or services offered by the selected public sector organization, (c) clients who wished to receive more information about the goods and/or services offered by the selected public sector organization, and (d) employees of the selected public sector organization who interacted with clients on a regular basis in providing services or delivering information.

Data collection methods such as interviews, observations, and gathering social networking data were used to analyze how social media affect the accessibility, engagement, and understanding of goods and services offered by public sector organizations. These research tenets were chosen primarily because of the richness of the data and the data's link to client and employee attitudes, motivations, and connections to the mission of the organization. The scope of the study did entail extended research involving public sector organizations other than the site at which data collection and analysis occurred.

This study was restricted to the use of social media platforms by the sample population using electronic (computers) and mobile (smartphones, iPads) devices, without concern with the technological details of the device. This prevented any issues or troubleshooting concerns that could occur during the implementation and use of social

media platforms. In addition, this study was limited to preselected social media platforms that were available at the research site. This provided a more organized process in lieu of collecting data from the numerous social media platforms that were available. The collected data were analyzed in accordance with the social media platforms that already existed or were installed for use by the selected public sector organization.

Significance of the Study

In recent years, there has been a greater demand for high and continually improving standards of services, transparency, and accountability by public sector organizations. The significance of this study resided in the effort to determine the impact of the central phenomena (social media) on public sector accessibility. Researching and analyzing the impact of social media on public sector accessibility is imperative for supporting professional practices within organizations, increasing engagement among stakeholders, streamlining administrative processes, and building a positive reputation for local, state, and federal government agencies. Currently, literature focuses on how social media have been beneficial to accessibility, mainly within the private sector, and how external audiences have been able to gain information to fulfill their needs. There is a gap in the current literature on how social media can be impactful in relation to public sector accessibility, awareness of goods and services, and communication and engagement with community stakeholders. Interactivity and public feedback can benefit government organizations by helping them to shape and adjust the delivery of their mission to better serve the masses.

The need to explore technologically advanced concepts that will allow the opportunity for enhanced public sector accessibility is extremely beneficial to the

profession of public policy and administration. Through the findings of this study, it is intended that government agencies will develop strategic social media and communications plans with protocols that can be implemented and used to guide matters such as crisis management, organizational change, or major initiatives. The ultimate goal is to develop a system of social change that will keep clients, employees, and community stakeholders engaged and increase performance and integrity throughout the public sector.

In the short term, this study may serve as a model for local, state, and federal government organizations that seek to enhance accessibility of information, interaction, and engagement with clients and the community. Over the long term, this study may serve all public sector organizations by helping them to enhance their reputation and integrity by providing information and promoting awareness and engagement regarding their goods and services in a balanced and interactive format. Literature validating and confirming the impact of social media on public sector accessibility is demonstrated in the following chapter. An analysis is provided as to how DoI theory, critical mass theory, and uses and gratifications theory support the need to integrate social media platforms within public sector organizations and demonstrate their impact on public accessibility.

Above all, this study has wide implications for social change and government policymakers. The results of the research may be significant for the public sector as well as communities that rely on goods and services from public organizations. The findings of this study could trigger increased accessibility for clients and community stakeholders, public engagement, accountability, transparency, and political awareness among the

citizenry. These factors are necessary for public sector organizations to build a positive reputation.

This study could also provide a precedent on policies that will improve accessibility of goods and services that are needed to enhance a resident's livelihood or maintain their stability. It is intended that this study result in the identification of an economical format in which critical information or documents from government organizations can be obtained and comprehended by the public. Further, this study is intended to make an impact through the enhancement of civic engagement and customer service, as well as the development of much—needed trust between communities and the public sector.

In the final analysis, if phenomena such as social media become successful in the enhancement of public sector accessibility, they may be expected to have a ripple effect throughout various populations. This study will be documented as having identified a solution to the intractable problem of public sector accessibility. This solution is of great importance to government organizations as they strive to maintain integrity, transparency, and a positive reputation.

Summary

This qualitative case study provides a comprehensive analysis of the impact of social media on public sector accessibility. The facts that have been presented on this topic indicate that there is a need for additional research. Limited accessibility and understanding of goods and services within the public sector have been explained, along with factors contributing to the problem that this study investigated. The impact of social media was analyzed in a large county government organization. The research cited

provided extensive insight into the level of operations that can be conducted within the public sector, benefits to the public, and the necessity of initiating public awareness and engagement.

Based on the analysis of data collected in this study, conclusions were developed concerning the most effective and beneficial practices to increase public accessibility, awareness, and understanding of goods and services offered by government organizations. It is my intent that the conclusions drawn from this study prompt continued research on social media within the public sector. In Chapter 2, I expound on the study's theoretical framework as well as relevant background and history to provide a basis and context for the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The past two decades have marked an era of unprecedented technological advancements led by the Internet. The growing influence of the Internet has altered the landscape of ways that members of society access information and interact with each other. The evolution of technology associated with the Internet has resulted in interactive digital innovations known as *social media* (social networking). Traditionally, the public sector has been perceived as less innovative than the private sector in regard to integrating the use of this phenomenon.

Literature has indicated that the implementation of social media in the public sector can provide integral benefits. In addition, these benefits have been primary covenants for public sector organizations to earn confidence and initiate citizen engagement.

> Online social networking can make the government and government services more accessible to citizens from one centralized place, helping to inform citizens by documenting valuable public information online, and improving public access and awareness to a government of information, making for an informed citizenship. (O'Murchu et al., 2004, p. 3)

To conduct this study, it was important to understand how these innovations can be adopted by the public, the point at which they reach sustainability, and the gratifications of their adoption. This study of the impact of social media on public sector accessibility explored the problem of lack of accessibility and understanding of programs and services within government organizations. The purpose of this chapter was to review

relevant literature pertaining to the adoption of social media and its impact on public sector accessibility. For a comprehensive explanation, three theoretical viewpoints were explored. This chapter begins with an in—depth discussion of the evolution of innovation adoption known as *diffusion*, followed by an exploration of traditional ideologies of innovation adoption. Next, the literature review expounded upon several factors of diffusion, including models of diffusion, influences of diffusion, diffusion of online social networks, and diffusion in the public sector.

Following this section, the second theoretical foundation for this study is developed on the sustainability of innovations known as *critical mass*. Topics addressed within this section include factors, perceptions, influences of critical mass, models of critical mass, critical mass of online social networks, and achieving critical mass within the public sector. The chapter concludes with an exploration of the third theoretical basis of the study, which relates to how and why the use of an innovation can satisfy the needs of the public. This is known as *uses and gratifications*. This section provides a comprehensive discussion of models of uses and gratifications as well as the uses and gratifications of an innovation such as social media.

In this chapter, literature from several disciplines, including public policy and administration, communications, management, information technology, and political science, is explored. In searching for relevant literature for this research, I included books, peer—reviewed journal articles, and key relevant websites. The review encompassed information obtained from multiple sources, including current journal articles, books, websites, and published technical papers. The following databases were used: ProQuest, Political Science Complete, Business Source Premier, SAGE Political

Science Collection, Academic Search Complete, PsycINFO, SocINDEX, Communication

and Mass Media Complete, Academic Research Premier, ScienceDirect, and Google

Scholar. Search terms used to find relevant articles and data on the topic included:

innovation adoption, *innovation sustainability*, *innovation satisfaction*, *E—government*,

Government 2.0, *social media*, *social networking*, *interactivity*, *government*, *strategic and*

organizational communications strategies, and *community engagement with public*

organizations.

Evolution of Innovation Adoption

Traditional Ideologies of Innovation Adoption

An *innovation* is "a social entity's implementation and performance of a new,

specific form or repertoire of social action that is implemented deliberately by the entity

in the context of the objectives and functionalities of the entity's activities" (Koch &

Hauknes, 2005, p. 9). This is accomplished through different, or more effective,

processes, technologies, or ideas that are readily available to markets, governments, and

societies.

An innovation in the public sector may indeed include the production of material

"things" or products, but more often than not, public innovation entails the

application of already existing "things," or the delivery of services, accompanied

by organizational change and policy development. (Kock & Hauknes, 2005, p. 9)

According to Rogers (2003), "an innovation is an idea, practice, or object that is

perceived as new by an individual or other unit of adoption" (p. 12). The adoption of new

innovations, particularly in the public sector, can account for some of the most dramatic

improvements in the lives of individuals and groups in the developed world. The social

networking technologies and platforms that society recognizes today as social media are

considered innovations because of their ability to provide accessibility, usability, and

immediacy of various forms of communication and information to the masses. Literature

associated with the adoption of innovations by individuals and groups has assisted in

developing a framework to study the impact of social media on public sector

accessibility.

Once the benefits of an innovation are discovered and realized within a

community, word is typically spread to others, who then integrate the innovation into

their lives. This is known as *diffusion*. Rogers (2003) explained that the diffusion of an

innovation is communicated through certain channels over a period of time among the

members of a social system. Murray (2009) indicated that the end results of diffusion are

adoption, implementation, and institutionalization.

> An individual or organization (a) adopts an innovation upon the decision to
>
> acquire the innovation, (b) implements the innovation by putting it into practice
>
> and testing it, and (c) institutionalizes an innovation by supporting it fully and
>
> incorporating it into typical practice routines. (Dusenbury & Hansen, 2004, p. 56)

Murray (2009) stated that potential adopters are individuals and/or organizations that are

part of the social system in which an innovation is being diffused.

Rogers (2003) stated that the study of diffusion can be dated back to the 19th

century with the investigations of French sociologist Gabriel Tarde (1904). However,

Kinnunen (1996) indicated that diffusion has been of interest to curious minds since long

before the time of Tarde, noting that Herodotus mentioned the phenomenon as early as

500 years ago. "The founding of the New World also led to speculation about whether the

American culture had developed independently or whether it had been influenced by the Old World" (Kinnunen, 1996, p. 432). Kinnunen (1996) asserted that, along with anthropologists, Tarde is considered to be among the founding fathers of diffusion research. Kinnunen added that Tarde accepted many of the ideas of European anthropologists, who were responsible for the introduction of the concept of diffusion to the social sciences.

For Tarde (1903), diffusion, particularly of new innovations, was one of the basic explanations of social change. Tarde believed that the similar laws that European anthropologists applied to natural sciences would also be applicable to sociology. Tarde stated in his book *The Laws of Imitation* that the purpose of his scholarly observations was to learn why given one hundred different innovations conceived at the same time—innovations in the form of words, in mythological ideas, in industrial processes, etc.—ten will spread abroad while ninety will be forgotten.

Tarde (1903) studied and introduced a system based on psychology, which was designed to explain all aspects of social behavior from the development of cultures to the social currents and acts of an individual. Tarde's system, which was referred to as "imitation", drew criticism from his peers and diminished his credibility. Katz (2006) indicated that an explanation for the decline in Tarde's popularity points a finger at his unfortunate use of the concept of "imitation". "It sounds altogether too mechanistic and un—thinking; although it may well be that he had a better word, 'influence', in mind" (Katz, 2006, p. 264). Tarde attempted to justify his use of the term *imitation* by stating that "an invention bears the same relation to imitation as a mountain to a river" (Tarde, 1903, p. 3).

Katz (1999) stated that "Tarde chose 'imitation' because he really believed that interconnected individuals (and groups and nations) copied each other (albeit not random others) in a semi—conscious way, and that 'invention' and 'imitation' were the keys to cultural change" (p. 148). Kinnunen (1996) interpreted a similar rationale in stating that inventions diffuse thorough the process of imitation, in which the social aspect of Tarde's system was entirely founded. "Tarde observed that inventions usually diffuse from their geometrical center as waves from the point where an object hits water; diffusion has an aerial center, usually a resourceful one, from which the spreading starts" (Kinnunen, 1996, p. 433).

Based on his focus on the masses, Tarde attempted to differentiate *inventions* and *innovations*. Tarde (1903) stated that *inventions* are mostly new means to old ends, which arise from the interaction of elites in societies that provide adequate leisure and a system that insulates leadership against direct populist pressure. "It is from such places that innovations are launched: from capital cities, from cities with dense populations, from institutional elites (scientists, clergy) who can interact intensively from the nobility or from the democratic leadership that replace them" (Tarde, 1903, p. 127). Tarde added that from these sources, innovations spread in concentric circles, flowing smoothly until they encounter hostile barriers, whether environmental or cultural, including the onset of a competing invention. The flow proceeds in stages, a slow advance in the beginning, followed by rapid and uniformly accelerated progress, followed again by progress that continues to slacken until it finally stops.

Tarde (1903) realized the possibility of hostile barriers that could affect or disturb the diffusion process. He inquired on the trend that of out of 100 innovations, only 10

will spread while the other 90 will be forgotten. Kinnunen (1996) stated that this led

Tarde to think of logical laws, and extra—logical influences of imitation. Tarde added

that logical laws of imitation bear the thought that innovations that are logically parallel

to the rational aspects in a given culture spread more readily than those that are not. In

other words, logical laws have to involve compatibility. "Logical laws operate whenever

an individual prefers a given innovation to others because he thinks it is more in accord

with the aims or principles that have already found a place" (Tarde, 1903, p. 141). Katz

(1999) stated that this proposition is central to theorizing the process of diffusion.

There are three extra—logical influences of imitation that Tarde (1903)

considered: (a) from inner to outer man, (b) from superior to inferior, and (c) the

transition from custom to fashion.

The first extra—logical influence means that imitation begins within an

individual: effects proceed cognition which proceeds action, the second extra—

logical influence means that innovations created by social superiors are more

likely to be adopted than the ones created by inferiors, and the third extra—logical

influence means that distance has an effect: the most superior among the least

distant is the one imitated. (Kinnunen, 1996, p. 434)

Katz (1999) added that, in Tarde's later work, he moved from an interest in

crowds to an interest in publics, and he made it abundantly clear that conversation, not

one—sided copying, was the key to imitation. He also saw conversation as a major

element in the formation of uniformities of opinion and behavior.

Despite Tarde's extensive research on and explanation of diffusion, there were

opposing views that challenged several of his major points. Katz (1999) elaborated on the

views of Harvard sociologist Pitirim Sorokin, who wrote a chapter on diffusion in his

book *Social and Cultural Dynamics* (1941). Katz stated that Sorokin took issue with

Tarde on several major points, the most interesting of which is that diffusion is

reciprocal—the proposition that diffusion flow is two—way. "What seems like one—way

export from capital cities to the hinterland or from high to low status is usually a more

balanced relationship where one side diffuses raw material, while the other side produces

'finished' products and re—diffuses them" (Katz, 1999, p. 150). Katz added that "the

influence of the 'finished' is more powerful than the 'raw' because manufactured items

travel together as an interconnected 'system' rather than as 'congeries' or a single trait;

here begins Sorokin's typology of diffusing items" (p. 150).

Katz (1999) stated that Sorokin also took issue with Tarde's observation that

diffusion travels in concentric circles around the point of invention. Katz elaborated that

Sorokin asserted that this is only true when the means of communication and

transportation are also concentric, which is rare. "Diffusion follows the routes of the

traveling salesmen, missionaries, scholars, travelers, adventurers, journalists, and of men

more than women because men take charge of 'foreign relations'" (Sorokin, 1941, p.

580). According to Katz, Sorokin contradicted Tarde by indicating that diffusion is not

limited to voluntary imitation. "Some values are imposed; some others penetrate before a

population even has an idea of these values; one cannot claim that in penetration of the

values, the inner desire to have them precedes the outer acceptance of them" (Sorokin,

1941, p. 634).

Katz (1999) indicated that Sorokin was also skeptical about the universality of the

cumulative normal curve of diffusion. According to Katz, Sorokin stated that at best,

there are several different S—curves, again agreeing more than disagreeing with Tarde. Although Sorokin's opposing views are valid, the development of Tarde's theory is more recognized.

> Sorokin's work on diffusion, although more recent, is as little remembered as Tarde's, as far as I can judge. As theory, it is sophisticated as is Tarde's, and as learning it is prodigious, like Tarde's. Both men propose to do what still needs doing: to find ways of theorizing across disciplines and across discrete case studies. (Katz, 1999, p. 151)

Katz concluded by stating that the multidisciplinary writings of Tarde and Sorokin provided useful benchmarks in any attempt at theorizing diffusion.

Although many of the views of Tarde and Sorokin differ, they both described a level of connectivity throughout the public. What remains to be considered are those within a social group who are not attached to a system. Rogers (2003) discussed another ancestor of the discipline of sociology, who lived at about the same time as Tarde, Georg Simmel (1908). Among his interests was the concept of the "The Stranger". Rogers indicated that Simmel defined "The Stranger" as an individual who is a member of a system but who is not strongly attached to the system. Simmel's essay "The Stranger" was originally written as an excursus to a chapter dealing with the sociology of space in his book *Soziologie* (1908).

In a society, there must be a stranger. If everyone is known, then there is no person who is able to bring something new to everybody. "The Stranger" bears a certain objectivity that makes him or her valuable to the individual and society. "'The Stranger' is not radically committed to the unique ingredients and peculiar tendencies of the group,

and therefore approaches them with the specific attitude of objectivity" (Simmel, 1908, p. 404). Simmel (1908) added that objectivity does not simply involve passivity and detachment; it is a particular structure composed of distance and nearness, indifference and involvement. "Objectivity may also be defined as freedom: the objective individual is bound by no commitments which could prejudice his perception, understanding, and evaluation of the given" (Simmel, 1908, p. 405).

Simmel (1908) observed that strangers often carry out special tasks that the other members of the group are either incapable of doing or unwilling to carry out. For example, especially in premodern societies, most strangers made a living from trade, which was often viewed as an unpleasant activity by "native" members of those societies. "In some societies, they were also employed as arbitrators and judges, because they were expected to treat rival factions in society with an impartial attitude" (Simmel, 1908, p. 405). "The Stranger" holds a certain objectivity that allows him or her to be unbiased and decide freely without fear. A person is simply able to see, think, and decide without being influenced by the opinion of others. Simmel briefly touched on the consequences of occupying such a unique position for "The Stranger", as well as the potential effects of the presence of "The Stranger" on other group members.

> In uprisings of all sorts, the party attacked has claimed, from the beginning of things, that provocation has come from the outside, through emissaries and instigators. Insofar as this is true, it is an exaggeration to the specific role of "The Stranger": He is freer, practically and theoretically; he surveys conditions with less prejudice; his criteria for them are more general and more objective ideals; he

is not tied down in his action by habit, piety, and precedent. (Simmel, 1908, p. 405)

In this excursus, Simmel (1908) introduced "The Stranger" as a unique sociological category. He differentiated "The Stranger" both from "The Outsider", who has no specific relation to a group, and from "The Wanderer", who comes today and leaves tomorrow. " 'The Stranger', according to Simmel (1908), comes today and stays tomorrow; 'The Stranger' is a member of the group in which he lives and participates and yet remains distant from other 'native' members of the group" (p.402). In comparison to other forms of social distance and difference (such as class, gender, and even ethnicity), Simmel (1908) indicated that the distance of "The Stranger" is perceived as extraneous to the group. Therefore, the perception was that the "The Stranger" was perceived as being in the group but not of the group. "'The Stranger' is close to us, insofar as we feel between him and ourselves common features of a national, social, occupational, or generally human nature; he is far from us, insofar as these common features extend beyond him or us, and connect us only because they connect a great many people" (Simmel, 1908, p. 406).

Rogers (2003) stated that Simmel's concept of "The Stranger" derived such concepts as social distance, heterophily, cosmopoliteness, and the notion that social science research should attempt to be objective. "Georg Simmel also pointed social scientists in the direction of studying communication networks, and increasingly useful conceptual tools in understanding how innovations diffuse in a system" (Rogers, 2003, p. 42). Simmel (1908) discussed in his literature that groups with which the individual is affiliated constitute a system of coordinates, as it were, such that each new group with

which he or she becomes affiliated circumscribes him or her more exactly and less ambiguously. Rogers (2003) concluded that, although the innovator is a type of stranger, he or she can adopt a new idea and set the tone within the system.

Rogers's (2003) literature indicated that early English and German anthropologists can be credited with founding diffusion research following Tarde. They were not influenced by Tarde's writings. These anthropologists were known as British and German—Austrian diffusionists. Rogers (2003) stated that "diffusionism was the point of view in anthropology that explained social change in a given society as a result of the introduction of innovations spread from one original source, which argued against the existence of parallel invention" (p. 43). Today, it is known that such parallel invention of new ideas has frequently occurred. Rogers (2003) added that the diffusionism viewpoint does not hold significant value during the modern era due to social change which could be explained by diffusion alone. "The dominant viewpoint now is that social change is caused by both invention and diffusion, which usually occur sequentially" (Rogers, 2003, p. 43). Rogers added that the main contribution of the European diffusionists was in calling the importance of diffusion to the attention of other social scientists; these European diffusionists were some of the first scholars to use the term *diffusion*. "Indirectly, this anthropological interest in the diffusion of innovations was to influence the Ryan and Gross investigation of hybrid seed corn in Iowa" (Rogers, 2003, p. 43).

Kinnunen (1996) stated that after Tarde's death in 1904, one could talk of a scientific discontinuity in the field of sociological diffusion research for nearly forty years. This could have been because the research of most sociologists' during that era

focused on the views of other authorities in that field or because of the lack of availability

of methodological tools to continue diffusion research. However, Kinnunen (1996) noted

that after the devastating World War I, social sciences developed faster in the United

States than in Europe, and Tarde's ideas concerning diffusion were eventually noted by

American rural sociologists. Kinnunen (1996) indicated that Bryce Ryan and Neal C.

Gross, rural sociologists at Iowa State University, were especially influential in the

diffusion of innovations paradigm based on their study of the spread of hybrid seed corn.

Rogers (2003) stated that Ryan and Gross's 1943 study of the diffusion of hybrid

seed corn in Iowa is the most influential diffusion study of all time, despite the 5,200 plus

diffusion investigations conducted prior to this pioneering study. Rogers (2003) added

that hybrid corn became one of the most important new agricultural technologies after it

was released to Iowa farmers in the late 1920s. The literature indicated that hybrid seed

corn had many advantages compared to traditional seeds, such as the hybrid seed's vigor

and resistance to drought and disease. Ryan and Gross (1943) added that between 1933

and 1939, acreage in hybrid cord increased from 40,000 to 24 million acres (about one—

fourth of the nation's corn acreage). Ryan and Gross (1943) stated that the very rapidity

of its diffusion made this trait attractive for study.

Ryan and Gross (1943) used a qualitative research design for their study that

included interviewing hundreds of farmers in the area and analyzing the data of the

respondents in order to determine the level of diffusion. According to Lowery and

DeFleur (1995), Ryan and Gross sought to explain how the hybrid seed corn came to

attention and which of two channels (i.e., mass communication and interpersonal

communication with peers) led farmers to adopt the new innovation. "Mass

communication functioned as the source of initial information, while interpersonal

networks functioned as the influence over the farmers' decisions to adopt" (Lowery &

DeFleur, 1995, p. 125). Lowery and DeFleur added that one of the most important

findings in this study was that the adoption of innovation depends on some combination

of well—established interpersonal ties and habitual exposure to mass communication.

Ryan and Gross (1943) stated that the preliminary stages of diffusion were somewhat

slower in terms of adoption than in knowledge. Once the wave of adoption swelled,

hybrid seed corn vastly expanded in the space of four years (1936—1939). Ryan and

Gross (1943) added that almost all had heard of the new trait before more than a handful

were planting it.

Ryan and Gross (1943) also found that the rate of adoption of hybrid seed corn

followed an S—shaped curve and that there were four different types of adopters. Rogers

(2003) stated that the hybrid corn investigation includes each of the four main elements

of diffusion: (a) innovation, (b) communication channels, (c) time, and (d) the social

system. He added that the Ryan and Gross's *Iowa Seed Corn Study* (1943) established the

customary research methodology used by most diffusion investigators: retrospective

interviews in which adopters of an innovation are asked when they adopted, where or

from whom they obtained information about their innovation, and the consequences of

adoption. "Ryan and Gross popularized the term *diffusion*, which had previously been

used by anthropologists, although they did use the concept of *innovation*" (Rogers, 2003,

p. 33). According to Rogers (2003), Ryan and Gross also made a contribution by

identifying the five major stages in the adoption process: awareness, interest, evaluation,

trial, and adoption. This led to thousands of published research papers about diffusion.

Investigation into these stages of adoption resulted in continued research and studies about diffusion.

Theorizing Diffusion: Everett Rogers

Research on diffusion of innovations is vast, covers multiple disciplines, and analyzes the distinctive approaches of various scholars. "The diffusion of innovations has been studied from a number of different perspectives: historical, sociological, economic (including business strategy and marketing), and network theoretical" (Hall, 2003, p. 6). Hall (2003) added that the choice of approach is often dictated by the use to which the results will be put, but there is no doubt that insights from one perspective can inform the research in another discipline. Katz (1999) stated that "the multidisciplinary writings of scholars such as Tarde (1903) and Sorokin (1941) provided useful benchmarks in any attempt at theorizing diffusion" (p. 153). However, Everett Rogers's work on tracing the history of diffusion research has made him a world—renowned academic figure on the subject. His research became widely accepted in a variety of communications, social science, and technology adoption studies. Rogers published the first edition of his book, *Diffusion of Innovations,* in 1962 as a result of his syntheses of hundreds diffusion studies.

In his book, Rogers (2003) formally produced the *diffusion of innovations theory* for the adoption of innovations among individuals and organizations. The book has evolved in its more than four decades of existence. Now in its fifth edition, *Diffusion of Innovations* (2003) includes: (a) changes in the contributions of various diffusion traditions since the expansion in such fields as communications and technology, (b) many studies of the diffusion of new communication technologies, like the Internet and cell

phones, (c) expanded understanding of diffusion networks through concepts such as the critical mass and individual thresholds, and (d) the use of field experiments (in addition to surveys) to test the effects of such diffusion interventions by using opinion leaders. Rogers (2003) explained that the research and development of DoI theory explains social change, one of the most fundamental of human processes.

Rogers (2003) defined diffusion as "the process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system" (p. 11). Within that definition, Rogers (2003) identified the four main elements that influence the spread of a new idea: (1) innovation, (2) communication channels, (3) time, and (4) the social system. Rogers (2003) provided an illustration of the diffusion process as indicated in Figure 1.
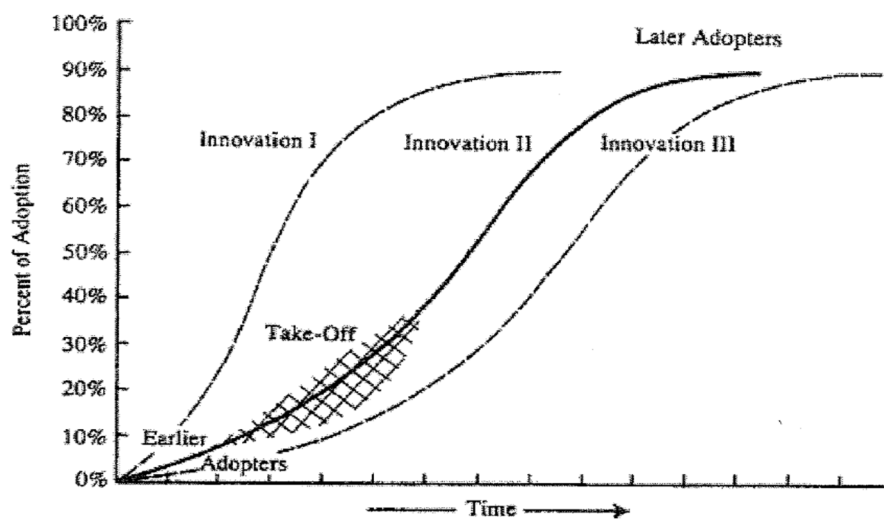
Figure 1. Rogers's model of the diffusion process. From *Diffusion of Innovations* (p. 11), by E. Rogers, 2003, New York, NY: Simon and Schuster.

Rogers (2003) provided definitions of the four main elements of the diffusion process:

1. Innovation: An idea, practice, or object that is perceived as new by an individual or other unit of adoption. Rogers (2003) stated that the perceived newness of the idea for the individual determines his or her reaction to it. If an idea seems new to the individual, it is an innovation. Innovations that are perceived by individuals as having greater relative advantage, compatibility, trialability, observability, and less complexity will be adopted more rapidly than other innovations. Past research indicates that these five qualities are the most important characteristics of innovations in explaining the rate of adoption. The first two attributes, relative advantage and compatibility, are particularly important in explaining an innovation's rate of adoption (p. 16).

2. Communications channels: The means by which messages get from one individual to another. The nature of the information exchange relationship between a pair of individuals determines the conditions under which a source will or will not transmit the innovation to the receiver and the effect of such a transfer (p. 16).

3. Time: Rogers (2003) stated that the time element in the diffusion process consists of the *innovation—decision process*:

   o The innovation—decision process is that in which an individual passes from first knowledge of an innovation through its adoption or rejection. Diffusion scholars have long recognized that an individual's decision about an innovation is not an instantaneous act; rather it is a process that occurs over time and consists of a series of different actions. (p. 20)

   Five Stages of the innovation—decision process:

- *Knowledge* occurs when an individual (or other decision—making unit) is exposed to an innovation's existence and gains an understanding of how it functions.

- *Persuasion* occurs when an individual (or other decision—making unit) forms a favorable or an unfavorable attitude towards the innovation.

- *Decision* takes place when an individual (or other decision—making unit) engages in activities that lead to a choice to adopt or reject the innovation.

- *Implementation* occurs when an individual (or other decision—making unit) puts a new idea into use.

- *Confirmation* takes place when an individual seeks reinforcement of an innovation—decision already made, but he or she may reverse this previous decision if exposed to conflicting messages about the innovation (Rogers, 2003, p. 170).

Rogers (2003) described the behavior that occurs at each of the five stages as indicated in Figure 2.

Communication Channels

Knowledge → Persuasion → Decision → Implementation → Confirmation

Characteristics of the Decision-Making Unit

Perceived Characteristics of the Innovation
1. Relative Advantage
2. Compatability
3. Complexity
4. Triability
5. Observability

Prior Conditions
1. Previous practice
2. Felt needs/problems
3. Innovativeness
4. Norms of the social System

1. Adoption — Cont. Adoption
Later Adoption

2. Rejection — Discontinuance
Cont. Rejection

Figure 2. Rogers's model of five stages in the innovation—decision process. From *Diffusion of Innovations* (p. 170), by E. Rogers, 2003, New York, NY: Simon and Schuster.

The notion of stages in an innovation—decision process was conceptualized by Ryan and Gross in the *Iowa Seed Corn Study* (1943), although their stages were not exactly the same as the five stages used by most diffusion scholars today. The innovativeness of an individual, or other unit of adoption, depends on the relative earliness/lateness with which an innovation is adopted compared to other members of the system. The innovation's rate of adoption in a system is usually measured as the number of members of the system who adopt the innovation in a given time period. (Rogers, 2003, p. 169)

4. Social System: A set of interrelated units that are engaged in joint problem solving to accomplish a common goal. The members or units of a social system may be individuals, informal groups, organizations, and/or sub—systems. The social system constitutes a boundary within which an innovation diffuses.

The amount of time that it takes for an individual or organization to realize a new innovation to its adoption or rejection varies based on a number of factors. This is formally known as the *innovation—decision period*. Rogers (2003) indicated that the innovation—decision period is the length of time that is required for an individual or organization to pass through the innovation—decision process. He added that the length of the innovation—decision period is usually measured from first knowledge to the decision to adopt or reject from the time of confirmation. This presented the question of how the time of confirmation be would be measured. Rogers (2003) stated that such measurement is often impractical or impossible because the confirmation stage may continue over an indefinite period. "The time elapsing between awareness—knowledge of an innovation and decision for an individual is measured in days, months, or years; the period is thus a gestation period during which a new idea ferments in an individual's mind" (Rogers, 2003, p. 213).

In the literature, Rogers (2003) also explained methods in which change agents could speed up the process in which innovations are adopted. He stated that one method of doing so is to communicate information about new ideas more rapidly or more adequately so that knowledge is created at an earlier date. Rogers (2003) also found that another method is to shorten the amount of time required for the innovation—decision after an individual is aware of a new idea. "At any given time, many potential adopters are aware of a new idea, but are not yet motivated to try it" (Rogers, 2003, p. 213). Technology, such as the Internet, which is the initiating factor of social media, can also accelerate the innovation—decision process. Rogers stated that the Internet allows people

to reach many other people in a one—to—many process, and diffusion via the Internet greatly speeds up an innovation's rate of adoption.

The rate in which an innovation is adopted varies due to several factors. The investigation of how innovations are perceived is important in determining its impact and rate of adoption. Rogers (2003) defined the term *rate of adoption* as the relative speed in which an innovation is adopted by members of a social system.

Rate of adoption is generally measured as the number of individuals who adopt a new idea in a specified period, such as a year, so the rate of adoption is a numerical indicator of the steepness of the adoption curve for an innovation (Rogers, 2003, p. 221).

Rogers (2003) explained that the perceived attributes of an innovation are one important explanation of the rate of adoption of an innovation. "Those perceived attributes of an innovation are: relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability" (Rogers, 2003, p. 223). In addition, the rate of adoption of an innovation is dependent on the more people involved in the innovation—decision. According to Rogers (2003), "the more persons involved in making an innovation—decision, the slower the rate of adoption" (p. 223).

The adoption of a new innovation typically does not occur by all within a group or social system at the same time. Rogers (2003) stated that they adopt in an "over time" sequence so that individuals can be classified into adopter categories based on when they first began using a new idea. He defined adopter categories as an efficient classification of members of a system on the basis of their innovativeness. "Innovativeness indicates overt behavioral change, the ultimate goal of most diffusion programs. Rather than just

cognitive or attitudinal change, innovativeness is the bottom line behavior in the diffusion process" (Rogers, 2003, p. 268). Continuing literature expounds on modeling levels of innovativeness into specific categories.

Modeling Diffusion

The literature revealed two primary factors of making the decision to adopt; benefits and costs. "The most important thing to observe in the decision to adopt a new invention or innovation is that, at any point in time, the choice being made is not a choice between adopting and not adopting, but a choice between adopting now or deferring the decision until later" (Hall, 2003, p. 12). Hall indicated that the benefits from adopting a new technology are flow benefits that are received throughout the life of the acquired innovation. "The costs, especially those of the non—pecuniary 'learning' type, are typically incurred at the time of adoption and cannot be recovered" (Hall, 2003, p. 12). Hall added that there may be an ongoing fee for using some types of new technology, but it is usually much less than the initial cost. She termed costs of this type as *sunk*. ", Ex ante, a potential adopter weighs the fixed costs of adoption against the benefits he or she expects, but ex post costs are irrelevant because a great part of them have been sunk and cannot be recovered" (Hall, 2003, p. 12).

Hall's (2003) literature argued that adoption is characterized by sunk costs which implies two stylized facts about the adoption of new technologies: (a) adoption is usually an absorbing state, in the sense that society rarely observes a new technology being abandoned in favor of an old one, (b) under uncertainty about the benefits of the new technology, there is an option value to waiting before sinking the costs of adoption, which may tend to delay adoption. Hall (2003) continued that an important exception to

the rule is that adoption is normally an absorbing state of the possibility of fads or fashions. A surge in adoption proceeded by a decline is typically in innovations of practice, such as a medical or legal practice, more so than a physical product. Hall (2003) stated that in an innovation of practice, the cost is incurred directly by the adopter, and in a physical product, the costs that are sunk are financial costs paid to others. She elaborated that relatively low sunk costs, combined with uncertain benefits, will mean that the decision to adopt is more easily reversible in the case of practices.

A model of diffusion is sequenced by the number of adopters of an innovation against time. Hall (2003) stated that it is a well—known fact that when the number of users of a new product or invention is plotted versus time, the resulting cure is typically an S—shaped or ogive distribution. "The not very surprising implication is that adoption proceeds slowly at first, accelerates as it spreads throughout the potential adopting population, and then slows down as the relevant population becomes saturated" (Hall, 2003, p. 13). This typically results in a cumulative type of S—shaped curve.

During the early days of diffusion research, there were numerous adopter categories. Rogers (2003) formulated a standard method for categorizing adopters based on the S—shaped curve of adoption. Rogers (2003) stated that the time element of the diffusion process allows us to classify adopter categories and draw diffusion curves. "The adoption of an innovation usually follows a normal, bell—shaped curve when plotted over time on a frequency basis; if the cumulative number of adopters is plotted, the result is an S—shaped curve" (Rogers, 2003, p. 272). The bell—shaped curve displays the frequency, and the S—shaped curve displays the cumulative model of the rate of

adoption. The two methods display the same data. Examples of both the S—shaped and

bell—shaped curves are indicated in Figure 3.
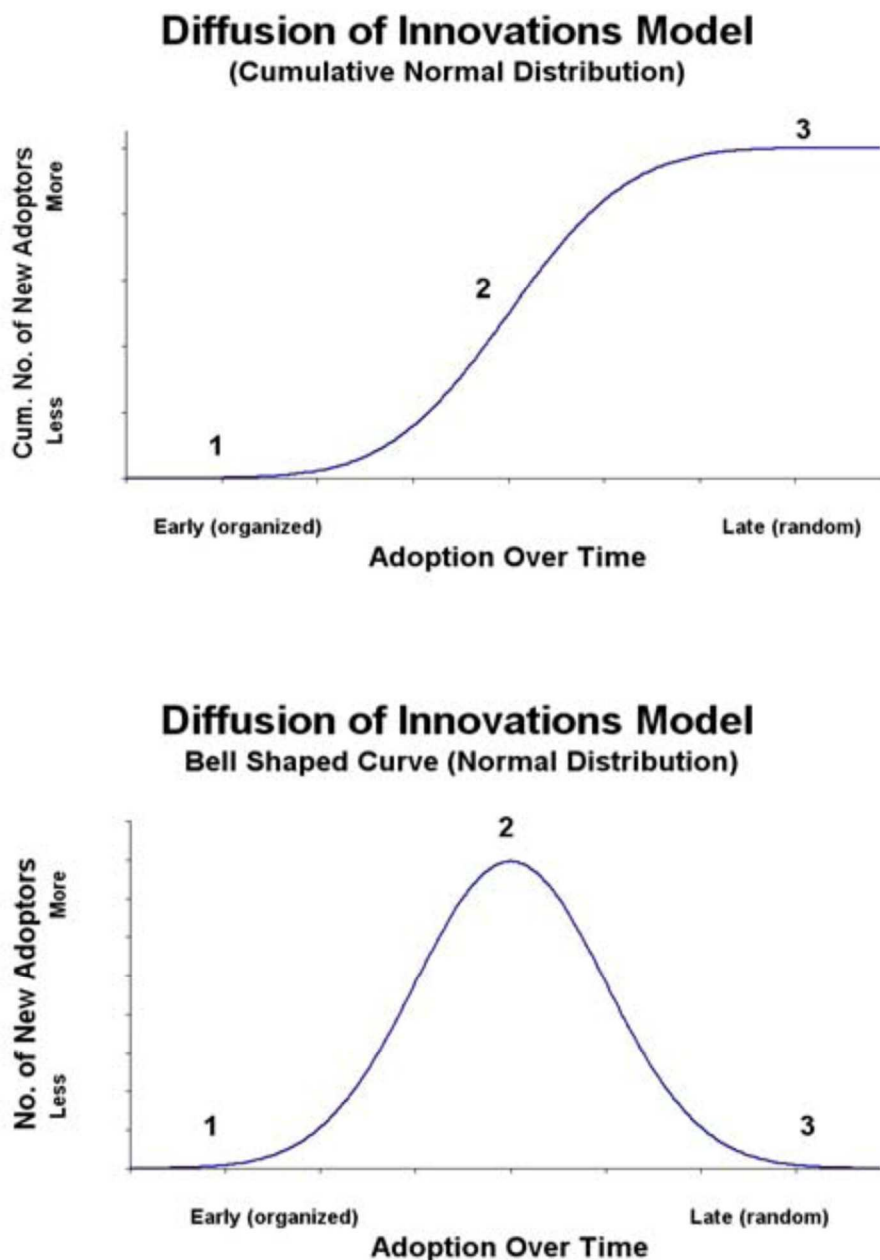
Figure 3. Rogers' S—shaped and bell—shaped curves of the rate of diffusion. From *Diffusion of Innovations* (p. 273), by E. Rogers, 2003, New York, NY: Simon and Schuster.

Rogers (2003) explained that the S—shaped adopter distribution rises slowly at first, when there are only a few adopters in each time period, and the curve accelerates to a maximum until half of the individuals in the system have adopted. The increase of the curve slows as the remaining individuals in the system adopt the innovation. Rogers (2003) described the S—shaped curve as normal because as many human traits are normally distributed, whether the trait is a physical characteristic, such as weight or height, or a behavioral trait such as intelligence or the learning of new information. "If a social system is substituted for the individual in the learning curve, it seems reasonable to expect that experience with the innovation is gained as each successive member in the social system adopts it" (Rogers, 2003, p. 272). Rogers indicated that the influence of the adoption or rejection of an innovation is dependent on the activation of peer networks about the innovation in a system. "The S—curve, it must be remembered, is innovation—specific and system—specific, describing the diffusion of a particular new idea among the member units of a specific system" (Rogers, 2003, p. 275).

How are adopters of a new innovation categorized? Rogers (2003) developed and published a method of categorization and indicated that anyone seeking to standardize adopter categories must decide on: (a) the number of adopter categories, (b) the portion of the members of a system to include in each category, and (c) the method, statistical or otherwise, of defining the adopter categories. He added that the criterion for adopter categorization is innovativeness, the degree that an individual or other unit of adoption is relatively earlier in adopting new ideas than other members of a social system. Rogers (2003) based the division of a normal distribution on two statistics; the mean (x) or average of the individuals in the system and the standard deviation (SD), a measure of

dispersion or variation about the mean. Because of these factors, he proposed that the normal frequency distribution divided into five adopter categories and the percentage of individuals included in each: (a) innovators (2.5%), (b) early adopters (13.5%), (c) early majority (34%), (d) late majority (34%), and (e) laggards (16%). The Bell—Shaped Curve indicated in Figure 4 provided a mathematical illustration of those categories.
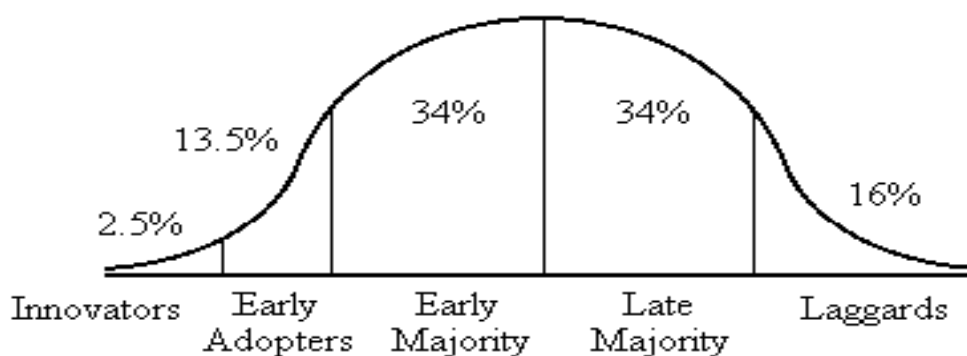
Figure 4. Rogers's bell—shaped curve of adopter categorization. From *Diffusion of Innovations* (p. 281), by E. Rogers, 2003, New York, NY: Simon and Schuster.

Hall (2003) revealed an alternative model of diffusion in the discussion of a learning or epidemic model that was more popular in the sociological and marketing literatures, *The Bass Model* (1969). According to Hall (2003), this this model illustrated that, consumers can have identical tastes and the cost of the new technology can be constant over time, but not all consumers are informed about the new technology at the same time. "Each consumer learns about the technology from his or her neighbor, and as time passes, more and more people adopt the technology during any period, leading to an increased rate of adoption" (Hall, 2003, p. 14). As the literature revealed, the market eventually becomes saturated and the rate decreases again, which also generates an S—

shaped curve for the diffusion rate. Hall stated that combining the Bass Model with the previous model simply reinforces the S—shape of the curve.

Yang and Leskovec (2010) explored modeling diffusion based on today's technological advancements of the World Wide Web and social networking. The authors indicated that social media form a central domain for production and dissemination of real—time information. Yang and Lesovec (2010) added that even though the diffusion of information has been an active research area recently, modeling the diffusion in social networks has proven to be a challenging task. "Even though such flows of information have traditionally been thought of as diffusion processes over social networks, the underlying phenomena are the result of a complex web of interactions among numerous participants" (Yang and Leskovec, 2010, p. 599). As a result, Yang and Leskovec developed a *linear influence model* (LIM). In this model, rather than requiring the knowledge of the social network and then modeling the diffusion by predicting which node will influence other nodes in the network,Yang and Leskovec (2010) focused on modeling the global influence of a node on the rate of diffusion through the (implicit) network. They validated their model on a set of 500 million tweets and a set of 170 million news articles and blog posts. The work of Yang and Leskovec (2010) opened up a new framework for the analysis of the dynamics of the information diffusion and influence in (implicit) social and information networks. Their models are broadly applicable to the general diffusion process.

More recently, Luu et al. (2012) provided an alternative approach by linking diffusion models that help to describe the rate of diffusion and number of adopters throughout the diffusion to social networks. They stated that the availability of social

networks and user transactional data have increased the importance of marketing through online social media. "The need for more elaborate marketing techniques have motivated research on diffusion of information and product items in social networks" (Luu et al., 2012, p. 218). Most research on diffusion can be categorized into macro— and micro— level studies. Luu et al. stated that macro—level studies model the aggregated number of adoptions in the user population throughout the diffusion process. "The topics relevant to macro—level studies include rate of adoption, number of adopters at any time point, and peak of adoptions" (Luu et al., 2012, p.218). This implies that each user is assumed to be related to all other users. Luu et al. stated that based on assumptions such as this, the Bass Model (1969) and other similar marcro—level models have been well studied in the literature and applied to many different scenarios and applications.

In relation to social media, Luu et al. (2012) stated that at the other extreme, users are connected by some social or communication network (usually a non—complete newtwork), that allows items to be diffused to users only through neighboring adopters. There are very few studies on developing macro—level models which consider such kinds of networks. Luu et al. (2012) provided a contrasting view by indicating that a micro—level study focuses on modeling each user as an agent making local adoption decisions based on the neighbors' adoption of some item. The diffusion models developed at the micro—level require complete knowledge of user—user relationships, and the knowledge of influence probablility between two neighboring users. "These models are not applicable in situations where the detailed network structure is not given or when the influence probablilities are missing due to privacy or data non—availability reasons" (Luu et al., 2012, p. 218).

Luu et al. (2012) conducted a study of diffusion models in social networks that focused on macro—level diffusion models. "Our research specifically addresses the relationship between social network propoerties and the diffusion process" (Luu et al., 2012, p. 219). Luu et al. proposed two new macro—level models, *Scale—Free Network Linear Influence Model* (SLIM) and *Exponential Network Linear Influence Model* (ELIM) for diffusion in Scale—Free (SF) and Exponential networks. They showed that the mathematical structures of the two diffusion models match the well—known Bass Model when assuming the node degree distribution is static during diffusion. Through their synthetic diffuion data, Luu et al. (2012) found that the static degree distribution assumption does not hold as higher degree nodes are more likely to become adopters and thus making the node degree distribution more and more skewed in the later stages of diffusion. In order to circumvent the fitting errors of SLIM and ELIM, Luu et al. (2012) developed a *Multi—Stage Network Linear Influence Model* (MLIM), which adopts the degree distribution parameter in different stages of diffusion. The results of experiments on synthetic data by Luu et al. (2012) indicated that the performance of their proposed macro—level models were promising for fitting purposes as well as for recovering parameters. They alluded to future experimentation to include extending the models to prodict diffusion and developing a rigorous way to determine proper degree distribution (among non—adopters) for each state in the diffusion process.

Influences of Diffusion

As indicated in Rogers's multi—faceted diffusion of innovations theory, it is important to understand that interpersonal communication and influences drive the diffusion process. This can be accomplished by creating a critical mass of adopters.

Critical mass is developed through opinion leadership or communication networks. Rogers (2003) defined opinion leadership as "the degree to which an individual is able to influence informally other individuals' attitudes or overt behavior in a desired way with relative frequency" (p. 27). Song et al. (2007) expanded on that definition by indicating that opinion leaders are those who bring in new information, ideas, and opinions, then disseminate them down to the masses, and thus influence the opinions and decisions of others by word of mouth. "Opinion leaders capture the most representative opinions in the social network, and consequently are important for understanding the massive and complex blogosphere" (Song et al., 2007, p. 971). Burt (1999) stated that opinion leaders are more precisely opinion brokers who carry information across the social boundaries between groups. He indicated that the role of an opinion leader in the diffusion of innovations was a role brought to public attention long ago at the Bureau of Applied Social Research during the 1940 presidential election. "They were not people at the top of things so much as people at the edge of things, not leaders within groups so much as brokers between groups" (Burt, 1999, p. 1). Rogers (2003) added that opinion leaders play an important role in diffusion networks, and are often identified and utilized in diffusion programs.

Rogers (2003) defined a communication network as "a group of interconnected individuals who are lined by patterned flows of information" (p. 27). Rogers (2003) added that an individual's network links are important determinants of his or her adoption of innovations. Typically, individuals understand and communicate the benefits of a new innovation with those who have similar attributes or socioeconomic characteristics. This is known as *homophily*. Rogers (2003) explained that homophily can act as an invisible

barrier to the rapid flow of innovations within a social system, as similar people interact in socially horizontal patterns, thus preventing a new idea from trickling down from those of higher socioeconomic statuses, more education, and greater technical expertise. McPherson et al. (2001) stated that homophily is a principle that a contact between similar people occurs at a higher rate than among dissimilar people.

> The pervasive fact of homophily means that cultural, behavioral, genetic, or material information that flows through networks will tend to be localized. Homophily implies that distance in terms of social characteristics translates into network distance, the number of relationships through which a piece of information must travel to connect two individuals. It also implies that any social entity that depends to a substantial degree on networks for its transmission will tend to be localized in social space and will obey certain fundamental dynamics as it interacts with other social entities in an ecology of social forms (McPherson et al., 2001, p. 416).

In contrast, the interaction of those with varying attributes or socioeconomic characteristics is known as *heterophily*. Rogers (2003) explained that when interpersonal diffusion networks are heterophilous, followers generally seek opinion leaders of higher socioeconomic status, with more formal education, greater mass exposure, more cosmopoliteness, greater contact with change agents, and more innovativeness. Akcora et al. (2012) simplified this principle in relation to social networks by indicating that heterophily is the tendency to interact with people that are not similar to you. In social networks, this tendency is motivated by the fact that social interactions (e.g., creation of new relationships with a stranger) might give the owner some benefits in terms of

acquaintance of new information. They indicated that examples of heterophily can be observed on the social network, Twitter. Twitter users do not need approval from others before they can "follow" them and view their status posts. "This allows users to follow people whenever they can get benefits, and, in many cases, followed users are distinctly different from the followers in their profile and social graph" (Akcora et al., 2012, p. 11).

Diffusion of Innovations: Public Sector/E—Government

As a matter of necessity, today's government entities have had to evolve with various technological advancements in order to effectively provide services to citizens. According to Bonson et al. (2012), in the 21st century, governments worldwide are under pressure to change and innovate the way in which their bureaucracies relate to citizens. The need to reduce cost, improve service provisioning, and enhance citizen involvement federal, state, and local government organizations have been stimulated to implement and operate electronic government (E—government) platforms. The World Bank Group (2011) provided an extensive definition of E—government:

> *E—government* refers to the use by government agencies of information
> technologies (such as wide area networks, the Internet, and mobile computing)
> that have the ability to transform relations with citizens, businesses, and other
> arms of government. These technologies can serve a variety of different ends:
> better delivery of government services to citizens, improved interactions with
> business and industry, citizen empowerment through access to information, or
> more efficient government management. The resulting benefits are less
> corruption, increased transparency, greater convenience, revenue growth, and/or
> cost reductions (The World Bank Group, 2011, http://web.worldbank.org).

The Organization for Economic Co—operation and Development (OECD), who promotes policies that will improve the economic and social well—being of people around the world, added that "E—government is the use of information and communication technologies, particularly the Internet, as a tool to achieve better government" (OECD, 2003, p. 63). OECD indicated that E—government provides the capacity to reform the way public administrations operate and can result in more customer—focused, responsive government. To increase efficiency and transparency within the public sector, leaders of government organizations have been compelled to implement technological advancements within their entities. According to Lim et al. (2009), as E—government becomes increasingly pervasive in modern public administrative management, its influence on organizations and individuals has become hard to ignore. It is timely and relevant to examine the impact of social media within the public sector in order to determine if these platforms align with the fundamental mission of E—government.

By adopting a stakeholder perspective and coming from the strategic orientation of control and collaboration management philosophy, Lim et al. (2009) studied approaches on the topic of E—governance from the three critical aspects of stakeholder management: (a) identification of stakeholders, (b) recognition of differing interests among stakeholders, and (c) how an organization caters to and furthers these interests. From the findings of their case study, Lim et al. (2009) identified four important groups of stakeholders: *the Engineers, Dissidents, Seasoners, and Skeptics,* who possess vastly different characteristics and varying levels of acceptance of and commitment towards the E—filing paradigm. "Accordingly, four corresponding management strategies with

varying degrees of collaboration and control mechanisms are devised in the bid to align these stakeholder interests such that their participation in E—government can be leveraged by public organizations to achieve competitive advantage" (Lim et al., 2009, p. 60).

Advancements in technologies and networking platforms have made a significant impact on many public and private lives. They have also influenced the way in which the public sector engages its constituents. Lim et al. (2009) stated that, while most governments have an online presence, this is mainly applied to the provision of one—way (i.e., government to citizen) information and services. "Available technologies, such as the Internet and mobile telephones, provide opportunities for governments to enter into a two—way dialogue with citizens, increase transparency of their operations, and encourage democratic participation" (Lim et al., 2009, p. 62). Lim et al. added that as the government closest to the people, local government qualifies to use online technologies to enhance and expand participatory democracy. The diffusion of E—government technologies has been highlighted by various authors as a method to enhance the interactivity, transparency, and efficiency of public sector entities and promote new forms of accountability. E—government technologies have expanded to include social media applications, which can promote interactivity between organizations and the public.

The emergence of social media has piqued interest within the public sector of how these applications can be beneficial in providing goods and services to the masses. Margo (2012) stated that in the past few years, E—government has been a topic of much interest among those excited about the advent of Web 2.0 technologies. Criado and Rojas—

Martin (2012) suggested that social media cover different Web 2.0 tools such as

microblogging, multimedia sharing, virtual worlds, mash—ups and open data

applications, questioning tools, crowdsourcing, collaboration tools, social networking,

and blogs among others.

> The analysis of these different strategies and applications in public settings is
>
> important in understanding how the exchange of information between
>
> governments and citizens may significantly transform the way in which the public
>
> sphere operates, creates new ways of governing, and/or enhance different forms
>
> of participation (Criado & Rojas—Martin, 2012, p. 3).

Social media applications have the potential to transform the interaction between

government actors, organizations, and citizens. Criado and Rojas—Martin (2012)

indicated that some studies have suggested that government—citizen interactions may be

significantly transformed using social media tools. Criado and Rojas—Martin (as cited in

Martinez, 2010) stated that using social media in government facilitates the interaction

with citizens in unexplored ways. Bertot et al. (2012) stated that social media make a

difference from traditional mass media as they rely on user—generated content, which

refers to any content that has been created by end users or the general public. "At the

same time, from the citizens' perspective, social media provide a platform for direct

participation in decision—making" (Criado & Rojas—Martin, 2012, p.3). Bonson et al.

(2012) added that social media allow the communication of citizens' views in a simpler,

faster, and more direct way, creating a better informed, more innovative, and more

citizen—centric government. Through data collected via a questionnaire aimed at those

responsible for the management of social media in regional governments, Criado and

Rojas—Martin (2010) offered an exploratory approximation to the main strategies put forward for the promotion of social media as well as the public sector's level of development in the process of implementation. Criado and Rojas—Martin (2010) found that social media present similarities with other previous processes of technological diffusion in the public sector. Their findings were inconclusive based on the lack of empirical evidence to prove that the diffusion of this innovation can be self—sustaining.

Diffusion of Innovations: Online Social Networks

Given the diverse characteristics of individuals that can exist within a communication network, it is important to understand how important information, such as that within the public sector, can be distributed to them as well as the network effects that influence adoption. This has become an extended point of research and discussion as the result of the World Wide Web and social networks. Myers et al. (2012) stated that social networks play a fundamental role in the diffusion of information. They indicated that there are two different ways in which information reaches a person in a network, by connections in social networks, and through the influence of external, out—of—network sources, like mainstream media. Myers et al. (2012) presented a research model in which information can reach a node via the links of the social network or through the influence of external sources. Then, they developed an efficient model parameter fitting technique and applied the model to the emergence of URL mentions in the Twitter network.

Traditionally, it was hard to capture and study the effects of mass media and social networks simultaneously. "The web, blogs, and social media change the traditional picture of the dichotomy between the local effects carried by the links of social networks and the global influence from the mass media" (Meyers et al., 2012, p. 33). Meyers et al.

measured the external influences over time and described how these influences affect the information adoption. They found that 71% of the information volume on Twitter can be attributed to network diffusion, and the remaining 29% is due to external events and factors outside the network. The research of Meyers et al. (2012) provided evidence that in our technologically advanced era, the majority of distribution of information is the result of online social networks as well as the effects of those in the network.

The effects of differences in individual connection patterns are important factors in predicting adopters. Word of mouth has been an effective method of innovation decisions and adoption. "Modern technology, however, has gradually transformed social interactions among people" (Katona et al., 2011, p. 425). Katona et al. studied the diffusion process in an online social network given individual connections between members in an effort to determine network effects, personal influences, and predictors of adoption. They indicated that with the emergence of new communication technologies, the communication patterns of individuals are increasingly being recorded, providing an opportunity to study word of mouth at the individual level.

Using conceptual and practical considerations, Katona et al. (2011) distinguished three factors that may affect a potential adopter's decision: network effects, influencer effects, and adopter effects. Katona et al. (2011) stated that: (a) Network effects relates to the influence of the structure of connection patterns of the potential adopter's already adopted neighbors; (b) Influencer effects refers to the (average) individual characteristics of already adopted network members on their not—yet—adopted neighbors; (c) Adopter effects captures the effects of the adopter's individual characteristics.

As a result of their analyses, Katona et al. (2011) found the following: (a) The number of already adopted friends has a positive effect on the probability of an individual's adoption; (b) The interconnectedness of an individual's already adopted friends has a positive effect on his or her adoption probability; (c) People with many friends have a lower average influence than those with fewer friends. Katona et al. (2011) also found that demographics are useful for identifying strong influencers. The effects of network structures, such as the web, and personal influences have a significant impact on the diffusion process.

Diffusion of Innovations: Summary

The review of the literature has thus far attempted to provide a comprehensive exploration of how a new innovation, such as social media, can be adopted by the masses from its inception to the framework of the diffusion of innovations theory. Various scholars and theorists have provided similar and contrasting views of their concepts of diffusion for many different fields. The process of diffusion, especially of new ideas or innovations, is a constant factor of the evolution and growth within a social system. What is considered the point at which a satisfactory amount of individuals adopt an innovation so that its diffusion becomes independent? For an innovation to achieve the stage of independence there must be a critical mass achieved. Continued review of literature will explain the factors that are involved in reaching this stage.

Innovation Sustainability

According to various strands of literature, a determining factor of diffusion is the ability for an innovation to sustain. This is measured by the level of adoptability of an innovation by the masses. Rogers (2003) indicated that a "crucial concept in

understanding the social nature of the diffusion process is the 'critical mass'" (p. 343).

There have been various scholarly views of what constitutes the critical mass from many

entities within the scientific community. In recent years, the exploration of this notion has

become more prevalent among communication and technology scholars. Rogers (2003)

stated that the rate of adoption of interactive media (such as social media platforms,

email, telephones, fax, and teleconferencing) often displays a distinctive quality that is

known as the *critical mass*. Rogers (2003) defined critical mass as "the point at which

enough individuals in a system have adopted an innovation so that the innovation's

further rate of adoption becomes self—sustaining" (p. 343).

Critical mass was extended to interactive media and social networking by Lynn

Markus (1987) who explained that in the special case of online interpersonal

communication, reciprocal interdependence emerges and requires interactivity for a

system's success. Markus stated that interactive media have two characteristics not

shared by many other innovations.

> First, widespread usage creates universal access, a public good that individuals
>
> cannot be prevented from enjoying even if they have not contributed to it; second,
>
> the use of interactive media entails reciprocal interdependence, in which earlier
>
> users are influenced by later users and vice versa (Markus, 1987, p. 491).

Markus (1987) added that as a consequence of these characteristics, interactive media are

extremely vulnerable to start—up problems and discontinuance in which traditional

explanations of diffusion of innovations do not accommodate. According to Markus, "the

influence of these two properties on the probability and extent of diffusion within

communities is the focus of the critical mass theory" (p. 493).

Contrasting theory and research regarding the critical mass of an innovation and the provision of public goods in recent decades has been inspired by Mancur Olson's *Logic of Collective Action* (1965). In his book, *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups,* Olson developed the theory in which he indicated that only a separate and selective incentive will stimulate a rational individual in a latent group to act in a group—oriented way. This concept, relative to critical mass, indicated that members of a large group did not act in the group's common interest unless motivated by personal gains (economic, social, etc.). "Even if all the individuals in a large group are rational and self—interested, and would gain if, as a group, they acted to achieve their common interest or objective, they would still not voluntarily act to achieve that common or group interest" (Olson, 1965, p. 2). Olson differentiated between large and small groups, and indicated that small groups can act simply on a shared objective. He stated that large groups will not form or work towards a shared objective unless individual members are sufficiently motivated. Cook and Karp (1994) asserted that the puzzle posed by Olson has been the subject of countless critiques and experiments investigating the various solutions to the problem of free—riding.

Cook and Karp defined free—riders as those who benefit from the provision of a public good without bearing any of the costs. In theory, rational egoists will be free—riders in the situation in which they can benefit with immunity. "Free— riding, however, is only one of the many problems identified in the literature which followed from Olson's pioneering work" (Cook & Karp, 1994, p. 360). Cook and Karp added that the more generic problem identified by Olson in 1965 was the assumption that individuals with a common goal will cooperate and coordinate their actions to pursue the goal. This was a

major challenge to many strands of existing social and political theory, which treated it as

non—problematic.

In analyzing the issue of free—riding in modern times, Centola's (2009) view of

Olson's conceptualization of social cooperation as a problem of free—riding was that it

had a devastating implication: "everyone will reason that they can get the same public

good whether or not they pay the costs for contributing; so everyone will decide not to

contribute, and no public goods will be produced" (p. 3). He argued that there is a

different problem of collective action, which Olson entirely overlooked, that has

surprisingly different implications for how society understands free—riding; the problem

of stability in collective action. This issue is magnified in the exploration of the theory of

critical mass. "The ability to see this problem clearly is a direct consequence of the

approach developed by Marwell and Oliver's *Theory of Critical Mass*" (Centola, 2009, p.

6). Centola (2009) explained that the critical mass theory emphasizes the dynamics of

participation, which naturally raises questions, not just about the growth of collective

action, but also about the long—term stability of the behavior once it is achieved. He

explored theoretical ideas, which indicated that normative pressure to participate, as well

as levels of participation, can benefit the stability of collective action. Centola (2009)

found that high levels of participations do not guarantee that membership will be stable.

"Over time, exogenous shocks and accidents will inevitably cause fluctuations in the

levels of participation" (Centola, 2009, p. 7). For example, if an illness or unforeseen

emergency causes participants to miss an activity or more, other participants may decide

to miss the activity, no consequence. Centola (2009) stated that their absence further

weakens the incentives to attend, which can cause others to drop out. The results of his

research challenged previous beliefs about the virtues of strong incentives for cooperation (and social sanctions for defection) for promoting the collective good. Centola (2009) found that through the dynamics of social interdependence, strong incentives to cooperate can amplify the impact of accidental perturbations, unintentionally causing more people to defect, and increasing the chances that the collective action will collapse.

The idea of critical mass is central to many understandings of collective action. Sociologists, Oliver, Marwell, and Teixeira (1985) initially developed the critical mass theory to integrate and formalize theory on phenomena variously labeled "the free—rider problem" (Olson, 1968), "the tragedy of commons" (Hardin, 1968), and "snob and bandwagon effects" (Leibenstein, 1950), by economists and sociologists. Markus (1987) explained that these theories revolve around collective action. According to Oliver et al. (1985), critical mass is a small segment of the population that chooses to make big contributions to the collective action, while the majority does little of nothing. In their study of critical mass, Raban et al. (2010) extended the work described by Olson (1968) and Hardin (1968). In their analysis of Oliver et al.'s (1985) assessment, they found that one of the theory's most important contributions was the argument that a group's level of heterogeneity, together with the shapes of various production functions, defined as relationships between resources contributed by the group and the collective output of that group, can be used to predict the likelihood of longer—term success of the group. According to Markus (1987), Oliver, Marwell, and Teixeira's *Theory of Critical Mass* (1985) seeks to predict the probability, extent, and effectiveness of group action in pursuit of a public good. "Their theory has two major sets of independent variables: the

shape of the production function and heterogeneity of resources and interest in the population" (Markus, 1987, p. 496).

Olson's logic of collective action not only illustrated the "free—rider" problem, which discussed the issue of an individual member of a group who can receive benefit even if they do not contribute, but also the problem of efficacy. Macy (1990) stated that efficacy is when an individual member of a group may not benefit even if they do contribute. He added that free—riding is possible because public goods are not excludable. Coleman (as cited in Macy, 1990) stated that the efficacy problem is created by the pooling of contributions such that only a fraction of the benefits of one person's action accrues to that person. According to Macy (1990), since Olson's classic study, rational choice theorists have generally concurred that collective action requires selective incentives that detour the free—rider problem by providing additional benefits that are conditional upon individual contributions. The most notable theorists are Oliver and Marwell (1988), whose experiments break with the selective incentives approach. They show how collective action need not be a mere spinoff from the pursuit of private goods but can be successfully mobilized through direct appeals to a common interest (Macy, 1990, p. 810). Macy added that and Oliver and Marwell (1988) solved the efficacy problem, which then makes free—riding innocuous. "The classic illustration is the lighthouse that costs the same no matter how many benefit, and one person's consumption of it does not reduce the amount available to anyone else" (Hardin, 1982, p. 17).

The work of Oliver and Marwell (1988) revealed that free—riders are not a burden on those who contribute, and it is not necessary to organize every member of a

large interest group. Macy (1990) stated that a small subset or critical mass of "highly resourceful and interested members" can patronize a much larger group without concern that the benefit to others will diminish their own. He added that in groups with resource inequity, the requisite number of volunteers may be quite small.

> The concentration of interests and resources solves the efficacy problem created by 'small, isolated contributions,' and thus explains why most action comes from a relatively small number of participants who make such big contributions to the cause that they know (or think they know) they can make a difference (Oliver & Marwell, 1988, p. 7).

Macy (1990) assessed the viability of the critical mass theory by indicating that it provides a compelling solution to the efficacy problem, showing that investments in public goods can be highly cost effective no matter how large the number of non—contributors. "This is a much needed corrective to the prevailing belief that free—riding makes contribution pointless in large groups" (Macy, 1990, p. 810).

In proceeding years, Marwell and Oliver (1993) continued to build upon the critical mass theory and contrast collective action in their book, *The Critical Mass in Collective Action: A Micro—Social Theory,* by stating that the dilemma of collection action (i.e., the social dilemma) in the provision of public goods, adheres to the high cost of providing them, relative to individual resources and interests, not to the number who share in them. Marwell and Oliver (1993) noted that the importance of Olson's argument to the history of social science cannot be underestimated because before Olson, almost all social scientists assumed that people would instinctively, or naturally, act on common interests. Cook and Karp (1994) stated that they turned Olson's Logic of Collective

Action (1965) on its head by arguing against the notion, popularized subsequent to the publication of Olson's book, that group size is negatively related to the probability of providing for the common good. Rogers (2003) concurred by stating that Olson's (1965) seeming irrationality of individuals in a social system attracted scholarly attention to the study of collective action by communication scholars, sociologists, social psychologists, economists, and scholars of public opinion. Based on Olson's theory, Rogers (2003) posed the question of, "Why is behavior in a system so seemingly illogical" (p. 349)? Rogers (2003) indicated the reason was because each individual acts in ways that are rational in pursuing individual goals without fully considering that he or she might be disadvantaging the system at the collective level.

Factors, Perceptions, and Influences of Critical Mass

Although the actual critical mass is difficult to measure, an individual may have a perception of whether an innovation reaches the threshold of critical mass, and such perception is termed *perceived critical mass*. Lou et al. (2000) expanded the term of perceived critical mass in their study to include groupware technologies such as email, electronic bulletins, and group support systems. Lou et al. (2000) (as cited in Orlikowski, 1993) indicated that while some groupware applications, such as email, have been commonly accepted, many other applications have not been adequately used and their potential benefits are far from being realized. They proposed a research model and argued that perceived critical mass is the key independent variable in predicted groupware acceptance and that its importance can be explained through existing literature on social movement, social norms, and network externality.

Lou et al. (2000) suggested that critical mass is the basis for producing collective actions. "The acceptance of a groupware application needs the participation and collective actions from all individuals whose work is affected by the technology" (Lou et al., 2000, p. 93). Lou et al. added that while it is very difficult to measure the actual critical mass threshold for any particular groupware technology, participants in group work may have a perception of whether a groupware technology has a critical mass of users through interactions with others. The perceived critical mass may or may not reflect the reality of groupware use within the group. Lou et al. (2000) stated that an individual may develop this perception from channels other than direct observation of usage.

> A potential adopter may get the impression that a groupware technology is widely used within his or her group because many people are asking questions about it or a number of announcements were made about the technology; in turn, when a potential adopter asks questions about the technology, he or she may give others the perception that he or she is using the technology (Lou et al., 2000, p. 94).

According to Lou et al. (2000), when potential adopters get this perception, perceived critical mass will have a significant impact on users' adoption decisions. Perceived critical mass can generate peer pressure among members of a group to adopt. Lou et al. (2000) indicated that with the existence of social norms in groups, perceived critical mass can affect groupware acceptance directly through normative influence and indirectly through informational influence. "Perceived critical mass creates the perception that most members of the group have adopted the technology; potential users may feel that it is their obligation to use the technology and failing to do so may bring negative consequences" (Lou et al., 2000, p. 94).

In addition, perceived critical mass can affect the perception of potential users regarding technology's convenience or usefulness. Lou et al. (2000) explained that through informational influence, potential adopters may have witnessed other members using groupware technology to perform various tasks and learned about the features and functionalities of the technology through word of mouth, demonstrations, or hands—on experiments. They added that such information exchange, and the perception that most of their peers are using the technology, is indeed useful and is not very difficult to use. In 1990, Markus stated that for interactive technologies such as groupware, the interdependence between early and late adopters is reciprocal rather than sequential. This means that early adopters can be influenced by the decisions of later adopters. "Perceived critical mass is also important for users who have already adopted the technology; it can strengthen their views of the technology's usefulness" (Lou et al., 2000, p. 95). As a result of their analysis and research model, Lou et al. conclusively found that perceived critical mass has a direct impact on intention to use groupware technology as well as users' perceptions of a groupware application's usefulness and ease of use. They stated that "their results are consistent with many diffusion of innovations studies in which personal interactions are regarded as an important source of external influence for technology adoption" (Lou et al., 2000, p. 95). "The findings indicated that a user's decision to use groupware is influenced by whether or not the same technology is used by their peers in the group; a user is more likely to adopt a groupware application if he or she thinks that other members of the group are using it" (Lou et al., 2000, p. 100).

Slyke et al. (2007) investigated the impact of perceived critical mass using a theoretically derived research model. They stated that communication innovations that

fail to achieve critical mass eventually fall into disuse. As a result, the authors applied useful measures of perceived critical mass in their model to investigate this matter. Slyke et al. (2007) indicated that perceptions of critical mass can create the illusion among adopters and potential adopters that actual critical mass has been reached, which impacts the diffusion of the innovation. "Thus, through interaction (within a social group), individuals develop their own perceptions about a particular innovation, and they can also give others the impression that they already use that innovation" (Slyke et al., 2007, p. 274). Slyke et al. added that the role of perceived critical mass has been demonstrated empirically in the context of diffusion of different innovations using theoretical models.

Slyke et al. (2007) conducted their study using the perceived critical mass influences of Lou et al. (2000). Based on this framework, they expected perceived critical mass to impact a number of important beliefs regarding communication innovations. From their research model, Slyke et al. (2007) concluded that perceived critical mass does have an impact on behavioral intentions to use communication innovations.

The research model is able to account for a large portion of the variance in subjects' attitudes and behavioral intentions with respect to communication innovations; the results also illustrate the importance of perceived critical mass in understanding behavioral intentions regarding the use of communication innovations (Slyke et al., 2007, p. 278).

Similar to the results of the study conducted by Lou et al. (2000), Slyke et al. (2007) indicated that their results show that perceived critical mass not only influences other important beliefs, but it also carries an independent influence on intentions, and so may be critically important to the adoption and diffusion of interactive communication

innovations. Slyke et al. (2007) stated that the findings of their study hold a number of implications for managerial practice. "As our results indicate, perceived critical mass has both direct and indirect impacts on use intentions, and we expect that increasing perceptions of critical mass will lead to significant increases in usage intentions" (Slyke et al., 2007, p. 278). In addition, Slyke et al. found that the visible activities of early adopters influence the adoption decisions of later adopters, and recommended that administrators wishing to speed diffusion should seek to build the impression of critical mass by finding ways to make early adopters more visible to the majority.

Drawing on prior studies of social influence and critical mass, Shen et al. (2009) conducted a similar investigation of the role of perceived critical mass. Their attempt was to explain the term, *we—intention*, in order to use communication innovations, such as instant messaging for team collaboration. Shen et al. (2009) explained that we—intention is often considered as the intention to participate in a group and perform a group activity that the participants perceive themselves as members of the group. Shen et al. (2009) mentioned that there are several unique characteristics that separate we—intention from the term *I—intention* (traditional individual intention). First, Shen et al. (2009) indicated that for I—intention, the intended target is a singular subject, whereas for we—intention, the focus is a plural target (a group of people, instead of an individual, that acts on or experiences an event). Second, Shen et al. (2009) indicated that in the circumstance of we—intention, each participant who functions as a member of the group collectively accepts the intention content and accordingly, all participants have collective commitment and shared authority over the joint action. This differs from I—intention in that a given behavior is privately accepted by an individual. Third, Shen et al. (2009)

indicated that participants with we—intention are motivated by group reasons such as community—oriented motivational factors, whereas individuals with I—intention are primarily motivated by personal reasons. Lastly, Shen et al. (2009) differentiated the two intentions by stating that the collectivity condition for the satisfaction of we—intention supposes that if the intention content is satisfying for one member of a group, it is satisfying for all the members in this group. "In contrast, the intention content is just satisfying for an individual in the I—intention context" (Shen et al., 2009, p. 1061).

In their study, Shen et al. (2009) hypothesized that perceived critical mass will have a positive impact on we—intention to use instant messaging for team collaboration. "If people perceive that most of their peers are using instant messaging for team collaboration, they may have a favorable attitude toward the use of instant messaging" (Shen et al., 2009, p. 1063). In their data collection, measurements, and responses to surveys, Shen et al. examined the role of perceived critical mass in the development of we—intention. From the relationships proposed in their research model, they found that attitudes toward the use of instant messaging exert a statistically significant effect on usage of we—intention. In addition, Shen et al. (2009) found that social influence factors, except for subjective norms, are significant factors in predicting we—intention to use instant messaging for team collaboration. "Users who have similar goals with others, or categorize themselves as group members, are more likely to have we—intentions to use instant messaging together" (Shen et al., 2009, p. 1066). Shen et al. concluded that perceived critical mass plays significantly in their research model.

It influences we—intention both directly and indirectly through users' attitudes and social influence processes; these findings echo with prior literature from Lou

et al. (2000) that perceived critical mass may influence the adoption and diffusion of communication technologies through both informational influence and normative influence (Shen et al., 2009, p. 1066).

Modeling Critical Mass

Thomas Schelling

Literature on collective behavior suggests that social cooperation connects Marwell and Oliver's (1988) research on collective action and social movements. Theorist Thomas Schelling (1978) illustrated, and has been credited with the formulation and popularization of critical mass as a model that provides a generalized description for a wide variety of phenomena. Centola (2009) stated that Schelling popularized the term critical mass in social science, comparing the dynamics of collective behavior to the chain reaction of radioactive materials. "The principle of critical mass is so simple that it is no wonder that it shows up in epidemiology, fashion, survival and extinction of species, language systems, racial integration, jaywalking, panic behavior, and political movements" (Schelling, 1978, p. 89). Schelling applied that principle in his literature by indicating that social behavior is cyclical. "Cyclical behavior is one of those kinds of social behavior for which it can be helpful to have a set of familiar models" (Schelling, 1978, p. 87). Schelling's definition of a model consists of either of two components: (a) A precise and economical statement of a set of relationships that are sufficient to produce the phenomenon in question; (b) An actual biological, mechanical, or social system that embodies the relationships in an especially transparent way, producing the phenomenon as an obvious consequence of those relationships. According to Schelling (1978), most of the models used in the social sciences are families rather than individual models. "There

is no single model of cyclical behavior, or any unique model of critical mass, but rather a family of related models that differ in some characteristics but share some essential features" (Schelling, 1978, p. 89).

Schelling (1978) discussed and illustrated families of models that are widely used in the social sciences in his book, *Micromotives and Macrobehavior.* Although they were whole theories, Schelling (1978) stated that his models were of recurrent behavior patterns that are best recognized and compared with each other by the help of familiar models. "A shared model is help in communicating, especially if the model has a name" (Schelling, 1978, p. 90). Schelling indicated that his models are not intended to be a definitive list of the families of models most widely used. His purpose was to illustrate that there are such families of models that cut across different fields of inquiry and different problem areas suggesting that such families of models more than just valuable tools.

> More valuable, the more familiar one is with the diversity of phenomenon to which they apply, a student of social sciences should be alert to the occurrence of such models and should add new families of models to their repertoire whenever they can find them (Schelling, 1978, p. 91).

The variety of critical mass models is reflective of the diversity and various trends in social behavior. Schelling (1978) stated that people's behavior depends on how many are behaving a particular way or how often they are behaving that way; the generic name of behaviors of this sort is critical mass. He argued that critical mass centers on a crucial, cross—level analysis that is characteristic of a large part of the social sciences, especially the more theoretical part. "What all of the critical mass models involve is some activity

that is self –sustaining once the measure of that activity passes a certain minimum level"
(Schelling, 1978, p. 95). Schelling added that the concept of critical mass is fundamental
to understanding a wide range of human behavior because an individual's actions often
depend on a perception of how many individuals are behaving in a particular way. To
provide clarity to critical mass situations, Schelling (1978) provided an academic
example of a seminar diminishing in popularity, in which he described a common
occurrence among the Harvard faculty. The example described a seminar in which its
sustainability depends on its popularity. The survival or demise of the seminar was
dependent on whether those taking part in it considered the number of other participants
to be sufficient.

Schelling (1978) discussed subclasses of critical mass models in his literature
such as *lemons and tipping models*. Schelling (1978) based the lemons model on the
terminology of Akerlof (1970), who analyzed quality uncertainty and market
mechanisms. For instance, buyers and sellers respond in different ways to the actual
percentage of used cars that are defective. Schelling (1978) argued that if lemons were
rare, the market would be stable because exchanges will be mutually advantageous for
both buyers and sellers, but when the number of lemons exceeds the critical number, the
entire market may disappear.

Schelling (1978) stated that tipping is a term that was first applied to
neighborhood migration. The tipping model was initially used to describe the instabilities
in the racial composition of neighborhoods:

> It was observed that the entrance of a few members of a minority into a
>
> neighborhood often caused uproar to leave among the formerly homogeneous.

Their departure left opening, so more members of the minority could enter; the increase in new residents induced more of the old to leave, and so forth in the familiar process. Some of the departures might be motivated by the minority entrants who had already arrived, some by the belief that the process, once started, would continue, and some by fear that they might soon be selling their houses in panic (Schelling, 1978, p. 101).

Schelling (1978) described the tipping model as a special case (a broad class of special cases) of critical mass phenomena. According to Schelling (1978), the tipping model's characteristics are usually that people have very different cross—over points; that the behavior involves place of residence or work or recreation or, in general, being someplace rather than doing something. He added that the critical numbers relate to two or more distinct groups, and each group may be separately tipping out (going) or tipping in (coming). The process involved conscious decisions and anticipations. It may be as small as a local informational blog that restricts its participants based on ethnicity or cultural background or as large as the population of a community, city, or state.

There are two other classes of models that Schelling (1978) discussed which are related to critical mass, the commons—type of processes, and the expectation—determined processes. Schelling (1978) stated that the commons was derived from Garrett Hardin who gave an address entitled, *The Tragedy of Commons* (1968). He indicated that the commons refers to all those situations in which an individual acts purposely, and by doing so, produces an aggregate that is considered undesirable by everyone. Perhaps the most well—known example of a situation such as this is the *Prisoner's Dilemma*. Schelling (1978) stated that the Prisoner's Dilemma escaped the

domain of game theory and became shorthand for a commonly occurring situation between two individuals, the one in which two people hurt each other more than they help themselves in making self—serving choices and could both be better off if obliged to choose the opposite. "Hardin's common grazing grounds are a particular multi—person version of the same motivational structure" (Schelling, 1978, p. 111).

Various situations, in which the pursuit of individual interests is priority at the potential expense of others, can be related to the commons. Schelling (1978) pointed out that the commons has come to serve as a paradigm for situations in which people so impinge on each other in pursuing their own interests that collectively they might be better off if they could be restrained, but no one gains individually by self—restraint. Consequences of these individual interests or actions can be unknown by the person in pursuit of them. "The commons are a special but widespread case out of a broader class of situations in which some of the costs or damages of what people do occur beyond their purview, and they either do not know or do not care about them" (Schelling, 1978, p. 112). Schelling listed litter, noise, dangerous driving, carelessness with fire, and hoarding during a shortage as examples that often have that character. He added that people may try to submit voluntarily to collective restraints on the behavior that is individually uninhibited but collectively costly.

Observing the distinct characteristics of the problem of the commons can help in determining a diagnosis. Schelling (1978) indicated that his model of the commons is widely and loosely used, and it is worthwhile to distinguish between the strict paradigm of the commons and the looser array of related models. Schelling (1978) stated that analytically, two noteworthy features of a common are: (a) Only those who use the

common are affected by the way it is used, and they are affected in proportion to how much they use it; (b) The costs of using or over—using the common are in the same currency as the benefits. "The paradigm fits better with the class of problems called "congestion" or wasteful exploitation than to the problems identified with noise, pollution, and public safety" (Schelling, 1978, p.115). Relative to the dissertation topic, an example of this is the daily volume of clients within a public sector organization being so crowded that one would rather complete administrative functions such as applications, certifications, and communications with organizational representatives via social or electronic means. Schelling (1978) stated that looser definitions of the commons will include situations that are similar, but not identical, in an analytical structure. This may include such activities as going beyond the allotted time on a device such as a public computer or phone at a busy agency for personal reasons, rather than for business use.

In contrast, expectation—determined processes refer to a class of processes that has the structure of self—fulfilling prophecies. According to Schelling (1978), self—fulfilling prophecies are one those descriptive terms that are so apt that they not only come initially into common use to describe the phenomena for which they were originally coined but go on to have a life of their own, losing touch with the original context and joining the common parlance to mean whatever they seem to mean. "The general idea is that certain expectations are of such a character that they induce the kind of behavior that will cause the expectations to be fulfilled" (Schelling, 1978, p. 115). For example, if a particular minority, such as those with language barriers, educational, or technological deficiencies is considered incapable of understanding computer basics or social networking platforms, they may not be considered candidates for conducting

business via electronic means. They may not have the opportunity to receive more

efficient services or may be prone to more administrative mistakes. Public sector

employees may believe that lacking such experience, they are considered incapable of

acquiring those skills. Schelling (1978) clarified this discriminating mentality by stating

that the broader class of phenomena to which the self—fulfilling terminology applies

does not depend on discrimination or reciprocal distrust.

Mark Granovetter

Another approach of the critical mass model was developed by Mark Granovetter

(1978). Granovetter's approach was inspired by sociology literature and research

conducted on riots and revolutions. According to Markus (1987), Granovetter proposed

threshold models to collective phenomena. In threshold models, someone throws the first

brick because that activity provides the individual utility. Markus (1987) added that

whether or not others follow depends on the distribution of individual thresholds, defined

as the number of other people who must be doing the activity before a given individual

joins in.

> In threshold models, the intrinsic utility of the behavior to an individual may be
>
> more important in determining that individual's behavior than social influence,
>
> but even a small amount of social influence may have a strong effect on the
>
> collective outcome (Markus, 1987, p. 494).

Granovetter (1978) focused his formal analysis of collective behavior on the

normal distribution of thresholds. The background for the development of Granovetter's

models was indicated in one of his most significant pieces of literature, *Threshold Models*

of Collective Behavior (1978). Granovetter (1978) stated that because sociological theory

tends to explain behavior by institutionalized norms and values, the study of the behavior, occupies a peripheral position in systematic theory. He added that in the field of collective behavior, one such effort involves the assertion that new norms or beliefs emerge in situations where old ones fail or few precedents exist. Granovetter (1978) argued that knowing the norms, preferences, motives, and beliefs of participants in collective behavior can, in most cases, only provide a necessary, but not a sufficient, condition for the explanation of outcomes. His attempt was to show how these individual preferences interact and aggregate.

Granovetter (1978) referred to theories oriented to norms as those, which lack a model, such as a threshold model. They ended up assuming, implicitly, a simple relation between collective results and individual motives. If most members of a group exhibit the same behavior, one can infer from this that most ended up sharing the same norm or belief about a situation, whether or not they did so initially. In contrast, Granovetter's threshold models (1978) took the most important casual influence on outcomes and the variation of norms and preferences within the interacting group. "It will be clear, even in the simplest version of these models, that the collective outcomes can seem paradoxical— that is, intuitively inconsistent with the intentions of individuals who generate them" (Granovetter, 1978, p. 1421). Granovetter added that these models can be applied to processes not usually considered collective behavior, such as diffusion of innovations, voting, residential segregation, educational attainment, strikes, migration, and markets, in addition to the more typical processes of crowd behavior and social movements. Granovetter (1978) stated that his models treat the aggregation of individual

preferences; they do not consider how individuals happen to have the preferences they do.

It is evident that Granovetter's *Threshold Models of Collective Behavior* (1978) addressed binary decisions, which can only have two alternatives or outcomes. Granovetter (1978) indicated that binary decisions are those where an actor has two distinct and mutually exclusive behavioral alternatives. In most cases, the decision can be thought of as having a positive and negative side. He mentioned another requirement in which the decision is one where the costs and benefits to the actor of making one or the other choice depend in part on how many others make that choice. In relation to the research topic, social networking may be used as an example. The cost (time, effort, etc.) to an individual of joining a social media platform declines as the size of the network increases, since the probability of the platform being cancelled is lower when more people are involved.

Granovetter (1978) argued the individuals involved in models such as these are assumed rational— that is, given their goals and preferences, and their perception of their situations, they act so as to maximize their utility. "Individual differences are a main focus of the models" (Granovetter, 1978, p. 1422). Relative to the example provided, different individuals require different levels of knowledge, comfort, and security before joining and participating in a social network, and there may be differences in what constitutes the benefits they may receive from joining. Granovetter (1978) stated that the crucial concept for describing such variation among individuals is that of threshold. A person's threshold for joining a social network is measured by the amount of current and new users that have joined the social network. Granovetter (1978) categorized the levels

of thresholds a person may be identified as: (a) a radical who has a low threshold (benefits of a social network are higher to him or her), (b) an instigator who has a sufficiently radical threshold of 0% (people who will join a social network when no one else does), (c) a conservative who has a high threshold (the benefits of joining a social network are small or negative to them and the consequences are high, since they are likely to be known as respectable citizens). He added that it is not necessary to be able to classify a person as a radical or conservative from his or her threshold, and one strength of the concept is that it permits us to avoid such crude dichotomies. "The threshold is simply the point where the perceived benefits to an individual of the doing the thing in question (e.g., joining a social network) exceed the perceived costs" (Granovetter, 1978, p. 1422).

Granovetter (1978) stated that the focus of his research is the formal model and not the substantive question of collective behavior. "It has no special conceptual status, and the analysis is meant to apply to any appropriate binary decision" (Granovetter, 1978, p. 1423). There are situations in which threshold models may appear erroneous or falsified due to individual behavior not being measured or predicted by the proportions of others who engage in one or another of two possible behaviors. Granovetter (1978) stated that an extreme case is where individuals who appear to react to one another are actually all responding to an external influence. For instance, a number of people may use a coat or umbrella because of a snowstorm. All are reacting in protection of the weather versus the actions of those around them. Granovetter (1978) stated that the threshold models are particularly valuable in helping to understand situations when outcomes do not seem intuitively consistent with the underlying individual preferences. He suggested a catalog

of other binary—choice situations where threshold models could be applied to include the diffusion of innovations, which is a major theoretical aspect of the study of the impact of social media on public sector accessibility. In consideration of this, how are the fundamentals of these models applicable to the factors involving the spread of social network structures?

Social Networks and Threshold Models

The context of the role of social networks on collective behavior prompted the investigation of using threshold concepts. Valente (1996) defined a social network as the pattern of friendship, advice, communication, or support that exists among the members of a social system. Although the research conducted in this study primarily focused on previously discussed approaches to the study of diffusion networks, Valente (1996) mentioned that they were replaced by a more structured approach suggested by Granovetter. "A structural approach, in this context, refers to the social network structure which is determined by the overall pattern of network ties rather than the ties for a particular actor" (Valente, 1996, p. 70). Valente measured thresholds of personal networks rather than whole social systems to understand the role of interpersonal influence in adoption behavior. Earlier, Valente (as cited in Wellman, 1988) indicated that personal networks are the set of direct ties that an individual has within a social system. Valente added that the personal network conceptualization of thresholds provides a model of diffusion that creates adopter categories based on innovativeness relative to personal networks. "The advantage of this approach is that it can be used to determine the critical mass" (Valente, 1996, p. 71).

According to Rolfe (2004), previous research indicates that an innovation may spread through a population, but very different social network structures seem to be required. To resolve this apparent contradiction, she built on Granovetter's threshold model (1978) in order to differentiate between innovations that spread easily and those that are not likely to spread and to show that the impact of social networks on collective behavior is conditional on the ease of diffusion. Rolfe (2004) stated that researchers interested in the spread of ideas and behaviors often invoke variants of conditional decision models, which assume that individuals base their own decisions on what other people do. Conditional decision models have been used to explain a wide range of empirical outcomes, such as diffusion. Rolfe (2004) indicated that these models vary in terms of both substance and details, but agree that individual decision—making can be formalized as interdependent, in that the probability of any given individual acting is dependent on what friends, family, co—workers, or other relevant social reference groups are willing to do.

Rolfe (2004) extended the concept of a threshold model into a more general form of a conditional decision model. During the analysis, she reviewed the various ways that an individual may respond to the binary decision of whether to adopt an innovation or engage in a behavior, both conditionally and unconditionally. In addition, Rolfe (2004) discussed the model's compatibility with both simple thresholds and more complex motivational mechanisms such as rationality or social pressure and reviewed the basic logic of conditional decision models and how conditional decisions spread an idea or behavior. "The emergence of cooperation depends on the existence of first movers, but

there must be others inspired by their efforts for cooperation to spread" (Rolfe, 2004, p.

2).

In analyzing the impact of social networks on the spread of innovations, Rolfe

(2004) examined situations where agents used global behavioral information and looked

at how varying the size of the group affects the resulting turnout level. From this, she

derived predictions about the effects of group size on collective outcomes, such as riots,

and found that larger groups tend to inspire higher rates of participation. Rolfe (2004)

also looked at how varying the size and composition of local social networks affects

adoption levels. She found that, while dense local networks generally produce higher

levels of adoption, when the innovation is quite costly or not likely to be widely accepted,

such networks also have a tendency to put a damper on the emergence of ideas and

behaviors when the innovation would otherwise spread quickly among the population.

Rolfe (2004) indicated that there was the issue of analytic distractions between the

various ways in which social networks may influence behavior. According to Rolfe

(2004), other characteristics of social networks may be important in understanding the

spread of behavior, such as the number of ties.

> The terms *strong ties* and *weak ties* are generally used to refer to the quality of the
>
> relationship, in particular, the frequency of interaction. The importance of weak
>
> ties in the spread of information, such as jobs, may lie primarily in the sheer
>
> volume of weak ties versus strong ties and the fact that these ties are less likely to
>
> overlap and thus lead to the same information sources (Rolfe, 2004, p. 25).

In contrast, Rolfe (2004) stated that there was good reason to expect that strong

tie relationships may actually elicit different reactions from the individuals involved in

many situations. Rolfe (as cited in Axerold, 1984) indicated that to the extent that strong

ties represent repeated reactions, one would expect to see individuals relying more

heavily on the fairness rule when interacting with close friends. According to Rolfe

(2004), strong relationships, as characterized by repeated interactions and increased

visibility or sanctionability of activity, may actually alter the decision rules used by

individuals in the relationships. "If individuals use uniform matching, the fair rule, more

often instead of merely conforming, innovations would spread more easily regardless of

group size" (Rolfe, 2004, p. 25). Rolfe indicated that this research should be of particular

use for empirical researchers who seek to understand the role that social network

structure may play in the phenomena of interest (such as the delivery of public goods and

services).

> If the researcher can make educated guesses about the ways in which decisions
>
> are being made, or the ease with which an innovation is spread, it is also possible
>
> to form expectations about how social networking structures are likely to affect
>
> the outcome in question (Rolfe, 2004, p. 26).

Critical Mass: Online Social Networks

Prior research has indicated that social networks and online communities are

leading factors in the wave of new, technologically advanced communication

innovations. The terms *social networks* and *online communities* are relative in their

meaning. Social networking sites allow users to share thoughts, activities, ideas, events,

and interests within their individual networks. Online communities are sometimes

considered as social networks, though in a broader sense, they provide similar services

that are group—centered. Patterson and Kavanaugh (2001) stated that the flowering of

the World Wide Web and the emergence of Internet—based community networks has generated much interest about the kinds of persons who adopt these innovative technologies and services and about the optimal conditions under which these initiatives may become self—sustaining and widely used.

Patterson and Kavanaugh (2001) conducted research implicated by the critical mass theory suggesting that the presence of a large group of high—resource, motivated early adopters are sufficient for critical mass if they are supported by the designers of the communication initiative. Their analysis consisted of community computer networking projects in an effort to determine if the pattern of adoption and growth was consistent with previous literature on interactive communication technology. Patterson and Kavanaugh (2001) indicated that, should a technology become important in the daily lives of enough individuals, that technology will continue to be sustained even if current users leave the system and new users join. Some technologies are unsuccessful in attempting to sustain. "The importance of sustainability is clear; should a technology, or technological system, fall short of sustainability, then early adopters of the technology lose the resources they have invested, and the technology ceases to become part of their everyday lives" (Patterson & Kavanaugh, 2001, p. 2). Patterson and Kavanaugh added that given the substantial amount of collective and individual resources invested, sustainability is especially vital for interactive communication systems, where early users of the system are rewarded for their risks, only if long—term universal access and use occur.

Patterson and Kavanaugh (2001) stated that community computer networks may be conceptualized as a public good. "For a community network, the objective is enhanced

by local and global multimedia communications" (Patterson & Kavanaugh, 2001, p. 2). According to Patternson and Kavanaugh (2001), community computer network organizers expect that the addition of Internet services to the existing communication milieu would increase the quality of life and the level of community involvement. Through their analysis of the applicability of the critical mass theory to community computer networks, they concluded that diversity and availability of early user resources are essential to network sustainability. In addition, Patterson and Kavanaugh (2001) discovered that many conditions identified by the critical mass theory provide good guides. "The critical mass of users also shares some interpersonal or organizational connection with the designers, builders, or key players behind the network" (Patterson & Kavanaugh, 2001, p. 9). Patterson and Kavanaugh concluded that interactive communication technologies, such as community computer networks, can achieve sustainability if designers remain involved with users and continue to adapt the system over time. "This co—creation seems essential if a community network is to become a household object, one important in the daily lives of community members" (Patterson & Kavanaugh, 2001, p. 10). The years have increased the benefits of such technologies, providing a combination of low—cost access to increasingly powerful computing and networking capabilities and decreased government Internet regulations. These components have facilitated the rapid development of a social phenomenon; the online community.

Plant (2004) stated that online communities can be a collective group of entities, individuals, or organizations that come together either temporarily or permanently through an electronic medium to interact in a common problem or interest space.

According to the author, the potential for near—universal Internet access and the ability to communicate at costs lower than ever before in human existence has facilitated the development of online communities that work to fulfill two basic human desires: first, to reach out and connect to other human beings, and second, to obtain human knowledge. The success of an online community is heavily dependent on its ability to achieve the critical mass. A number of characteristics can determine the probability of an online community reaching critical mass and ultimately its sustainability or failure.

Fast forward to the progression of technology within the past few years. Social networks and online communities have continued to make strides in becoming a primary communication innovation. Yet, there have still been issues of what critical mass characteristics are essential for their long—term survival. According to Raban et al. (2010), there is a general consensus that critical mass at inception ensures the sustained success of online communities. However, no clear understanding of what constitutes such a critical mass exists, and too few studies have been conducted on the relationship between initial online community interaction and its longer—term success to draw any conclusions. To address this gap, Raban et al. (2010) conducted a large—scale study in order to explore the relationship between online community lifespan and critical mass measures: (a) message volume, (b) user population heterogeneity, and (c) production functions. Raban et al. (2010) stated that online communities are often used to describe coalescence over time utilizing a particular collaborating computing—system environment. They examined the relationship between critical mass and initial group interactions in online community spaces, and the longer—term survival of the group interactions.

The empirical focus is on Internet Relay Chat (IRC) channels. "To date, little is known about the initial conditions that lead to the formation of groups in synchronous spaces such as IRC channels and about the subsequent conditions necessary for those groups to evolve and be sustained over longer periods of time," (Raban et al., 2010, p. 71). Raban et al. (2010) indicated that the driving research question for their study was the ability of the critical mass theory to predict the longer—term sustainability of groups in online synchronous interaction spaces. In consideration of conditions, they hypothesized that the long—term survivability of any newly born active channel can be predicted using four categories of factors: (a) the level of channel activity during various initial time intervals, (b) the trajectories of channel activity during various initial time intervals, (c) the heterogeneity of the channel's population during various initial time intervals, and (d) the type of production functions for various initial time intervals.

In the results of their analysis, Raban et al. (2010) found empirical evidence and support for Oliver, Marwell, and Teixeira's (1985) critical mass theory. "Poster heterogeneity emerges as the central predictor of survival with the advantage that it is evident as early as within two hours of a channel's existence and continues to be the leading predictor in the long term" (Raban et al., 2010, p. 79). Raban et al. found that activity in the form of messages sent and production functions are also good predictors, but it requires a longer time span in order to become reliable. "This situates the theories by Oliver, Marwell, and Teixeira (1985) and by Markus (1987) within the actual practices of chat channels" (Raban et al., 2010, p. 79). The research conducted by Raban et al. (2010) did not provide answers when it comes to understanding users' motivations and intentions.

Booij and Helms (2011) agreed that, in the case of online communities, it is unclear what the characteristics of the critical mass are. They indicated that some research defines critical mass as a particular number of users. "This approach fails to take into account the fact that not all users are equally active within a community, making it impossible to put a specific number on it" (Booij & Helms, 2011, p. 2). Booij and Helms found that some research defines critical mass as a result of the social context in which the discourse is embedded, such as the power relations among users or types of communities. "As a result of these complex interactions, the critical mass will be different for each community" (Booij & Helms, 2011, p. 2). To bring some clarity to the research related to critical mass, Booij and Helms (2011) affirmed that the goal of their research was to identify which factors contribute to the ideal circumstances needed for an online community to reach a critical mass.

Booij and Helms (2011) proposed in their literature that the critical mass is a change in the state of an online community that happens during its growth stage, marking the point at which the community becomes self—sustaining. "It causes a community to tip over into a mature state that is aimed at achieving continued growth and stability for the rest of its lifespan" (Booij & Helms, 2011, p. 7). In addition, Booij and Helms combined some of the elements of the discussed theories into one unified theoretical model on critical mass in online communities. Booij and Helms (2011) identified three recurring concepts that characterize the critical mass. Booij and Helms (2011) indicated that the first concept is a solid foundation required to allow the development and support for a user base and their particular social context. "Characteristics of the social platform itself (such as its technological infrastructure) form the most basic concept for

determining critical mass dynamics" (Booij and Helms, 2011, p. 8). The second concept

was based on the research conducted by Oliver et al. (1985), who assigned a very

prominent role to the social context surrounding a community in terms of new content

production. The third concept was based on 21st century research in which group

heterogeneity or a social platform is one of the most important factors of community

success in the long term.

> The social platform is at the bottom of the hierarchy, providing the basic
>
> functionality and infrastructure that allows for content to be produced and a social
>
> context to develop; this then determines the interactions of the user base, while
>
> those dynamics will also feed back into the content production over time, and may
>
> even trickle down to the social platform (Booij & Helms, 2011, p. 9).

Becoming overwhelmed by the activity in the community to the extent that they

will stop contributing could cause what is known as information overload. In order to

investigate their research question, Booij and Helms (2011) indicated that factors of each

level that in particular contribute to the ideal circumstances needed for an online

community to reach critical mass. As illustrated in Table 1, Booij and Helms (2011)

showed an overview of some example design guidelines related to each factor. "These

guidelines can help online communities improve their chances of reaching a high level of

growth and sustainability" (Booij & Helms, 2011, p. 16).

Table 1

Booij and Helms's Table of the Three Levels of Critical Mass

Social platform factors		Mechanisms:
1.	The technological platform and privacy	Handling user data sensitively
		Fast reaction time
		Anonymity
		Usability
		Safety
2.	Marketing	Adaptive execution of strategy
		Establish a strong trademark
		Marketing and promotional campaigns
		Highly sought—after people among the initial users
Content factors		**Mechanisms:**
1.	Form of the production function	Receptive participation
		Allow for a pleasant, un—obtrusive and immediate first impression
		Establish social norms
2.	Prevention of overload	Active moderation of all activity (sanctions)
		Delegate responsibility to the members
		Allow the formation and support of subgroups
		Implement personalized filtering features
User base factors		**Mechanisms:**
1.	Participation inequality	Reward participants for contributing
		Make it easier to contribute
		Contribution as a side effect of user activity
		Let members know they are special with respect to the group
		Create dissimilar groups to foster discussions
2.	Total size	Display community size statistics

Note. From *Dissecting the Critical Mass of Online Communities Towards a Unified Theoretical Model* (p. 14), by E. Booij and R. Helms, 2011, retrieved from http://www.ebooij.com/downloads/CriticalMass.pdf

From their research, Booij and Helms (2011) concluded that while their research focused on identifying what factors contribute to the ideal circumstances needed for an online community to reach a crucial mass, and though the most visible effect of reaching a critical mass is a large increase of members in a short period of time, it is still unclear what exactly makes a community tipping point in the first place. "I suspect the real trigger will vary from case to case, but will most likely lie in changes made at one or more of the three hierarchical levels defined" (Booij & Helms, 2011, p. 16).

Geddes (2011) conducted research on the factors that influence people's adoption of a new network and key strategies for achieving and maintaining critical mass. According to Geddes (2011), although difficult to achieve, it is possible to grow a social network from nothing to critical mass, organically. Geddes's approach, which guided his research, focused on building social networks and critical mass on a block by block basis. "So long as each community reaches a high enough saturation, the inclusion of new communities does not dilute the content below the critical mass; then a project is likely to continue to expand" (Geddes, 2011, p. 128). Table 2 illustrates Geddes's key strategies for critical mass sustainability.

Table 2

Geddes's Table of Key Strategies for Achieving and Maintaining Critical Mass

Key factor	Direction of effect	Strategy
Perceived user value	Increase	Increase perceived competitive positioning, perceived associations, customer need, or perceived proposition delivery
Influence	Increase	Leverage close, existing networks with established influencers; Mine existing conversations and identify existing super—influencers for targeting
Frequency	Increase	Leverage existing strong relationships in existing networks, as they have more frequent conversations
Relevance	Increase	Decrease the scope of conversation on the network, so as to ensure that more conversations are on topic
Uniqueness	Increase	Allow users to reward or thank users that produce great content, thus encouraging new, unique content
Value	Increase	Clearly demonstrate the value that the network offers while also displaying the value that other users get from it
Distance of relationship	Decrease	Leverage close, existing relationships initially
Community population size	Decrease	Reduce the target community size as to ensure that the saturation increases faster

Note. From "Achieving Critical Mass in Social Networks," by C. Geddes, 2011, *Database Marketing and Consumer Strategy Management, 18*(2), 128.

Critical Mass: Government 2.0

Most would consider the public sector as the superior collector and user of public information and the primary facilitator in providing goods and services to members of our society. It is vital that organizations are effective in not only accommodating mass numbers of individuals but also conducting operations accurately and efficiently. Electronic innovations, such as the Internet, have revolutionized the way organizations gather information and provide goods and services, resulting in the term E—government or Web 1.0. Kobza (2008) stated that organizations use traditional Internet, or Web 1.0 techniques for "out—of—network" behaviors. Rapid advancements in the development of Web 1.0 technologies has led to the implementation of collaborative or in—network techniques, such as social networking, known as Web 2.0. This progressive term, typically known within the private sector, has evolved to reflect definitive tools that can be associated with the public sector and the emergence of open government known as Government 2.0. According to Meijer et al. (2012), "Government 2.0 is often presented as a means to reinforce the relation between state and citizens in the information age" (p.59). Meijer et al. (2012) indicated that Government 2.0 is a more open, social, communicative, interactive, and user—centered version of E—government and has the potential to reshape the relationship between government and citizens in a sense that services, control, and policy formulation are designed through a cooperation of citizens, governments, and civil society. The Internet is the primary tool facilitating the growth and development of Government 2.0 applications. Literature has indicated that the growing interest and potential impact of this recent phenomenon has increased the investigation of its ability to achieve critical mass.

Joseph (2009) stated that Government 2.0 transforms government services from rigid bureaucratic structures to more efficient and dynamic entities. Due to the rapid expansion of the World Wide Web and its social networking applications, public sector organizations have been prone to explore the interactive capabilities and benefits of this innovation. "As governments take more of their products and services online, there is a greater shift toward identifying the value of interactive user components" (Joseph, 2009, p. 350). There are various components that can have an effect on the success or failure of Government 2.0 applications. Joseph (2009) pointed out two factors that can directly affect Government 2.0 sustainability: the level of user participation and the level of technical infrastructure to support the interactive applications. She added that for the growth of Government 2.0 projects, E—participation and wireless applications are two areas worthy of detailed examination. Joseph (2009) added that additional factors such as cost, managerial support, usability, reliability, security, and interoperability all affect the development of E—government projects.

Chun et al. (2009) explored the concept of Government 2.0 and its required principle functions and technological enablers to lead to a transformative, participatory model of E—government. They stated that The Open Government Initiative of the U.S. Federal Government (2009) urged the implementation of three principles for a government: transparency, participation, and collaboration. Chen et al. (2009) added that the required functions of open government can be easily achieved by adopting the Web 2.0 technologies that promote public participation.

Similarly, the adoption of social media technologies in the government results in the founding of Government 2.0; this should include functions not only for the

civil servants within the diverse government agencies, but also for the public who are external to the government's organizational boundary (Chen et al., 2009, p. 3).

In order for Government 2.0 to reach critical mass, dissemination of information via concepts such as social networking must be achieved, not only between organizations, but also between organizations and their constituents. Chun et al. (2009) concluded that for governments to be transparent, information should be easily accessible, searchable, and integrated without fear of personal information leaks and using a robust identity system. They added that for collaborations between government agencies and the public to develop, data integration and interoperability need to be achieved through sematic mediation such that the data is meaningfully integrated and shared. Chun et al. (2009) also indicated that for participation to occur, the citizens should have a platform to express their opinions without losing discussion threads, and the platform of Government 2.0 should provide governments with tools to analyze and evaluate the impact of making certain policy decisions. The analysis conducted by Chun et al. (2009) explained the issues and challenges residing in the use of social networks for government purposes and in Government 2.0 where citizens, data providers, and government agencies have made unprecedented connections. The literature indicated that there is still much work to be done.

Foley (2011) conducted an assessment of the progress that has been made since The Open Government Initiative of the U.S. Federal Government (2009) was implemented. He stated that since the directive was released, the list of accomplishments is long; detailed plans are in place, new web sites have been launched, and more than 300,000 data sets have been released to the public. Foley (2011) posed the question of

how much of what has been done to establish a more transparent government, one that

encourages collaboration between the public and private sectors as well as participation

from citizens, and is it having a real impact? He conducted an interview with Aneesh

Chopra, the first ever Chief Technology Officer of the United States, who provided his

insight on the state of open government and increase accessibility of citizens. Foley

(2011) indicated that Chopra wants public sector agencies to continue releasing high—

value data, do a much better job facilitating public participation, and do more to create

interfaces that make it fast and easy to tap into government data.

Based on his assessment, Foley (2011) agreed that much remains to be done. He

listed 10 action items that must be addressed if open government is to reach the critical

mass necessary for long term success:

1. **Create a Master Index:** What is needed is an inventory of all the data that is

   collected, generated, and managed by agencies (Foley, 2011, p. 12).

2. **Release More Data:** The volume of data released so far is a decent start, but

   it is not nearly enough (Foley, 2011, p. 12).

3. **Improve Data Quality:** Guidance may be needed to help agencies master the

   science of data cleansing and quality control (Foley, 2011, p. 12).

4. **Automate Data Distribution:** Open government will work at scale only if

   content can be easily consumed (Foley, 2011, p. 12).

5. **Engage the Public in New Ways:** Many of the websites created as first steps

   in the open government effort are little more than static pages; agencies must

   find ways to spark the public's interest and show that they are responsive

   (Foley, 2011, p. 12).

6. **Reduce FOIA Backlogs:** The Open Government Directive calls for agencies to reduce Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) backlogs by 10% annually when it should be a 25% target; the directive calls on agencies to proactively use technology to disseminate useful information rather than wait for FOIA requests (Foley, 2011, p. 12).

7. **Apply Better Metrics:** The key objectives of open government—transparency, participation, and collaboration should all be measured for effectiveness and accountability (Foley, 2011, p. 13).

8. **Greater Accountability is Needed:** There must be consequences when agencies don't deliver (Foley, 2011, p. 13).

9. **Engage the Private Sector:** Open government creates fertile ground for public—private partnerships around new applications and services, economic opportunities, government efficiencies, and other public service innovations and improvements (Foley, 2011, p. 13).

10. **Get the Word Out:** Too many Americans do not grasp open government; agencies must do more to help the public understand the possibilities and processes of open government (Foley, 2011, p. 13).

Although Foley (2011) pointed out action items that would increase the likelihood of achieving the critical mass of open government or Government 2.0, they will only work if public attitudes are adaptable to increased technology and participates. Nam (2012) conducted a study on the transition of E—government into new modes such as social networking and citizens' attitudes toward open government and Government 2.0. "When new goals and vehicles of E—government reach citizens, a set of conventional

determinants, such as perceived value of government services and general trust in government, shapes the collective attitude toward new modes of e—government" (Nam, 2012, p. 346). Nam stated that the attitudes of citizens may be influenced by services that are enabled and advanced by the employment of new technologies implemented for government workings. He added that individuals' longstanding perceptions about government may be unyielding, so that while elaborate technology may positively affect some citizens' attitudes, these advances may also fail to influence even a slight change in others. "Open government driven by Government 2.0 needs to be evaluated from the viewpoint of citizens" (Nam, 2012, p. 350).

Nam (2012) analyzed the following factors that influence citizens' attitudes toward E—government: usage intensity, perceived value of E—government, general trust in government, and general use of the Internet. In addition, he investigated socio—demographic characteristics that can affect citizens' knowledge and usability of Government 2.0 platforms. As a result of his investigation and testing four hypotheses relative to citizens' use of Government 2.0 platforms, Nam (2012) discovered several key findings. According to Nam (2012), citizens who connect with social networking and social media websites of government agencies believe that Government 2.0 makes government more accessible to people and creates better informed citizens. He also found that those who value E—government based on transactions tend to believe that Government 2.0 benefits citizens by making government more accessible and allowing citizens to stay informed about government workings. Nam (2012) indicated that the effect of citizens' trust in government is, overall, supportive of open government and the generic benefits delivered by the technological means of E—government. "Trust in

government increases citizens' perceptions of the efficacy of Government 2.0 providing accessibility and making them more informed" (Nam, 2012, p. 361). Nam's fourth finding was that the frequency of Internet use and access to high—speed Internet do not significantly influence citizens' attitudes toward open government and Government 2.0. "Despite a growing number of frequent Internet users and broadband users, the expansion of government technology use does not make a positive change in citizens' attitudes toward Government 2.0" (Nam, 2012, p. 361).

The gap in frequency of technology use and broadband adoption, the so—called "usage divide" or "access divide", has little impact on citizens' attitudes toward open government and Government 2.0. "Perceived value and trust exercise a stronger leverage on attitudinal differences over technology adoption and use" (Nam, 2012, p. 363). Nam stated that the main findings suggest policy implications for E—government practitioners. "The fact that citizens' trust in government anchors their support for a new E—government initiative requiring government to consider factors for inspiring general trust, as well as to keep improving technological convenience through E—government" (Nam, 2012, p. 363).

The possible benefits of the implementation of public sector social networking technology, known as Government 2.0, have generated far more interest than its limitations. The literature has provided various aspects of these innovations from their inception to their capabilities. The dominant view is that the web—based applications that are associated with Government 2.0 offer almost unlimited potential. Although some agencies have integrated its usage on a limited scale, literature has indicated that the public sector is not fully exploring this opportunity. Increasing concerns of public trust,

limited transparency, and accessibility of goods and services by growing populations prompted researchers to explore this revolutionary technology and apply it to the public sector. The findings of various studies have shown that integration of Government 2.0 platforms has a direct impact on the flow of information between governments, stakeholders, and citizens which, in turn, increases transparency and confidence by communities. In order for the phenomenon of Government 2.0 to reach long—term sustainability, the critical mass must be achieved.

The literature has indicated that achieving critical mass can be accomplished by public understanding, adaptability, and participation. Research has also found that citizens' attitudes toward this technology and its perceived value play a major role in achieving critical mass. The delivery of goods and services, as well as the ability to access information through the implementation of Government 2.0 technologies, may influence the attitudes of citizens. In reviewing various literary views of Government 2.0 and its potential of becoming a self—sustaining innovation, it is important that governments consider factors that will influence citizens' trust and encourage engagement. This will be beneficial to achieving critical mass.

Summary of Critical Mass

Innovation sustainability is the milestone to reach following its diffusion among the masses. The review of literature has extensively explored various aspects, processes, factors, perceptions, influences, and models that enable a new innovation to achieve the level to sustain long—term, better known as critical mass. The critical mass theory (Oliver et al., 1985) provided the framework in explaining that users of a phenomenon such as social media can influence each other by the frequency of its usage and its

interactive capabilities. Various scholars have analyzed the multi—faceted applications of the critical mass theory and offered their views of its factors, perceptions, and influences. In addition, researchers developed and applied several models that tested an innovation's ability to reach critical mass.

The review of literature also revealed that the idea of critical mass is central to many understandings of collective action. Literature indicated that the critical mass theory (Oliver et al., 1985) integrated and formalized theories on phenomena variously labeled "the free—rider problem" (Olson, 1968), "the tragedy of commons" (Hardin, 1968) and "snob and bandwagon effects" (Leibenstein, 1950). These components were examined in order to provide a better understanding of the nature of the critical mass theory. Literature was reviewed in relation to technology that has been introduced that enables social interactivity. Various researchers conducted studies and provided their scholarly views of the ability to achieve critical mass within an online social network. In addition, literature explored the integration of this technology within the public sector, known as Government 2.0. Scholars provided their views on the impact and benefits of Government 2.0 as well as issues that could impede this technology from achieving critical mass.

Theoretical views have been introduced that explain how an innovation is adopted and how an innovation reaches the point of sustainability. The concept of sources of interactivity among government agencies, stakeholders, and the public has evolved into various platforms and applications of informatics. An important aspect to consider is how potential adopters of technology such as social media can not only select their platform

but also use and gain benefit. Continuing literature examined how people select and use innovations that are beneficial to their needs.

Gratification of Innovations

Uses and Gratifications Theory

The various uses and applications that have evolved as a result of the Internet have led to transformative changes in personal and social habits and roles. Research indicated that social and professional interaction with friends, family, and business contacts transitioned from the offline realm into an online practice as the result of the increasing popularity of social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Due to the recent presence and growth in the use of social media, researchers are conducting investigations using the uses and gratifications theory (Katz et al., 1974) to provide an explanation as to why users find this form of media to be so enticing. Although the uses and gratifications theory was initiated long before the introduction of the World Wide Web, let alone social media, this approach has been applied in several current studies that analyzed the appeal and satisfaction of social media platforms.

According to Katz et al. (1974), interest in the gratifications that media provide their audiences goes back to the beginning of empirical mass communication research. They indicate that the earliest studies can be dated back to the 1940s on interests such gratifications from television, radio, and newspapers.

Each of these investigations came up with a list of functions served either by some specific contents or by the medium in question: to match one's wits against others, to get information or advice for daily living, to provide a framework for one's day, to prepare oneself culturally for the demands of upward mobility, or to

be reassured about the dignity and usefulness of one's role (Katz et al., 1974, p.509).

Katz et al. added that although these early studies had many similarities, they cumulatively did not result in a more detailed picture of media gratifications conducive to the eventual formulation of theoretical statements. Those similarities included:

- A methodological approach whereby statements about media functions were elicited from the respondents in an especially open—ended way.

- A qualitative approach in their attempt to group gratification statements into labeled categories, largely ignoring the distribution of their frequency in the population.

- They did not attempt to explore the links between the gratifications detected and the psychological or sociological origins of the needs that were so satisfied.

- They failed to search for the interrelationships among the various media functions, either quantitatively or conceptually, in a manner that might have led to the detection of the latent structure of media gratifications.

Katz et al. (1974) stated that more recent studies have a number of differing starting points, but each attempts to press toward a greater systemization of what is involved in conducting research in this field. They added that researchers made operational many of the logical steps that were only implicit in their earlier work. "They are concerned with the social and psychological origins of needs, which generate expectations of the mass media or other sources, which lead to differential patterns of media exposure (or other engagement activities), resulting in need gratifications and other consequences, perhaps

mostly unintended ones" (Katz et al., 1974, p. 510). Katz et al. added that the uses and gratifications approach represents an attempt to explain something about the way that individuals use communications, among other resources in their environment, to satisfy their needs and to achieve their goals.

Modeling Uses and Gratifications

Katz et al. (1974) implied that uses and gratifications rest on a body of assumptions, explicit or implicit, which have some degree of internal coherence and that are arguable in the sense that not everyone contemplating them would find them self—evident. They argued that those assumptions are elements of a uses and gratifications model. Those elements include:

1. The audience is conceived of as active (mass media use is assumed to be goal directed).

2. In the mass communication process, much initiative in linking need—gratification and media choice lies with the audience member.

3. The media compete with other sources of need—satisfaction.

4. Methodologically speaking, many of the goals of mass media use can be derived from data supplied by individual audience members.

5. Value judgements about the cultural significance of mass communication should be suspended while audience orientations are explored on their own terms.

Even though these elements provided a significant foundation in the study of the uses and gratification approach, they focused on traditional forms of media such as print or television. The emergence of new media technology, such as the Internet, has

prompted modifications to the theory. Ruggerio (2000) stated the some media scholars argued that even the traditional audience concept must be radically amended because of novel informational characteristics of the Internet. "Although scientists are likely to continue using traditional tools and typologies to answer questions about media use, we must also be prepared to expand our current theoretical models of uses and gratifications" (Ruggerio, 2000, p. 3). Ruggerio added that contemporary and future models must include concepts such as interactivity, demassification, hypertextuality, and asynchroneity.

Uses and Gratifications: Online Social Networks

Within the past couple of decades, the use of the Internet has not only been integrated as an important tool of communication in our society, but it has also changed the way people interact. Raacke and Bonds—Raacke (2008) indicated that recent research has begun to focus on the way the Internet is used with regard to relationship building. The online communication that can be initiated by the Internet allows the cultivation of relationships as well as improved communication between parties. They stated that a new means of online communication has emerged within its own set of idiosyncrasies: *social networking*. Based on the limited research conducted on social networking sites and their impact, Raacke and Bonds—Raacke (2008) conducted their study to evaluate why people use these social networking sites, the characteristics of the typical user, and what uses and gratifications are met by using these sites.

During the time of the investigation, Raacke and Bonds—Raacke (2008) concluded that the percentage of participants who indicated that they had an account with a social networking site was large and growing. In addition, participants of the study

indicated that they spent significant time during the day on these sites. Raacke and Bonds—Raacke (2008) explained that when examining the characteristics of users, women and men were equally likely to have accounts at one or more social networking sites. The uses and gratifications for using these sites varied. "Popular uses and gratifications such as to keep in touch with old and new friends or to make new ones indicate that users are meeting a 'friend' need" (Raacke & Bonds—Raacke, 2008, p. 174). Raacke and Bonds—Raacke's (2008) research indicated that social networking sites also provide uses and gratifications for providing information and accessibility. "Similar uses and gratifications, such as to learn about events, to post functions, and to feel connected, indicate that users are meeting a need by using the site as a source of information" (Raacke & Bonds—Raacke, 2008, p. 174).

Quan—Haase and Young (2010) continued research of uses and gratifications of social networking and social media platforms such as Facebook and MySpace. "Users have adopted a wide range of digital technologies into their communication repertoire; it remains unclear why they adopt multiple forms of communication instead of substituting one medium for another" (Quan—Haase & Young, 2010, p. 350). Based on their review of literature, Quan—Haase and Young identified two important trends: (a) Users typically do not embrace a single form of social media, but they tend to employ a band of tools for communication. This trend shows that one type of social media does not replace another, but becomes integrated into a bundle of media use that includes online and offline forms of communication; (b) Users tend to embrace new tools and adopt them as part of their communications repertoire. This suggests that the adoption and use of digital technologies follow social trends, where one medium becomes popular among users and

reaches a peak of high penetration, and then daily use becomes steady, or even diminishes, as other media starts to gain popularity. Quan—Haase and Young (2010) conducted a study which compared the gratifications obtained from Facebook and instant messaging (IM) to examine the extent to which different types of social media fulfill different user needs.

As a result of their investigation, Quan—Haase and Young (2010) found that both Facebook and IM possess a similar factor structure, suggesting that they have very similar uses and fulfill similar communication and socialization needs. They identified six factors that motivate the use of social media platforms:

- Pastime—getting away from responsibilities and pressures and providing a form of entertainment

- Affection—expressing concern and friendship toward others

- Fashion—helping users appear fashionable and stylish to others

- Sharing Problems—talking to others about their concerns

- Sociability—using technology as a means to meet new people and overcome social inhibitions

- Social Information—feeling involved with what is going on with others

Quan—Haase and Young (2010) also noted that social information factors include information about what activities and events peers are involved in, current statuses, and what general news is important to the community.

In their comparison of Facebook and IM, Quan—Haase and Young (2010) found minor differences in the gratifications obtained. "Even though these differences are small, they are central to the way in which users experience the two tools and use them"

(Quan—Haase & Young, 2010, p. 358). Quan—Haase and Young stated that in Facebook, social information emerged as a key factor that was not present in the IM factor analysis. "Although IM allows users to be in the 'social know', it is not as effective as Facebook because users have to communicate with each 'friend' separately to find out about plans; in Facebook, this information is broadcast to the entire network" (Quan—Haase & Young, 2010, p. 358). Quan—Haase and Young added that social information emerges as a key difference between the two tools with Facebook fulfilling a unique social need by allowing users to conveniently broadcast social information asynchronously via "the wall". They found another distinction between the two tools was the manner in which they support users in sharing problems and showing affection.

In IM, users can engage in intimate conversations allowing them to share their problems with partners more easily, whereas Facebook interactions more closely resemble a mix of email and online forums where messages are visible to the entire community (Quan—Haase & Young, 2010, p. 359). Quan—Haase and Young expressed that these two key differences are central to users' experiences. "Overall, we can conclude that sociability is a central gratification obtained from both forms of social media; however, the kinds of needs that each medium fulfills are different in nature and directly linked to their functionality" (Quan—Haase & Young, 2010, p. 359).

The gratification of the basic human need to connect with others has become an integral factor in the development and implementation of social networking sites. The social networking site Twitter has grown into a major application of connectivity in just a few years of existence. Chen (2010) applied the principles of the uses and gratifications theory to Twitter to see how people who seek out this medium and use it actively gratify

a need to connect with other people. She indicated that among social networks, Twitter has received less study so far than larger and older applications, such as Facebook. Chen (as cited in Neilsen Wire, 2009) stated that Twitter is one of the faster—growing social networking sites, with visitors growing from 1 million in June 2008 to 21 million one year later and a future growth rate of more than 5 million users annually in the coming years. "While social networks tend to flourish and then flounder, at least at the moment, Twitter seems to have strong appeal" (Chen, 2010, p. 756).

Chen (2010) argued that Twitter allows people to gratify their intrinsic need to form relationships with other people through the process of sending tweets and direct messages, retweeting, following people, and gaining followers. She applied previous literature from Rubin (2009) by indicating that the interpersonal aspect of a social media, such as Twitter, makes the uses and gratifications approach particularly suitable because uses and gratifications focus on people's psychological and social needs, along with how a particular medium can gratify needs and motives to communicate. Chen (2010) added that gratification of the need to connect with others through the process of using Twitter is a para—social gratification, where people form (as cited in Wenner, 1985) ritualized social relationships through media use. Wenner (1985) defined para—social gratifications as relationships with media actors, such as television newscasters or newspaper columnists. Chen (2010) evolved this definition by stating that, in a social media environment such as Twitter, people form social relationships with media actors who are also members of that social network.

Some of the data collected and analyzed for this study will include informal relationships between participants who more than likely have never met face—to—face.

This coincides with Chen's (2010) study in which she indicated that the gratification of the need for connection relies on less formal relationships between people, capitalizing on the web's potential for interaction that is absent in more static communication forms such as print newsletter or newspaper. She indicated that Granovetter's (1973) concept of weak ties is useful to explain the gratification of the need for connection. Granovetter (1973) defined the strength of a tie between people as a combination of the amount of time, the emotional intensity, the mutual confiding, and the reciprocation between people, and he noted these ties incorporate a feeling of belonging. Chen (2010) stated that the weak ties concept applies to her study. "I predict that the more time people spend on Twitter, the greater their potential to gratify a need to connect to other people on the social networking site" (Chen, 2010, p. 757). Chen sought to achieve three goals in her study:

1. To examine how actively people use Twitter both over the course of a series of months and on a daily basis to assess the active audience concept intrinsic to a uses and gratifications approach

2. To quantify how well people gratify a need to connect with others by using this particular medium

3. To see how use of particular Twitter functions, such as tweeting and retweeting, mediate the relationship between active time on Twitter and gratifying a need to connect with other users

Chen (2010) indicated in her findings that spending a lot of time using Twitter over a series of months is more responsible for gratifying people's need to connect with others on Twitter than the hours per day people spend on Twitter or the specific acts of

sending messages or repeating others' messages on Twitter. "These findings confirm

earlier research that found that people who are active on social networks, such as

Facebook are more likely to feel connected" (Chen, 2010, p. 760). Chen (2010) added

that these findings offer support for the idea that Twitter is not just virtual noise of people

talking to each other, as some critics contend, but that it is a medium that people actively

seek out to gratify a need to connect with others. "This supports the idea that uses and

gratifications is a suitable approach for the study of online social networks, and paves the

way for more research of this kind" (Chen, 2010, p. 760).

Summary of Uses and Gratifications

The Internet has created a landscape conducive for innovative forms of social

networking in recent years. Some platforms offer greater levels of interactivity than

others. Anyone capable of accessing the Internet, or in possession of a mobile device, can

use most forms of social media (networking) through text messaging, a web browser, or a

variety of mobile or desktop applications. The combination of social networking's

exponential growth and rise in popularity is indicative of a new trend in how humans

communicate with each other on the Internet. This presents the question of how

individuals can lay the groundwork of understanding the reasons why it is being used by

so many. Scholars have noted that the uses and gratifications theory (Katz et al., 1974) is

a useful framework for Internet research. Researchers have revived the uses and

gratifications theory as a means to explore the motives and behaviors of Internet users.

The review of literature on the uses and gratifications theory (Katz et al., 1974)

revealed elements of a uses and gratifications model. Those elements were developed for

more traditional forms of media such as print or television. Ruggerio (2000) was one of

the first scholars to acknowledge the emergence of new media technology and interactive

concepts, such as the Internet, and suggested expansion to the uses and gratifications

approach to accommodate the evolution. He indicated that contemporary and future

models must include concepts such as interactivity, demassification, hypertextuality, and

asynchroneity. Continued research has further proven that the use of the Internet has not

only become integrated as an important tool of communication in our society, but it has

also changed the way people interact. The uses and gratifications approach has also been

used to study why the interactivity of platforms such as social networking has become so

enticing.

In recent years, the uses and gratifications theory has been used to explain the

popularity of social networking or social media platforms. Scholars indicated that the

adoption and use of digital technologies tend to follow social trends. Quan—Haase and

Young (2010) identified important trends of users that reflect social habits. They also

identified six motivating factors of social media platforms. Chen (2010) contributed to

the literature by indicating that the gratification of the need for connection relies on less

formal relationships between people, capitalizing on the web's potential for interaction

that is absent in more static communication forms such as print. Based on the research

conducted, it was apparent that the uses and gratifications theory has been a vital

approach in understanding the strength of social networking and its ability to satisfy

users.

Summary of Literature Review

This extensive review of literature provided insight into the rationale and need to investigate the research question and subquestions. By integrating the diffusion of innovations, critical mass, and uses and gratifications theories, three theoretical constructs were identified that represent the key driving forces for both the adoption and use of social media as well as its potential impact of increasing public sector accessibility, improving public trust, initiating community engagement, and building a positive reputation. Boyd and Ellison (2007) indicated that the terms social media and social networking are interchangeable in that they both are web—based services that allow individuals to: (a) construct a public or semipublic profile within a bounded system, (b) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (c) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. The evolution of technology led by the Internet has advanced the inclusion of social media as a viable innovation.

The review of literature also explored how an innovation is spread and adopted based on the diffusion of innovations theory. This led to the inquiry and review of how an innovation is sustained by the masses, which was explored through the various elements of the critical mass theory. In order to better understand the satisfactory benefits acquired from an innovation, the uses and gratifications theory was explored to develop a complete theoretical framework for the intended study.

In public sector organizations, there is a gap in the literature that focuses on the impact of social media for increased public accessibility, understanding of programs, goods, and services, and community engagement. This review of literature explored

theoretical and literary viewpoints that indicate the various reasons why the wide—

spread adoption and use of this innovation can enhance public sector efficiency and

effectiveness in the delivery of services. The results, conclusions, and recommendations

that emerged from this research initiated implications for positive social change.

      In summary, the synthesis of literature and integration of applicable theoretical

constructs developed a framework that provided the basis and context for this study. The

points that were presented indicated that there was a need for the impending research.

Chapter 3 provided an in—depth overview of the research methodology for this study.

Clients and employees within departments of a county government agency in Atlanta,

Georgia centered the research on the impact of social media platforms on accessibility.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

More than a decade ago, Brown and Duguid (2001) concluded that if people perceive that information is difficult to access, or they do not know what information exists for them to access, they will likely not seek it out. As the background and review of literature have indicated, this has been a valid assessment, particularly within the public sector. In recent years, the Internet has been the foundation for the integration of major technological advancements that have been shown to enhance interactivity as well as accessibility of information. What is known as *social media* (social networks) have enabled people to communicate, discover information, and engage with each other on an unlimited number of topics and issues. Boyd (2010) elaborated that social media's ability to provide increased visibility of both behaviors and information separates it from other technologies and creates unique consequences.

There have been various perspectives regarding research approaches to the study of the impact of digital technology such as the Internet within the public sector. The rapid emergence of social media and its potential impact on public sector accessibility has created a new scope of exploration. Raeth et al. (2009) noted that scholars estimate that social media adoption in organizations is outpacing empirical understanding of the use of these technologies and theories about why they may alter various organizational processes. In this study, several research designs and models of research methodologies were considered with the intention of choosing one that would be most suitable. The questions that guided the study were as follows:

Research Question

Does the adoption of social media platforms result in increased accessibility of goods and services within the public sector?

Subquestions

1. What is considered a point of sustainability for social media usage in public sector organizations?

2. Does the use of social media provide better insight into the benefit of goods and services offered to clients, office efficiency, and the productivity within the public sector?

3. Does the increase in the usage of social media result in improved engagement between the public sector and the community?

Although the use of social media has the potential to be revolutionary within the private sector, there are gaps in literature that indicate similar benefits within the public sector. The purpose of this exploratory research was to examine the impact that social media have on accessibility within public sector organizations, specifically the awareness and understanding of goods, services, and programs. This study investigated the specific research problem of the lack of accessibility, awareness, and understanding of programs and services by citizens who use public sector organizations. This chapter establishes a research framework to explore the impact of social media on public sector accessibility in a large county government organization.

This study of the impact of social media on public sector accessibility addressed a gap in current research literature on modern approaches to enhancing public awareness, understanding, and engagement in order to improve trust and the reputation of

governmental organizations. This study used a specific research paradigm and approach. In this chapter, I explored the research designs considered, the theoretical tradition of inquiry, the research sample and population, the method of data collection and procedures, data interpretation and analysis, as well as ethical issues in research.

Design of Study

This section describes the research design adopted for the study and the justification for its selection. In this regard, this section includes a justification for the selected research method, the rationale and criteria for the selection of study participants, the sample and population, methods of data collection, data analysis and interpretation, as well as ethical issues that affected me during the course of the study.

Justification of Research Design

To conduct the research necessary to effectively answer the research question, a research design that comprehensively included the appropriate methodology and procedures was employed. Frankfort—Nachmias and Nachmias (2008) stated that a *research design* is the "blueprint" that enables the investigator to come up with solutions to research problems and that guides him or her in the various stages of research. Several methods of research design were explored before a qualitative analysis was selected. According to Creswell (2009), "The selection of a research design is based on the nature of the research problem or issue being addressed, the researchers' personal experiences, and the audiences of study" (p. 3). Based on the background and research problem, this study was considered social science research. Many scholars have elaborated on the complexity and diversity of social science research. It was beneficial to analyze the style

and techniques of all research designs to determine which would best align with the

nature of the study.

King et al. (1994) studied research designs in order to determine which would

produce valid inferences about social and political life. They provided discussion on the

differences of quantitative and qualitative research and explained that

Quantitative research uses numbers and statistical methods. It tends to be based

on numerical measurements of specific aspects of phenomena; it abstracts from

particular instances to seek general description or to test causal hypotheses; it

seeks measurements and analyses that are easily replicable by other researchers.

(King et al., 1994, p. 3)

In contrast, King et al. (1994) indicated that:

Qualitative research covers a wide range of approaches, but by definition, none of

these approaches relies on numerical measurements. Such work has tended to

focus on one, or a small number of cases, and uses intensive interviews or depth

analysis of historical materials to be discursive in method and to be concerned

with a rounded or comprehensive account of some event or unit. (p. 4)

Creswell (2007) expounded on the role of qualitative research by stating that "qualitative

research begins with assumptions, a worldview, the possible use of a theoretical lens, and

the study of research problems inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe

to a social or human problem" (p. 37).

Mixed methods research calls for a combination of the two prior research designs.

In its solicitation research papers, *The Journal of Mixed Methods* (2006) described mixed

methods as research in which the investigator collects, analyses, mixes, and draws

inferences from both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or program of inquiry. Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) provided a more comprehensive definition by stating that:

> Mixed methods research is a research design with philosophical assumptions as well as methods of inquiry. As a methodology, it involves philosophical assumptions that guide the direction of the collection and analysis of data and the mixture of qualitative and quantitative data in a single study or series of studies. Its central premise is that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone. (p. 5)

Babbie (2007) recommended the use of more than one research method because the researcher can benefit from the advantages of each method. Hanson, Creswell, Creswell—Clark, and Petska (2005) and Creswell (2007) acknowledged the relevance of mixed methods in social science research by indicating that the mixed methods design is beneficial because it can assist the researcher in triangulating or varying data sources, thereby eliminating possible bias that any single research method may produce. The mixed methods research design appeared to be the most logical approach for this study, but a study using such parameters would require an unlimited amount of resources and time that I was not capable of providing. Continued research based on a large scale study would be a more appropriate option for this research design.

This study examined the perspectives of clients and employees within a public sector agency in Atlanta, Georgia, to determine whether the use of social media platforms is beneficial in addressing administrative and informational disconnects. The quantitative,

qualitative, and mixed methods research designs were all analyzed to determine which was most beneficial to the elements of this study. Jensen (2002) reviewed the complementarities of quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods and indicated that whereas a quantitative research method is ideal for understanding repetitive events and objects, such as expression of opinions, a qualitative research method is suitable for exploring a one—time occurrence of a significant phenomenon. In addition, Jensen elaborated on the consideration of qualitative methods in that it may be used when the research aim is to investigate complex phenomena that are difficult to measure quantitatively, to generate data necessary for a comprehensive understanding of a problem, to gain insights into potential causal mechanisms, to develop sound quantitative measurement processes or instruments, or to study special populations.

The factors to consider in the selection of a research design for this study coincided most with the views provided by Jensen (2002). Based on the extensive review of the research designs and the analyses of the benefits and drawbacks of each, I found that qualitative research would be most appropriate in the study of the impact of social media on public sector accessibility. Although quantitative and mixed methods designs were formidable approaches for this type of social science research, for the purposes of effectiveness, cohesiveness, and expediency, a qualitative inquiry was used.

Examination of Research Methods

Several methods of qualitative inquiry were examined. They included ethnography, grounded theory, narrative, phenomenology, and case study. The examination of these approaches helped to elucidate their use in qualitative research as well as their level of appropriateness in relation to this study. "Ethnography originated in

comparative cultural anthropology by early 20th century anthropologists" (Creswell,

2007, p. 69). Creswell (as cited in Harris, 1968) stated that "ethnography is a qualitative

design in which the researcher describes and interprets the shared and learned patterns of

values, behaviors, beliefs, and language of a culture—sharing group" (p. 68). Creswell

(2007) discussed several ways in which ethnographic research can be challenging, which

applied to this study:

> The researcher needs to have grounding in cultural anthropology and the meaning
>
> of a social—cultural system as well as the concepts typically explored by
>
> ethnographers. The time to collect data is extensive, involving prolonged time in
>
> the field. In many ethnographies, the narratives are written in a literary, almost
>
> storytelling approach, an approach that may limit the audience for the work and
>
> may be challenging for authors accustomed to traditional approaches to writing
>
> social and human science research. (p. 72)

Creswell (2007) indicated that the grounded theory design was developed in

sociology in the late 1960s by two researchers who felt that theories used in research

were often inappropriate and ill—suited for the participants under study. Creswell (as

cited in Strauss & Corbin, 1998) defined *grounded theory* as a qualitative research design

in which the inquirer generates a general explanation (theory) of a process, action, or

interaction shaped by the views of a large number of participants (p.63). Grounded theory

is similar to ethnography in that it is used to develop a theory based on a conceptual

approach to the data collected. The *narrative* research method consists of "biographic

data" given by the person(s) who actually experience an event (Rudestam & Newton,

2007, p. 44). A grounded theory design would present challenges to a study of the impact of social media on public sector accessibility in that:

> The investigator needs to set aside, as much as possible, theoretical ideas or notions so that the analytic, substantive theory can emerge. Despite the evolving, inductive nature of this form of qualitative inquiry, the researcher must recognize that this is a systematic approach to research with specific steps in the data analysis. The researcher faces the difficulty of determining when categories are saturated or when the theory is sufficiently detailed. (Creswell, 2007, p. 68)

According to Creswell (2007), narrative research originated in the fields of literature, history, anthropology, sociology, sociolinguistics, and education. Creswell (as cited in Daiute & Lightfoot, 2004) stated that narrative research has many forms, uses a variety of analytic practices, and is rooted in different social and humanities disciplines. He based the definition of this research method on the statement of a previous scholar that "narrative research is a specific type of qualitative design in which narrative is understood as a spoken or written text giving an account of an event/action or series of events/actions, chronologically connected" (Czarniawska, 2004, p. 17). Creswell argued that narrative research can be a challenging approach to use:

> The researcher needs to collect extensive information about the participant, and needs to have a clear understanding of the context of the individual's life. It takes a keen eye to identify, in the source material gathered, the particular stories that capture the individual's experiences. (Creswell, 2007, p. 57)

A qualitative research method that is closely related to narrative is *phenomenology*. Creswell (2007) stated that "whereas a narrative study reports the life of

a single individual, a phenomenological study describes the meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept of phenomenon" (p. 57). Creswell added that phenomenology has a strong philosophical component to it. "It draws heavily on the writings of German mathematician, Edmund Hussel (1859—1938) and those who expanded his views" (Creswell, 2007, p. 58). Creswell indicated that "the basic purpose of phenomenology is to reduce individual experiences with a phenomenon to a description of the universal essence" (p. 58). Additional information from Rudestam and Newton (2007) indicated that phenomenology seeks to establish the meaning of events through a documentary—style approach to gaining insight on a particular subject. Although phenomenology can provide a deep understanding of growing phenomena such as social media, Creswell (2007) indicated that the research method does have its challenges:

> Phenomenology requires at least some understanding of the broader philosophical assumptions, and these should be identified by the researcher. The participants in the study need to be carefully chosen to be individuals who have all experienced the phenomenon in question, so that the researcher, in the end, can forge a common understanding. Bracketing personal experiences may be difficult for the researcher to implement. (Creswell, 2007, p. 62)

Despite the fact that each of the previously discussed qualitative research methods has its advantages, the strategy of inquiry that was chosen was case study research. McNabb (2000) stated that the case study approach allows the researcher to examine authentic sets of data to derive certain anticipated outcomes. Creswell provided a more comprehensive definition of the case study method:

Case study research is a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in—depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g., observations, interviews, social networking material, documents, and reports), and reports a case description and case—based themes. (Creswell, 2007, p. 73)

Creswell also indicated that a case study can involve singular or multiple programs. He added that case study research has been used in many disciplines, particularly in social science. "The case study approach is familiar to social scientists because of its popularity in psychology, medicine, law, and political science" (Creswell, 2007, p. 73).

Another factor that could prove to be beneficial for the use of case study research was that there were five critical elements to this design. According to Yin (2003), "those elements include: (a) research questions, (b) propositions, (c) unit of analysis, (d) logic linking the data to the proposition, and (e) criteria for interpreting the findings" (p. 21). Moreover, Yin (2003) argued that the scope of the case study consists of "investigating a contemporary phenomenon within its real—life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (p. 13).

The impact of social media on public sector accessibility was investigated within a large—county government agency. The case study method was used to provide extensive knowledge that local, state, and federal organizations can apply as well as contribute to improvements for community engagement. Because multiple bounded systems were used to produce authentic sets of data, case study research was applied to produce valid and reliable results. The intent of the case study research was the basis for

the type of case study that was selected. According to Creswell (2007), "types of qualitative case studies are distinguished by the size of the bounded case, such as whether the case involves one individual, several individuals, a group, an entire program, or an activity" (p. 74).

Creswell (2007) added that there are three types of cases studies based on intent: (a) the single instrumental case study, (b) the intrinsic case study, and (c) the collective or multiple case study. Creswell (as cited by Stake, 1995) stated that in a single instrumental case study, the researcher focuses on an issue or concern and then selects one bounded case to illustrate this issue. This singular focus has been done to gain greater knowledge on the actual subject, organization, or entity being studied. Creswell (as cited by Stake, 1995) described that within an intrinsic case study, the focus is on the case itself (e.g., evaluating a program or a studying a student having difficulty) because the case presents and unusual or unique situation. "This resembles the focus of narrative research, but the case study analytic procedures of a detailed description of the case, set within its context or surroundings, still hold true" (Creswell, 2007, p. 74). The focus of an intrinsic case study is more of a subject for personal reasons and not to advance a certain phenomenon.

The collective case study is commonly known as the "multicase" design (McNabb, 2000, p. 287). Creswell (2007) provided a more descriptive take on a collective case study:

> The one issue or concern is again selected, but the inquirer selects multiple case studies to illustrate the issue. The researcher might select for study several programs from several research sites or multiple programs within a single site.

Often, the inquirer purposefully selects multiple cases to show different perspectives on the issue (p. 74).

Based on the review of the types of case studies, the forthcoming research most closely aligns with elements of a collective case study. Yin (2003) stated that the collective case study method uses the logic of replication, in which the inquirer replicates the procedures for each case. The replication of data collection and analysis procedures for each department within the research site was reflective of the collective case study. Although other qualitative research methods, such as ethnography, grounded theory, narrative, and phenomenology could be applied to this study, the case study method was chosen as a base because of "its potential richness and "thickness" (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 128). In addition, this research method aligned with the multiple methods of data collection that were used for this study, such as interviews, observations, and social networking data. Conducting social science research can be diverse and complex. The means in which the research is conducted, its goals, and methods vary significantly. Tuli (2010) stated that qualitative research is grounded on an interpretivist paradigm. Tuli (as cited by Farzanfar, 2005) added that according to this paradigm the nature of inquiry is interpretive and the purpose of inquiry is to understand a particular phenomenon, not to generalize to a population. "Researchers within the interpretivist paradigm are naturalistic since they apply to real—world situations as they unfold naturally; more specifically, they tend to be non—manipulative, un—obtrusive, and non—controlling" (Tuli, 2010, p. 100). The qualities indicated have been reflective of the scope of the research conducted while reasons were adduced for those methods not chosen.

Role of the Researcher

The role of the researcher, especially in conducting qualitative research, is diverse and must consist of competent, multi—faceted, interpersonal skills. According to Yin (2003), "the researcher must have ability to ask good questions, be a good listener, be adaptive and flexible, have a firm grasp of issues being studied and be unbiased by preconceived notions" (p. 59). Dwyer and Buckle (2009) studied the role of the researcher in qualitative research, and investigated if qualitative researchers should or should not be members of the population they are studying:

> The issue of the researcher membership in the group or area being studied is relevant to all approaches of qualitative methodology as the researcher plays such a direct and intimate role in both data collection and analysis. Whether the researcher is an insider, sharing the characteristic, role, or experience under study with the participants, or an outsider to the commonality shared by participants, the personhood of the researcher, including his or her membership status in relation to those participating in the research, is an essential and ever—present aspect of the investigation (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009, p. 55).

According to Dwyer and Buckle (as cited in Adler & Adler, 1987), there are three "membership roles" of qualitative researchers engaged in observational methods: (a) peripheral member researchers, who do not participate in the core activities of group members (b) active member researchers, who become involved with the central activities of the group without fully committing themselves to the members' values and goals, and (c) complete member researchers, who are already members of the group or who become fully affiliated during the course of the research. During the course of this study, I

performed the functions of the researcher as well as collected and analyzed data. I also identified the sample location, research participants, and research instruments that were used in the study.

Based on the information regarding the roles of qualitative researchers, I most identified with an active member researcher. Although, I was associated with the central activities of the sample group, my values and goals differed because the research participants consisted of clients and employees who have different job responsibilities than I do. There were no family members or personal friends who were employed at this location. This could have implicated researcher bias and affected the validity of the study. Biases that could be inferred with me as the researcher mainly involved my affiliation with government entities in the collection of data.

I planned to avoid all potential biases in the following ways: (a) periodic peer debriefings with research participants to gain insight on alternative explanations and inferences, (b) capture and document all findings accurately and timely (the use devices such as a tape recorder and/or video recorder will be enlisted for the interviews), (c) report all data (interviews, observations, social networking data), not just data that supports the research questions. The possibility of the data being skewed for any reason was significantly reduced. Another significant advantage was that I was to be privy to the current culture of the organization, and the ability to access, observe, and recognize its cultural dynamics.

Methodology

Sample Population and Rationale

Decisions about who to include in the collection of data for research were vital components of this case study. The process of selecting individuals, groups, settings, or events to study is traditionally known as sampling. Typically, the researcher makes this decision by targeting select participants within the research setting because the overall population of the location is too large. Miles and Huberman (1994) suggested that one cannot study everyone, everywhere, doing everything, even within a single case, and asked, "How does one limit the parameters of a study" (p. 36)? A specific sampling strategy must be considered because of the research method. "Selection decisions should also take into account the feasibility of access and data collection, your research relationships with study participants, validity concerns, and ethics" (Maxwell, 2005, p. 90). There were various types of sampling techniques that aligned with the type of research being conducted and the method of inquiry.

My goal was to select a sampling strategy that was conducive to my social science research. According to Teddlie and Yu (2009), sampling procedures in the social and behavioral sciences are often divided based on the research design (qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods). Based on the qualitative nature and components of this study, the sampling strategy that I selected was purposive sampling. Maxwell (1997) defined *purposive sampling* (also known as purposeful sampling) as a type of sampling in which, "particular settings, persons, or events, are deliberately selected for the important information they can provide that cannot be gotten as well from other choices" (p. 87).

Patton (2002) provided a more in—depth approach in his description of purposive

sampling:

> Cases for study (e.g., people, organizations, communities, cultures, events, critical
>
> incidences) are selected because they are "information rich" and illuminative.
>
> That is, they offer useful manifestations of the phenomenon of interest. Sampling,
>
> then, is aimed at insight about the phenomenon, not empirical generalization from
>
> a sample to a population (p. 40).

According to McNabb (2002), purposive sampling techniques are primarily used

in qualitative studies, and they are the most commonly used form of non—probability

samples often recommended when a study focuses on a specific group. For this study,

using purposive sampling techniques, participants were grouped according to pre—

selected criteria (e.g., clients of the organization, employees of the organization,

management of the organization, etc.) relevant to the research questions. Sample sizes

that may or may not be fixed prior to data collection depended on resources, consent from

the research site, amount of time allotted from the research site, and consent from the

research participants. A volunteer approach was used to acquire research participants

within the qualitative components of this study. The research population was drawn from

clients and employees of the Fulton County Sheriff's Office, a public sector agency

serving the largest county within the state of Georgia. The sample population consisted of

new or reoccurring clients who filed cases or requests for goods and services from the

Fulton County Sheriff's Office within a 30 day period. Also, the sample population

consisted of employees from the Fulton County Sheriff's Office who provided leadership

and administration, processed, case managed, and/or counseled clients.

I coordinated with the research site for the implementation or enhancement of social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, etc.). The sample population utilized these platforms to communicate, access information, and engage with their affiliated service division as well as fellow users. The employees, who were part of the sample population, consisted of those who were responsible for departmental or communication processes within the organization. They were asked to participate in the interview process on a voluntary basis. Some employees with management duties were chosen for the interview because they were primarily responsible for organizational communications protocols and procedures of their specific business areas. They also received messages and information from clients and community stakeholders that needed to be communicated throughout the organization. Employees were ensured, per their consent authorization, that their name and title would not be disclosed in preliminary or final research. Their participation remained anonymous. They also received a confidential invitation for their participation in the study.

To this regard, I developed the list of research participants by consulting with and receiving authorization from leadership of the research site. From the list, I selected adult clients (aged 18 and up) who had an established relationship or case file within the research site, to volunteer as potential research participants. The decision to use adult clients as research participants was based on two factors: (a) This would alleviate the need to receive parental permission for youth that could serve as potential research participants; (b) Based on the various types of public sector organizations that serve a wide range of needs, the selection of adult research participants would provide a diverse range of data. The selected research participants were required to sign a consent form that

authorized their participation. The employees who were selected as research participants worked at least 12 months for the Fulton County Sheriff's Office. This alleviated interference with any employees who may have been on a probationary period, and the timeframe allowed employees to become acclimated to organizational processes.

Research Setting and Rationale

From the nature of this study, the decision was made to use a local government entity such as the Fulton County Sheriff's Office. This decision was based on the daily client—employee interaction within the agency and the delivery of goods and services that affect not only clients, but also taxpayers and community stakeholders. The Fulton County Sheriff's Office is responsible for providing law enforcement services within Fulton County, Georgia, to prevent crimes, preserve the peace, and make arrests. Responsibilities of deputies include securing and providing safety to county buildings, courtrooms, jails, and other public areas, and processing and securing inmates at the Fulton County Jail. The mission of the Fulton County Sheriff's Office is to: (a) Maintain the Fulton County Jail; (b) Provide services that are needed and directed by the court systems; (c) Provide support and educational services to the community as a method of preventing and reducing crime; and (d) Enforce federal and state laws.

Fulton County, Georgia, encompasses the state's capital city of Atlanta, and public services are provided to thousands of residents annually. The Fulton County Sheriff's Office also promotes safety to Fulton County citizens of all ages and coordinates events to educate members of the community. In 2012, a Citizen's Academy was established to educate the community members about the day—to—day activities of the Sheriff's Office (Annual Report— Fulton County Sheriff's Office, 2012). The

Community Outreach Section of the Academy coordinated recruitment, curriculum, and activities to give participants an unprecedented look at the functions of the Sheriff's Office. For example, during one evening session, the Citizen's Academy class toured the Fulton County Courthouse. Deputies working at a security checkpoint explained how crucial it was to detect contraband at the entrances to the facility with hands—on demonstrations of how items are concealed and detected. These activities indicated that the research site had taken steps to increase community accessibility, engagement, and enhancement. The study of the impact of social media on public sector accessibility of these goods and services can be beneficial to administrators who can revise or implement policies to improve organizational transparency and efficiency as well as enhance the agency's public reputation. Research for this study was conducted within the departments of the Fulton County Sheriff's Office.

With a workforce of more than 1,000 law enforcement professionals and support staff, the Fulton County Sheriff's Office is the largest county sheriff's agency in the State of Georgia, covering a 535 square mile area and encompassing 88 percent of the City of Atlanta (www.fultoncountyga.gov). Included in its population, are richly diverse communities of color, ethnicity, and class. Fulton County includes a significantly large population of those living at or below the poverty level or who may not be informed of technological advancements in communication such as social media. There are a number of services that are performed by the Fulton County Sheriff's Office that require engagement between the agency and the client.

The Fulton County Sheriff's Office was selected on the basis of its recognition and the importance of the services it provides that have the biggest impact on improving

the lives of its citizens. One of the most vital entities within the public sector is law enforcement. Law enforcement agencies not only interpret and apply the laws of its state or jurisdiction, but they also process filings in the resolution of disputes. These activities are included within the daily operations of the Fulton County Sheriff's Office as well as community outreach activities, which are conducted to educate and deter the public from delinquent and criminal activity. These services and programs are not only beneficial to youth, but also to parents, families, and other citizens of the community.

Ensuring that the public is informed and has accessibility of the Fulton County Sheriff's Office, as well as understand its functions, is vital in order to gain support and engagement from the community. It is a priority of administration to develop and implement plans and policies that will increase utilization of its programs and services, initiate community outreach, support and engagement, and build public trust. The study of the impact of various social media platforms within this research site was needed to increase knowledge of innovative and strategic approaches to transparency, organizational integrity, collaboration, and community engagement.

Context of the Study

The qualitative research approach to this study was enacted through a collective case study method. The Fulton County Sheriff's Office was examined to demonstrate the impact of social media on public sector accessibility. I served as the primary researcher of this study. The research participants consisted of clients and employees of the selected divisions to gain insight and perspectives on accessibility of organizational information and interactivity between the organization, clients, and the public as the result of the implementation of social media platforms. I used various collection methods in an effort

to acquire raw data that were organized and prepared for analysis. The raw data collected

were analyzed to arrive at beneficial conclusions, inferences, and recommendations for

public sector organizations. The qualitative methods were further expounded upon in the

Data Collection section of this chapter.

Data Collection Procedures

Data were collected following the dissertation proposal and university IRB

application. Data collection tools such as interviews, observational field notes, and social

networking data have been established in social science research. In addition, these were

the preferred data collection methods for this case study. Maxwell (as cited by Fielding &

Fielding, 1986) stated that collecting information, using a variety of sources and methods,

was one aspect of what is called triangulation.

> This strategy reduces the risk that your conclusions will reflect only the
>
> systematic biases or limitations of a specific source or method and allows you to
>
> gain a broader and more secure understanding of the issues you are investigating
>
> (Maxwell, 2005, p. 93).

Triangulation was explored more comprehensively in the explanation of issues of

trustworthiness later in this chapter.

Interviewing

Although three qualitative data collection methods have been indicated for this

study, I anticipated that most of the research data would be generated from interviews.

Interviewing allowed me to gain beneficial data from the perspectives of those with

viable knowledge of the topic being studied. Patton (2002) stated, "Qualitative

interviewing begins with the assumption that the perspective of others is meaningful,

knowable, and able to be made explicit. Researchers interview to find out what is in and on someone else's mind and to gather their stories" (p. 341).

Conducting interviews was an effective method of gaining information that may not be captured using other data collection methods. "Interviewing can also be a valuable way of gaining a description of actions and events, often the only way for events that took place in the past or ones to which you cannot gain observational access" (Maxwell, 2005, p. 94). To be the most efficient and effective in collecting relevant data using the interviewing process, a plan was established. This plan consisted of framing open—ended interview questions and selecting the most appropriate interviewing approach.

In formatting questions, I considered the strengths and weaknesses of the interview approach. Patton (2002) indicated that there are three approaches to collecting qualitative data through open—ended questions. They include: (a) the informal conversational interview, (b) the interview guide approach, and (c) the standardized open—ended interview. The approach from which I believed the most data would be generated was the standardized, open—ended interview. According to Patton, this approach requires carefully and fully wording each question before the interview. In addition, this approach ensured that each interview participant was asked the same questions, in the same order, using the same format. This also improved the efficiency of data analysis in that responses to questions were easier to organize and compare.

Interviews were used to gain information from clients who received goods and services from the selected research site and employees who work in the organization. Prior to these interviews, permission was requested from organizational management to verify that no organizational policies or regulations would be broken. In addition, all

research participants were asked to sign a consent/confidentiality agreement that
indicated the purpose of the interview, roles of parties involved, instruments or
equipment that was used, and guaranteed to keep questions and responses confidential
from other potential participants. This was done to maintain the integrity of the process as
well as the protection of human subjects' rights to privacy and protection from harm.
Follow—up or probing questions were asked to the research participants based on the
responses to the preconstructed questions.

Notwithstanding the numerous advantages of the standardized, open—ended
interview method, it had its drawbacks. "The weakness of the standardized approach is
that it does not permit the interviewer to pursue topics or issues that were not anticipated"
(Patton, 2002, p. 347). Patton added that a standard open—ended interview reduces the
extent to which individual differences and circumstances can be queried. The advantages
were greater than the disadvantages, hence its application to this study.

Observational Field Notes

Along with the interview protocol, notes or memos were collected from field
observations during the data collection process. Patton (2002) provided various scenarios
of what is considered "in the field":

> Naturalistic observations take place in the field. For ethnographers, the field is a
> cultural setting. For qualitative organizational development researchers, the field
> will be an organization. For evaluators, the field is the program being studied (p.
> 262).

Babbie (2007) indicated that conducting field observations allows the researcher
to focus on relevant issues emerging from the data and can useful be in data analysis and

interpretation of findings. Field observations can also enable the researcher to provide a more comprehensive descriptive analysis of the research site due to it being in or around an ongoing social setting. Patton (2002) pointed out several advantages of field observations:

- Through direct observations, the inquirer is better able to understand and capture the context in which people interact (p. 262).

- Firsthand experience with a setting, and the people in the setting, allows an inquirer to be open, discovery—oriented, and inductive, because by being on—site, the observer has less need to rely on prior conceptualizations of the setting, whether those prior conceptualizations are from written documents or verbal reports (p. 262).

- The inquirer has the opportunity to see things that may routinely escape awareness among the people in the setting (p. 262).

- The chance to learn things that people would be unwilling to talk about in an interview (p. 263).

- Getting close to the people in a setting through firsthand experience permits the inquirer to draw on personal knowledge during the formal interpretation stage of analysis (p. 264).

Based on these factors, the working environment, culture, and personal demeanor of the research participants becomes an important part of the field notes. According to Creswell (1998), observational field notes have the potential to lend credibility to qualitative research by providing collaborative evidence from multiple sources or strong resources for triangulation. I anticipated that field observations would be conducted on

the divisions indicated within the selected research site. Daily business operations were observed and included services provided to new and existing clients within the organization. This was done to document the efficiency and effectiveness of satisfying client needs to determine the impact of how social media platforms can affect these processes. In addition, employees were captured in their natural work environments to capture the advantages and frustrations they encounter in providing services to the public and how the impact of social media platforms could affect their organizational and work practices and efficiencies or inefficiencies. Field notes were collected based on the observations captured of clients requesting services and employees processing those requests at the research site.

Social Networking Data

"As society transforms by new technology, so are there new ways in which qualitative researchers collect and analyze data and new forms of data to collect" (Gibbs et al., 2002, p. 1). Data generated from the use of social media platforms to include statistical trends, posts, comments, and digital formats such as audio and video uploads now makes possible new ways of creating, processing, and analyzing such data. According to Gibbs et al. (2002), "one of the most recent developments in video and audio has been the rapid introduction of digital technology" (p. 3). Gibbs et al. (2002) added that "Not only has this made the technology cheaper and more widely used, but it has also made possible new ways of manipulating and analyzing the data collected" (p. 3). Social media platforms can also be used to edit and examine digital audio and video easier and more cost effective than methods used in the past. The collection of data from social media platforms allowed me the ability to review and select audio and video clips

associated with the research site and behaviors relative to the study, as well as analyze those behaviors and come to analytical conclusions.

The development of information technology and particularly the growth of the Internet has not only created new ways in which researchers can analyze their data, but also created new areas from which data can be collected and ways in which it can be collected (Gibbs et al., 2003, p. 3).

The third data collection method that was used is social networking data. Creswell (2009) stated that forms of this data include: video platforms, photographs, film, computer software, art objects, or any form of sound. This data can be posted to various social media platforms for public view and comments. Methods used to generate data from these items can include examining patterns of comments posted, video, or photographs from social institutions, or an individual or group, and the collection of sounds (musical indicators) and interactive media such as email or cell phone text messages. Creswell (2009) provided several advantages of this method of data collection: (a) Social networking data may be an unobtrusive method of collecting data; (b) Social networking data provide an opportunity for participants to share their reality; and (c) Collection of social networking data is creative in that it captures attention visually.

According to Johnes (2012), the quantity of qualitative data generated by social networking platforms such as Facebook and Twitter is huge. These data represent a significant resource for researchers in a wide variety of fields. Johnes (2012) added that the development of new techniques aimed at harvesting the data in a form suitable for analysis has, over the last decade or so, been rapid and fruitful. Data using a variety of social networking data from the research site was collected. This included comments and

posts made by staff and clients, email, instant messages, or texts from mobile devices such as cell phones, IPads, and notebook computers. These materials were analyzed to add depth and breadth to the research component of the study. While the application of tools of this kind in the context of academic research is still in its infancy, the potential for social networking data to be used in this study is clearly considerable. The collection of such data has made it possible to explore organizational aspects including, but not limited to, the organization's mission, vision, and values, as well as the goods and services provided, strategic plans and goals, customer service reports, and employee satisfaction outcomes.

Management of Data

Due to the myriad of codes, variables, and statistical information, the process of data management is a typical component of quantitative research, but Miles and Huberman (1994) indicated that management of data in qualitative research is just as, if not more, important than it is for quantitative research. "Typically, large amounts of data come from several cases or sites, and sometimes includes numerical data sets as well," (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 45). From the various methods of data collection indicated, I anticipated it would be vital that the information was organized in a manner that resulted in a comprehensive qualitative analysis. The first step of the data management component was providing structure to the collection process.

Organization of data collection included participant selection, consent, and authorization from the selected research site and research participants, determination of what settings to observe, and beneficial social networking data to collect. Secondly, data management for this study involved methods of transcription and data storage. The

transcribed interviews, field observation notes, and social networking data were organized into electronic file formats. An electronic audio program was used to manually transcribe the voice interviews. Babbie (2007) indicated that the final stage in the data management component is the ability to retrieve data for comparison and interpretation purposes. The computer software program, NVivo10, was utilized for coding and reporting data gathered from the interviews, observational field notes, and social networking data.

As previously mentioned, a computer software program was used to code the raw data collected. The use of a qualitative analysis computer software program was a more efficient method to process and organize all data obtained from interviews and observations and to classify into specific themes and subgroups. In addition, the software program was able to organize gathered text from participants to compare lifestyle trends, behaviors, and attitudes. This was significant in providing comparisons of group data, and putting specific words and phrases into categories. Summaries of the data collected from the proposed methods provided valuable insight to answering the research question for the study.

Interpretation and Analysis

According to Tere (2006), qualitative data analysis and interpretation take different forms and depend on the subject of investigation, researcher's preference, time available, and resources at the disposal of the researcher. To be able to effectively analyze the large amounts of data collected, I produced it in a format that was less complicated to analyze. Various researchers have compiled a number of methods to analyze qualitative data, all of which have individual characteristics. Data analysis

methods that were reviewed included: typology, taxonomy, constant comparison,

grounded theory, analytic induction, hermeneutical analysis, content analysis, discourse

analysis, and thematic analysis. Other methods included: phenomenology, heuristic

analysis, narrative analysis, semiotics, domain analysis, event analysis/microanalysis,

quasi—statistics, logical analysis/matrix analysis, and analytic induction. In reviewing

the various types of data analysis and interpretation methods, the selected method should

coincide with the proposed case study design.

> Case studies are particularly valuable in program evaluation when the program is
>
> individualized, so the evaluation needs to be attentive to and capture individual
>
> differences among participants, or unique variations from one program setting to
>
> another. Regardless of the unit of analysis, a qualitative case study seeks to
>
> describe that unit in—depth and detail, holistically, and in context (Patton, 2002,
>
> p. 55).

In consideration of these factors, I focused on dual methods to include

comparative and thematic analysis for this study because of the seemingly inherent

inductive slant of the methods. Tere (2006) stated that the process of data analysis and

interpretation in most qualitative studies occur simultaneously with the data collection

process. Similarly, Tere (2006) indicated that the dual purpose of data collection and

analysis is consistent with comparative and thematic analyses because the methods

enable the researcher to routinely scan transcripts, notes, and research literature. In

addition, I believed that this type of analysis was beneficial to the themes that emerged

from the data with little or no interference.

The process of comparative analysis has evolved within the past two decades in order to align with the broad components of qualitative research. Ragin (1987) is credited with the development of this method of analysis and provided an early definition for the process. It is common to define comparative research as research that uses comparative data from at least two societies. "This definition emphasizes the fact that the data of comparative science are cross—sectional" (Ragin, 1987, p. 3). He added that while this was an acceptable definition, "most comparativists would find the definition too restrictive" in that it excludes oriented case studies (p. 3). Over the years, more and more case study research to include multiple cases have been conducted, and the comparative method of analysis has been used to interpret data.

> During the last few years, an increasing proportion of social scientists
>
> have been opting for multiple case studies as a research strategy – more
>
> generally speaking, the explicitly comparative design is gaining momentum. The
>
> choice of such a strategy often reflects the intention of scholars to meet two
>
> apparently contradictory goals. (Rihoux, 2006, p. 680).

Olsen stated that *qualitative comparative analysis* (QCA) offers a new, systematic way of studying configurations of cases:

> QCA is used in comparative research and when using case study research
>
> methods. The QCA analyst interprets the data qualitatively while also looking at
>
> causality between the variables. Thus, the two—stage approach to studying
>
> causality has a qualitative first stage and a systematic second stage using QCA
>
> (Olsen, 2012).

I also incorporated the thematic analysis method in the interpretation of collected data. Boyatzis (1998) wrote that *thematic analysis* is a process for encoding qualitative information. In using this method, I had the ability to organize and describe a data set in explicit detail. By "coding" data, I was able to discover specific patterns or themes.

> The encoding requires a specific "code". This may be a list of themes; a complex model with themes, indicators, and qualifications that are casually related; or something in between these two forms. A theme is a pattern found in the information that at minimum describes and organizes the possible observation and at maximum interprets aspects of the phenomenon. A theme may be identified at the manifest level (directly observable in the information) or at the latent level (underlying the phenomenon). The themes may be initially generated inductively from the raw information or generated deductively from theory or prior research. The compilation or integration of a number of codes in a study is often called a codebook (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 4).

Boyatzis explained that "thematic analysis enables scholars, observers, or practitioners to use a wide variety of types of information in a systematic manner that increases their accuracy and sensitivity in understanding and interpreting observations about people, events, situations, and organizations" (p. 5).

The collection of data using the selected methods of interviewing, observations, and social networking materials, generated a continuous evaluation of the emerging themes resulting in the application of thematic analysis. Based on the decision to use both comparative and thematic analysis methods, I was able to compare and contrast views of participants throughout the interview, observation, and social networking data collection

processes until I noticed a redundancy of opinion. This also lowered the possibility of

new issues arising and a point of conclusion of new information or themes. Guest et al.

(2006) indicated that the point at which no new information or themes are observed in the

data is called the *saturation point*. For this study, I anticipated that the interviews,

observations, and social networking data that was collected from the research participants

would be transcribed and given some thematic significance through the use of tables,

graphs, or figures. I also described my personal experiences with interviewing the

research participants, especially some of the nonverbal communication that occurred

during the interview. With all of the selected data collection methods, I found

connections and patterns relevant to the goals of the study.

Presentation of Results

Following the process of analyzing the data collected using comparative and

thematic analysis methods, the results must be presented in a manner that not is not only

reflective the qualitative nature of the study, but was also effective in answering the

research question. According to Hancock (2002), "qualitative data has several features to

take into consideration when planning the presentation of findings; the data is subjective

interpretative, descriptive, holistic, and copious, and it can be difficult to know where or

how to start" (p. 22). Unlike the statistical and numerical characteristics of quantitative

outcomes, the reporting of qualitative data is more dependent on the quality and

cohesiveness of description. It was my intent that anyone who read or attempted to

duplicate this research would be able to visualize the context of the study. Based on the

large amount of data I anticipated to collect and analyze, I believed that a good starting

point would be to look at the themes and categories that emerged from the data in order

to structure the dissemination of the results of the research. I planned to present the results of this qualitative research in a manner that was understandable and engaging to the reader or audience. There were various ways in which the findings could be arranged and presented to the reader.

The presentation of results were governed by the theories in which the study was founded, diffusion of innovations, critical mass, and uses and gratifications. In addition, the results were presented in a manner that aligned with the data collection tools applied . For the data collected using interviewing, observations, and social networking materials, I selected quotes, field notes, and pertinent information that reflected reoccurring themes found in participants' responses, researcher observations, and recording and/or listening devices. Graphs and charts were designed to focus on the specific questions or themes that correlated with the research question and subquestions.

It was understood that there may be contradictory, variant, or disconfirming data discovered within the body of data collected which would provide an alternative perspective on an emerging category or pattern. This is known as *discrepant data*. Maxwell (1996) stated that if the themes or categories cannot support the data, they need to be modified. I extensively examined supporting and discrepant data to determine if the research themes or categories supported it. In the event that themes or categories needed to be modified to present prevalent data, I included a notification to readers and audiences of the possibility of discrepant data within the research narrative.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Validity, Reliability, Credibility

Qualitative research can breed a plethora of issues regarding trustworthiness. According to Shenton (2004), "the trustworthiness of qualitative research is often questioned by positivists, perhaps because their concepts of validity and reliability cannot be addressed in the same way in naturalistic work" (p. 63). Shenton referenced naturalistic investigators, Guba (1981) in particular, who he said used different terminology to distance them from the positive paradigm. Guba proposed four criteria that should be considered by qualitative researchers in pursuit of a trustworthy study:

- Creditability (in preference to internal validity)

- Transferability (in preference to external validity/generalizability)

- Dependability (in preference to reliability)

- Confirmability (in preference to objectivity)

Shenton (2004) stated that Guba's constructs have been accepted by many.

For this study, the validity and reliability assumptions were based on the following tests and actions:

- *Internal Validity:* According to Shenton (2004), one of the key criteria addressed by positivist researchers is that of internal validity, in which they seek to ensure that their study measures or tests what is actually intended. This test allowed me to determine factors and themes within the data, which may lead to certain situations and circumstances. Yin (2003) stated that typically, inferences drawn are scrutinized and deemed invalid if not properly tested. This research analyzed the data from the various research components to

determine patterns and trends as wells as build a case to explain the
implications drawn from the data.

- *External Validity:* Yin (2003) defined the process of external validity as
determining whether a study is relevant or applicable to another similar entity
or setting – other than the one being studied. This study focused on the impact
of social media on public sector accessibility within the selected research site.
The intent of this study was to gain intensive knowledge on how social media
positively or negatively affect public awareness and understanding of goods,
services, and programs in an attempt to develop strategic plans and improve
the systems of other government agencies.

- *Reliability:* Shenton (2004) addressed the potential issues of reliability in
stating, "The positivist employs techniques to show that, if the work were
repeated, in the same context, with the same methods and same participants,
similar results would be obtained" (p.71). Qualitative researchers may
encounter problems due to the changing nature of the phenomenon studied.
Shenton provided a method to counter issues of reliability in that the processes
within the study should be explicitly detailed. This enables a future researcher
to repeat the same processes even if the same results are not given. The
processes within this study was organized and explained in—depth for future
opportunities to repeat the research. This included strategic planning and
execution, detail of data collection, and evaluating the effectiveness of the
process.

- *Objectivity:* Shenton (2004) indicated, "The concept of confirmability is the

  qualitative investigator's comparable concern to objectivity" (p. 72).   The

  findings were the result of the experiences and ideas of the participants, rather

  than the characteristics and preferences of the researcher. Miles and

  Huberman (1994) stated that a key criterion for confirmability is the extent to

  which the researcher admits his or her own predispositions. For this study, I

  explained   the rationale for decisions made and methods adopted. In addition,

  any preconceived biased and possible strengths and weaknesses of approaches

  taken were explained.

It was my intent to minimize all issues of trustworthiness in the most effective

means possible. It was beneficial to use multiple methods in the research and evaluation

of this study. This concept is known as *triangulation*. Patton (2002) stated that

"triangulation strengthens a study by combining methods" (p. 247). According to Patton,

the combination of methodological combinations can be employed to illuminate an

inquiry.

> Some studies intermix interviewing, observation, and document analysis. Others
>
> rely on more interviews than observations and vice versa. Studies that use only
>
> one method are more vulnerable to errors linked to that particular method (e.g.,
>
> loaded interview questions, biased or untrue responses) than studies that use
>
> multiple methods in which different types of data provide cross—data validity
>
> checks (Patton, 2002, p. 248).

The points that have been highlighted by Patton (2002) were reflective of my plans to

incorporate the concept of triangulation in this qualitative study. The triangulation of

interviewing, observation, and social networking data analyses were the best methods to ensure the validity and trustworthiness of the research for this study.

Ethical Issues

In many scenarios of social science research, ethical issues may surface within the course of the study. Researchers often experience ethical dilemmas in their processes and decisions made while conducting research. McNabb (2002) defined research ethics as "a conscious effort to respect morally acceptable regulations in ─planning, conducting, and reporting research findings" (p. 32). Miles and Huberman (1994) explained that a series of ethical issues can arise that typically need attention before, during, and after qualitative studies. These include:

- Worthiness of the Project

- Competence Boundaries

- Informed Consent

- Benefits, Costs, and Reciprocity

- Harm and Risk

- Honesty and Trust

- Privacy, Confidentiality, and Anonymity

- Intervention and Advocacy

- Research Integrity and Quality

- Ownership of Data and Conclusions

- Use and Misuse of Results

- Conflicts, Dilemmas, and Trade—Offs

- Advice

Among the ethical issues listed by Miles and Huberman (1994), honesty and trust, privacy, confidentiality and anonymity, and research integrity and quality were factors that would most likely impact the research that was conducted for this study. Most qualitative researchers are unlikely to lie, cheat, or steal in the course of their work, but broken promises are not unheard of (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 292). This was a cause for concern due to deceptive, erroneous, or manipulated responses or information that can be generated during data collection processes such as interviewing, making observations, and gathering social networking data.

In an effort to alleviate this issue, I developed a prescreening process for the selection of research participants. This involved eligibility requirements such as: the level of involvement with the organization, the length of time employed or receipt of goods and/or services from the organization, and participation in activities that may be detrimental to the mission of the selected research site. I believed that a prescreening process for the recruitment of research participants allowed me to select the most qualified individuals for the benefit of the study as well as those who had genuine interest in participating.

A second ethical issue that could have potentially emerged within this study was privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity. Miles and Huberman (1994) presented factors that could become an ethical issue, "In what ways will the study intrude, come closer to people than they want? How will information be guarded? How identifiable are the individuals and organizations studied?" (p. 293). Sieber (as cited in Miles & Huberman, 1994) explained distinctions among privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity:

- Privacy: control over others' access to oneself and associated information; preservation of boundaries against giving protected information or receiving unwanted information (p. 293)

- Confidentiality: agreements with a person or organization about what will be done (and may not be done) with their data; may include legal constraints (p. 293)

- Anonymity: lack of identifiers, information that would indicate which individuals or organizations provided which data (p. 293)

I ensured the privacy of the research participants by informing the research participants of the ways that data would be reported. This involved sharing transcripts or other data (such as observational field notes or photographs) with participants and obtaining consent for their use. All revisions included inviting study participants to amend the transcript and agreeing to its use. It involved showing and obtaining consent for the use of specific pieces of data (such as photographs or interview extracts) in outputs. I also explained to the research participants the risks involved in particular forms of dissemination to enable them to make informed decisions about how their data would be used.

A regular practice of researchers is to protect research participants from the accidental breaking of confidentiality through the process of *anonymization*. Anonymization involves the use of pseudonyms applied to research participants, organizations, and locations. The Data Protection Act (1998) provides the legal framework for anonymization of data. Anonymity of research participants is a central feature of ethical research practice which is written into the various guidelines to which

social researchers work. Although complete anonymity may be difficult to achieve, this method was effective based on the sample size of the research population.

Another ethical issue of potential concern was research integrity and quality. The analysis of collected data should be carefully thought out and within a reasonable set of standards. Miles and Huberman (1994) indicated that this is more than a technical issue:

> If we provide a set of conclusions based on sloppy (or even fraudulent) work and claim their validity, then we are being dishonest with our sponsors, colleagues, supervisors, respondents, and anyone else who reads and trusts our reports (p. 294).

I strived to uphold the utmost integrity and quality throughout the research process to deliver conclusions that were accurate according to the analysis leaving no doubt for any dishonest practices. The process of conducting this social science research presented ethical challenges that were addressed throughout the study. The issues discussed were based on potential scenarios that could have ensued during the research process. Plans of addressing each, in hopes of presenting valid and reliable outcomes, were presented. The effort to bring attention to these potential issues verified that I performed all necessary steps to control potential inherent ethical violations throughout the research process.

Summary

In summary, the qualitative research design was successful in balancing, fairly assessing, and comparing findings with the utmost objectivity. This approach was designed to overturn the stereotypical assertions regarding the reliability and viability of the case study approach. A combination of interviewing, observation, and social

networking data collection instruments were used to draw relevant inferences as they relate to the study's research question, subquestions, and theoretical framework. It was my intent that the results of this study will serve as a catalyst to transformational change in how that public sector views the impact of social media in increasing accessibility, transparency, and engagement.

This chapter also examined the research methodology used for the study. The sample frame was analyzed as well as the justification for the sample size. The methods of data collection to include: including interviews, observations, and collection of social networking data, have been detailed and an explanation of why these methods were the most beneficial in capturing relevant data for this research were provided. In addition, the method of data analysis was comprehensively discussed in an effort to report accurate conclusions of the study. The points that have been highlighted by Patton (2002) were reflective of my plans to incorporate the concept of triangulation in this qualitative study. The next chapter provided the results generated from the data and explained the implications of the results in relation to the research problem and questions generated.

Chapter 4: Data Collection, Analysis, and Findings

Introduction

Data captured from the interview responses of employees and clients, observational field notes, and social networking platforms within the Fulton County Sheriff's Office were examined to investigate whether the use of social media could enhance accessibility, engagement, and the overall system of communications for the public. A collective case study approach was used to explore organizational, administrative, and informational methods and disconnects. The data collected were used to analyze the impact that social media have on accessibility within public sector organizations, specifically awareness and understanding of goods, services, and programs.

The Georgia Constitution mandates that each county has a sheriff, and legislation designates the sheriff as the chief law enforcement officer in the county (Georgia Constitution, 42 U.S.C. § 1983). Typically, the sheriff voluntarily relinquishes the general law enforcement responsibilities to the county police department in counties that have a sheriff and a police department. The sheriff has the right to intervene in any law enforcement effort within the county if compelled to do so. This includes actions initiated by deputies of the agency who have witnessed a violation of law or in the absence of a county police officer. The Fulton County Sheriff's Office is a government organization constitutionally created to oversee the Fulton County Jail, provide services that are needed by the court systems, provide support and educational services to the community as a method of preventing crime, and enforce federal and state laws.

Public sector organizations are faced with the tasks of not only delivering quality

goods and services while meeting growing client demand, but also ensuring that citizens are provided the most efficient and innovative means to gain access, be informed, and comprehend. As the level of technology has grown in recent years, the Fulton County Sheriff's Office has exhibited deficiencies that present challenges to the public accessing information and understanding organizational policies and procedures. These factors could affect the public's perception of government organizations, resulting in decreased community engagement and trust. Moreover, many employees of the agency have often heard of major announcements, events, or public incidents through the media or well after the occurrence instead of receiving information electronically. As a result of lack of access to information, an employee of the Fulton County Sheriff's Office who was interviewed for this study stated that "measures are needed to fill in the gap for the unexplained." The rapid emergence of social media and their potential impact on public sector accessibility have created a new scope for exploration. This study investigated the specific research problem area of lack of accessibility, awareness, and understanding of programs and services for citizens (clients) who use public sector organizations.

Additionally, I attempted to collect data that addressed the following research questions:

Research Question

Does the adoption of social media platforms result in increased accessibility of goods and services within the public sector?

Subquestions

1. What is considered a point of sustainability for social media usage in public sector organizations?

2. Does the use of social media provide a better comprehension of goods, services, and programs offered to clients?

3. Does increase in the usage of social media result in improved engagement between the public sector and the community?

On January 17, 2014, I received clearance from the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB # 01—17—14—0119579) to begin the qualitative segment of this research study. Data findings were organized in accordance with themes derived from interview responses, observational field notes, and social networking data. This approach consisted of analyzing the qualitative data and extrapolating that data to attain certain themes and emerging trends. This study used a specific research paradigm and approach. In this chapter, I have explored the research overview, research setting, research population, demographic profile of research participants, methods of data collection and procedures, data interpretation and analysis, and evidence of trustworthiness to report findings that addressed the research question and subquestions.

Research Overview

Per Georgia law, the Fulton County Sheriff's Office was established as the chief law enforcement agency of the county. The Fulton County Sheriff's Office is composed of four divisions: Administration, Court Services, Jail, and Law Enforcement. There are numerous sections and units within each division and workgroups that provide goods and services to the public. Employees in these workgroups are unified to serve the citizens of Fulton County. Support offices such as: community programs, audits, financial and facilities services, investigative services, legislative affairs, and quality control remain in existence but have fewer staff. Accessibility and communication to the public by the

Fulton County Sheriff's Office were imperative with such a diverse staff and array of services. Previous research has indicated that for many entities within the Fulton County Sheriff's Office, these qualities have been sporadic or inconsistent.

Technological advancements that have been introduced within the last 20 years have exhibited progress in improving public accessibility of businesses. Studies have shown that the implementation and use of social media within the past decade have shown significant growth in public accessibility of the private sector. The data collected within the Fulton County Sheriff's Office were analyzed to determine whether those results could be obtained within the public sector.

The Fulton County Sheriff's Office has received gradual technological upgrades in order to address public communication concerns to include Internet accessibility. Upon the evolution of Internet technology and its availability to the public, the Fulton County Sheriff's Office implemented several social media platforms. The social media platforms implemented within the agency included Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. During data collection planning within the research site, it was determined that the social media platforms that were most used on a consistent basis included Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. These platforms have been made available to the public, and the Fulton County Sheriff Office's home page can be accessed by "friending" (Facebook) or "following" (Twitter, Instagram).

Based on the proposed number of current social media platforms used within the research site, there were no additional platforms or technical enhancements implemented. It was agreed by the Fulton County Sheriff's Office and me that three social media platforms would be monitored for use by the research participants and the public and

would be used in the collection of data. Those social media platforms were Facebook,

Twitter, and Instagram. Data were collected from the use of these social media platforms.

The authority to monitor the indicated social media platforms was regulated by the Fulton

County Sheriff's Office Standard Operating Procedures (1.19) in accordance with Fulton

County Government Policy. Users were not required to pay for the use of any of the

social media platforms and completed a free membership registration to use the

infrastructure.

The research took a step further to examine the perspectives of employees of the

Fulton County Sheriff's Office regarding specific public accessibility needs and clients

who could benefit from increased accessibility of information, goods, and services.

Themes were developed during the analysis of data to determine the adoption of social

media platforms and dissemination of information, the sustainability of social media

platforms, and the reasons why users find social media platforms to be so enticing. These

themes built the theoretical foundation for the study. Understanding the differences and

similarities between employee— and client—preferred social media channels, frequency

of use, and subjects was instrumental in the investigation of the research question and

recommendations for strategic alignment within the public sector.

Research Setting

Prior studies have found that traditional practices within public safety agencies

can often block progress in remediating public accessibility and information sharing

barriers. Fessenden (2005) indicated that after years of hoarding information and not

promoting an information—sharing environment, shortcomings remained with

information sharing and accessibility among public safety agencies. This had resulted in

diminished public perception and trust. Parker and Wisely (2009) added that organizational distrust based on differences in organizational culture is part of the overall culture of public safety in the United States. According to Ralston and Chadwick (2010), trust is usually based on conditions within public safety agencies. Organizational practices and conditions within the Fulton County Sheriff's Office were evaluated to determine the impact of technological phenomena like social media on public accessibility.

It was the intention that the data collected and analyzed within the selected research site would correlate its organizational culture with the point of accessibility using social media platforms. "Organizational culture is a set of shared norms, values, and perceptions that develop when the members of an organization interact with each other and their surroundings," (Gottschalk & Saether, 2007, p. 99). The selection of the Fulton County Sheriff's Office as the research site for this study was appropriate because it presented qualities that were relevant for a comprehensive investigation.

The Fulton County Sheriff's Office authorized my collection and analysis of data for this study. This research site was used to collect data from the selected social media platforms, to interview employees and clients of the Fulton County Sheriff's Office, and to monitor organizational practices and community outreach activities. The research site was instrumental in the identification of the sample population and research participants and assisted in providing classified population and demographic information that I was not otherwise privy to per the policy of the Fulton County Sheriff's Office.

Demographic Profile

According to Suburban Stats (2014), Fulton County has a total population of more than 920,000 residents. Not only is the Fulton County Sheriff's Office responsible for the jurisdiction that encompasses this growing population, but citizens are eligible to receive goods and services from this agency. The demographic household type of this population varies, with more than 370,000 occupied homes in Fulton County. It was important to capture and review these data during the development of the demographic form for the study's sample population and research participants. Figure 5 illustrates the total population of Fulton County, including the number of male and female residents. In addition, Figure 5 illustrates the household demographic type of residents within Fulton County.

DEMOGRAPHIC POPULATION TOTALS	
DEMOGRAPHIC HOUSEHOLD TYPE	
Number of Occupied Homes in Fulton County	
Total:	376,377
Family Led Homes:	209,215
Husband—Wife Family:	134,308
Other Family:	74,907
Population of Male Led with No Wife Present:	15,769
Population Female Led with No Husband Present:	59,138
Population of Nonfamily Homes:	167,162
Population Living Alone:	133,307
Population Not Living Alone:	33,855

Total Population in Fulton County	
Total Population:	920,581
Male Population:	448,267
Female Population:	472,314

Figure 5. Fulton County demographic population totals and household type, 2014.

In the collection of data for this study, the demographic profiles were developed from research participants' responses to a demographic form that was administered verbally or via email. The demographic form (Appendix E) provided additional information about the participants, including their affiliation with the research site (employee or client), age, race, gender, residence, law enforcement service, and type of

Internet access. Appendix E also illustrated outcomes of the demographic questionnaire and provided a visual aid of the attribute coding.

Data Collection

The qualitative data for this collective case study were gathered with the intent to be reflective of the study's theoretical foundation. This consisted of diffusion of innovations theory, critical mass theory, and uses and gratifications theory. Multiple tools (interviews, observational field notes, and social networking data) were used to collect data using the strategy of triangulation. The process was sectioned into three phases reflective of the data collection tools. These data sets and procedures for data collection are discussed in detail within this section. Figure 6 illustrates the multiple sources of data used for the study.

Interviews	Observational Field Notes	Social Networking Data

Research Question

Does the adoption of social media platforms result in increased accessibility of goods and services within the public sector?

Subquestions

1. What is considered a point of sustainability for social media usage in public sector organizations?

2. Does the use of social media provide a better comprehension of goods, services, and programs offered to clients?

3. Does the increase in the usage of social media result in improved engagement between the public?

Figure 6. Data collection tools used for indicated research questions.

Coding of Data

The data that were collected for each phase generated specific information that was used to develop specific themes. Per coordination with the research site, the Fulton County Sheriff's Office, the collection and organization of data occurred upon its availability, selection of research participants, information provided by the Fulton County Sheriff's Office, and the selected social media platforms. Data were collected to support the theories indicated and the impact of social media on public sector accessibility. A three—tier data collection approach, known as *triangulation* (Maxwell, 2005), was used to provide the most in—depth analysis of data and to reduce biases and limitations within the research. This included conducting interviews with Fulton County Sheriff's Office

employees and clients, observing organizational culture and practices that were recorded

as field notes, and collecting data from the selected social media platforms, including

photos, videos, and audio posts. The data were coded using a thematic approach per use

of the computer software program NVivo 10 for the organization and reporting of data

collected from interviews, observational field notes, and social networking data.

It was the intent that interview responses, observational field notes, and social

networking data be transcribed, coded, and presented in such a way that the reader would

have a clear picture of the perceptions and impact of social media on public accessibility

of the Fulton County Sheriff's Office. Data were analyzed through extensive description,

categorization, comparison, and explanation of emerging themes and patterns. The goal

of this qualitative research was to increase understanding by identifying and organizing

common themes or ideas and unique characteristics in the study. Using the first— and

second—cycle coding methods outlined by Saldana (2009), I coded interview responses,

observational field notes, and social networking data and distilled some meaning from the

opinions and ideas expressed by study participants as well as the remaining data

collection tools.

Phase I (Interviews)

Research participants for this qualitative data collection tool were selected via a

purposive sampling strategy. The sample population included Fulton County Sheriff's

Office employees and clients and utilized the selected social media platforms to

communicate, access information, and engage with the Fulton County Sheriff's Office as

well as with fellow users. In the review of prior literature, I found that there was no

agreement among qualitative researchers as to the adequacy of sample size for a study of

this nature. Bertaux (1981) indicated that 15 is the minimum sample size accepted in qualitative research. "As a result of the numerous factors that can determine sample sizes in qualitative studies, many researchers shy away from suggesting what constitutes a sufficient sample size" (Mason, 2010, p. 2).

The initial sample size was 50 (25 employees and 25 clients). After conducting 15 interviews of employees and 15 of clients, I noticed a series of redundancy and repetition, an indication of data saturation. I discovered that no more new information was forthcoming. Therefore, I conducted interviews with 30 people. Participants were identified by two categories; employees and clients (Employee 1 to Employee 15; Client 1 to Client 15). This method was designed to conceal the identity of participants. I employed the constant comparative approach in coding themes that emerged from the interview transcripts.

Appendices F and G consist of interview questions presented to Fulton County Sheriff's Office employees and clients who served as research participants. The appendices also include interview transcript grids that provided insight into the cycle coding conducted respectively for responses provided by employees and clients of the research site. The grids were developed to translate data at the most basic level. The grids were reflective of responses, direct quotes, and phrases provided by the research participants in their interviews to add depth and breadth to the analysis and to give the reader context for the questions as it relates to the research.

Fulton County Sheriff's Office employees. I made contacts with potential interviewees in collaboration with the Fulton County Sheriff's Office's Public Affairs Officer. The Public Affairs Officer is a staff position within the agency that is responsible

for the dissemination of all announcements, communications, and news for the Fulton County Sheriff's Office. Per county policy, it was recommended that I collaborate with the Public Affairs Officer to recruit eligible employees as potential research participants. The selection of eligible employees was based on: approval by Fulton County Sheriff's Office administration, a review of the sample population's usage trends of social media platforms, and the amount of comments made or responses received. Per an electronic request made by the Public Affairs Officer, employees were invited to participate in the study. In turn, I sent an email that provided the overview and purpose of the study and attached a letter of invitation and informed consent. The reason for sending these documents was to prepare potential participants for impending interview questions and to answer any questions or concerns. It was indicated to potential research participants that interview questions would be sent upon receipt of the informed consent form. The selected employees were busy people with key organizational responsibilities and complex schedules. I found it to be more effective to provide them with the opportunities to participate by interviewing in the traditional, face—to—face format, or to conduct the interviews via electronic communication.

Participants interviewed included employees from each division within the Fulton County Sheriff's Office (Administration, Community Outreach, Courts, Jail, and Law Enforcement). A detailed description, including official designations of participants, were not provided in this study as a deliberate step to protect the identity of participants. Of the 15 employees interviewed, eight were female and seven were male. Interviews were semi—structured and included open—ended questions as well as ratings of innovativeness, community engagement, client communications, and client interaction.

Prepared questions guided the interviews, but some questions were adjusted to conform to the responses of interviewees. It was requested that interviewees submit their responses within a 14 day period. All of the interviews were conducted in the English language and verbatim responses to each question were transcribed using a standardized transcription protocol (Appendix F). The majority of the participants held strong views on social media, public access to information, and community engagement and were passionate about transparency within the public sector.

Fulton County Sheriff's Office clients. Parallel with the selection of employees that were interviewed, new or reoccurring clients of the Fulton County Sheriff's Office were also recruited and interviewed. Contacts were made with potential interviewees in collaboration with the Fulton County Sheriff's Office's Public Affairs Officer. I was provided with data that included trends of usage among those who had joined one or all of the selected social media platforms and made comments or posts, requested information, uploaded pictures, videos and audio, or received services. These services included delinquent property taxes, dispossessory notices, civil process paper intake, warrant intake, criminal history, or vehicle impound releases. The selection of eligible clients was based on the number and frequency of visits made to the research site's Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram pages. I wanted to be sure to capture the views of those who regularly visited those platforms and made comments, posts, or uploads. I sent an email that provided the overview and purpose of the study and attached a letter of invitation and informed consent to those selected to participate in the study.

Participants interviewed included diverse individuals and socio—economic levels. A detailed description, including official designations of participants, were not provided

in this study as a deliberate step to protect the identity of participants. Of the 15 clients interviewed, ten were female, and five were male. Interviews were similarly formatted to those of the Fulton County Sheriff's Office employees, consisting of semistructured and open—ended questions as well as questions rating the innovativeness, community engagement, client communications, and client interaction of the Sheriff's Office. Prepared questions guided the interviews, but some questions were adjusted to conform to the responses of interviewees. All of the interviews were conducted in the English language. Verbatim responses to each question were transcribed using a standardized transcription protocol (Appendix F).

Phase II (Observational Field Notes)

This qualitative data collection tool was based on the observations of daily business operations to include services provided to new and existing clients within the Fulton County Sheriff's Office. I conducted five observation sessions and generated field notes from each visit. In collaboration with the Fulton County Sheriff's Office Public Affairs Officer, those observation dates were proposed and approved by agency administration. The observation sessions occurred between 1—21—2014 and 3—20—2014. Each observation session lasted approximately 60 minutes. The purpose of the observations was to gain additional information about the culture of the Fulton County Sheriff's Office, how information is disseminated to the public, and the effectiveness of the selected social media platforms. The observations also allowed me to document the organizational practices that occurred. In accordance with the protocol discussed by Patton (2002), observations were conducted at the research site and were nonintrusive (i.e., the users of social media platforms were observed as they naturally use the

technology).

I was provided classified access to the research site where I could see employee discussions and interactions, employee—client discussions and interactions, and the processing of legal activities such as civil filings, warrants, criminal history reviews, and vehicle impound services. I was also given the authority, by the research site, to monitor the content of the social media platforms being used but could not reveal the identities or personal information related to the user. The observations paid particular attention to the following items:

- The demographic profile of the users in terms of age and gender

- Social—network influence: whether the users interact in groups or individually

- The use of the facilities (i.e., the activity the users were engaged in when they were using the facilities)

There were no special accommodations needed during the observations. I took field notes based on observations made during the allotted data collection timeframe. For example, I noted the slow speed of Internet connectivity in three of the five observation sessions within departments of the Fulton County Sheriff's Office. Throughout the data collection period, I also observed the physical surroundings of the Fulton County Sheriff's Office and Fulton County Jail as well as the proximity between the offices of the two institutions and noted relative findings. Field notes were collected based on those observation sessions and the use of the selected social media platforms within the research site. The field notes were organized in a journal to record daily summaries of observation sessions during the period of data collection. These notes were formatted as a

part of the data analysis and findings. Merriam (1998) identified observational field

notes as credible source of data. According to Merriam, "field notes are analogous to the

interview transcript" (p. 104). Data were transcribed, coded, and analyzed to determine

how the impact of social media platforms affect organizational and work practices and

efficiencies or lack thereof (Appendix G).

Phase III (Social Networking Data)

This qualitative data collection approach included the collection of posts,

comments, retweets, uploads of pictures, audio, video, and messages from the selected

social media platforms within the Fulton County Sheriff's Office to develop analytical

conclusions. The digital collateral was made visible per authorization from the research

site, which provided me access to analyze the social media platforms used. The period of

data collection occurred between 1—17—2014 and 5—17—2014. During that time

period, the following amount of Facebook posts, Tweets, and Instagrams were captured:

- **Facebook—** 144 Posts

- **Twitter—** 226 Tweets

- **Instagram—** 115 Posts

The data were organized into tables that reflected the following information for

each social media platform:

- **Facebook—** Date of the Post, Title, Post, Source, The Proposed Theory, # of

  Likes, # of Comments, # of Shares, # of Pictures

- **Twitter—** Date of the Tweet, Tweet, Source, The Proposed Theory, # of

  Retweets, # of Replies, # of Favorites, # of Shares, # of Pictures

Instagram— Date of the Instagram, Source, Location, # of Likes, # of

Comments, # of Pictures

In collaboration with the research site, I was also able to measure trends of usage

for the selected social media platforms. Figure 7 indicates the usage trends of the social

media platforms within the Fulton County Sheriff's Office by employees and clients to

include the number of logins and posts made to the selected social media platforms and

times of the day posts were made during the period of data collection. Appendix J reflects

the social media data that were collected.
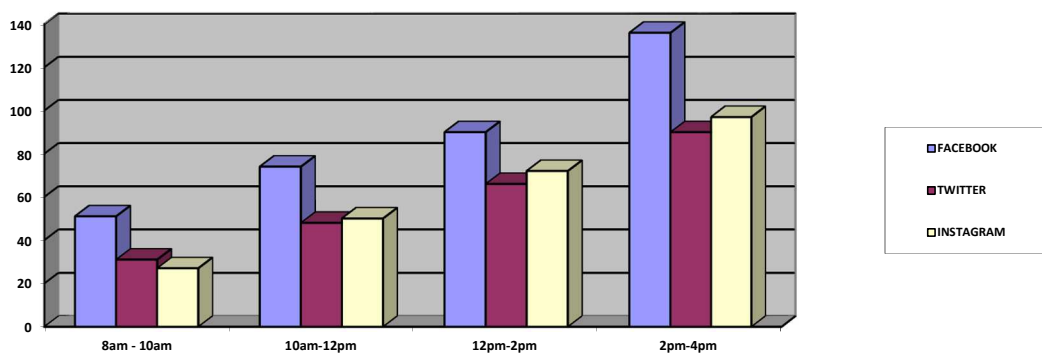
Fulton County Employees
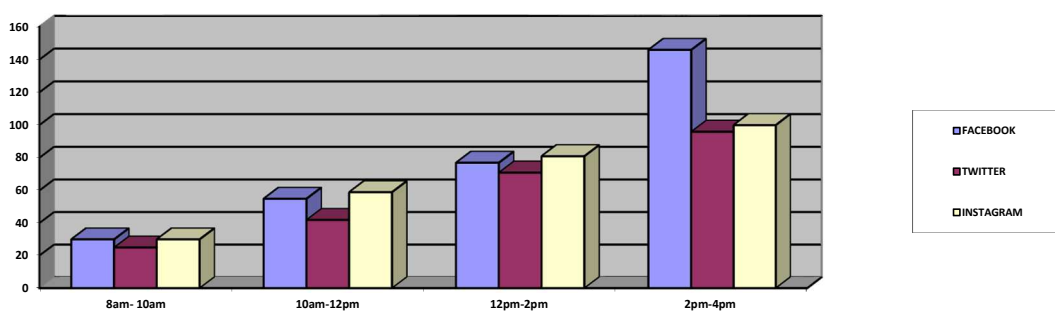
Fulton County Clients

Figure 7. Usage trends of the number of posts or comments and times of usage per social media platform of Fulton County Sheriff's Office employees and clients.

The usage trends provided an indicator of the peak times for usage and the demeanor of users. These trends allowed patterns in the text to be identified, transcribed, and coded so that they were amenable to the qualitative investigation. An important subset of these tools comprised methods of sentiment analysis whereby themes and numerical scores can be assigned to posts, comments, or tweets as a means of evaluating the strength and direction of the writer's reaction to certain events or information. The coding of key words with positive and negative connotations, the frequency of visits to

the platforms, and the level of interaction (comments, retweets, pics, audiovisual materials) per message were used to analyze social media's impact on the Fulton County Sheriff's Office's level of accessibility to the public.

Upon the completion of the phases of the data collection, the data were summarized and analyzed as a whole to generate a theoretical foundation. Key themes were developed from this process. The expectation was that this process would allow readers of the study to have a general understanding of the study and its connection with the proposed theories. It was expected that the theoretical foundation would correspond and correlate with the research question and subquestions for the study. The key themes were reiterated in Chapter 5 and resulted in premises that served as the basis for the proposed recommendations.

Deviations and Surprises

In addition to the patterns, themes, and premises established in Chapter 3, there were two actions that deviated from the data collection process:

1. In the employee and client interviews, participants were asked to give final comments and/or their opinions on the subject of the impact of social media within the Fulton County Sheriff's Office. Interviewees took the opportunity to expound on the topic by reiterating a specific point or idea that was previously stated in the interview. Some used the opportunity to share additional information that did not pertain to the questions asked during the interview.

2. A surprising response was given when an interviewee was asked to answer what they believed were the most effective communication tools or

channels within the research site. The individual simply responded, "it's

hard to say. Things change here on a constant basis."

In summary, the qualitative approach that I used provided breadth and depth to

the data collection and analysis processes. Understanding internal stakeholders'

viewpoints on public accessibility is important for employee trust, performance, and

ultimately, satisfaction. According to Cheney (2003), messages created for external

stakeholder audiences also have a massive impact on internal stakeholders; employees

and clients.

Data Analysis

The analysis of the data collected was matched with the theoretical framework of

the study. According to Patton (2002), data analysis in qualitative research involves three

main steps: (a) coding or annotating the primary data, (b) grouping together the related

codes, and (c) generating the themes from the codes in most cases. This approach was

applied to the analysis of data that were collected. The themes that were generated were

analyzed and aligned with the most appropriate theory. The triangulation of these theories

allowed for the development of a grounded theoretical framework to present outcomes

for the research question and subquestions and to identify findings.

Diffusion of Innovations (Analysis)

The analysis of collected data aligned with the diffusion of innovations theory

(DOI) was intended to measure the adoption of innovations, such as social media use

among individuals and organizations. Since the aim of the study was to explore how DoI

could be used to explain the adoption pattern of social media by employees and clients of

the Fulton County Sheriff's Office, the data analysis essentially involved mapping the

primary data to the DoI framework. As such, it was not necessary to generate new themes after coding the primary data and grouping the codes. The analysis proceeded to classify the data into the DoI categories. This section began by looking at the attributes of innovation before proceeding to the other aspects of the framework, namely communication channels, accessibility of the public and social systems, length of adoption, and consequences of the innovation.

As Table 3 illustrates, there was overwhelming evidence that social media have the potential to support the themes indicated below. The code of frequency report was reflective of the number of participants who based the adoption of social media on the indicated themes. The data reflected the status of social media adoption and use within the Fulton County Sheriff's Office and identified major themes that can be identified in the adoption of social media such transparency and accessibility of public information.

Table 3

A Code Frequency Report of Respondents' Level of Support

Themes	# of participants (Employees)	# of participants (Clients)
Transparency	15	14
Freedom of expression	13	10
Community participation	15	15
Accessibility of public information	15	15
Status of media convergence	15	12
State of technology	15	12
Social media accessibility	15	10

Figure 8 reiterates the previous code of frequency report reflecting the level of support by all of the employee and client research participants for transparency, freedom of expression, community participation, accessibility of public information, status of media convergence, state of technology, and social media accessibility. In order to investigate if the diffusion of social media within the research site was effective, it was imperative to analyze these themes to determine the success or failure of the innovation.
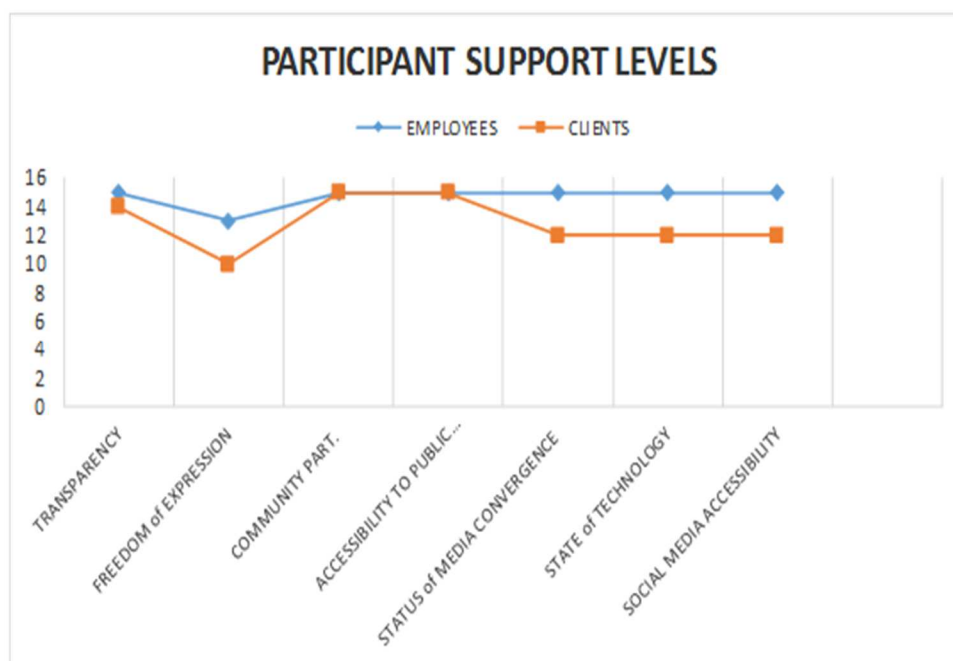
Figure 8. Participants' level of support for key variables.

Attributes of the Innovation (Relative Advantage)

According to Robinson (2009), relative advantage is the degree to which an innovation is perceived as better than the idea it supersedes by a particular group of users, measured in terms that matter to those users, like economic advantage, social prestige, convenience, or satisfaction. The concept of relative advantage was analyzed along two dimensions: (a) relative advantage having limited or no access to public information or

announcements from the research site (i.e., analyzing the benefits of access in general), and (b) relative advantage of other forms of access to information available to the public (i.e., phone, in—person visits).

Compared with having limited or no access to public information or announcements, this study offered employees and clients the opportunity to consume an innovation in which they otherwise may not have been aware. The main uses of the selected social media platforms among the participants were information seeking, sharing information, and having access to forms or documents. At the time of data collection, the Fulton County Sheriff's Office was in the process of announcing the availability of the social media platforms and encouraging the public to sign—up for one or all of the platforms and engage them publically. These announcements were made to the public in several ways to include: flyers, pamphlets, email, and word of mouth. The research site also provided advantages to employees and clients. It was noted that most employees and clients used facilities, mobile phones, tablets, and applications to access information. For most employees and clients, these tools items were the only outlets they had to be informed about events, directives, or announcements. Several of the clients interviewed indicated that they did not own computers. For some clients who lived far from the research site, they were not able to afford the cost of Internet services needed to sign— up for or frequently access their social media profile. Compared with other access points, this study offered advantages such as the ability to attain social media at little to no cost.

The Fulton County Sheriff's Office provided public Internet access within its premises and mobile access to employees for work related duties, but the research site did not offer mobile capabilities to clients. Most clients had Internet access or the ability to

travel to outlets that provided Internet access to electronically receive information or documents. The distance was a hindrance particularly to some clients; especially because safety and affordability were the prime concerns of most who lived within disadvantaged communities. The analysis indicated a clear effect of distance on adoption: most of the users of the selected social media platforms lived nearby.

The fact that the Fulton County Sheriff's Office offered accessibility of public information via the selected social media platforms and provided these services at no cost was an advantage over traditional methods of gaining information. Most users indicated that this was the main advantage of using the social media platform(s). Cost was especially important because concerns of affordability were high. Most of the clients interviewed indicated that they would stop using the platform service if they had to pay for it. In contrast, most of the employees had access to the selected social media platforms as a result of their employment with the Fulton County Sheriff's Office.

Technologically, the project's infrastructure did not offer much advantage compared with alternative access points. One of the most common concerns for users was the speed of the computers, especially when accessing the Internet. In the research site, computers were connected to the Internet by an internal server that was utilized by all county departments. Users found low speeds frustrating, especially because they had limited time to access computers. As DoI predicts, relative advantages such as: serving as an information sharing tool, providing access to users from residential areas, and offering these services at no cost promoted adoption of the social media platform(s). These were aspects that the research site offered comparable advantages to what was available at alternative sites, which were noted to have affected the adoption of social media.

Compatibility

Compatibility played a role in the adoption of the innovation. Robinson (2009) stated that *compatibility* "is the degree to which an innovation is perceived as being consistent with the values, past experiences, and needs of potential adopters. Compatibility was relevant to the analysis of data on the following accounts: (a) other forms of technology to which members of the community had accessibility, (b) functions of the hosting institution, (c) the needs of the potential adopters, (d) the financial status of the members of the community, and (e) the "normal" ways of doing things. It was interesting to note that the adoption rate seemed to be higher in urban—based communities compared with equivalent suburban communities within Fulton County. This could be explained by the difference in the level of exposure to technology such as social media in general. The urban population was most likely to be confronted with this technology and were more likely to enhance their appreciation of the use and capabilities of social media.

The same could not be said about their rural counterparts. For example, cell phone ownership was higher in urban areas compared with rural areas. A small subset of research participants indicated that they resided in rural communities under Fulton County's jurisdiction. The demographic profiles of the research participants reflected that more than 60% of the service area's (Fulton County and the immediate surrounding areas) population own cell phones. Therefore, it was inferred that the compatibility of computing facilities with other technologies to which participants were exposed had a positive impact on innovation adoption. However, the use of social media platforms by users in more rural areas could have had a negative impact on compatibility and adoption.

Some of the users who had prior or alternative access to computers had not used, were not familiar with, or had not established an account on the selected social media platforms for interaction with others.

Some of the users found the social media platforms extraordinary and difficult to use. The research site was also compatible with the core function of the social media platforms that they were hosting (i.e., they were a source of information for the general public). This observation was in line with the findings of Samaai (2005), who indicated that even without training, the adoption rate seemed to be higher in urban based and public areas. It should also be noted that many adopters became aware of the information shared via the social media platforms while visiting the research site. Some who took advantage of the Fulton County Sheriff's Office's physical location to receive information were satisfied with this method and apprehensive to adopt the social media platforms for this use. There was a need for continued study of non—adopters and compatibility with the needs of potential adopters. The platforms were compatible to service the needs of the community. They were free of charge, making the innovation compatible with the economic realities of all communities.

The types of services provided by the use of the social media platforms within the research site were also compatible with the realities of users. Compatibility could be interpreted as a precursor to increased knowledge of procedures and skills. It was likely that users of the platforms were knowledgeable about the platforms at least to some extent. Thus, it was likely that these users were accepting of using social media platforms to locate information. Compatibility was enhanced by locating information via social media. The opposite effect of compatibility with "normal" ways of doing things was

noted by some of the users who had previous or alternative access to technology. Most of this group had used proprietary products and were comfortable with the use of the selected social media platforms.

The results on compatibility were consistent with DoI (i.e., compatibility led to increase the likelihood of social media adoption, and lack of compatibility reduced the likelihood). Compatibility with technology to which the urban poor were exposed, the functions of the hosting institution, and the normal way of doing things positively contributed to the adoption. Lack of compatibility with the use of the selected social media platforms by some research participants negatively impacted adoption.

Trialability

Robinson (2009) stated that *trialability* is the degree that an innovation can be experimented with on a limited basis. From a fiscal perspective, the innovation of social media can be considered as trialable. The social media platforms used for this study were offered to the public at no cost. Users only required a free membership to join the social media platform(s). The financial risk in signing—up for the technology was low. As discussed under relative advantage, this had a positive impact on adoption. However, lack of previous use of social media prevented those with no previous exposure to the innovation an opportunity to effectively reap the benefits of the technology. A client of the Fulton County Sheriff's Office and a previous nonuser of social media indicated that she had never tried to use the technology because she did not know where to start. This issue was exacerbated by a lack of training and time limitations (i.e., A 20—30 minute review does not give a novice user sufficient time to become proficient with using social media.).

Another hindrance to trialability, for those with inadequate Internet or computing skills, was the possibility of embarrassment. One of the problems noted by most nonusers was that it was too complicated to join or post information or comments to the selected social media platforms. As Client 1 stated, "it makes me nervous, and I feel like I am wasting their time since I am too slow. So, I often give up without learning how to really use social media."

Observability

The question of the impact of *observability* on adoption can be addressed from two angles: (a) the visibility of the technology or people using the technology, and (b) the observability of the results on adoption. In terms of visibility of the social media infrastructure within the research site, there were two answers to this question depending on whether one is inside or outside of the social network. According to Robinson (2009), the easier it is for individuals to see the results of an innovation, the more likely they are to adopt it. This would involve increased accessibility of public information. The fact that most adopters first learned about the availability and use of social media for access of public information, announcements, and public documents and forms within the research site was a testimony to this.

I observed several posters and flyers within the research site that promoted the availability of social media. However, one of the research participants indicated that the signage was very small and difficult to see from a distance unless the individual was looking for it. None of the respondents indicated that they had first learned about the Fulton County Sheriff's Office or the availability of social media from signage. There was no evidence to explain the influence of observability of results. This lack of evidence

could be due to the abstract nature of the results of adopting social media platforms. For instance, how can one observe that an individual joined one or all of the social media platforms because she/he saw an advertisement? It can only be speculated that the fact that a person joined a platform, made a posting, or received a response through the Internet is observable (at least for those who view that user's social media page) and would attract new users to the platform. The results of this study were consistent with the DoI position on observability (i.e., visibility enhances adoption of an innovation).

Communication Channels

From the interviews there were two popular responses provided for the question, "How did you first learn about the social media platforms?" Those responses were "while visiting the research site" and "from personal networks". Very few respondents learned about the platforms through the mass media or other communication channels. The results pointed to a high degree of homophilous communication. In addition, it was found that most of the users had a relative or a friend who also used the social media platform. It was also observed that most of the younger respondents, aged 18 to30, were knowledgeable of social media, but were nonusers of the social media platforms within the research site. Most nonusers actually did not know about the availability of these platforms within their community.

The research site was also instrumental in the diffusion of information about the social media platforms. The research site often provided information about the accessibility to their social media platforms during the community or open—day campaigns. However, it was not clear how effective such activities were in reaching those who did not utilize the research site. Rogers (2003) termed these activities as *selective*

exposure which individuals were likely to expose themselves to messages that were consistent with their attitudes and beliefs. Therefore, it was likely that only people who were employed by or interested in the services provided by the Fulton County Sheriff's Office attended such events. It was unlikely that those who were not interested in community activities or the research site would become familiar with its new innovations.

Social System

DoI stipulated that *social systems* affect diffusion of innovations within social systems. The results of this study showed that social systems had an impact, not only on adopters, but also on the innovation adopted. The patterns of adoption and its uses were slightly different among the employees and clients interviewed. For employees, most of the interview respondents were members of one or all of the selected social media platforms prior to the study. In contrast, some communication and marketing efforts were needed for clients to become members and engage on one or more of the selected social media platforms.

At the onset of interviews with clients of the Fulton County Sheriff's Office and of the monitoring of the selected social media platforms, there was very little usage among older adults (50 years of age and older). Based on the demographic profiles of the respondents, I suspected that this was due to low levels of literacy among this social group. As previously noted, many of the communities encompassed within Fulton County were at or below the poverty level with lower levels of education. Therefore, some populations were likely to have low levels of literacy and, in turn, low levels of acceptance or usage of the selected social media platforms. To maximize the rate of

adoption, the research site must strive to get the community involved in the project (i.e.,

community buy—in) (Bridges.org, 2002; NTCA, 2000). Also, there must be opinion

leaders who encourage others to use an innovation. The study indicated that there was

minimal effort to get community buy—in. In addition, members of the community,

including Fulton County Sheriff's Office staff members, were not identified as opinion

leaders.

An explanation of contradictory information to existing literature was found in the

relationship between Fulton County Sheriff's Office and the community. The research

site has existed in the community for years, and people have gotten accustomed to its

current business operations. Since the selected social media platforms were implemented

within the research site, members of the community were willing to accept the innovation

with minimal reservation. Most clients viewed the new innovation as part the evolution of

the research site. Fulton County Sheriff's Office attempted to use public forums, such as

community events or board of commissioners' meetings to explain the details of the

implementation of social media and its benefits to the community. Therefore, it can be

argued that the Fulton County Sheriff's Office played the role of opinion leader and

facilitated community buy—in. Gefen and Ridings (2003) stated that this was consistent

with those who argued, from a view of social identity, that bridging the gap between the

providers and users of social networking systems could improve the likelihood of

adoption.

Length of Time and Adoption

At the time of the study, the selected social media platforms within the Fulton

County Sheriff's Office had been available for less than two years. As such, it was

premature to draw any useful inferences on the effect of time on adoption. A study using approaches that analyze the adoption process, such as domestication of technology, would provide insight into the impact that length of time has on adoption. During the period of data collection, the number of users increased for each of the selected social media platforms.

Consequences of the Innovation

As discussed earlier, it was difficult to identify or measure the consequences of an innovation. According to Rogers (2003), consequences of an innovation can best be studied over a long period of time. The innovation of social media is still a relatively new technology, and scholars have not yet invested sufficient time to appreciate its consequences. However, from the results so far, it can be said that there are both desirable and undesirable consequences. One of the desirable consequences has been the provision of public information access to residents who could not afford to pay those services. This access has resulted in increased efficiency in processing client services and engagement between the agency and the community. According to an employee of the Fulton County Sheriff's Office, some of the clients received trainings at the research site on basic operating functions of the social media platforms. In addition, the use of social media platforms increased the confidence of users who lacked computer experience. Two clients indicated that using one or more of the selected social media platforms allowed them to acquire and sustain computer skills and become more interactive with others.

One undesirable and unintended consequence discovered was the creation of a skills divide. This divide was, to a large extent, a result of not providing training to users and potential users. It was noted that most of the users had acquired their computer skills

from school, home, or elsewhere. Few users acquired their skills from a formal class or training. This trend indicated that individuals with skills could benefit from the technology, while individuals who did not have the skills stagnated. It was also observed that nonskilled users (mainly clients) were asking more skilled users (usually employees) for assistance with operating one or more of the selected social media platforms. This was consistent with the statement by Röling et al. (1976, as cited by Roman, 2003), "Diffusion processes lead to inequitable development unless preventative measures are taken" (p. 163).

Many employees indicated that the number of registered users of the selected social media platforms and interaction have increased. One employee indicated that the increasing number of registrations meant that computer users would use the technology to access other resources. One clear negative consequence of the platforms was the increase in negative and derogatory communication. Some employees found this annoying and insulting to the mission of the agency. One employee mentioned that she had become accustomed to negativity or backlash from clients but some of the comments, responses, and uploads were inappropriate and should be removed. This consequence echoed Rogers's (2003) statement that sometimes the consequences of an innovation affect individuals other than those adopting the technology or innovation.

Critical Mass (Analysis)

The pattern of extreme growth of social media platforms within the last decade has made a significant impact on the interpretation of theoretical concepts related to diffusion. To effectively measure the adoption and diffusion of social media, it was important to understand the influences of critical mass. It was indicated in the review of

literature that critical mass influences involve network externalities and sustainability of the innovation. The surge in online users during the past two decades has resulted in significant growth in the application and use of social media, indicating the sustainability of the innovation. According to Nielsen's *State of the Media: The Social Media Report* (2011), in recent years, social media has not only connected consumers with each other, but also with the places they go, the programs they watch and the products they buy. Nielson added that social networks and blogs are taking up more of American's time online, accounting for nearly a quarter of time spent on the Internet. Internet users in the United States spend more than twice as much time on social networks than their participation in the second—most popular category, playing online games

Nielsen's (2011) report also indicated that Americans are increasingly transfixed with social networking sites, with Facebook taking up more of time than any other blog or social media platform. Nielsen (2011) reported that more than140 million people visit Facebook annually. That is 70% of all active. Internet users in the United States. It was also reported that the remaining social media platforms used in this study, Twitter and Instagram, have been viewed or regularly used by more than 50% of all active Internet users in the United States. With their increasing growth and popularity, social media platforms that were considered to have reached critical mass include Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, among others. The collection of data within the Fulton County Sheriff's Office was analyzed to support perceived influences related to the critical mass theory.

The critical mass of social media involved connecting people to an experience, knowing the rules of engagement, and adding value to inspire participation. Based on the approach developed by Booij and Helms (2011) and discussed in the review of literature,

it was my intent to identify what factors contribute to the ideal circumstances needed for an online community to reach a critical mass. I discovered that those factors include: social platform, content, and user base. According to Booij and Helms (2011), critical mass is a change in the state of an online platform that becomes self—sustaining. Attributes of the critical mass theory were applied to the analysis of data to develop a unified theoretical framework.

Social Media Platform

The three most commonly used social media platforms within the Fulton County Sheriff's Office were Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. These platforms were analyzed to determine the minimum size that enough users could interact sustainably. This included the number of people who initiated, viewed, or contributed to engagement on the social media platforms on a consistent basis. In collaboration with the research site, the point at which one of the selected social media platforms reached a point of sustainability was determined to be at least 1,000 users per platform. This point was determined by population and demographic profile of the jurisdiction serviced by the Fulton County Sheriff's Office. The data that was collected to determine the critical mass of the selected social media platforms within the research site included the following factors: the components and privacy of the platform and the marketing strategy used to generate new users to the platform. Research participants were asked to rate mechanisms of those factors in their interviews on a scale of 1 to10. These mechanisms included: the ease of use, safety of the social media platform, and the strategies used to become aware of the platform and initiate its use. The ratings provided by the interviewees were averaged per each mechanism in order to determine the effectiveness of these techniques

as well as the number of users of the platforms. Table 4 is reflective of each social media

platform that was used in the study, the factors that were considered, the mechanisms

used to measure the factors, and the average rating determined by participant responses.

Table 4

Average Rating of Participant Responses to Factors and Mechanisms of Social Media Platforms

Social media platform	Factors	Mechanisms	Participant rating Employees	Participant rating Clients
Facebook	Components and Factors of Technological Platform	Handling user data sensitively	8.8	8.7
		Fast reaction time	8.8	8.8
		Anonymity	8.4	8.3
		Usability	9.2	8.7
		Safety	8.3	8.3
	Marketing	Adaptive execution of strategy	8.7	8.6
		Establish a strong trademark	8.8	8.7
		Marketing and promotional campaigns	8.6	8.5
		Highly sought—after people among the initial users	8.8	8.6
Twitter	Components and Factors of Technological Platform	Handling user data sensitively	9	8.5
		Fast reaction time	9	8.8
		Anonymity	8.3	8.3
		Usability	8.8	8.6
		Safety	8.3	8.3
	Marketing	Adaptive execution of strategy	9	8.8
		Establish a strong trademark	9	8.7
		Marketing and promotional campaigns	9	8.7
		Highly sought—after people among the initial users	9	8.8
Instagram	Components and Factors of Technological Platform	Handling user data sensitively	9	8.5
		Fast reaction time	8.3	9

(*table continues*)

Social media platform	Factors	Mechanisms	Participant rating	Participant rating
			Employees	Clients
		Anonymity	8.3	8
		Usability	8.6	8.3
		Safety	8.6	8
	Marketing	Adaptive execution of strategy	9	8.8
		Establish a strong trademark	9	8.8
		Marketing and promotional campaigns	9	8.8
		Highly sought—after people among the initial users	9	8.8

Data was also collected from the usage of the social media platforms within the

research site. During the period of data collection, trends were analyzed to include the

average number of daily users for each platform and the times of day that users were

logged in within a 12 hour span (8AM to 8PM). This was used to determine if there was

growth in the use of the social media platform to reach sustainability and the platform

that generated the greatest increase of users. Based on collected data, Figure 8 indicates

significant increases in the usage of each platform by the research participants throughout

the day.
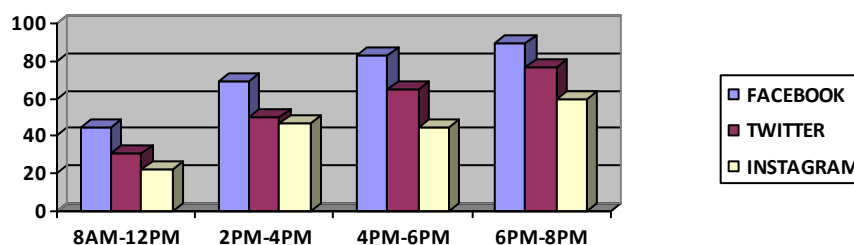
Figure 9. Average number of daily users of Fulton County Sheriff's Office social media platforms.

Content

In addition to determining if critical mass had been reached on the selected social media platforms, it was important to investigate the information and content that was posted and the comments, reactions, or responses that generated engagement. Information regarding important events, breaking news, and announcements within the research site were essential factors of not only measuring critical mass but also increasing public accessibility and credibility of the agency. For example, early during the data collection period, there were two major winter storms that greatly impaired the functions of Fulton County. It was an important function of the Fulton County Sheriff's Office to disseminate any information such as weather updates, roads closings, school closings, and actions taken to ensure the safety of the public. The selected social media platforms were used to post frequent updates and information for accessibility of all who followed.

Another example involved the death of a beloved member of the Fulton County Sheriff's Office for more than six years, Marco, the K—9 Service Dog. The announcement was posted of the dog's death from inoperable cancer by the Fulton County Sheriff's Office to all of the selected social media platforms. The post received a

significant amount of comments, likes, and retweets of support and gratitude for service

from various county law enforcement agencies as well as people from different levels of

society, living both in and outside of Fulton County. The selected social media platforms

were used to provide announcements for a funeral service, remarks of Marco's

achievements, updates to promote awareness of cancer in canines, and the

announcements of a new K—9 service dog within the data collection period.

Posts were also made regarding the public safety of residents. During the data

collection period, an inmate of the Fulton County Jail escaped from a transport bus, and a

statewide manhunt ensued. The Fulton County Sheriff's Office used the selected social

media platforms to post announcements of the escape and warned residents be vigilant

during the manhunt. The posts received many likes, comments, and retweets regarding

the efforts to capture the escapee. The research site followed with posting photos of the

escapee to make the community more aware of the individual and identify him. Within

72 hours of the initial posts made to the social media platforms, the escapee was captured

by information provided by a follower of the Fulton County Sheriff's Office's Facebook

Page.

The data that was collected to measure the content of the critical mass of the

social media platforms within the research site included the following factors: form of the

production function and prevention of overload. Research participants were asked to rate

mechanisms of those factors in their interviews on a scale of 1 to 10. These mechanisms

provided insight on research participants' views on the value and benefit of the content

within the selected social media platforms. The ratings provided by the interviewees were

averaged per each mechanism in order to determine the effectiveness of these techniques

as well as the number of users of the platforms. Table 5 is reflective of the content of

each social media platform that was used in the study, the factors that were considered,

the mechanisms that were used to measure the factors, and the average rating determined

by participant responses.

Table 5

Average Rating of Participant Responses to Factors and Mechanisms of Social Media Content

Content	Factors	Mechanisms	Participant rating Employee	Participant rating Client
Facebook	Form of the production function	Receptive participation	9.1	9
		Allow for a pleasant, un—obtrusive and immediate first Impression	9 8.7	8.9 8.8
		Establish social norms	8.9	8.9
	Prevention of overload	Active moderation of all activity (sanctions)	8.9	8.9
		Delegate responsibility to the members	8.6	8.1
	Allow the formation and support of subgroups	Allow the formation and support of subgroups	8.9	8.9
	Implement personalized filtering features	Implement personalized filtering features	8.8	8.8
Instagram	Form of the production function	Receptive participation	9	9
		Allow for a pleasant, un—obtrusive and immediate first Impression	9 9	9 9
		Establish social norms	9	9
	Prevention of overload	Active moderation of all activity (sanctions)	9	9
		Delegate responsibility to the members	8.3	8.3
		Allow the formation and support of subgroups	9	9
		Implement personalized filtering features	9	9
Twitter	Form of the production function	Receptive participation	9.2	8.9
		Allow for a pleasant, un—obtrusive and immediate first Impression	9.2 9.2	8.8 8.8
		Establish social norms	9	8.9
	Prevention of overload	Active moderation of all activity (sanctions)	9	8.8
		Delegate responsibility to the members	9	8.4
	Allow the formation and support of subgroups	Allow the formation and support of subgroups	9	8.9
	Implement personalized filtering features	Implement personalized filtering features	9	8.9

User Base

Another factor that was considered a key circumstance in achieving critical mass was the user base. The *user base* included the number of people who have utilized the referenced technology. Within the research site, the user base consisted of people who created a Facebook, Twitter, and/or Instagram account and signed—up to follow the accounts of one or more of the social media platforms operated by the Fulton County Sheriff's Office. Data that were collected of user demographic information provided beneficial insight of the age and residential background that the selected social media platform was most appealing. Although they may or may not have participated in the study, Table 6 represents the landscape of social media users within the research site including: the number of followers for each of the selected social media platforms, (as of 1—17—2014), the percentage increase of the user base (captured during data collection period, 1—17—2014 to 5—17—2014), and the demographic population that the social media platform tends to be most appealing.

Table 6

Landscape of Social Media Users—Fulton County Sheriff's Office

Social networking site	# of followers (1—17—2014)	% increase of user base (1—17—2014 to 5—17—2014)	Social media platform most appealing to …
Facebook	864	67%	Adults ages 18—35; urban residents; clients
Twitter	715	60%	Adults ages 18—35; urban residents; employees
Instagram	596	55%	Adults ages 18—35; urban residents; employees

The data that were collected to measure the user base of the critical mass of the social media platforms within the research site included two factors, participation and

total size. Research participants were asked to rate mechanisms of those factors in their

interviews. Those mechanisms included methods to encourage and increase participation

of the platform and the size of communities that use the technology. The ratings provided

by the interviewees were averaged per each mechanism in order to determine the

effectiveness of these techniques and the number of users of the social media platforms.

Table 7 is reflective of each social media platform used in the study, the factors that were

considered, the mechanisms that were used to measure the factors, and the average rating

determined by participant responses.

Table 7

Average Rating of Participant Responses to Factors and Mechanisms of Social Media User Base

User base	Factors	Mechanisms	Participant rating Employee	Participant rating Client
Facebook	Participation	Reward participants for contributing	8.5	8.7
		Make it easier to contribute	8.8	8.7
		Contribution as a side effect of user activity	8.9	8.8
		Let members know they are special with respect to the group	8.8	8.7
		Create dissimilar groups to foster discussions	8.9	8.7
	Total size	Display community size statistics	8.9	8.8
Twitter	Participation	Reward participants for contributing	8.8	8.7
		Make it easier to contribute	8.8	8.6
		Contribution as a side effect of user activity	9	8.6
		Let members know they are special with respect to the group	8.8	8.5
		Create dissimilar groups to foster discussions	9	8.7
	Total size	Display community size statistics	9	8.8
Instagram	Participation	Reward participants for contributing	8.3	8.8
		Make it easier to contribute	8.3	8.8
		Contribution as a side effect of user activity	9	8.8
		Let members know they are special with respect to the group	8.7	8.8
		Create dissimilar groups to foster discussions	9	8.8
	Total size	Display community size statistics	9	8.8

Uses and Gratifications (Analysis)

The diffusion and use of social media would not be possible if it were not for the Internet. According to Morris and Ogan (1996), the Internet is, in many ways, a unique medium that has not escaped the attention of uses and gratifications researchers who have contributed innovative variations on conventional approaches. Many studies have generally upheld the basic proposition about media attendance from the uses and gratifications tradition: the gratifications sought from the Internet predict individual exposure to the medium. Due to the fact that social media is a direct extension from the use of the Internet, the analysis of data collected to investigate the impact of social media on public sector accessibility applied attributes from the uses and gratifications theory to develop the study's framework.

The analysis of data collected from interview responses, observational field notes, and social networking data aligned with similar research conducted by Chigona, Kamkweda, and Manjoo (2008) on the uses and gratifications theory. They indicated no assumptions on the gratification structure and attempted to identify the gratification factors during the research. Using the NVIVO 10 software package, gratification themes were generated from interview responses, observational field notes, and social networking data to extract gratification factors for each medium. Data were measured on basic demographics (age, income, background, etc.), Internet and social media use, and accessibility of information per use of social media platforms within the Fulton County Sheriff's Office. Twenty—seven gratification statements were developed to measure the motivations for gaining accessibility of information. The statements were grouped into eight priority categories that captured the gratifications as summarized in Figure 10.

USES & GRATIFICATION MEASURES
INTERNET (IN)
To access information
For entertainment
Provides content and stories with good illustrations, photographic content, and audio
SOCIAL MEDIA (SM)
To access information
To connect with others
To share information, announcements, events
To post or upload pictures, video, etc.
ACCESSIBILITY (AC)
The ability to browse through information, policies, or laws that are unfamiliar
The ability to download forms and documents that would otherwise require travel to pick up
The ability to learn about news and announcements that affect my community
The ability to learn about community events that I may be interested in
ENGAGEMENT (EN)
To connect with people with similar interests
To keep abreast of events and trends

The freedom to express my opinion and feelings
To gain influential points of view
ECONOMY (EC)
Ability to afford access to Internet and social media at home
Limited or no access to the Internet and social media because it is not affordable
Access to the Internet and social media via mobile device
INFORMATION SEEKING (IS)
To access in—depth information
To access information quickly and cheaply
To find specific information
Ability to find reliable information
STATUS (ST)
Usage of Internet and social media indicates knowledge of current, modern technology
To share status updates
DEVELOPMENT (DE)
Inspiration to be more knowledgeable about community news and events
Provision of information and ideas to improve one's lifestyle

Figure 10. Measurement items designed to capture Internet and social media gratifications.

The statements were operationalized based on the responses provided by the research participants during their interview. Coding was measured on the interview responses of employees and clients within the Fulton County Sheriff's Office indicating reasons for using social media for each statement. The interview responses were entered into NVIVO 10 and were aligned with its relative gratification category and statement. The instrument that reflects the output of the coded data to its gratification category is reflected in Appendix I.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

It was my intent that the analysis of the qualitative data for this study would not prompt questions regarding its validity and trustworthiness. According to Creswell and Miller (2007), qualitative data is often questioned for its validity and reliability because the data is not strictly quantifiable. It was also my intent to conduct transparent data analyses and follow all procedures that would result in valid outcomes. Anfara, Brown, and Mangione (2002) argued that qualitative researchers should demonstrate transparency in data analyses to provide legitimacy to their studies and rebuff criticisms of non—disclosure of their methods. To ensure the validity, trustworthiness, and safety of the data collection and analysis processes, the following actions were taken to ensure the four criteria considered by qualitative researchers to be essential in reflecting transparency:

Interviews

Credibility. The data collected from interview responses were measured by the principles of internal validity. The data were coded to determine themes relative to the

theoretical framework of the study. The themes were intended to provide key implications to the investigation of the research question and subquestions. Data were analyzed to determine patterns and trends to build a collective case. Upon completion of the organization and analysis of data, mini debriefs were conducted randomly with interviewees to ensure the accuracy of the data and address any concerns or challenges.

Transferability. The data collected from interview responses were measured by the principles of external validity. The data collection and analysis processes conducted for this study within the selected research site were measured by qualitative research standards that can be applied within the public sector. The data provided by the interview responses provided feedback by individuals who were directly affected by the implementation of social media and can be referenced in the investigation of future research on the subject within the public sector.

Dependability. The data collection and coding processes of the interview responses were organized using proven approaches and provided the opportunity to repeat the research. As a part of the triangulation process, data from the employee and client interviews were contrasted to draw specific themes under each research question and the development of the theoretical foundation. The themes demonstrated a broad pattern or set of trends related to strategic organizational communications. The data were analyzed to investigate the research problem presented in the study and identify themes for future research. This included strategic planning and execution, detail of data collection, and evaluating the effectiveness of the process. The implications were used in the process of developing recommendations for Chapter 5.

Confirmability. The collection of data from interview responses were objectively coded and analyzed based on the experiences and ideas of the participants, rather than my personal views, characteristics, or preferences. I provided explanations of the rationale for decisions made and data collection and analysis approaches adopted. There were no preconceived biases that were identified throughout this study.

Safety. For security and tamper—safe purposes, responses to the interviews were recorded and transcribed immediately after each session. The recorded information was analyzed with demographic information to provide a comprehensive assessment of each research participant and his or her views. Collected data were uploaded to NVIVO 10 to develop figures and tables reflective of the research. I used three methods of saving the data collected to include: storing on a computer USB drive, my home computer hard drive, and the most innovative method, online cloud service, Dropbox. No other entities would be able to link the interview participants to their exact interview responses.

Observational Field Notes

Credibility. The data collected from observations were measured and transcribed into field notes that highlighted information or events relative to the study. Principles of internal validity were implemented to code and develop themes relative to the theoretical framework of the study. The themes were intended to provide key implications to the investigation of the research questions. Data from the organizational field notes were analyzed to determine patterns and trends to build a collective case. Following my organization and analysis of data, mini debriefs were conducted with the Fulton County Sheriff's Office's Public Affairs Officer to review the information and activities recorded

from the observation sessions to ensure the accuracy of the data and address any concerns or challenges.

Transferability. Principles of external validity were applied to the observational field notes. Transferability was ensured for this study by measuring the qualitative research standards that were applied from the data within the public sector. The data provided by the observational field notes captured information and daily activities pertaining to the effects of social media within the selected research site. The findings of the data can be referenced in the investigation of future research on the subject within the public sector.

Dependability. The data collection and coding processes of the observational field notes were organized using proven approaches and provided the opportunity to repeat the research. As a part of the triangulation process, data collected and transcribed into the observational field notes were contrasted to draw specific themes under each research question and the development of the theoretical foundation. The themes demonstrated a broad pattern or set of trends related to the impact of social media within the research site. The data were analyzed to investigate the research problem presented in the study and identify themes for future research. This included: strategic planning and execution, detail of observation sessions, and evaluating the effectiveness of the field notes. The implications were used in the process of developing recommendations for Chapter 5.

Confirmability. The collection of data from observational field notes were objectively coded and analyzed based on the settings, information, and daily activities captured during observation sessions. My personal views, characteristics, or preferences

were not recorded or taken into consideration during this process. I provided explanations of the rationale for decisions made and data collection and analysis approaches adopted. There were no preconceived biases that were identified throughout this study.

Safety. For security and tamper—safe purposes, field notes were recorded from each observation session and transcribed immediately after each session. The recorded information was analyzed to provide a comprehensive assessment of each observation session and its relevance to the investigation of the research question and subquestions. Collected data were uploaded to NVIVO 10 to develop figures and tables reflective of the research. I used three methods of saving the collected data to include: storing on a computer USB drive, my home computer hard drive, and the online cloud service, Dropbox. No other entities would be able to link the observational field notes to the exact setting and daily activities within the research site.

Social Networking Data

Credibility. The social networking data were measured and transcribed immediately upon collection. Principles of internal validity were implemented to code and develop themes relative to the theoretical framework of the study. The themes developed from the social networking data were intended to provide key implications to the investigation of the research questions. The social networking data were analyzed to determine patterns and trends to build a collective case. Following my organization and analysis of data, mini debriefs were conducted with the Fulton County Sheriff's Office's Public Affairs Officer to review the social networking data collected to ensure the accuracy and address any concerns or challenges.

Transferability. Principles of external validity were applied to the social networking data. Transferability was ensured for this study by measuring the qualitative research standards that were applied from the social networking data to the public sector. The social networking data captured posts, comments, likes, retweets, photos, audio, and video between 1—17—2014 to 5—17—2014 from the selected social media platforms to analyze daily activities pertaining to the effects of social media within the selected research site. The findings from the social networking data can be referenced in the investigation of future research on the subject within the public sector.

Dependability. The collection and coding processes of the social networking data were organized using proven approaches and allowed the opportunity to repeat the research. As a part of the triangulation process, the social networking data were collected and transcribed to draw specific themes under each research question and the development of the theoretical foundation. The themes demonstrated a broad pattern or set of trends related to the impact of social media within the research site. The social networking data were analyzed to investigate the research problem presented in the study and identify themes for future research. This included posts, comments, likes, retweets, photos, audio, and video from the selected social media platforms to evaluate the effectiveness of the social networking data. The implications were used in the process of developing recommendations for Chapter 5.

Confirmability. The social networking data were objectively coded and analyzed based on the content of posts, comments, tweets, retweets , location, number of likes, and number of pictures. My personal views, characteristics, or preferences were not recorded or taken into consideration during this process. I have provided explanations of

the rationale for decisions made and data collection and analysis approaches adopted.

There were no preconceived biases that were identified through this study.

Safety. For security and tamper—safe purposes, the social networking data were recorded and transcribed immediately after each review of the social networking platform. The recorded information was analyzed with demographic information and location of the post in order to provide a comprehensive assessment of the research participant and his or her views. Collected data were uploaded to NVIVO 10 to develop figures and tables reflective of the research. I used three methods of saving the collected data to include: storing on a computer USB drive, my home computer hard drive, and the online cloud service, Dropbox. No other entities would be able to link the posts, comments, or retweets made by users to their identity.

Summary of Findings

Based on the analysis of interview transcripts, observational field notes, and social networking data, a series of themes manifested that provided insight to the collective case study and attempted to satisfy the research question and subquestions that were investigated. The majority of the interview respondents believed that social media had the potential to accelerate access to public information, freedom of expression, transparency, citizen participation, and engagement. The observational sessions that were conducted led to the development of field notes that indicated increased accessibility of public information as the result of social media. The collection of social networking data provided evidence of increased community engagement. The three—instrument data collection and analysis method implemented for this study resulted in the extensive explanation of the following research question:

Research Question: Does the adoption of social media platforms result in increased accessibility of goods and services within the public sector?

Subquestions:

1. What is considered a point of sustainability for social media usage in public sector organizations?

2. Does the use of social media provide better insight on the benefit of goods and services offered to clients, office efficiency, and productivity within the public sector?

3. Does the increase in the usage of social media result in improved engagement between the public sector and the community?

Research Question

The objective of the primary research question was to determine if the adoption of social media platforms resulted in increased accessibility of goods and services within the public sector. The analysis of data generated from several data collection tools to include: interview responses, observational field notes, and social networking data resulted in the development of appropriate themes that were used to effectively provide a response relevant to the primary research question. During the interviews, employees and clients of the Fulton County Sheriff's Office provided responses and voiced their opinions about public accessibility of information, innovativeness, community engagement, communication issues, and transparency within the research site. To interpret the participants' responses that were relevant to the Research Question, NVivo 10 qualitative computer data analysis software was utilized to initiate a word frequency search that generated the most common words used in participants' responses. My coding strategy

allowed me to organize, view, and comprehend the data in a manner that generated the

development of a response to the research question. Table 8 illustrates fifty of the most

frequently used words by participants during the interviews to describe information

sharing barriers among public safety agencies.

Table 8

Most Frequent Words Used by Research Participants During Interviews

Word	Frequency of use Employees	Frequency of use Clients
"Friend"	18	32
"Like"	44	60
Accessibility	91	117
Account	28	24
Announcements	27	53
Agency	188	77
Application (APP)	11	26
Audio	11	17
Awareness	5	19
Client	178	203
.Com	227	198
Comment	45	62
Community	94	121
Compatible	26	22
Computer	4	18
Convenient	8	26
Dissemination	33	13
Current	62	48
Download	3	20
Efficient	70	68
Electronically	6	22
Engagement	16	15
Facebook	304	298
Experience	59	41
Http	99	71
Implementation	143	112
Increase	58	78
Information	408	512
Instagram	179	175
Interactive	117	96
Internet	156	225
Knowledge	9	24
Page	498	301
Pics	144	162
Platform	317	206

Word	Frequency of use Employees	Frequency of use Clients
Post	79	118
Public	138	217
Reliability	24	52
Reputation	26	37
Safety	15	39
Retweet	68	60
Service	249	315
Social Media	1,015	822
Technology	10	34
Traffic	5	7
Twitter	355	261
Updates	56	40
Use	399	267
Video	34	69
Website	47	98

There were significant differences as to how Fulton County Sheriff's Office employees and clients responded during their interviews. The responses from many employees indicated that the increase of social media had made significant changes to public accessibility. Employee 1 responded, "I do think that social media can increase accessibility and efficiency. For example, sometimes, due to inclement weather or equipment issues, visitation may be cancelled or delayed. Social media can be used to inform the public." According to Employee 5, social media have made a definite impact to public accessibility. "Social media can allow the opportunity to talk with employees, clients, and other government agencies and establish a relationship in a less formal way. You can share with them about anything from community activities, to warnings and advisories. With Twitter, you can show them love by retweeting an article they wrote. Some people even tweet media opportunities that you can respond to right then and there. Overall, social media allows you to not only share information, but also to humanize the

person you communicate with."

Only one of the fifteen employees interviewed said that social media did not create a change to public accessibility. Employee 6 indicated that social media would not increase accessibility within her department because of its high security clearance, but she believed that other areas within the research site could benefit. Another employee who was interviewed was skeptical about the level of information that social media would provide. Employee 4 indicated, "The increased implementation and use of social media may be beneficial to the public as long as it is used to provide information that informs and helps people in a suitable manner." As reflected by employee responses on the Interview Transcript Grid (Appendix F), specific trends that were discovered from the employees' responses indicated that social media made it easier to find out more information about organizational announcements, community events, and client needs.

Clients were less agreeable that social media has caused a change in the accessibility of goods and services. Eight of the fifteen client interviewees indicated a substantial change in their relationship with the research site because of social media. Client 3 lamented both the advantages and disadvantages of social media, "Social media is both a gift and a burden. It helps proliferate everything, and allows for stories and voices that might never have been heard to take the spotlight. At the same time, there's just so much junk that gets passed around on social media that it's hard to keep up with, and it's hard to find within the junk information you're really looking for." Client 1 indicated, "The implementation of social media made the relationship with the research site interactive and more personal. I felt closer to employees and more comfortable in gaining information because of this change." Responses from the remaining clients

indicated that adoption of social media platforms resulted in increased accessibility of goods and services and that changes have been substantive. Some were less enthusiastic about the changes social media had produced, indicating that their socio—economic status prevented them from accessing platforms or information on a consistent basis. As reflected by client responses on the Interview Transcript Grid (Appendix F), specific trends that were discovered from the clients' responses indicated that social media made it easier to find out more information about organizational announcements, community events, and client needs.

The analysis of field notes collected from observational sessions within the Fulton County Sheriff's Office also provided key patterns that assisted in the development of findings for the Research Question. Observation Session 1 revealed that the technology that existed within the research site was conducive to the adoption of social media platforms. During Observation Session 2, a review of the selected social media platforms indicated patterns of employee, client, and public interaction. Observations of the selected social media platforms also revealed the provision of announcements, posts, comments, and updates of community activities or events. It was recorded during Observation Session 3 that the affordability of becoming a member of the selected social media platforms contributed to increased accessibility and engagement. As reflected by Observation Sessions 1—5, which were conducted and transcribed on the Observational Field Notes Grid (Appendix G), additional patterns that were identified during the observations included:

- The social media platforms were increasingly used to stay abreast of current information and announcements from the Fulton County Sheriff's Office.

- The average user of one or all of the selected social media platforms developed close ties to the Fulton County Sheriff's Office and is half as likely to be socially isolated from the community.

- Internet users received more support from their ties on social media.

- Users of the social media platforms were much more community and politically engaged than those who did not have the regular access to the Internet.

But while people were still joining the social media platforms and compulsively visiting the sites, I observed a small but noticeable group who were not visiting the sites on a consistent basis, and some even deleted their memberships. Reasons for this observed exodus ranged from the lack of resources to maintain Internet service or regularly visit the social media platforms to simple disinterest in the use of one or more social media platforms and the movement toward more interactive platforms for social networking and communication.

Social networking data also contributed to the development the findings for the Research Question. Hundreds of posts, comments, and retweets were analyzed, and patterns were identified that were indicative of increased accessibility of goods and services from the adoption of social media platforms. Of the three social media platforms that were studied, Facebook was the most widely adopted by employees and clients of the Fulton County Sheriff's Office. However, the number of users that signed—up for Twitter and Instagram increased significantly. These social media platforms became a valuable resource to support the dissemination of information and interactivity with others. The growing frequency of posts, comments, and retweets, as well as the sharing of

pictures, videos, and audio that I noticed from the social networking data, indicated that

by providing additional avenues and purposes for communications, accessibility of public

information becomes available. As reflected by the collection and analysis of data

collected from the usage and interactivity of the selected social media platforms that were

conducted and transcribed on the Social Media Data Grid (Appendix H), additional

patterns that were identified included:

- A significant growth in the number of daily posts on Facebook, Twitter, and
  Instagram

- A significant growth of pictures, videos, and audio that were uploaded to the
  social media platforms

- A significant increase in the number of connections between the users of
  selected social media platforms through "friending" (Facebook) or
  "following" (Twitter and Instagram)

Findings made from the collection and analysis of social networking data within

the research site indicated that employees and clients differed somewhat in their current

and anticipated uses of the social media platforms. Interestingly, there were significant

differences between the perceived role of these platforms as social, rather than an

instrument to gain information. Analysis of the social networking data also alluded to the

fact that the rapid evolution in societal perceptions, socio—economic standings, and uses

of the technology, such as the Internet and social media, created attitudes toward the

adoption of innovation over time. The collection, organization, and analysis of the social

media data can be perceived as a prelude to a much greater role to come. Based on its

rapid growth and current popularity, cumulative data purported to the assumption that

social media will continue to grow in the future as a mainstream communication tool in society.

To summarize the Research Question, the implementation and adoption of social media platforms can generate increased accessibility of goods and services within the public sector. The interview responses provided by employees and clients of the Fulton County Sheriff's Office indicated the importance of the adoption of social media. However, specific challenges were indicated that expressed concerns of safety and Internet availability due to financial constraints. Observational field notes captured daily business processes that not only reflected increased adoption of the social media platforms but also increased accessibility of information. Patterns discovered from social networking data reflected evidence of the benefits that can be reaped by public sector organizations in moving toward a culture of social networking. Based on these findings, public safety organizations must work together to enhance technology such as social media to increase accessibility and communications among all stakeholders.

Subquestion 1

Building on the findings of the primary research question, Subquestion 1 inquired, "What is considered a point of sustainability for social media usage in public sector organizations?" As indicated earlier, the point that one of the selected social media platforms was considered to have reached a point of sustainability or critical mass was determined to be at least 1,000 users per platform. Research participants were made aware of the point of sustainability, but the information was not disclosed to the public. During the period of data collection and analysis, I found that each of the selected social media platforms reached more than 1,000 users, and the number of new users increased

daily. Figure 11 reflects the number of users captured for the selected social media platforms to reach critical mass during the period of data collection and analysis.
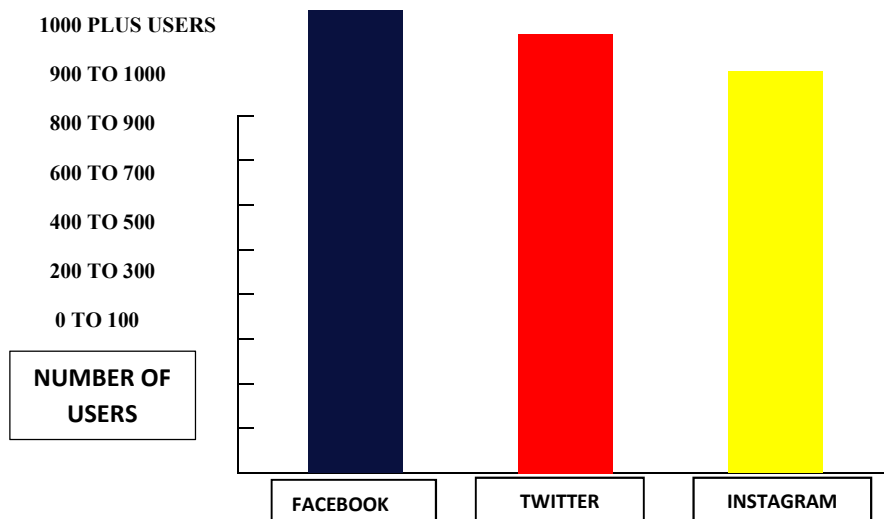
Figure 11. Number of users captured for selected social media platforms.

Population and demographic profiles of the jurisdiction serviced by the Fulton County Sheriff's Office were factors in the determination of the point of sustainability (critical mass). Employees and clients indicated that the assurance of privacy and ease of use made them more comfortable in registering for memberships with one or all of the selected social media platforms. Also, it can be assumed that marketing and word—of—mouth generated new users to the platform, leading to a point of sustainability. The analysis of the average number of daily users for each platform, including the times of day that users were logged—in, indicated significant growth throughout the data collection period. Virtually all the interview respondents (employees and clients) believed that the increased use of the selected social media platforms would result in sustainable technology that had to be recognized by the Fulton County Sheriff's Office.

Subquestion 2

Subquestion 2 attempted to explore if the adoption and use of social media provided better insight of factors such as: the benefit of goods and services offered to clients, office efficiency, and productivity within the public sector. Curtis et al. (2009) examined the adoption of social media among public and nonprofit sector organizations and concluded that social media was a very effective tool to enhance workplace efficiency. Analyses of interview responses indicated that the use of the selected social media platforms developed awareness of factors including innovativeness and productivity. Employee 10 responded that the use of the social media platforms resulted in more frequent communication and exchange of dialogue with employees and clients. "I believe that we all need to be more familiar with the social media platforms before we can gauge how it has made an impact on production and efficiency." Employee 13 responded, "Since the implementation of more technological communications such as social media, I am able to assist more clients, so I think that our business operations have improved. We need to continue to develop ways to improve on these factors."

Responses that were reflected on the Client Interview Transcript Grid (Appendix F) indicated that research participants acknowledged an improvement in awareness of services and information and quicker responses from the research site. Client 8 indicated that the use of the selected social media platforms cut a lot of time that would have been spent waiting on the phone for a response from an employee of the Fulton County Sheriff's Office. Client 14 stated that Internet access for her is limited due to financial constraints, but when she did have the ability to visit the selected social media platforms, she was able to gain information on how to download an important document she needed.

Many clients responded that they experienced increased office efficiency, but contended that there was still a long way to go in an ever—changing communications system.

The observations that were conducted also indicated that the use of social media, along with increased employee and client interaction, resulted increased productivity, efficiency, and enhanced services provided to clients. I noticed an immediate improvement in organizational culture and productivity as the result of the selected social media platforms. During Observation Session 2, I noted that comments or posts made by users often received responses within 12 hours. I also noted that questions regarding county services or announcements were responded to within eight hours. During Observation #3, I noted that some public documents or applications were made available on the Fulton County Sheriff's Office Facebook Page, or a link was provided via Twitter, so one could be afforded access via the Internet.

The analysis of the social networking data (Appendix H) reflected increased interactivity on each of the selected social media platforms. During the period of data collection, I noticed a significant increase in the amount of posts, comments, and tweets that were made. Some of them included pictures, video, and audio. Many received likes, retweets, or reposts on another user's page. In the analysis of data, I found that announcements of emergency events, closings, and public notices received the most likes, comments, retweets, or questions from employees and clients of the research site. Findings also included many of the posts made by the Fulton County Sheriff's Office to the selected research platforms included links that could be accessed via the Internet. This additional information often included background information and documents for public access. I found the information generated from the data provided a direct indication that

social media enhanced client services, office efficiency, and productivity within the public sector.

Subquestion 3

Finally, to further enhance the validity of findings investigated for in the primary research question, it was vital to determine if the increase in the usage of social media resulted in improved engagement between the public sector and the community. Because of key indices to measure the impact of social media on public sector accessibility and engagement as found in the literature, many interview respondents believed that true engagement has yet to take shape. For example, Employee 10 indicated that trends towards collaboration, partnership, and cross promotion were evident. "However, as the use of these social media platforms increase, there must be more effective ways to ensure engagement between the public sector and the community." Employee 12 alluded that achieving improved engagement between his department and the community through social media was nearly impossible because his information was classified due to delinquent tax matters. "We do not post to any of the social media platforms. The department has posted the property tax sale list to the Sheriff's website." Employee 15 rated the level of community engagement as high since the implementation and use of the social media platforms. "I have noticed positive comments on posted pictures and videos from other agencies as well as citizens that we serve."

Many of the client respondents indicated that using the selected social media platforms vastly improved their communication and interaction with others. Client 1 responded that she was not an active user of social media, but she was able to post simple messages and stay connected to co—workers, relatives, and activities within the Fulton

County Sheriff's Office. Client 5 stated that social media enhanced informal cooperation between the research site and the public with minimal content sharing. Employee 12 indicated that Facebook was the only social media platform that she could see an improvement in engagement between the Fulton County Sheriff's Office and the community. However, Employee 12 shared that Instagram provided sponsored deals or advertisements, so engagement was more organic.

The observations that were conducted reflected increased engagement within the research site. During Observation Session 1, I noted a number of new users of the social media platforms not only made posts, comments, or tweets and uploaded pictures and video, but responses and "likes" were also returned from employees within the Fulton County Sheriff's Office as well as clients. Activities, announcements, and updates that were provided by the Fulton County Sheriff's Office received many responses from law enforcement and government agencies throughout the country as well as residents within the county who responded with "likes" or expressions of gratitude for providing the information. The field notes that were generated from the observations reflected increased community usage and exchange of dialogue using social media. I found this to be a direct indication of increased engagement using these interactive formats.

The analysis of the social networking data generated additional evidence that engagement was increased as the result of the use of the selected social media platforms. The amount of posts, comments, tweets, pictures, and videos uploaded to each of the selected social media platforms during the data collection period were often followed by responses within 24 hours. A specific example of increased engagement occurred during the winter storms that affected Fulton County and the death of K—9 Marco. Responses

included residents of Fulton County and government agencies across the country

expressing their support. I also noticed that users reposted many comments, pictures, and

videos to their page in order to draw increased attention to a specific event or public

notice. The links provided by the Fulton County Sheriff's Office were also intended to

draw increased attention for not only the ability to access information at any time, but

also to reflect the research site's transition to electronic file sharing when permissible.

The social networking data that was analyzed provided a direct indication of improved

engagement between the research site and the community.

Nonconforming/Discrepant Data

The data for all interviews, observations, and social networking were examined

for nonconformities and discrepancies. I developed two sets of interview questions, one

for employees and one for clients. The interviews that were conducted consisted of

identical questions for the two groups. However, the questions were phrased differently

in order for clients to understand. The intent of this was to determine if the interviewees

would offer consistent responses about their experiences with the phenomenon or

attitudes towards it. I was surprised to discover that the majority of participants

responded consistently to similar questions, even when phrased in different formats. For

example, most employees who responded that the selected social media platforms

resulted in some level of improvement to public accessibility and community

engagement, also rated the research site highly on the attributes of innovativeness and

client interaction. Most clients who identified themselves as low—income, indicated that

the no—cost access to the selected social media platforms encouraged their desire to

sign—up and continue utilizing the services.

Another surprising trend exposed in the data was that most of the employees had received training and were familiar with the Internet and social media. However, many of the clients responded that their training was minimal to none, and even though they were familiar, they were not comfortable with using the Internet and social media. For example, Client 8 indicated that she wished she would have taken computer classes in school because her job had become more technical, and she did not feel prepared for emerging technology such as social media.

I also discovered that few participants were available in the 50 and above age range. This age group appeared to be missing from the pool of client interviewees. The sample population, consisting of young adults, 18 to 25 years of age, and adults in the 30 to40 and 40 to50 age groups overwhelmingly outnumbered adults 50 and older. I believed that the inclusion of more adults who were 50 and older was an essential factor in the study because they reflected a specific age group. They could benefit from the use of increased technology and potential accessibility of information, documents , without leaving their home. I actively attempted to recruit or discover potential participants in the missing age group within the sample population, but was advised that adults in the 30 to40 age range were the majority of the sample population who actively requested services from the Fulton County Sheriff's Office. Younger adults, aged 18 to 25, had a more active and fluent technical knowledge of the Internet and social media terminology. It was still my intent to include the 50 and above age range within the sample population, and I made a public request for older adults who were self—motivated to seek services to build their computer skills.

Connected to the minor age discrepancy within my sample population was the

revelation that the older participants were better storytellers, and had more experiences to share that reflected significant contrasts in their uses for technologies in the past and present. Following an extended invitation to potential interviewees that fit within the 50 and above age range, four participants were selected. In review of the data collected from interviews, and the sometimes monotonous responses delivered by participants, I felt that four adults who identified as 50 or older were an adequate representation within the sample population.

I also anticipated finding a correlation between limited availability to the Internet and accessibility of social media due to economic status. Two of the client interviewees revealed that they were homeless and more dependent, both financially and personally, on someone else. Those factors affected their availability to the technology essential for this study. There were four participants who were the only adults that indicated that they were currently receiving vocational or alternative education.

In terms of findings, conclusions, and personal reflections, I tended to blend all three into factors that were reflective of the themes developed. My examination of supporting and discrepant data found that the research themes or categories supported them. There was no need for themes to be modified to present prevalent data and provide adequate explanations of the findings. The qualitative approach to determine non—conforming and discrepant data provided breadth and depth to the research collection and analysis process. According to Cheney (2003), comments and messages created for external stakeholder audiences also have a massive impact on internal stakeholders, employees, and leadership. Understanding both internal and community stakeholders' viewpoints on the impact of social media on public accessibility was important for trust,

performance, engagement, and satisfaction.

Summary

In this chapter, I provided a comprehensive description of how the research was conducted and presented the findings as distilled from the data analysis. The primary research question sought to discover the perception of employees and clients of the Fulton County Sheriff's Office to determine if the adoption of social media platforms resulted in increased accessibility of goods and services within the public sector. Based on the analysis of interview transcripts, it was found that majority of the respondents believed social media had the potential to increase accessibility of public information, promote community engagement, and accelerate transparency within the public sector. Observation sessions were conducted that provided several findings to include: current technology within the research site being conducive to the adoption of social media platforms, patterns of engagement between employees and clients, and evidence of increased public engagement as the result of social media. Social networking data revealed increased accessibility of goods and services from the adoption of social media platforms as well as an increase in the frequency of traffic on the selected social media platforms by clients and employees of the Fulton County Sheriff's Office. These findings signaled a significant and irreversible change in public sector communications now and in the future.

There were three subsequent research subquestions that attempted to enhance the findings of the primary research question. Subquestion 1 inquired about the point of sustainability for social media usage in public sector organizations. Using the discussed data collection and analysis procedures, I found that each of the selected social media

platforms had exceeded their point of sustainability (1,000 users). This was indicative of the fundamentals of the critical mass theory, building on the three—tier theoretical foundation of the study. However, the socio—economic levels, lack of computer skills, and resources among the vast population of clients within the research site were identified as challenges that could undermine the continued growth of social media, public accessibility of information, and community engagement.

Subquestion 2 wanted to determine a significant correlation between the use of social media and the benefits offered to employees, clients, office efficiency, and productivity within the public sector. Most employee and client interview responses indicated increased awareness of announcements, emergencies, and events as well as engagement, efficiency, and delivery of services between the research site and the community. Another finding that indicated advancements in the provision and use of social media was the affordability of the technology. From the observations conducted, it was found that the increased usage of the selected social media platforms enhanced interaction between the research site and the community and the ability to access public information. The observational field notes indicated the discussed findings as well as improvements in the organizational culture and productivity of the research site. Social networking data reflected that the use of social media increased across all of the selected platforms. It was also discovered that announcements, warnings, and public information were not only frequently received but also shared by users. I found that this indicated public awareness and engagement. I also found that the information generated from the data provided a direct indication that social media enhanced client services, office efficiency, and productivity within the public sector. Based on the approaches used to

measure the impact of social media on public sector accessibility, true convergence, usage, and benefits of the technology were fulfilled.

Finally, the third subquestion investigated whether the increase in the use of social media resulted in improved engagement between the public sector and the community. The findings of most of the employee interview respondents indicated that although the selected social media platforms resulted in increased engagement, there was room for continued improvement. Client responses coincided with these findings, but many clients indicated that the use of the selected social media platforms generated significant improvements to community engagement. It was discovered from observational field notes that increased posts and comments made to the selected media platforms generated increased responses reflective of a growth in engagement. Social networking data also generated evidence that the use of social media enhanced communication and interactivity between the research site and the public.

Overall, the qualitative method of acquiring and analyzing data served its purpose to compare, contrast, and draw pertinent implications, patterns, and key themes as they relate to assessing the impact of social media on accessibility and interactivity, or lack thereof, within the Fulton County Sheriff's Office. The analysis and findings on the impact of social media on public sector accessibility brought to focus such issues as communications, community engagement, and appropriate access to the Internet and social media. Furthermore, the data collection process provided a significant set of data that strengthened the validity, credibility, and reliability of the research. The execution of the data collection and analysis procedures were pre—planned and calculated. However, there were a couple of unplanned or uncalculated steps, responses, and events that added

richness to the data set.

In addition, the collective case study approach that was used increased the credibility and reliability of the data by using a triangulated approach when analyzing the data. Proper storage, data confidentiality, validity, reliability, safety, and credibility were all implemented to protect the integrity and veracity of the data used in this study. As a result of analyzing the data, four major premises were developed:

1. The implementation of social media is vital to the enhancement of public sector accessibility.

2. Basic organizational communication tenets and protocols are needed to launch continuous public accessibility and engagement.

3. Employees within public sector agencies understand that social media can provide a catalyst for increased efficiency and interactivity.

4. The benefits and affordability of the use of social media for public access to information are major factors that should be promoted within the community for increased engagement.

These analytical statements spearheaded the process of developing recommendations for strategic organizational communications and social media processes within the Fulton County Sheriff's Office. This chapter provided an in—depth description of how the research was conducted and presented the findings as distilled from the data analysis. The overarching themes were discussed in Chapter 5 pertaining to the literature and findings presented. I made specific recommendations that aligned with the study's implications for social change and concurrently raised important issues required for continued research.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The uses and capabilities popularized by the Internet resulted in the emergence of the phenomenon known as *social media*. This technology has expanded from being used for personal and social benefit to being an essential component of professional interaction. Although the application of social media continues to be more prevalent in the private sector, government organizations are discovering its benefits and are adopting the technology to better serve their mission. According to Karakiza (2015), social media are changing communication between government and citizens as they contribute decisively to the transformation of public administration toward a new and open format. Karakiza added that the format will be characterized by: (a) active participation of citizens in public affairs, (b) close collaboration between public services, government, and citizens, and (c) transparency of the state activities. Using a qualitative research design approach, the intent of this study was to examine similar characteristics within the Fulton County Sheriff's Office to determine if the use of social media has made an impact on public sector accessibility.

Conducting a collective case study resulted in a rich and valid data set for the Fulton County Sheriff's Office. A three—instrument data collection approach allowed me to generate relevant findings that served as the foundation for presenting recommendations to build a strategic and transparent organizational communications infrastructure in the Fulton County Sheriff's Office. Moreover, the data findings were reviewed and used to answer or support the following research questions:

Research Question

Does the adoption of social media platforms result in increased accessibility of goods and services within the public sector?

Subquestions

1. What is considered a point of sustainability for social media usage in public sector organizations?

2. Does the use of social media provide a better comprehension of goods, services, and programs offered to clients?

3. Does the increase in the usage of social media result in improved engagement between the public sector and the community?

The data demonstrated the understanding that social media accelerated organizational benchmarks such as access to public information, freedom of expression, transparency, citizen participation, and engagement. Themes and patterns were drawn to develop the theoretical framework that was applied to satisfy the research question and subquestions. The findings of the study supported several key summations obtained through an in—depth analysis of collected data. It was discovered early in the research process that there was a direct link between the public having accessibility of information, as well as knowledge and understanding of the provision of goods and services by a government organization, and the level of public trust and confidence in that entity. It was also found that social media have broad implications for the convergence of accessibility of information, understanding of the provision goods and services, transparency, and community engagement within the public sector.

Interpretation of Findings

The findings presented for the study were generated from the collection and

analysis of data and correlated with the research question and subquestions. Implications

for social change and recommendations for continued research were based on a

summation of the key themes and patterns relative to the research question and

subquestions.

Research Question

Research Question asked, "Does the adoption of social media platforms result in

increased accessibility of goods and services within the public sector?" As previously

mentioned in relation to the outcomes discussed in Chapter 4, the implementation and

adoption of social media platforms can generate increased accessibility of goods and

services within the public sector. In the analysis of the three data sets (interview

responses, observational field notes, and social networking data) collected for the

Research Question, I found that the selected social media platforms that were used within

the Fulton County Sheriff's Office became effective tools to disperse information to the

masses.

Interview responses that were collected from employees and clients of the Fulton

County Sheriff's Office were varied due to non—Internet—related job responsibilities

that were indicated by employees or socioeconomic limitations that were indicated by

clients. However, the majority of interview participants provided responses and key terms

that developed a pattern indicative of social media providing increased accessibility of

goods and services. Specific trends that provided evidence to enhance the validity of the

research questions from the employees' and clients' responses indicated that social media

made it easier to find out more information about organizational announcements, community events, and client needs.

Observational field notes that were collected supported the findings that were presented for the Research Question. Key observations included the following: significant increases in the use of social media within the research site throughout the timeframe of the study, interaction between Fulton County Sheriff's Office employees and the public, and significant increases in the number of public requests for goods and services based on information and announcements posted on the selected social media platforms. I also observed an increase in the submission of electronic documents by clients as the result of the posting of links to the Fulton County Sheriff's Office website or external links on the selected social media platforms. This method allowed for increased availability of public information as well as more efficient processing of client requests.

Social networking data that were collected indicated that social media provided an additional communication outlet within the Fulton County Sheriff's Office, resulting in increased accessibility of public information. The analysis of data collected from the usage and interactivity of the selected social media platforms indicated the following: significant increases of daily posts and comments; significant increases of pictures, videos, and audio that were uploaded; and increased engagement between the research site and the public. This was evident from the increases in the number of connections between the users of selected social media platforms through "friending" (Facebook) or "following" (Twitter and Instagram).

Although data indicated that there were concerns of Internet availability, which is needed to use social media, due to socioeconomic disparities, it was proven that the technological phenomenon provided an interactive and cost—effective method to receive and apply public information for the benefit, delivery, and consumption of goods and services. Patterns were identified that were indicative of increased accessibility of goods and services from the adoption of social media platforms. There were significant increases in the use of social media during the study. Facebook was the most used, and most new—user accounts were created for this platform. Therefore, the widespread adoption and use of social media provide vast opportunities for the public to become aware of, and benefit from, goods and services that are provided within governmental organizations.

The findings presented for the Research Question confirmed the information prevalent to the adoption of innovations by individuals and groups that were discovered in peer—reviewed literature described in Chapter 2. The findings were reflective of the wide—spread adoption and increased usage of social media by employees, clients, and community stakeholders of the Fulton County Sheriff's Office. This indicated that the diffusion of an innovation (social media) had occurred. As previously indicated in Chapter 2, Rogers (2003) explained that the diffusion of an innovation is communicated through certain channels over a period of time among the members of a social system. Data were collected and analyzed to generate findings to confirm the adoption of social media resulted in increased accessibility of goods and services. From the review of literature conducted for Chapter 2, Murray (2009) indicated that the results of diffusion are: adoption, implementation, and institutionalization. The findings indicated that, upon

approval of the Fulton County Sheriff's Office as the research site for this study, the organization adopted the selected social media platforms, implemented the innovation into practice, and monitored its activity throughout the duration of the study. The peer—reviewed literature that was presented in Chapter 2 directly correlates with the findings generated from the investigation of the adoption of social media within the research site. This assisted in the development of the theoretical framework used to support the findings of this study.

In addition to comparing the findings with the peer—reviewed literature, I analyzed the context of the theoretical framework to ensure that its interpretation did not exceed the scope of the research. The scope of this case study was to examine the impact of social media platforms on public sector accessibility. The theoretical framework for this study was built on three individual theories to maximize the interpretation of the scope of the research. The findings that were generated to answer the Research Question correlated with the activities required to achieve diffusion of an innovation. Rogers (2003) was credited with formulating the diffusion of innovations (DOI) theory. According to Rogers (2003), the research and development of the theory of the diffusion of innovations explains social change, one of the most fundamental of human processes and one of the primary objectives of this study. The DoI theory was formulated many years ago, before the emergence of social media. The findings that were generated to answer the Research Question fit within the context of the theory by explaining the rationale and frequency of the adoption of social media. Principles of the DoI theory guided the research that investigated the Research Question. The analysis of interview responses from employees and clients, observational field notes, and social networking

data collected from the Fulton County Sheriff's Office and the tenets of social media served as variables.

In conclusion, findings for the Research Question indicated that the increase in availability of public information to citizens via social media, and the use of those platforms to express their views, has broad implications for transparency within the public sector. How the public sector is able to build, cultivate, and grow a community of people who are interested in the goods and services it delivers and how to engage citizens on social media platforms can bring about a change in mindset. Subsequent research subquestions were generated to provide evidence that further validate the Research Question and support the theoretical framework for the study.

Subquestion 1

Subquestion 1 asked, "What is considered a point of sustainability for social media usage in public sector organizations?" Continued research of components of the DoI theory indicated that a determining factor of diffusion was the ability for an innovation to sustain. As indicated in Chapter 2, this was measured by the level of adoptability of an innovation by the masses. Therefore, it was important to investigate the number of users that would be needed for each social media platform to reach a point of sustainability, also known as critical mass. As reflected in the data analysis, the point that one of the selected social media platforms would be considered to have reached a point of sustainability was determined to be at least 1,000 users per platform. The outcomes stated in Chapter 4 indicated that each of the selected social media platforms reached more than 1,000 users, and the number of new users increased daily.

The determination of the point of stability was also measured by the population and demographic profiles of the jurisdiction serviced by the Fulton County Sheriff's Office. Additional factors that were found to contribute to the selected social media platforms to reach its critical mass include: ease of use, assurance of privacy, marketing efforts that promoted registering for social media accounts, and positive feedback from existing users. During the period of data collection, the number of new users who were active on the selected social media platforms grew significantly, leading to a point of sustainability. The analysis of data generated compelling evidence, reflective of the average number of daily users for each platform, to include the times of day that social media usage and interaction was at its peak. I found from the analysis of interview responses that the increased use of the selected social media platforms resulted in sustainable technology that had to be recognized by the Fulton County Sheriff's Office.

The findings generated from Subquestion 1 confirmed prior knowledge that was found in the review of literature presented in Chapter 2. Rogers (2003) stated that the rate of adoption of interactive media such as: social media platforms, email, telephones, fax, and teleconferencing) often displays a distinctive quality that is considered the critical mass. It was discovered in past literature that interactive media have two characteristics not shared by many other innovations. "First, widespread usage creates universal access, a public good that individuals cannot be prevented from enjoying even if they have not contributed to it; second, the use of interactive media entails reciprocal interdependence, in which earlier users are influenced by later users as well as vice versa" (Markus, 1987, p. 491). In comparison to these findings, the analysis of data for this study revealed that

the factors that were involved in the selected social media platforms achieving critical

mass coincided with those characteristics.

In the context of the components that make up the theoretical framework for this

study, the findings were relative to the characteristics of the theory of critical mass

(Oliver, Marwell, & Teixeira, 1985). According to Oliver et al. (1985), critical mass is a

small segment of the population that chooses to make big contributions to the collective

action. *The Logic of Collective Action,* developed by Olsen (1965), indicated that only a

separate and selective incentive will stimulate a rational individual in a latent group to act

in a group—oriented way. This concept, relative to critical mass, indicated that members

of a large group will not act in the group's common interest unless motivated by personal

gains (economic, social, etc.). Based on the analysis of data collected for this study, the

benefit of the increased level of accessibility of information, transparency, and interaction

between the Fulton County Sheriff's Office and the community, Olsen's logic was

interpreted in relation to the critical mass theory. Interpretations that were presented in

literature did not exceed the data findings and scope of the study.

Subquestion 2

Subquestion 2 asked, "Does the use of social media provide a better

comprehension of goods, services, and programs offered to clients?" The analysis of data

discussed in Chapter 4 revealed several outcomes that indicated that the use of the

selected social media platforms developed awareness and understanding of goods,

services, and programs that were offered by the Fulton County Sheriff's Office.

Outcomes that were generated from interviews acknowledged an improvement in

awareness of services and information and quicker responses from the research site.

However, limited accessibility of the Internet and social media as indicated by some of the Fulton County Sheriff's Office clients presented challenges in the frequency of updates that they were able to receive. Client responses reflected a significant decrease in response times from the Fulton County Sheriff's Office as well as the ability to download and submit forms and documents electronically as the result of using the selected social media platforms.

I observed that the use of social media led to increased employee and client interaction. I also noticed that some public documents or applications were made available on the Fulton County Sheriff's Office Facebook page, or a link was provided via Twitter, which one could access the document via the Internet. From the analysis of social networking data, I found continuous increases in the amount of posts, comments, and retweets that were made. I also found that of the posts or responses made by the Fulton County Sheriff's Office to the selected research platforms included links to useful information that could be accessed via the Internet. The data related to Subquestion 2 provided a direct indication that social media enhanced client services, office efficiency, and productivity within the public sector. These outcomes provided the Fulton County Sheriff's Office the opportunity to evaluate the impact of their operations to enhance services provided to clients.

In comparing these findings to literature presented in Chapter 2, additional confirmation, as well as extended knowledge of the critical mass theory, were accentuated. During the period that began the social networking phenomenon, Patternson and Kavanaugh (2001) indicated that the addition of Internet services to the existing communication milieu would increase the quality of life and level of community

involvement. The findings were reflective of this outcome in that the use of social media within the Fulton County Sheriff's Office allowed for increased understanding and accessibility of goods and services provided, resulting in increased community involvement.

Literature reviewed in Chapter 2 also revealed various factors of the critical mass theory and provided a viable guideline for the data presented. According to Patterson and Kavanaugh (2001), interactive communication technologies, such as social networks, can achieve sustainability if designers remain involved with users and continue to adopt the system over time. Advancements in the use and capabilities of social media throughout the years have enhanced its benefits by providing a combination of low—cost access with increasingly powerful computing and networking capabilities, comprehension of goods and services, and greater accessibility of the public. The interpretation of data did not compromise or exceed the scope of the study.

Subquestion 3

Subquestion 3 asked, "Does the increase in the usage of social media result in improved engagement between the public sector and the community? Outcomes discussed in Chapter 4 revealed that the use of the selected social media platforms vastly improved engagement. Evidence that purported to these outcomes included interview responses that acknowledged the use of social media was a practical tool to engage in dialogue and share photos, audio, and video with the public. Most employee and client interviewees indicated that social media have initiated connection, content sharing, and cooperation between the research site and the public. Data indicated that the social media platform showing the most prevalent growth in engagement between the Fulton County

Sheriff's Office and the community was Facebook.

Observational data discussed in Chapter 4 revealed increased engagement within the research site and the public. I noted a number of new users of the social media platforms made posts, comments, or tweets and uploaded pictures, audio, and video. Ongoing comments, responses, and "likes" by employees within the Fulton County Sheriff's Office indicated engagement from the agency to the public. Activities, announcements, and updates that were provided by the Fulton County Sheriff's Office received many responses from law enforcement and government agencies throughout the country as well as residents who often posted "likes" or expressions of gratitude for providing the information. I found this to be a direct indication of increased engagement as the result of the use of social media.

Social networking data provided additional evidence that engagement was increased as the result of the use of the selected social media platforms. This was evident from the growing amount of posts, comments, tweets, pictures, audio, and videos uploaded to each of the selected social media platforms during the data collection period. They were often followed by responses within 24 hours. Data also reflected that users reposted many comments, pictures, and videos to their page in order to draw increased attention to a specific event or public notice. On some posts made by the Fulton County Sheriff's Office, links to external websites were added that provided access to additional information or documents. The social networking data that were analyzed provided a direct indication of improved engagement between the research site and the community.

The findings were also compared with literature presented in Chapter 2 to confirm increased engagement as the result of the use of social media. It was indicated in Chapter

2 that due to the recent presence and growth in the use of social media, researchers were conducting investigations using the uses and gratifications theory (Katz et al., 1974) to provide an explanation as to why users find this form of media to be so enticing. Katz et al. (1974) theorized that social media could be used to reflect benefits to individuals to match one's wits against others, get information or advice for daily living, provide a framework for one's day, prepare oneself culturally for the demands of upward mobility, or be reassured about the dignity and usefulness of one's role. Although the concept of uses and gratifications was initiated long before the introduction of the Internet and social media, this approach confirmed findings that revealed that the use of social media provided widespread appeal and satisfaction. In the review of more recent literature, it was predicted that contemporary and future models of uses and gratifications must include concepts such as interactivity. Data analyzed for this study indicated the evolution to interactivity as the result of social media.

Subsequent research discussed in Chapter 2 investigated how the use of innovations, such as the Internet, affected relationship building. Raacke and Bonds—Raacke (2008) conducted research to evaluate why people use social networking sites, the characteristics of the typical user, and what uses and gratifications are met by using these sites. Their research provided varied results that generated uses and gratifications. Raacke and Bonds—Raacke (2008) indicated specific gratifications as the result of social networking to include: keeping in touch with old and new friends, connecting to new friends, and providing accessibility of information. Additional literature discussed in Chapter 2 by Quan—Haase and Young (2010) identified important trends that compared gratifications obtained from the use of social media. They concluded that as the

innovation evolves, social media can fulfill general communication and socialization needs.

The interpretation of findings in the context of the uses and gratifications theory revealed that increased time spent using the selected social media platforms during the period of data collection satisfied people's need to connect with others. According to Chen (2011), "These findings confirm earlier research that found that people who are active on social networks, such as Facebook are more likely to feel connected" (p. 760). The outcomes that were presented for this study support the idea that uses and gratifications was an applicable approach in the development of the theoretical framework and did not exceed the study's scope.

Limitations of the Study

There were instances that were viewed as limitations to trustworthiness that arose from the execution of this study. Data collection and analysis was limited to a sample size of employees and clients of the Fulton County Sheriff's Office. The opinions included in participant interview responses were obtained solely from the viewpoint of Fulton County Sheriff's Office employees and clients who participated in the study. The qualitative data that was collected and analyzed represented a limited sample size of employees and clients from the research site. Thousands of individuals and families utilize the departments within the Fulton County Sheriff's Office, and the cumulative employee base of the organization is more than 500. It was impossible to sample all of the clients of the selected public sector organization due to constraints of time and resources.

Some of the research participants that were interviewed had limited access to the Internet and accessibility of social media due to economic status. The participants agreed to find access to the social media platforms within the Fulton County Sheriff's Office at least twice per week during the period of data collection to effectively provide responses to interview questions presented. Due to the limited availability of technology, interview responses provided by some research participants were based on their periodic experiences on the selected social media platforms. In addition, while the qualitative methods that were conducted for this study provided considerable depth, the collection, and especially the analysis, of data was time—consuming. Despite these limitations, the findings from this study are important. Social media has become a key component in providing an efficient, low—cost tool to access public information and promote engagement within the community.

Recommendations for Further Research

Per the review and interpretation of the literature and findings for this study, recommendations for further research are suggested for implementation for the Fulton County Sheriff's Office. The following recommendations are suggested to increase accessibility of public information, awareness and understanding of goods and services provided, initiate public engagement, and build trust and a positive reputation:

- Develop and implement digital agency and government strategies to ensure widespread diffusion of social media.
- Address existing "digital divides" and avoid the emergence of new forms of "digital exclusion".

- Encourage engagement and participation of public and community stakeholders in public service design and delivery.

- Create a data—driven culture within the agency and in the public sector.

This study focused on employees and clients that provided or received goods and services from the Fulton County Sheriff's Office. A sample size was used to generate data from the research site. The Fulton County Sheriff's Office is one agency within a multi—unit, county government system. In the review of literature presented in Chapter 2, Rogers (2003) explained that the diffusion of an innovation is communicated through multiple channels over a period of time among the members of a social system. Although there was evidence of diffusion of social media discovered within the research site, I recommend that further studies on public sector accessibility involve more agencies within a system of government. This would generate data to develop a deeper understanding of how an innovation, such as social media can diffuse through multiple channels' resulting in increased accessibility of public information through multiple government agencies such as: healthcare, community development, aging, and youth. Along with the sheriff's office, these agencies offer and provide a continuum of services to the citizens of Fulton County, Georgia.

It would be interesting to analyze the different viewpoints from employees and clients within all of the public service agencies of Fulton County. In addition, it would be interesting to investigate the impact of social media on the public sector expanded beyond agencies within one county government to include state and federal entities. Additional social media platforms and networking strategies could be explored using this broadened approach. Based on the continuous integration of new innovations, I

recommend developing and expanding public sector Information and Communication Technology (ICT) strategies.

According to Ubaldi (2013), governments are shifting to a citizen—driven model of digital government to include "collaborative and participatory governance" (more open forms to engage institutional and non—institutional stakeholders in public value creation). "This shift offers opportunities for new collaborative approaches to face challenges of great complexity and improve public relationships and confidence with governments' ability to deliver public value (Ubaldi, 2014, p. 3). Ubaldi added that the importance of ICT use is not just for improved service delivery and internal public sector efficiency, but also ICT is a driver for economic growth, social equality, and governance outcomes of greater transparency, integrity, and citizen engagement. Further studies to investigate digital strategies such as ICT and the benefits presented is recommended to be disseminated to local, state, and federal government entities to enhance organizational strategies and expand the scope of knowledge on the impact of social media on public sector accessibility.

Another recommended area of further study is the investigation of economic and social inequalities that result in technological gaps to public sector accessibility. According to the Organization for Economic Co—operation and Development (OECD) (2001), the term *digital divide* was coined in the mid—1990s and refers to the gap between individuals, households, businesses, and geographic areas at different socio—economic levels with regard to both their opportunities to access ICTs and to their use of the Internet for a wide variety of activities. The demographic profile of Fulton County residents, discussed in Chapter 4, revealed evident socio—economic disparities. Those

disparities resulted in some client interview responses, observational, and social media data that indicated lack of ownership of computers and limited Internet access due to financial constraints. Chakraborty and Bosman (2005) found that there is clear evidence of income—related distributional inequalities regarding home PC ownership across the nation.

According to Boje and Dragulanescu (2003), there are many types of the digital divide at local, national, regional or world levels, such as: the gender divide, the age divide, and the income divide. Each divide having its specific background, phenomena, evolution trends, perspectives as well as its specific bridging solutions and initiatives. That finding has evolved to include: availability of social networks, software, mobile devices, and applications. Per the theoretical components reviewed in the literature of Chapter 2, the lack of ownership of these technologies, as the result of the digital divide, can lead to challenges in the diffusion of innovations and subsequently accessibility of public information. Due to the ever—changing, continuous development and emergence of new technologies, the digital divide has become a dynamic problem. There are also sociological and psychological effects of not addressing the evident digital divide that include: potential missed opportunities on the part of thousands of people to interact with others, find information, obtain desirable jobs, and enhance their lives.

It is recommended that public sector organizations continue to examine strategies that will enhance economic equality. Bridging the digital divide may foster greater economic equality, educational potential, and earning potential not only within Fulton County but all local, state, and federal governments. I also recommend increased public participation in the decision making processes of policymakers and government through

innovative channels such as social media. The findings of this study allude to increased

implementation and use of this phenomenon as a tool to enhance transparency and

information and communication processes among community stakeholders. Continued

research can also generate strategies that support long—term economic growth and

facilitate innovativeness within the public sector.

The exploration of research strategies that focus on enhancing public interaction

is recommended for public sector accessibility. This recommendation was based on the

components of the critical mass theory (Oliver, Marwell, &Teixeira, 1985), reviewed in

Chapter 2. It was found that achieving critical mass of social media involves knowing the

rules of engagement to add value and inspire participation. In the analysis of factors of

engagement that contribute to achieving critical mass of social media, few have examined

their applicability to the public sector in any depth. From the analysis of data reflected in

Chapter 4, it was found that social media platforms have become valuable resources to

support engagement and interactivity with others. However, many interview respondents

believed that true engagement is still forthcoming.

Based on findings that indicated the benefits of citizen participation, participative

web approaches, such as social media, are needed for involvement in government

processes and service delivery. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and

Development (OECD) (2009) listed and described three main benefits of participative

web approaches for public policy making and service delivery:

- Efficiency: Turning the many separate strands of bilateral "traffic" between

  individual citizens and government into a public information resource can

  help reduce administrative burdens for both the administration and the citizen

- Innovation: Online collaborative tools, such as social media, that allow asynchronous collaboration with actors inside and outside government

- Adoption: The symbolic power of government seeking to develop policy on an online "public space" is itself an important asset in establishing public trust

It is recommended that further research is conducted in the public sector to develop strategies that encourage engagement and participation of public and community stakeholders in public service design and delivery to achieve these benefits. A proposed approach to research and achieve efficiency would be publishing links to websites, documents, or applications that encompass the most commonly requested public information on social media platforms. This is beneficial to citizens and/or community stakeholders to alleviate new requests for existing information, and greater efficiency among employees.

It is anticipated that continued research using such an approach will offer significant benefits for all public data and information transactions. A proposed approach to research and achieve innovation is increased promotion of the distribution of public information on social media or provide links to additional, online collaborative tools. The comprehension and integration of social media terms such as: "liking" or "tagging" could provide greater visualization, options to sort through information, analyze data, establish priorities, and develop recommendations. A proposed approach to research and achieve accountability is to conduct online reputation management. From an organizational standpoint, I recommend holding all participants of social media platforms accountable for their comments, submissions, and uploads. Also, linking publicly

available information in innovative ways (e.g., local service delivery using Google Maps or government budgets with public initiatives using a site such as www.maplight.org).

Another recommended area of continued study is to create a data—driven culture and investigate its impact within the public sector. According to IBM's Economic Vitality 2.0 Report (2015), a wave of technological advances, such as social collaboration, are transforming organizations and societies. Based on this report, Clark (2015) stated that government leaders must understand these trends, and work to capture their value to drive innovation and collaboration across their organizations.

The study of why users find social media to be so enticing is also beneficial to measuring its impact on public sector accessibility. The review of literature in Chapter 2 discussed components of the uses and gratifications theory and can be applied to analyze the appeal and satisfaction of social media platforms. Research conducted by Raacke and Bonds—Raacke (2008) found that social networking sites were instrumental in providing uses and gratifications of information and accessibility. Quan—Haase and Young (2010) identified two important trends in the uses and gratifications of social media: (a) Most users of social media employ many platforms, indicating that one type of social media does not replace another; (b) Most users of social media tend to embrace new tools and adopt them as part of their communications repertoire. Based on the Chapter 4 analysis of user trends, one social media platform (Facebook) reached the highest peak of penetration, but the uses and gratifications discovered through the adoption of other selected social media platforms (Twitter and Instagram) indicated an increased share of popularity.

It is recommended that further research is conducted and based on the evidence of uses and gratifications to determine accessibility and the effectiveness of programs and services provided within the public sector. This includes the rigorous testing of theories and strategies to build new knowledge of what generates greater accessibility within the public sector. Organizations could develop a series of initiatives to build or expand the skills and capabilities of staff to be more data driven and evidence—based in their business activities and the provision of goods and services to the public. For example, the evaluation of social networking concepts can improve the impact of programs serving at—risk youth. Multi—agency collaborations focusing on the accessibility of public information and provision of goods and services is also beneficial.

Implications for Social Change

The results of this study highlighted how the implementation and use of social media platforms within a public sector organization (Fulton County Sheriff's Office) could impact accessibility of public information, awareness, and understanding of goods, services, and community engagement. There has been growing demand for enhanced services, transparency, and accountability from public sector organizations. Technological advancements such as social networking prompted the need to investigate if this phenomenon is beneficial to public sector accessibility. The research and outcomes that have been presented in this study carry ramifications for social change to include: supporting professional practices within public sector organizations, increasing community engagement among stakeholders, streamlining administrative processes, and building a positive reputation for local, state, and federal governments.

The outcomes that were presented in Chapter 4 reflected increased accessibility within the public sector and increased interactivity between users. The use of social media has provided an effective, low—cost outlet for people to become aware of community activities and announcements as well as real—time updates on current or potential crises. The exploration of social media conducted for this study has implications for mass social change in the provision of communication channels within a municipality. Public sector organizations can develop strategic communication plans that include the use of social media platforms with protocols that can be implemented and utilized to guide matters such as: crisis management, organizational change, or major initiatives. The ultimate goal is to develop a system of social change that will keep clients, employees, and community stakeholders engaged and increase performance and integrity throughout the public sector. Improving accessibility and information sharing can save lives, increase funding, and cultivate the safety of citizens and stakeholders.

This study demonstrated how the diffusion of an innovation such as social media can make a significant impact on how information is communicated and shared within the public sector, eliminating isolation from individuals who need it. Chapter 4 data revealed that Facebook was the social media platform that had acquired the most users. Therefore, it can be assumed that this this platform can have the most immediate impact on public sector accessibility and social change. However, it was found that social media platforms such as Twitter enabled direct engagement with individuals and groups who have the power to effect change.

According to the 2012 Walden University Social Change Impact Report, individuals are a driving force behind social change engagement but rely on organizations

to facilitate their involvement. Creating and increasing opportunities for social change through accessibility, engagement, and collaboration within the public sector organizations have become infinitely easier with the adoption of social media. Social media have evolved into a widespread channel for public sector organizations to serve people that may have otherwise been unable to reach. To address many social issues that organizations within the public sector encounter, large numbers of people and community stakeholders with interdisciplinary backgrounds are needed to develop comprehensive and long—term implications for social change.

The theoretical framework that was used to support the findings of this study provided positive social change implications. Per the analysis of data presented in Chapter 4, evidence reflected increased, widespread use of social media innovations, and it was attributed to many factors such as: marketing, ease of use, and word of mouth. The findings that support the spread of social media were reflective of the diffusion of innovations theory. Evidence has shown that continued adoption and use of social networks is a clear implication for social change that will develop increased diffusion of innovations. Public sector organizations can develop enhancement strategies based on the outcomes of their current communications and/or technical plans in order to identify possible shortcomings, opportunities for improvement, and additional innovations that could impact accessibility of public information. The application of the diffusion of innovations theory to the outcomes presented in this study offers three valuable insights into the process of social change: qualities make an innovation spread, the importance of social networking, and understanding the needs different users.

Drawing on the implications of the diffusion of innovations theory, it was discussed in Chapter 4 that it is important to understand the influences of critical mass. Therefore, the concepts of the critical mass theory were applied to the analysis of data for this study to include measurement of the number of users of the selected social media platforms to determine the point that each could become self—sustaining. The analysis of data revealed that when the critical mass of individuals exists, social change spreads rapidly and crystallizes to become self—sustaining in society. The point that each of the selected social media platforms reached critical mass (1000 plus users), constructive interaction and exchange of knowledge were developed, initiating positive social change.

Per the findings and recommendations discussed relative to the critical mass theory, I have found that institutionalization of social change can be effective if the following components are provided to the public:

- Organizational Structures – the development of departments or units that deal particular accessibility or communications issues

- Legislation – when there is need for official policy change

- Enforcement – when the need to enforce change is accepted

- Public Awareness and Support – when the technology is generally accepted, and grassroots education takes place within the community

In relation to the critical mass theory, I believe that those components are necessary for positive social change to occur. In order to develop or change policy, organizational structure and enforcement should be considered in terms that are practical to the public. Applications of the uses and gratifications theory were included to develop the theoretical framework of this study and provided implications for positive social

change. From the analysis of data discussed in Chapter 4, it was found that the

gratifications sought from the use of the Internet were a predictor of exposure and

gratifications to social media. The implementation and use of the selected social media

platforms within the research site generated a list of gratification statements to measure

the motivations for gaining accessibility of information. Those gratifications promote

positive social change implications of practical guidelines to measure user satisfaction

with social media and future virtual networking communities.

Public sector organizations could monitor the user activity of social networking

sites that are implemented to determine gratifications and issues. The data collected

could be used to develop new communication technology within the organization and

provide sufficient training to employees and clients. A further social change element

could be the collaboration of public sector organizations to develop social networking

channels that link goods and services provided. With various government services

offered, public sector organizations are often confused as to which collaborations would

be most effective in providing a continuum of services within the community. Future

research on collaborative social networking channels could gauge user gratifications and

determine which ones are the most effective.

The research and findings that have been presented in this dissertation is intended

to be a catalyst of a new field of study to examine the impact of innovations, such as

social media, on accessibility of public information. Positive social change occurs when

people alter their behaviors, which when achieved collectively, benefit society. Per the

data examined for this study, a primary recommendation for the practice of positive

social change is the availability of Internet technology for all socio—economic levels

within the community. Additional recommendations that promote social change include:

involving relevant community stakeholders within social networking projects,

customizing social networking components within organizational plans based on local

knowledge and culture, leveraging community relationships within public sector

organizations to spread change, and building a sustainable public resource base such as

education, employment, or youth development to initiate behavioral change.

Reflection of the Researcher

Continuous education, a tenure in the United States Army, and personal

experiences and values have influenced the person that I am and molded a life—long

interest in public service. Throughout my work experience in local, state, and federal

governments, I have noticed that community response and perception of government

organizations have diminished because of the lack of accessibility and knowledge of

programs and services. The past decade has brought many technological advancements,

notably the Internet. An innovation generated from the Internet that has grown into a

world—wide phenomenon is social media. My career and research aspirations have been

to examine ever—changing advancements in technologies to develop and improve

organizational strategies that are inclusive of the public. Therefore, it was my desire to

research the impact of social media on accessibility of public information. This research

process has been a significant journey for me in investigating and determining how

innovative approaches, such as social media, can effectively link the goods, services, and

programs that are provided by public sector organizations and are beneficial to the public.

In reflection of the approach taken to conduct this research, I believed that

examining the perspectives of clients and employees within a large—county government

organization, observing business operations, and capturing user activity on social media platforms provided a comprehensive investigation of the research question and subquestions that were presented. I found that the study of social networking within the public sector is beneficial for administrative and informational disconnects. This case study, conducted within the Fulton County Sheriff's Office, provided a gap in current research literature of modern approaches to enhance public awareness, understanding, and engagement to improve the trust and reputation of government organizations.

     I was involved with the central research activities conducted for this study. I wanted the outcomes that were generated from the analysis of data to lead the findings that were presented. I ensured that my professional experience, societal values, and goals that I hoped to accomplish from this study were not of any influence. The research participants consisted of employees and clients who provided varying responses during interviews and were a main component of the findings that were generated. Those potential biases that inferred were alleviated supporting the validity of the study.

    The main goal of this case study was to discover how the use of social media within public sector organizations can make an impact on the availability of goods, services, and programs offered to the public, the initiation of community engagement, and the enhancement of public trust to build a positive reputation. The findings indicated a direct link between the public having knowledge and understanding of goods, services, and programs having trust and confidence in public sector organizations. This study should effect the views of administrators within the public sector and prompt the development and/or advancement of organizational strategies that promote innovation, accessibility, and transparency to its constituents.

Conclusion

The study of the impact of social media on public sector accessibility addresses an ongoing issue of accessibility and understanding of goods and services by the public. As discovered in the study, social media supports vital organizational caveats such as accessibility of: public information, engagement, freedom of expression, and transparency. The interview responses provided by employees and clients of the Fulton County Sheriff's Office, observation sessions of daily operations, and social networking data capturing user activity have proven that real—time public accessibility and exchange of information is pivotal to the inclusive governance essential for the twenty—first century. "The shift from traditional public administration, to new public management, and now to digital era governance, represents the underlying essence of public sector renewal from broadcast to communicative and collaborative engagement. This is the expectation of the 21st Century 'citizen-prosumer,' and now is the time for governments to realize their potential" (McNutt & Shu, 2012, p. 54).

The study also affirmed a digital divide that provided challenges for some in having Internet services needed for social networking. The socio—economic levels, lack of computer skills, and resources among the vast population of clients within Fulton County, Georgia were identified as constraints that could undermine the continued growth of social media, public accessibility of information, and community engagement. Policy makers and community stakeholders must recognize the importance of emerging technologies within government organizations and take measures to ensure access for all. Although there are various methods of accessing the

Internet to use social media, and costs have been substantially reduced, it should be understood that costs remain a primary factor for some. I recommend that that government organizations should consider resources such as subsidies for Internet access to low—income households. At the same time, Internet providers must commit to providing equal service and networks to underserved communities so that all individuals can participate. In order for the diffusion of social media within the public sector to sustain, organizations and the public must come to realize the insurmountable power of new technologies and embrace them as essential tools for E—governance.

In conclusion, by linking the benefits and convergence of social media to the elements of Government 2.0, I wanted to present a comprehensive study that promoted continuous research within the public sector to implicate ideologies that are conclusive of evolution to Government 2.5. It has been found that the implementation and use of social media within the public sector improves community outreach and promotes organizational transparency by providing access to public information. In addition, this phenomenon: (a) captures public mood, sentiment, and knowledge of goods and services provided or community matters, (b) is a free or low—cost amplification of governmental communications, (c) offers a range of opportunities to engage the public, (d) provides user—generated content and feedback systems that can improve loyalty and trust of public sector organizations and confidence in receiving current information. The findings presented for this study should contribute to the knowledge base to influence public sector entities to develop future organizational plans that include wide—spread utilization of social media. I hope that public policy and administration researchers will develop or find important new theoretical influences

from this study and integrate their outcomes to develop evolving conclusions about the

impact of social medial on public sector accessibility.

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Appendix A: Request for Permission to Conduct Research

Wayne Woods, MPA
Ph.D. Candidate, Public Policy & Administration
Walden University
398 Pickfair Avenue, S.W
Atlanta, Georgia 30315

Fulton County Sheriff's Office
Jimmy Carter, Chief Deputy
185 Central Avenue, 9th Floor
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

Dear Chief Carter:
I am writing to request permission to conduct a research study at the Fulton County Sheriff's Office. I am currently enrolled in the Public Policy and Administration program at Walden University in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and I am in the process of writing my Doctoral Dissertation. The study is entitled, Government 2.5: The impact of Social Media on Public Sector Accessibility: A Case Study. The researcher role will be facilitated by me and overseen by Walden University's Center for Research Quality. The study will be conducted under the supervision of my dissertation committee chair, Dr. Richard Worch, Ph.D.

The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) on accessibility of public sector agencies that provide services to clients and citizens (residents of Fulton County). Extensive research has revealed the need and demand for increased methods of communication and accessibility in order to disseminate information to citizens and community stakeholders. In addition, employees regularly interact with citizens, and may send or receive communications that is vital to the community. The results of this study can be used by government agencies in terms of how it influences public awareness and increases organizational efficiency, engagement, and transparency.

I am seeking your consent to collect data for this study to include conduct interviews, observations, and audio visual materials to determine the impact social media use has on citizens' access to information, understanding it, and etc. This will include interviews of clients and employees, observations of daily business operations within the research site, and the review of audiovisual materials such as posts, audio, video, uploads, and messages from mobile devices such as cell phones, IPads, and laptop computers. The estimated period of this data collection process will be up to 60 days or a period of time as approved by you.

In the event that social media platforms have not been implemented for the Fulton County Sheriff's Office, made available for public use, or require technical enhancement, I am

requesting permission to serve dual roles (researcher and as implanter of social media platforms if needed for implementation or enhancement). The implementation of social media platforms (if needed) will be overseen by the research site in accordance with Fulton County Government Policy.

All research participants will be scheduled with interview times that will be before or after business hours in order to maintain daily operations. Participation in this study will completely voluntary, and research participants will be subject to a consent form that will provide permission to participate in the study.

I have provided you with a copy of the interview questions that will be asked to research participants. In addition, I have provided a copy of my dissertation proposal that includes copies of the measure and consent forms that will provide permission for participation in the research process. Upon completion of the study, I will provide your agency with a bound copy of the full research report. If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me or my dissertation chairperson. My dissertation chairperson is Dr. Richard Worch, Ph.D. Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Wayne Woods, MPA

Wayne Woods, MPA
Ph.D. Candidate, School of Public Policy and Administration
Walden University

Appendix B: Research Participation Invitation—Consent Form

(Fulton County Sheriff's Office Employee)

Wayne Woods, MPA
Ph.D. Candidate, Public Policy & Administration
Walden University
398 Pickfair Avenue, S.W.
Atlanta, GA 30315

Dear Potential Research Participant:

You are invited to take part in a research study entitled: Government 2.5: The impact of Social Media on Public Sector Accessibility: A Case Study. The study will examine if modern approaches such as social media can enhance public awareness and understanding of government services. You were chosen for this study because you have filed a report or requested goods and/or services from the Fulton County Sheriff's Office. The study will examine the perspectives of clients and citizens (residents of Fulton County) who use or are willing social media platforms to receive organizational information. As the researcher, I am inviting you to be a participant in the study, and this form is part of a process called "informed consent" to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part.

I am currently enrolled in the Public Policy and Administration program at Walden University in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The researcher role will be facilitated by me and overseen by Walden University's Center for Research Quality. The study will be conducted under the supervision of my dissertation committee chair, Dr. Richard Worch, Ph.D. I am an employee of Fulton County Government, but this study is separate from that role and will not be in the department that I work.

Background Information:
The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) on accessibility of public sector agencies that provide services to citizens (residents of Fulton County). Extensive research has revealed the need and demand for increased methods of communication and accessibility in order to disseminate information to citizens and community stakeholders. The results of this study can be used by government agencies to improve public awareness and increase organizational efficiency, engagement, and transparency.

Procedures:
If you agree to be in this study, you may be asked to:

o   Participate in a 45 minute, tape—recorded, interview that will be scheduled before or after business hours or on a designated lunch period

o Be observed in daily business operations to collect data of agency practices and customer service
Materials such as audio, video, uploads, and messages from the social media platforms used will be included as data and analyzed for the investigation of this study.

Here are some sample interview questions:
o What was the most useful/valuable information item you found on the social media platform? Why was it so valuable?
o What was the least useful information/item that you found on the social media platform? Why?
o Upon implementation or use of social media have you seen any changes in services? How so?
o Since your use of social media for services, have you experienced improved efficiency? How so?

Voluntary Nature of the Study:
Participation in this study is voluntary. Everyone will respect your decision of whether or not you choose to be in the study. No one at the Fulton County Sheriff's Department or Fulton County Government will treat you differently if you decide not to be in the study. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind later. You may stop at any time.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:
There are no foreseeable risks to your safety or well—being by participating in the study. The data collected will not be linked to the services requested or your employment with the Fulton County Sheriff's Office.

Anticipated benefits of participating in this study include:
o The collected data will be analyzed, and information will be used to draw conclusions and develop recommendations for improved service delivery.
o The collected data will be analyzed, and information will be used to draw conclusions and develop recommendations for improved customer service.
o The collected data will be analyzed, and information will be used to draw conclusions and develop recommendations for more efficient service delivery and improved community engagement.

Privacy:
Any information you provide will be kept **confidential.** The researcher will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in the study reports. Data will be kept secure by electronic file formats that will be used to organize and store data. The information will be secured by using password protection during initial collection, transfer, and archiving.

Contacts and Questions:
You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact the me. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can contact Walden University's Research Participant Advocate. Walden University's approval number for this study is **IRB will enter approval number here** and it expires on **IRB will enter expiration date.** If you agree to participate in this study, please review and sign the Statement of Consent below and return to me directly or by email. Please print or save this consent form for your records, or I will give you a copy of this form to keep.

Statement of Consent:
I have read the above information, and I feel I understand the study well enough to make a decision about my involvement. By signing below, "I consent" that I understand that I am agreeing to the terms described above.

Only include the signature section below if using paper consent forms.

Date of Consent _____

Printed Name of Participant _____

Participant's Written or Electronic* Signature _____

Researcher's Written or Electronic* Signature _____

Electronic signatures are regulated by the Uniform Electronic Transactions Act. Legally, an "electronic signature" can be the person's typed name, their email address, or any other identifying marker. An electronic signature is just as valid as a written signature as long as both parties have agreed to conduct the transaction electronically.

(Fulton County Sheriff's Office Client)

Wayne Woods, MPA
Ph.D. Candidate, Public Policy & Administration
Walden University
398 Pickfair Avenue, S.W.
Atlanta, GA 30315

Dear Potential Research Participant:

You are invited to take part in a research study entitled: Government 2.5: The impact of Social Media on Public Sector Accessibility: A Case Study. The study will examine if modern approaches such as social media can enhance public awareness and understanding of government services. You were chosen for this study because you have worked for the Fulton County Sheriff's Office for at least 12 months and your duties includes the following:

o   Leadership and administration
o   Case management
o   Counseling

The study will examine the perspectives of clients or citizens (residents of Fulton County) who use or are willing social media platforms to receive organizational information. As the researcher, I am inviting you to be a participant in the study, and this form is part of a process called "informed consent" to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part.

I am currently enrolled in the Public Policy and Administration program at Walden University in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The researcher role will be facilitated by me and overseen by Walden University's Center for Research Quality. The study will be conducted under the supervision of my dissertation committee chair, Dr. Richard Worch, Ph.D. I am an employee of Fulton County Government, but this study is separate from that role and will not be in the department that I work.

Background Information:
The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) on accessibility of public sector agencies that provide services to citizens (residents of Fulton County). Extensive research has revealed the need and demand for increased methods of communication and accessibility in order to disseminate information to citizens and community stakeholders. The results of this study can be used by government agencies to improve public awareness and increase organizational efficiency, engagement, and transparency.

Procedures:
If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to:

o Participate in a 45 minute (est.), tape—recorded, interview that will be scheduled before or after business hours or on a designated lunch period
o Be observed in daily business operations to collect data of agency practices and customer service

Materials such as audio, video, uploads, and messages from the social media platforms used will be included as data and analyzed for the investigation of this study.

Here are some sample interview questions:
o Do you feel that the implementation and use of social media platforms within your department will increase your efficiency and productivity with clients? Why?
o How difficult do you perceive client interaction using social media platforms to be? Why?
o How compatible is the implementation and use of social media platforms with your current management and communications?

Voluntary Nature of the Study:
Participation in this study is voluntary. Everyone will respect your decision of whether or not you choose to be in the study. No one at the Fulton County Sheriff's Department or Fulton County Government will treat you differently if you decide not to be in the study. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind later. You may stop at any time.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:
There are no foreseeable risks to your safety or well—being by participating in the study. The data collected will not be linked to the services requested or your employment with the Fulton County Sheriff's Office.

Anticipated benefits of participating in this study include:
o The collected data will be analyzed, and information will be used to draw conclusions and develop recommendations for improved service delivery.
o The collected data will be analyzed, and information will be used to draw conclusions and develop recommendations for improved customer service.
o The collected data will be analyzed, and information will be used to draw conclusions and develop recommendations for more efficient service delivery and improved community engagement.
o The collected data will be analyzed, and information will be used to draw conclusions and develop recommendations to improve communications plans within the Fulton County Sheriff's Office and other state agencies.

Privacy:
The information you provide will be kept **confidential**. The researcher will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in the study reports. Data will be kept secure by electronic file formats that will be used to organize and store data. The information will be secured by using password protection during initial collection, transfer, and archiving.

Contacts and Questions:
You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact me. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can contact Walden University's Research Participant Advocate. Walden University's approval number for this study is **IRB will enter approval number here** and it expires on **IRB will enter expiration date.** If you agree to participate in this study, please review and sign the Statement of Consent below and return to me directly or by email. Please print or save this consent form for your records, or I will give you a copy of this form to keep.

Statement of Consent:
I have read the above information, and I feel I understand the study well enough to make a decision about my involvement. By signing below, "I consent" that I understand that I am agreeing to the terms described above.

Date of Consent _____

Printed Name of Participant _____

Participant's Written or Electronic* Signature _____

Researcher's Written or Electronic* Signature _____

Electronic signatures are regulated by the Uniform Electronic Transactions Act. Legally, an "electronic signature" can be the person's typed name, their email address, or any other identifying marker. An electronic signature is just as valid as a written signature as long as both parties have agreed to conduct the transaction electronically.

Appendix C: Thank You Letter for Participation

Wayne Woods, MPA
Ph.D. Candidate, Public Policy & Administration
Walden University
398 Pickfair Avenue, S.W.
Atlanta, GA 30315

Dear Research Participant:

Thank you very much for meeting with me on (date of interview) to discuss the impact of social media on public sector accessibility. I appreciate the time you took from your schedule to spend time with me to respond to questions regarding my research study. The information you shared with me concerning your use of social media platforms within the Fulton County Sheriff's Office will be very helpful to me in my collection and analysis of data to develop findings and recommendations.

Please contact me if further thoughts occur to you about the subject of our conversation, particularly if you decide in retrospect that you would like to designate some of it for non—attribution. Should you have any comments or concerns you can also contact Walden University's Research Participant Advocate

I will be sending you a typescript copy of the interview notes for your criticism and comments. Thank you again for your assistance with my research study.

Sincerely,

Wayne Woods, MPA

Wayne Woods, MPA
Ph.D. Candidate, School of Public Policy and Administration
Walden University

Appendix D: Adverse Problem Report Form

Principal Investigator				
PI Name:		**Email Address:**	
University Status (Faculty, Student, etc.):		**Mailing Address:**	
College/ Department:		**Phone Number:**	

Approval Number: _____   Current Date: _____

Title of Study: _____

Faculty Sponsor/Contact				
Name:		**Email Address:**	
University Status (Faculty, Student, etc.):		**Mailing Address:**	
College/ Department:		**Phone Number:**	

Indicate the type of event/problem:	
Adverse event that is: (1) unexpected and (2) related/likely related to the research as determined by the Walden University principal investigator	☐
Specific protocol—defined events that require prompt reporting to the sponsor	☐
Breach of confidentiality	☐
An accidental or unintentional deviation to the IRB—approved protocol that involved risks	☐
An emergency protocol deviation without prior IRB review to eliminate an apparent immediate hazard to a research participant	☐
A complaint of a participant that indicates an unanticipated risk or any complaint that cannot be resolved by the research staff	☐

Information that indicates a change to the risks or potential benefits of the research. For example: • An interim analysis or safety monitoring report indicating that frequency or magnitude of harms or benefits may be different than initially presented to the IRB; **OR** • A paper published from another study indication that the risks or potential benefits of the research may be different than initially presented to the IRB.	☐
Incarceration of a participant in a protocol not approved to enroll prisoners	☐
Sponsor imposed suspension for risk	☐

Location of event:	**YES**
At a site listed in the IRB application	☐
Other— Explain:	☐

Continuing Participation	**YES**	**NO**	**N/A**
Is the study permanently closed to enrollment?	☐	☐	☐
Is anyone still involved in the current study and receiving treatment?	☐	☐	☐

Problem/Event	**YES**	**NO**
Date of problem/event:	☐	☐
Date of discovery of problem/event, if applicable:		
Identify device, treatment, intervention, etc., if applicable:	☐	☐
Briefly describe the problem/event:		
Has the same problem/event occurred previously in this study? If yes, what is the number of times this event has occurred study—side?	☐	☐

Is the problem/event ongoing?
    If no, date problem ended:
    Outcome of the problem/event: (Check all that apply)
☐ Participant was not adversely affected by the problem/event
☐ Resulted in prolonged hospitalization
☐ Resulted in permanent disability
☐ Resolved spontaneously
☐ Resolved with treatment
☐ Participant discontinued study intervention
☐ Participant withdrew from study
☐ Other: Specify:
☐ Participant died: Provide a detailed description of the circumstances that led to the death:
	☐	☐

Are the specificity, frequency, and severity of this problem/event consistent with the study and consent document? If no, explain why not:	☐	☐
Should the consent document be revised?	☐	☐
Should the protocol be revised?	☐	☐

If yes, submit a *Change in Protocol Request Form* with this report.		
Should the research be suspended or terminated?	☐	☐
Should currently enrolled participants be notified about this problem/event?	☐	☐
If yes, explain how they will be notified. If an addendum to the consent document will be used, submit this document and a *Change in Protocol Request Form* with this report.		
Should past participants be notified about this problem/event?	☐	☐
If yes, explain why they will be notified. If an addendum to the consent document will be used, submit this document and a *Change in Protocol Request Form* with this report.		

<u>Principal Investigator Certification:</u> My signature certifies that all necessary information has been assessed and the risk—to—benefit ration continues to be acceptable.

_____   _____
  Principal Investigator's Signature   Date

Appendix E: Participant Demographic Form and Grid

(Employees)

DATE and TIME	
INTERVIEWEE IDENTIFIER	
INTERVIEWER INITIALS	
LOCATION OF INTERVIEW	

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION
Name:_____
Client/Employee:_____ **Zip Code:** _____
Position or Occupation: _____ **Length of Employment:**_____

AGE

18—25 ☐

26—35 ☐

36—45 ☐

46—55 ☐

56 and over ☐

RACE

_____ BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN
_____ AMERICAN INDIAN/ALASKA NATIVE
_____ ASIAN
_____ NATIVE HAWAIIAN/PACIFIC ISLANDER
_____ WHITE
_____ OTHER:_____
_____ DON'T KNOW

ETHNICITY
_____ HISPANIC/LATINO
_____ NON—HISPANIC/LATINO

PREFERRED LANGUAGE
_____ ENGLISH
_____ SPANISH
_____ OTHER: _____

GENDER
_____ MALE
_____ FEMALE

RESIDENCE

_____ URBAN (50,000 – 199,000 population)

_____ URBAN (over 200,000 population)

_____ RURAL

LAW ENFORCEMENT SERVICE (Check all that apply):

_____ COURT SERVICES
_____ HOME LOSS/SIGNIFICANT DAMAGE

_____ CIVIL PAPERS
_____ CRIMINAL WARRANT
_____ JUVENILE WARRANT
_____ PHYSICAL INJURY
_____ LIFE WAS THREATENED
_____ TRAFFIC CITATIONS
_____ CRIMINAL HISTORY REQUEST
_____ SEX OFFENDER REGISTRY
_____ WITNESSED COMMUNITY DISTRUCTION
_____ OTHER:_____

NON—LAW ENFORCEMENT SERVICE (Check all that apply):

_____ COMMUNITY SERVICE
_____ EDUCATION
_____ OUTREACH PROGRAM

INTERNET ACCESS
_____ YES
_____ NO

_____ COMPUTER
_____ MOBILE DEVICE (Cell Phone, IPad, Tablet, Etc.)

TYPE OF SERVICE
_____ INDIVIDUAL
_____ FAMILY
_____ GROUP
_____ OTHER: _____

Fulton County Sheriff's Office Participant EMPLOYEE	LAW ENFORCEMENT SERVICE/ JOB TYPE	AGE *18—25 *26—35 *36—45 *46—55 *56 & OVER	RACE *AFRICAN AMER. *CAUCASIAN *LATINO/HISPANIC *OTHER	GENDER *MALE *FEMALE	LENGTH OF EMPLOYMENT (SHERIFF's OFFICE)	TYPE OF INTERNET ACCESS *COMPUTER *MOBILE DEVICE
EMPLOYEE 1	Building/ Facilities	36—45	AFRICAN AMER.	Female	9 Years	Computer; Mobile Device
EMPLOYEE 2	Acct. Supervisor (Property Taxes)	46—55	AFRICAN AMER.	Female	5 Years	Computer; Mobile Device
EMPLOYEE 3	Sergeant	56 & Over	AFRICAN AMER.	Female	23 Years	Computer; Mobile Device
EMPLOYEE 4	Administrative Captain (Law Enforcement Division)	46—55	AFRICAN AMER.	Male	21 Years	Computer; Mobile Device
EMPLOYEE 5	Sheriff's Deputy	26—35	AFRICAN AMER.	Female	3 Years	Computer; Mobile Device
EMPLOYEE 6	Administrative Assistant	26—35	AFRICAN AMER.	Female	5 Years	Computer; Mobile Device
EMPLOYEE 7	Jail Intake Supervisor	36—45	AFRICAN AMER.	Male	12 Years	Computer; Mobile Device
EMPLOYEE 8	Sheriff's Deputy	26—35	CAUCASIAN	Male	2 Years	Computer Mobile Device
EMPLOYEE 9	Detention Officer	36—45	AFRICAN AMER.	Male	5 Years	Computer; Mobile Device
EMPLOYEE 10	Records and Docs Specialist	36—45	LATINO/HISPANIC	Male	7 Years	Computer; Mobile Device
EMPLOYEE 11	Sheriff's Deputy	45—55	AFRICAN AMER.	Male	17 Years	Computer; Mobile Device
EMPLOYEE 12	Budget Analyst	26—35	CAUCASIAN	Female	1 Year	Computer; Mobile Device
EMPLOYEE 13	Data Base Administrator	36—45	CAUCASIAN	Male	3 Years	Computer; Mobile Device
EMPLOYEE 14	Captain	46—55	AFRICAN AMER.	Female	20 Years	Computer; Mobile Device
EMPLOYEE 15	Client Services Manager	36—45	AFRICAN AMER.	Male	8 Years	Computer; Mobile Device

(Clients)

Fulton County Sheriff's Office Participant CLIENT	OCCUPATION / JOB TYPE	AGE *18—25 *26—35 *36—45 *46—55 *56 & OVER	RACE *AFRICAN AMER. *CAUCASIAN *LATINO/HISPANIC *OTHER	GENDER *MALE *FEMALE	LENGTH OF EMPLOYMENT	TYPE OF INTERNET ACCESS *COMPUTER *MOBILE DEVICE
CLIENT 1	Office Manager	46—55	AFRICAN AMER.	Female	22 Years	None
CLIENT 2	Retail	26—35	AFRICAN AMER.	Male	2 Years	Mobile Device
CLIENT 3	Logistics Analyst	36—45	AFRICAN AMER.	Female	10 Years	Computer; Mobile Device
CLIENT 4	Business Owner	46—55	CAUCASIAN	Male	13 Years	Computer; Mobile Device
CLIENT 5	Property Manager	36—45	AFRICAN AMER.	Female	15 Years	Computer; Mobile Device
CLIENT 6	Restaurant Manager	26—35	AFRICAN AMER.	Male	5 Years	Mobile Device
CLIENT 7	Nurse	26—35	CAUCASIAN	Female	4 Years	Computer; Mobile Device
CLIENT 8	Retail Associate	36—45	AFRICAN AMER.	Female	2 Years	Mobile Device
CLIENT 9	Import Manager	36—45	AFRICAN AMER.	Male	6 Years	Computer; Mobile Device
CLIENT 10	Bank Teller	36—45	CAUCASIAN	Female	12 Years	Computer; Mobile Device
CLIENT 11	Teacher	46—55	AFRICAN AMER.	Female	20 Years	Computer; Mobile Device
CLIENT 12	Housekeeper	36—45	LATINO/HISPANIC	Female	7 Years	Mobile Device
CLIENT 13	Nonprofit Executive	46—55	AFRICAN AMER.	Male	20 Years	Computer; Mobile Device
CLIENT 14	Administrative Assistant	26—35	CAUCASIAN	Female	2 Years	Computer; Mobile Device
CLIENT 15	Fast Food Associate	26—35	AFRICAN AMER.	Female	3 Years	None

Appendix F: Interview Questions and Interview Transcript Grid

(Employees)

I. **First, I would like to start with some general questions about your affiliation with The Fulton County Sheriff's Office:**

- How long have you been employed with the organization?
- What is your job?

II. **How would you rate your department on each of the following attributes:**

- Innovativeness?
- Community Engagement?
- Client Communication?
- Client Interaction?

III. **Next, are some general questions about your use of the Internet and social media within your department:**

- How is information disseminated to your clients?
- What methods do clients currently use to access information?
- Have you used the Internet to find out information about this agency? How was your experience?
- Are you an active user of social networking sites (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Etc.)? Why or why not?

IV. **The next questions are about your perception of the implementation and use of social media platforms and your work processes:**

- Do you feel that the implementation and use of social media platforms within your department will increase your efficiency and productivity with clients? Why?
- How difficult do you perceive client interaction using social media platforms to be? Why?
- How compatible is the implementation and use of social media platforms with your current management and communications?

V. **Next, we will discuss your perceptions since the implementation and use of social media platforms:**

- Since the implementation of social media, have you seen any differences in how clients interact or communicate with the employees?
- Have you seen an increase in the number of hits or messages from your clients use a social media platform?
- Have you seen an increase in clients since the implementation of social media platforms?
- Since the implementation and use of social media platforms in your department, what convinces/gratifications have you experienced in your work processes?
- What social media platform that you have used in which you believe would be more beneficial to improving the dissemination of information to clients? Why? What social media platform that you have used in which you believe would be more beneficial to your work processes? Why?

EMPLOYEE INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT GRID

QUESTION	EMP. 1	EMP. 2	EMP. 3	EMP. 4	EMP. 5	EMP. 6	EMP. 7	EMP. 8	EMP. 9	EMP. 10	EMP. 11	EMP. 12	EMP. 13	EMP. 14	EMP. 15
How long have you been employed with the organization?	9 Years	5 Years	23 Years	21 Years	3 Years	5 years	12 Years	2 Years	5 Years	7 Years	17 Years	1 Year	3 Years	20 Years	8 Years
What is your job?	Building & Facilities	Accounting Supervisor/ Property Taxes	Sergeant	Administrative Captain/Law Enforcement Unit	Sheriff's Deputy	Administrative Assistant	Jail Intake Supervisor	Sheriff's Deputy	Detention Officer	Records and Documents Specialist	Sheriff's Deputy	Budget Analyst	Data Base Admin.	Captain	Client Srv. Mgr.
How would you rate your department on each of the following attributes? (Scale of 1—10):															
Innovativeness?	9	6	7	7	7	6	7	7	7	8	7	8	8	7	7
Community Engagement?	9	8	6	7	6	6	7	6	7	7	6	6	8	7	7
Client Communication?	8	8	7	7	6	7	6	7	7	7	6	7	8	7	7
Client Interaction?	8	8	7	7	5	7	6	6	6	6	6	7	8	7	6

How is information disseminated to your clients?	FGTV, News, Internet, Social Media	Mail, Internet	Social Media, Internet, Mail	Written, Verbal and Social Media	Dept. Website, Brochures, Flyers	Depends on the department: Mail, Website, Phone	Website, Mail, Community Meetings	Dept. website, Public Announcements	Dept. website	Dept. website	Internet, Mail, Public Announcements	Dept. website	Dept. website, News media	Dept. website, Public announcements	Dept. website, Mail
What methods do clients currently use to access information?	Dept. Website, Facebook, Twitter	Dept. Website, In—Person	Facebook, Dept., Website, In—Person	Telephone, Social Media.	Visiting the Sheriff's Office, Phone, Dept. Website	Phone and Mail	Website, In—Person	In—Person, Phone, Mail	Dept. website, Mail, In—Person	In—Person, Phone, Mail	Dept. website, Call—Ins, Mail	Dept. website, Visit the office, Mail	Dept. website, phone, visits	Dept. website, County website, In—Person	In—Person, Phone, Mail

EMPLOYEE INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT GRID

QUESTION	EMP. 1	EMP. 2	EMP. 3	EMP. 4	EMP. 5	EMP. 6	EMP. 7	EMP. 8	EMP. 9	EMP. 10	EMP. 11	EMP. 12	EMP. 13.	EMP. 14	EMP. 15
Have you used the Internet to find out information about this agency?	Yes.	No.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
How was your experience?	Ease of use in accessing information	N/A	Great information has been given by the PIO for the agency	Quicker and more convenient	I have used the dept. website. It provided minimal information about the services offered.	I have used the Sheriff's Office website. It described the dept. and services within the Sheriff's Office	I have used the dept. website. It provided a minimal amount of information.	I have used the dept. website. It was useful, but some information was outdated.	A discovered a lot of information about the Sheriff's Office. I found some policies or programs are a little outdated.	Very informative	The dept. website was informative but could use current updates	Dept. website, Dept. intranet (Secured). Information was useful, but could be updated more regularly	It has useful information, but it should be updated more frequently.	I found basic information about the Sheriff's Office	I found a lot of useful information, but some information was outdated.
Are you an active user of social networking sites (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)?	No. Recent Member of Facebook	No.	Somewhat. Facebook	No.	Somewhat. Facebook	Not Really. I have a Facebook acct.	No.	Yes. Facebook	No.	Yes. Facebook	No.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes. Facebook	Yes.
Why or why not?	New to using social media	Security Concerns	A way to connect with people	Privacy	I use Facebook frequently. I haven't become too familiar with the others	I am not familiar with the capabilities of social media.	I do not understand the benefit for my department.	I'm not really familiar with other sites.	I do not have a lot of experience with all that the Internet or social media does	Interaction with the community and outside of work	Not familiar with newer technology	Ability to stay in contact with those who are far away and to become informed.	Mainly for personal use.	This is my only social media account	I got a Facebook account about 6 months ago.

Do you feel that the implementation and use of social media platforms within your department will increase your efficiency and productivity with clients?	Yes.	No.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
Why?	To Inform The Public	My work with clients regarding taxes is private	This a new method of communicating and sharing	As long as it is used to provide information that informs and helps people in a suitable manner.	It will definitely help in sharing important information, and give employees the opportunity to respond to issues quickly.	It will allow us to share more information with more people.	If people developed an interest in understanding the value of social media and to use it professionally.	It will increase response times to client complaints.	I believe it could make a difference in work processes.	It will allow more efficient response rates and organization	If we receive some training.	Social media will allow the opportunity for greater interaction with employees and clients in the resolution of issues.	I believe that work processes would be quicker and more transparent.	It will improve the response times of my staff to client issues.	It will increase efficiency in resolving client issues, or sharing dept. info.

QUESTION	EMP. 1	EMP. 2	EMP. 3	EMP. 4	EMP. 5	EMP. 6	EMP. 7	EMP. 8	EMP. 9	EMP. 10	EMP. 11	EMP. 12	EMP. 13	EMP. 14	EMP. 15
How difficult do you perceive client interaction using social media platforms to be?	Somewhat.	Potentially difficult.	Not difficult.	Not difficult	It has the potential to be difficult.	Not very difficult.	It may be difficult.	Not very difficult.	It may be difficult.	It may be difficult.	It may be difficult	It may be difficult.	It may be difficult.	Not difficult.	Somewhat difficult.
Why?	Some Clients are Not Familiar With the Internet	Highly Sensitive Issues: Tax Accessor's Office	As long as there is access to the Internet	As long as it is kept simple and user friendly	If clients are not familiar with the Internet or social media.	If clients have access to our website and social media pages.	For those who are not familiar with the Internet and how to access information.	People would have to have to have access to the Internet and become used to using social media.	If clients do not becoming familiar with the Internet or social media	Clients may not and feel safe with social media	If clients are not familiar with social media or have Internet access	Depends on client accessibility and knowledge of social media	If clients do not have access to the Internet or do not have a social media account	Depends on clients accessibility of the social media	Clients are very diverse culturally and economically. Low—income areas may not have access to the Internet.
How compatible is the implementation and use of social media platforms with your current management and communications?	It is Compatible; Currently Not Applicable With My Dept.	It could be compatible with enhanced security to protect clients	Should be compatible with current operating systems	Very compatible and much needed	I believe that the Sheriff's Office is compatible. I know of three platforms that are currently being used.	It should be very compatible. The Sheriff's Office receives constant updates from Information Technology.	The County's Information Technology would have the authority to test compatibility and authorize use.	Compatible with county authority	I believe that it is compatible. Social media has become useful within the Sheriff's Office	It is compatible. The Sheriff's Office has begun to rely on social media more frequently.	It should be compatible.	I believe it is highly compatible	I believe that compatibility is possible with authorization for Information Technology.	I believe it is compatible. The Sheriff's Office currently uses several platforms.	I believe that compatibility is possible. The Sheriff's Office has provided accessibility of several social media platforms to the public.

Since the implementation of social media, have you seen any differences in how clients interact or communicate with the employees?	Yes. Starting to Receive Maintenance Requests Electronically	Yes. Our clients are able to use the Internet to learn more about delinquent property taxes and the results of not paying your taxes on time	Yes. More frequent messages and comments from clients; Faster responses	Yes. More emails	Yes, I have seen more messages and comments on Facebook, also the posting of more pictures and videos.	Yes. More clients make posts or comments on social media than in the past.	I have seen more requests for information of the status of inmates.	Yes. More traffic and interaction between clients and employees.	Yes. Increased sharing of information, pictures, and video	Not in my department. I am sure departments that provide direct services to clients have experience an increase.	No. I don't have a social media page right now, so I haven't witnessed and differences.	Yes. More traffic on the Sheriff's Office's social media platforms	Yes. More frequent interaction in disseminating information or posting comments.	Yes. The growing number of clients who use social media results in increased interaction.	Yes. I have seen a greater number of users, messages, and uploads of pictures and videos.

QUESTION	EMP. 1	EMP. 2	EMP. 3	EMP. 4	EMP. 5	EMP. 6	EMP. 7	EMP. 8	EMP. 9	EMP. 10	EMP. 11	EMP. 12	EMP. 13	EMP. 14	EMP. 15
Have you seen an increase in the number of hits or messages from your clients use a social media platform?	Yes. Positive Comments to Pictures Posted on Facebook	No. My unit does nor post to social media.	Depending on the topic or picture will determine the hits. So yes I have.	Yes. An increase in messages	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes	Yes.	Yes. I have seen more traffic on the Sheriff's Office Facebook page.	I do not have a social media page, so I do not know.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
Have you seen an increase in clients since the implementation of social media platforms?	Yes. Positive Comments to Pictures Posted on Facebook	No. We do not post to social media. We only use the Sheriff's website to post the list of property tax address for sale.	Yes. It has grown the number that are on the Facebook page for the Agency	Yes. People feel comfortable and can provide more information	Yes. More clients take advantage of services offered.	Yes. More client posts and comments on social media	Not really. Most of the clients with my department are jail inmates and are not allowed to have social media access.	Yes.		Yes. More people have become members of the Sheriff's Office's platforms.	Yes.	I do not have a social media page, so I do not know.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.

Since the implementation and use of social media platforms in your department, what convinces/gratifications have you experienced in your work processes?	Slow Migration to Electronic Formats Such as Social Media	We do not post to any of the popular social media. Since 2010, I have posted the property tax sale list to the Sheriff's website. As a result, this has reduced a lot of unnecessary phone calls about the property tax sale.	Yes, More public communication	The work process is handled more professionally and it allows a person to research the question before responding	Faster and more efficient communications and processing of complaints	The ability to respond or comment faster than in the past	Faster access to information, announcements, and responses	The spread of information to the community. Ease of use for some social media platforms	Yes. Improved knowledge of the Sheriff's Office by clients	The ability to quickly communicate with the public.	I plan on becoming a member of Facebook soon, so this may enhance my engagement with the community.	Greater ability to share information with clients	Yes. Greater efficiency in disseminating information. Increase in users.	I have seen faster dissemination of information, announcements, and events. I have seen a greater amount of pictures, video, and audio that is shared.	The ability to inform the public more efficiently. Quicker responses to client issues.

QUESTION	EMP. 1	EMP. 2	EMP. 3	EMP. 4	EMP. 5	EMP. 6	EMP. 7	EMP. 8	EMP. 9	EMP. 10	EMP. 11	EMP. 12	EMP. 13	EMP. 14	EMP. 15
What social media platform that you have used in which you believe would be more beneficial to improving the dissemination of information to clients?	Facebook	Facebook	Facebook	Facebook	Facebook	Facebook	Facebook	Facebook	Facebook	Facebook	Facebook	Facebook	Facebook and Twitter	Facebook and Twitter	Facebook
Why?	I believe that is the most commonly used social media platform	The only platform for my unit is the Sheriff's Office website.	More people have an account and it's more convenient.	It is used to provide information that informs	I believe it's the most known among our clients.	I believe more people are familiar with how the platform works.	More users	More people use the platform.	Growing number of users	More people are users of this platform	Most popular	Most commonly used	Reporting information and responding to clients.	Most commonly used by staff and clients.	More users of the platform

What social media platform that you have used in which you believe would be more beneficial to your work processes?	Facebook	Facebook; Twitter	Facebook	Facebook	Facebook and Twitter	Facebook	Facebook	Facebook	Facebook	Facebook and Twitter	Facebook	Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram	Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram	Facebook and Twitter	Facebook and Instagram
Why?	Ease of Use	Only to post important dates	To post dept. information and events to the masses	It can be constructed as an Information page	I am more familiar with Facebook, but Twitter also can be beneficial in sharing information.	I am more familiar with this platform.	Most used and commonly known.	The ability to share information, pics, and video.	Only one that I'm am really familiar with.	The ability to post information quickly	I have just become a member of media, and I plan to become more active.	The ability to quickly share information to a large number of people.	The ability to post information and updates faster and more efficiently.	These are the platforms that I am most familiar with.	I believe the Facebook platform offers great information sharing capabilities, and increased security.

Interview Questions and Interview Transcript Grid
(Clients)

I.   First, I would like to start with some general questions about your affiliation with The Fulton County Sheriff's Office:

- How long have you been a client of this agency?
- What goods or services do you receive?

II.   Next are some general questions about your use of the Internet and social media within the organization:

- How often do you use the Internet?
- Where do you use the Internet? (e.g. agency/library/home/work)
- Approximately how much time do you spend per week (or month) on the Internet?
- Have you used the Internet to find out information about this agency? How was your experience?
- Are you an active user of social networking sites (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Etc.)? Why or why not?

III.   The next questions are about your perception of the organization:

- How often do you interact with employees, case managers, or service providers within the agency? Other clients receiving services?
- What is your view of the reputation of the organization? (Confidence in services?)
- Given the current method(s) of accessing information about the agency, do you generally understand the information or services from this organization?

IV.   The next questions are about specific information about the agency that you found on the Internet using Social Media Platforms:

- Which social media platform(s) did you use?
- Before you started searching on the Social Media Platforms, did you have anything that you wanted to know specifically? Were you expecting to find anything in particular?
- What type of information did you find?
- How do you tell if information from social media is reliable?

V.   Next, we are going to discuss the quality of the social media platforms and what happened next for you:

- What did you do with the information that you found?
- What was the most useful/valuable information item you found on the social media platform? Why was it so valuable?
- What was the least useful information/item that you found on the social media platform? Why?
- Upon implementation or use of social media have you seen any changes in services? How so?
- Since your use of social media for services, have you experienced improved efficiency? How so?
- What barrier(s) have been in the way of you receiving efficient services since the implementation of social media?
- Since your use of social media what convinces/gratifications have you experienced?

- Would you recommend they use of the social media platforms to access information within this agency? Why or why not?

CLIENT INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT GRID

QUESTION	CLIENT 1	CLIENT	CLIENT 3	CLIENT 4	CLIENT 5	CLIENT 6	CLIENT 7	CLIENT 8	CLIENT 9	CLIENT 10	CLIENT	CLIENT 12	CLIENT 13	CLIENT 14	CLIENT 15
How long have you been a client of this agency?	15 years	3 Years	5 Years	6 Years	10 years	4 Years	1 Year	15 Years	2 Years	7 Years	2 Years	3 Years	10 Years	2 Years	5 Years
What goods or services do you receive?	I have received assistance for a relative of mine who was an inmate in the county jail. I also have received assistance with my property taxes.	I have had to file some complaints at the Sheriff's Office. I have also checked on inmates that I know who are incarcerated in the county jail.	I have had to get some information on outstanding warrants. I have also used the Sheriff's Office for information regarding property taxes.	My sons have had a couple of run—ins with the law, and I have had to get information. I have also gotten information about property taxes from the Sheriff's Office.	I have had to file eviction notices. I have also requested information regarding property taxes.	Information regarding jail inmates; community events.	I went to the Sheriff's Office to receive information on property taxes.	Property taxes; Information on inmates.	Information on inmates; Bond information	Property tax information; Employment opportunities.	My son has been involved with some community events and has received some educational services.	Information about employment; Information about the jail.	I have participated in community service events sponsored by the Sheriff's Office.	Public service information; Employment information	I received information and referrals on homeless services.

How often do you use the Internet?	Not very often. I do not have Internet in my home.	Not very often. I do not own a computer, and my access to the Internet through my cell phone is limited	I am a regular user of the Internet.	2 to 3 times a week	I am a regular user of the Internet.	2 or 3 times per week	Very often, at least once a day	Not very often	I use the Internet often.	I use the Internet often.	I use the Internet often.	Whenever I have access. I don't not have Internet in my home.	I use the Internet pretty often.	I use the Internet often.	Not often. I have been homeless, and I haven't had consistent access to the Internet.

QUESTION	CLIENT 1	CLIENT 2	CLIENT 3	CLIENT 4	CLIENT 5	CLIENT 6	CLIENT 7	CLIENT 8	CLIENT 9	CLIENT 10	CLIENT 11	CLIENT 12	CLIENT 13	CLIENT 14	CLIENT 15
Where do you use the Internet?	Library, Work	Library	Home and Work	Home, Work	Mostly work, I do not have Internet at my house.	Library; Mobile Device. I do not have Internet at my house.	Home; Work	Library; Sometimes I access the Internet from my phone.	Work; Home	Work; Home	Work; Home	Phone	Home; Work; Phone	Home; Work; Phone	Library
About how many hours do you spend per week on the Internet?	I would say about 3 or 4.	I would say about an hour a week.	At Home about 4 or 5; At Work about 6 or 7	2 hours	My job requires a lot of use of the Internet, I would say 20 or 30.	2 or 3 hours	It varies. About 10—12 hours if I have a lot of work to do.	Depends on what I need the Internet for; I would say 1 or 2 hours on an average week.	8 to 10 hours	6 to 8 hours	At least 10 hours	5 or 6 hours	It can be up to 12 hours.	10 to 12 hours at least	Maybe 1 or 2 hours, looking for jobs.

Have you used the Internet to find out information about this agency?	No.	I had not prior to this study.	I think I have gone to the Sheriff's Office website once or twice.	I have gone to the Sheriff's Office website once or twice.	No.	No.	I have visited the Sheriff's Office website a couple times.	No.	I have gone to the Sheriff's Office website a couple times.	Yes.	Yes.	No. Not before being asked to participate in this study.	Not before being asked to participate in this study.	I have visited the website a couple of times.	No.
What information were you looking for?	N/A	N/A	Mainly the office phone number or information on employees	Information regarding the County Jail, and community announcements	I never visited this agency's website prior to this study.	I never visited this agency's website prior to this study.	I was looking for contact information like phone numbers or email addresses of staff.	N/A	Inmate information; Bonding Services; Community events.	I have gone to the Sheriff's Office website to search for employment opportunities.	I discovered that I could register to receive information on some educational services for my son.	N/A	N/A	Employment Information; Updates within the community.	N/A

QUESTION	CLIENT 1	CLIENT 2	CLIENT 3	CLIENT 4	CLIENT 5	CLIENT 6	CLIENT 7	CLIENT 8	CLIENT 9	CLIENT 10	CLIENT 11	CLIENT 12	CLIENT 13	CLIENT 14	CLIENT 15
Are you an active user of social networking sites (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Etc.)?	No.	No.	Yes.	No.	Yes.	Yes. I have a Facebook account. I use it from my phone.	Yes, I have a Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram account.	No.	Yes.	Yes. I have Facebook and Twitter accounts.	Yes. I have Facebook and Twitter accounts.	Yes. I have Facebook and Twitter accounts.	Yes. I have Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram accounts.	Yes. I have Facebook and Twitter accounts.	No
Why or why not?	N/A	I have a Facebook page, but I would not consider myself an active user because I don't have access to the Internet all the time	I have accounts with Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. These are the platforms I have become familiar with, and I use them to keep in contact with, find out information, or interact with friends.	I just got a Facebook account since being a participant in this study. I'm usually a very private person, and I haven't seen an importance in using social media. I am now realizing that the evolution of technology is making the use of social media.	I have a Facebook account to keep in contact with, find out information, or interact with friends.	I have a Facebook account to keep in contact with, find out information, or interact with friends.	I found social media to be an effective was to communicate with people worldwide. I have these accounts to keep in contact with, find out information, or interact with friends.	I do not have constant access to the Internet, and I haven't seen the benefit of getting a social media account prior to this study.	I have Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram accounts.	I have used these forms of social media to communicate and get information about old friends and contacts.	I have used these forms of social media to communicate and get information about old friends and contacts.	To communicate and get information about old friends and contacts.	To communicate and get information about old friends and contacts.	To communicate and get information about old friends and contacts.	I have been homeless and low—income, so I have not been able to afford Internet.

How often per year do you interact with employees, case managers, or service providers within the agency?	Maybe 3 or 4 times a year when I visit the agency.	I would say at least 2 or 3 times per year.	4 to 5 times	3 to 4 times	I would say once or twice a year.	1 to 2 times	1 to 2 times.	About 5 times.	2 to 3 times	2 to 3 times	8 to 10 times	1 to 2 times	1 or 2 times.	I may visit 3 or 4 times a year.	About 5 or 6 times a year
Other clients receiving services?	I have never interacted with other clients online.	I don't interact with other clients, unless I know them personally.	I have never directly interacted with other clients before this experiment. Since being a participant I have spoken with other clients on Facebook and Twitter.	I have never directly interacted with other clients before this experiment. Since being a participant I have spoken with other clients on Facebook.	I have never directly interacted with other clients before this experiment. Since being a participant I have spoken with other clients on Facebook.	I have never directly interacted with other clients before this experiment. Since being a participant I have spoken with other clients on Facebook.	I have never directly interacted with other clients before this experiment. Since being a participant I have spoken with other clients on Facebook.	I have never directly interacted with other clients before this experiment. Since being a participant I have spoken with other clients on Facebook.	I have never directly interacted with other clients before this experiment. Since being a participant I have spoken with other clients on Facebook.	I have never directly interacted with other clients before this experiment. Since being a participant I have spoken with other clients on Facebook and Twitter.	I have never directly interacted with other clients before this experiment. Since being a participant I have spoken with other clients on Facebook and Twitter.	I have never directly interacted with other clients before this experiment. Since being a participant I have spoken with other clients on Facebook and Twitter.	I have never directly interacted with other clients before this experiment. Since being a participant I have spoken with other clients on Facebook and Twitter.	I have never directly interacted with other clients before this experiment. Since being a participant I have spoken with other clients on Facebook and Twitter.	I have never directly interacted with other clients before this experiment.

What is your view of the reputation of the organization?	I believe that is somewhat of a lack of trust in the organization and their services.	I would say that the Sheriff's Office's reputation could be better (smiling). They seem to be in the news a lot for internal matters.	My view is that some people may not trust this organization from prior experiences with them or what they have heard.	From prior experiences, I believe that public perception and trust of the Sheriff's Office could be better.	I think that the organization could use some improvement of its reputation. This is a law enforcement agency, and many people don't trust the law.	I believe that the Sheriff's Office has taken some hits with their reputation because of the lack of transparency with the community that is perceived.	I have not had any bad experiences in doing business with the Sheriff's Office. I view the Sheriff's Office as a reputable agency that enforces the laws of the community.	I think that the reputation of the Sheriff's Office is pretty good and is respected in the community.	I believe that the Sheriff's Office reputation could be better.	The reputation of the Sheriff's Office is pretty solid in my view. I do believe that community outreach efforts and informing the public could be better.	I believe that the reputation of the Sheriff's Office has improved. I see a lot of positive activities that they sponsor in the community.	Being that it's a law enforcement agency, I believe that the reputation of the Sheriff's Office will always be scrutinized.	I think that the Sheriff's Office reputation is pretty decent the Sheriff has made an effort to have events or community outreach.	I believe that the reputation of the Sheriff's Office is pretty good. I have heard of some issues within the County Jail.	They have a pretty good reputation in providing with referrals for homeless services and assistance. I am not sure about other services.
Confidence in services?	A lot of times, the public has a hard time staying informed about deadlines or announcements. It can also be difficult to receive applications that need to be filled out and processed by them or getting status updates on applications that have been submitted.	I understand the basic services that are provided, but there are a lot of services or announcements that I am unaware of. Maybe because I do not have regular access to the Internet.	Again, from what some people may have experienced or from what they have heard, there may not be a lot of confident in services from the Sheriff's Office.	Their services should evolve with the growth in technology and providing services to clients should be more efficient.	I think that they could be more transparent in their services and how they inform people.	I believe that they provide beneficial services, but a lot of times the public does not know they are available.	I have been confident in the services provided by the Sheriff's Office. I feel that the Sheriff's Office could do a better job in making the public aware of their services within the community.	I have been confident in the services that are offered. I just wished I received updates or announcements on services or events offered in my community.	I believe that the Sheriff's Office could do a better job in making their services more aware and understandable to the public.	I believe that the Sheriff's Office could do a better job in making their services more aware and understandable to the public.	I am pretty confident in their services, and it's getting more convenient to interact with staff since the implementation of social media.	I believe that more services could be provided and made aware of to the public by the Sheriff's Office.	I believe that more services could be provided and made aware of to the public by the Sheriff's Office.	I believe that the delivery in services could be faster and more efficient.	I have been confident in their services. Sometimes, they could be faster in responding back to people.

QUESTION	CLIENT 1	CLIENT 2	CLIENT 3	CLIENT 4	CLIENT 5	CLIENT 6	CLIENT 7	CLIENT 8	CLIENT 9	CLIENT 10	CLIENT 11	CLIENT 12	CLIENT 13	CLIENT 14	CLIENT 15
Given the current method(s) of accessing information about the agency, do you generally understand the information or services from this organization?	I understand the basic services that are provided, but there are a lot of services or announcements that I am unaware of. Maybe because I do not have regular access to the Internet.	Yes, it could be posted in more places.	I was not aware of all of the services within the Sheriff's Office. There were some procedures or rules that I did not understand.	I do not have a good understanding of everything within the Sheriff's Office. I am learning more as I am getting used to interacting on social media.	I have learned quite a bit of information about the Sheriff's Office since becoming a "friend" of their Facebook page.	I have learned a lot about the Sheriff's Office since looking at the website and Facebook Page.	Yes, the Sheriff's Office website as well as social media pages provided a lot of information about the agency.	I understand most services that are offered from the Sheriff's Office, but I found helpful information when I became got a Facebook account and started to follow the Sheriff's Office page.	I understand most services that are offered from the Sheriff's Office, but I believe that there could be more efforts made in reaching more of the public.	I understand most services that are offered from the Sheriff's Office, but I believe that there could be more efforts made in reaching more of the public.	Yes, I understand most services that are offered from the Sheriff's Office, but I believe that there could be more efforts made in reaching more of the public.	Yes, I understand most services that are offered from the Sheriff's Office, but I believe that there could be more efforts made in reaching more of the public.	Yes, I understand most services that are offered from the Sheriff's Office since viewing the agency's website and social media pages.	Yes, I understand most services that are offered from the Sheriff's Office since viewing the agency's website and social media pages.	I understand some of the services that are offered from the Sheriff's Office that I was not familiar with.

Which social media platform(s) did you use?	Facebook	I used Facebook and Twitter.	I used Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.	Facebook	I used Facebook and Twitter	Facebook.	Facebook, Twitter, Instagram	I recently got a Facebook account.	Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram	Facebook and Twitter	Facebook and Twitter	Facebook and Twitter	Facebook, Twitter and Instagram	Facebook and Twitter	Facebook Twitter
Before you started searching on the Social Media Platforms, did you have anything that you wanted to know specifically?	I was looking for more information from the Sheriff's Office like description of their services or how instructions or procedures like how people can check on inmates. It is possible for people to fill out papers and submit online without having to go into the Sheriff's Office.	No specific information. I was hoping that the way to access the information would be easy.	I wanted to know the services that were provided under the Sheriff's Office.	I wanted to know the services that were provided under the Sheriff's Office.	I wanted to all of the services that were provided by the Sheriff's Office. As well, I wanted to know if they have made any forms or applications available for online submission.	I wanted to get a better understanding of the services that were provided by the Sheriff's Office.	Not anything specifically. It was surprised to see the number of users on the accounts and level of interaction.	Not anything specifically. I saw a greater number of users on the accounts and level of interaction than I expected.	I wanted to gain a greater understandin g of the services and community outreach efforts of the Sheriff's Office.	I wanted to gain a greater understanding of the services and community outreach efforts of the Sheriff's Office.	More information of community events and programs for youth.	Not before participating in this study.	Information on services provided by the Sheriff's Office.	Information on services provided by the Sheriff's Office.	Information on services provided by the Sheriff's Office; Public assistance.

QUESTION	CLIENT 1	CLIENT 2	CLIENT 3	CLIENT 4	CLIENT 5	CLIENT 6	CLIENT 7	CLIENT 8	CLIENT 9	CLIENT 10	CLIENT 11	CLIENT 12	CLIENT 13	CLIENT	CLIENT 15
What type of information did you find?	I found information about the Sheriff's Office and several events and activities that they had. Some posts included pictures or videos of things such as job promotions and community activities like school visits.	I was surprised to find a lot of information on activities that occurred or that are planned within the community. I also saw several comments on various activities such as the winter storm or the escapee from the jail.	I found a lot of information regarding emergency response efforts and community activities.	I found community announcements and events that I wasn't aware of and I review a lot of information about the jail and staff.	I received a lot of updates on current activities within the Sheriff's Office and in the community.	I received a lot of updates on current activities within the Sheriff's Office and in the community.	Interaction between Sheriff's Office staff and in the community.	I found information on services that were provided by the Sheriff's Office that I was unaware of; Interaction between Sheriff's Office staff and the community; I received a lot of updates on current activities within the Sheriff's Office and in the community.	I found information on services that were provided by the Sheriff's Office that I was unaware of; Interaction between Sheriff's Office staff and the community; I received a lot of updates on current activities within the Sheriff's Office and in the community.	I found information on services that were provided by the Sheriff's Office that I was unaware of; Interaction between Sheriff's Office staff and the community; I received a lot of updates on current activities within the Sheriff's Office and in the community.	I found additional information on services that were provided by the Sheriff's Office that I was unaware of; Interaction between Sheriff's Office staff and the community; I received a lot of updates on current activities within the Sheriff's Office and in the community.	I found some good information on services that were provided by the Sheriff's Office that I was unaware of; Interaction between Sheriff's Office staff and the community; I received a lot of updates on current activities within the Sheriff's Office and in the community.	I found beneficial information on services that were provided by the Sheriff's Office that I was unaware of; Interaction between Sheriff's Office staff and the community; I received a lot of updates on current activities within the Sheriff's Office and in the community.	I found some useful information on services that were provided by the Sheriff's Office that I was unaware of; Interaction between Sheriff's Office staff and the community; I received a lot of updates on current activities within the Sheriff's Office and in the community	I found information on services that were provided by the Sheriff's Office that I was unaware of; Interaction between Sheriff's Office staff and the community; I received a lot of updates on current activities within the Sheriff's Office and in the community.

How do you tell if information from social media is reliable?	I would say that you can tell reliability by the level of information that is provided. The more specific that a posting or comment is, to include evidence like pictures or videos to prove it, the more reliable social media is.	I believe that the information on the postings or comments that were made directly from the Sheriff's Office is reliable.	If pics or video were included in the postings, I found the information to be more reliable.	Usually pics or video proved to be more reliable	I found any visual or audio information to be more reliable.	I think that posts that included pictures or video provided reliable proof.	I would say that information that is posted by Sheriff's Office staff is reliable as well those post that include pictures or video.	Video, audio, and pictures that reinforced messages that were posted are those I found to be more reliable.	Video, pictures, and audio that were included in the posts and comments.	Video, pictures, and audio that were included in the posts and comments.	Video, pictures, and audio that were included in the posts and comments.	Video, pictures, and audio that were included in the posts and comments.	Video, pictures, and audio that were included in the posts and comments.	Video, pictures, and audio that were included in the posts and comments.	Video, pictures, and audio that were included in the posts and comments.

What did you do with the information that you found?	I noted some of the dates and announcements that were posted because these are items that I may be interested in or participating in or attending.	I have been able to stay more abreast of activities within the city. I have also found that some applications or forms can be filled out and submitted online.	I have gained more knowledge on the Sheriff's Office and what they do. I have also become more aware of community activities.	I have gained more knowledge on the Sheriff's Office and what they do. I have also become more aware of community activities.	The information that I found expanded my knowledge of the Sheriff's Office and all they do.	I was able to apply for jobs online and submit applications online.	Increased interactivity with Sheriff's Office staff and the public.	I used the information to broaden my knowledge of the Sheriff's Office and transitioning to electronic forms of communication.	I used the information to broaden my knowledge of the Sheriff's Office and transitioning to electronic forms of communication.	I used the information to broaden my knowledge of the Sheriff's Office and transitioning to electronic forms of communication.	I used the information to stay abreast of community events. My son is in a program sponsored by the Sheriff's Office so gaining information about the H.Y.P.E. (Helping Youth Prosper and Evolve) was beneficial.	I have been able to stay updated and interact with others who are using the Sheriff's Office social media platforms.	I have been able to stay updated and interact with others who are using the Sheriff's Office social media platforms.	I have been able to stay updated and interact with others who are using the Sheriff's Office social media platforms.	I have been able to use information for job and housing contacts and referrals.

QUESTION	CLIENT 1	CLIENT 2	CLIENT 3	CLIENT 4	CLIENT 5	CLIENT 6	CLIENT 7	CLIENT 8	CLIENT 9	CLIENT 10	CLIENT 11	CLIENT 12	CLIENT 13	CLIENT 14	CLIENT 15
What was the most useful/valuable information item you found on the social media platform?	I found that the constant updates on the winter weather that we had as well as updates on road closings or office closings were valuable.	Information on internal activities within the Sheriff's Office. I also believe that the posting of job announcements on social media was valuable.	I found that the regular updates on the social media platforms of emergency matters were very useful.	I found that the regular updates of emergency matters and community announcements were very useful.	Regular postings of community events and dates, as well as announcements of emergency issues.	Current postings of community events and dates; announcements of emergency issues.	Current postings of community events and dates; announcements of emergency issues.	Current postings of community events and dates; announcements of emergency issues.	Current postings of community events and dates; announcements of emergency issues.	Current postings of community events and dates; announcements of emergency issues.	Information about the H.Y.P.E. Program; Current postings of community events and dates; announcements of emergency issues.	Current postings of community events and dates; announcements of emergency issues.	Current postings of community events and dates; announcements of emergency issues.	Current postings of community events and dates; announcements of emergency issues.	Employment; Information on homeless services; Current postings of community events and dates; announcements of emergency issues.
Why was it so valuable?	It allowed me to avoid those areas and plan accordingly if I needed to conduct business with any of the offices or schools were closed.	I think it allows people to find out about this information without have to call or go to the Sheriff's Office.	It provided much needed information to the public.	It makes the public more aware of what's going on in the community.	It allowed me to stay abreast of a lot of information within the community as well as weather warnings or the announcement of a jail escapee.	It allowed the public to be informed of things that were going on in the city that could affect them.	It allowed the public to be informed of things that were going on in the city that could affect them.	It allowed the public to be informed of things that were going on in the city that could affect them	It allowed the public to be informed of things that were going on in the city that could affect them.	It allowed the public to be informed of things that were going on in the city that could affect them.	It allowed the public to be informed of things that were going on in the city that could affect them.	I believe that it is a quick and convenient way to gain information and stay updated.	I believe that it is a quick and convenient way to gain information and stay updated.	I believe that it is a quick and convenient way to gain information and stay updated	I believe that it is a quick and convenient way to gain information and stay updated	I believe that it is a quick and convenient way to gain information and stay updated.

What was the least useful information/item that you found on the social media platform?	I didn't really find any of the information I viewed on social media to be not useful to someone.	I saw some personal comments on the social media platforms that were not appropriate.	Personal comments on the social media platforms that were not appropriate.	There was some comments or responses that were crazy, insensitive, or unnecessary.	I saw some of the postings and comments that were added to the social media platform were not necessary.	Some comments that were posted that were very critical, derogatory, and even racist.	Some of the comments that were posted were very rude.	Unfavorable comments that were made to postings from the Sheriff's Office.	I believe there were bad comments and responses that were made to postings from the Sheriff's Office.	I believe there were bad comments and responses that were made to postings from the Sheriff's Office.	I found that some of the reviews posted were unnecessary.	Even though people have the freedom of speech, I found that some of the comments that posted were unnecessary.	I found that some of the comments that posted were unnecessary.	Even though people have the freedom of speech, I found that some of the comments that posted were unnecessary.	I found that some of the comments that posted were unnecessary.
Why?	Yes.	They were derogatory and some were even vulgar and complained of the Sheriff's Office.	Some postings were laced with profanity and not appropriate.	Some postings were laced with profanity and not appropriate.	Some of the postings were derogatory an unnecessary to post on a public platform.	They were laced with profanity and inappropriate to post.	They were laced with profanity and inappropriate to post.	They were laced with profanity and inappropriate to post.	They were laced with profanity and inappropriate to post.	They were laced with profanity and inappropriate to post.	They were laced with profanity and inappropriate to post.	They were laced with profanity and inappropriate to post.	They were laced with profanity and inappropriate to post.	They were laced with profanity and inappropriate to post.	They were laced with profanity and inappropriate to post.
Upon implementation or use of social media have you seen any changes in services?	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
How so?	I have seen a lot more ads and commercial	I have seen more comments and updates from the Sheriff's Office	Increased interactivity with the public.	Increased interactivity with the public	Faster response times from Sheriff's Office staff; Increased interactivity with the public.	Faster response times from Sheriff's Office staff; Increased interactivity with the public.	Faster response times from Sheriff's Office staff; Increased interactivity with the public	Faster response times from Sheriff's Office staff; Increased interactivity with the public.	Faster response times from Sheriff's Office staff; Increased interactivity with the public.	Faster response times from Sheriff's Office staff; Increased interactivity with the public.	Faster response times from Sheriff's Office staff; Increased interactivity with the public.	Updates on community events; Faster response times from Sheriff's Office staff; Increased interactivity with the public.	Updates on community events; Faster response times from Sheriff's Office staff; Increased interactivity with the public.	Updates on community events; Faster response times from Sheriff's Office staff; Increased interactivity with the public.	Updates on community events; Faster response times from Sheriff's Office staff; Increased

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QUESTION	CLIENT 1	CLIENT 2	CLIENT 3	CLIENT 4	CLIENT 5	CLIENT 6	CLIENT 7	CLIENT 8	CLIENT 9	CLIENT 10	CLIENT 11	CLIENT 12	CLIENT	CLIENT 14	CLIENT 15
Since your use of social media for services, have you experienced improved efficiency?	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
How so?	Faster updates on activities that can affect the community. Some issues that you would have to in person to the Sheriff's Office to address can be handled online now.	I had an issue with receiving information on the status of my taxes. I posted this issue on the Sheriff's Office Facebook page, and receive a quick response.	Faster response times to public questions or comments	Community announcements and updates	Faster response times to public questions or comments.	Faster response times to public questions or comments.	Faster response times to public questions or comments	Faster response times to public questions or comments.	Faster response times to public questions or comments.	Faster response times to public questions or comments.	Faster response times to public questions or comments.	Faster updates and response times to public questions or comments.	Faster updates and response times to public questions or comments.	Faster updates and response times to public questions or comments.	Faster updates and response times to public questions or comments.

What barrier(s) have been in the way of you receiving efficient services since the implementation of social media?	I guess it would be that prior to participating in your study, I was not knowledgeable about social media, and was skeptical to use it.	I wish there were more services that you inquire about or submit interest in online.	No barriers	No barriers	No barriers	No barriers	No barriers	No barriers	No barriers	No barriers	No barriers	No barriers	No barriers	No barriers	No barriers
Since your use of social media what convinces/gratifications have you experienced?	I have found it to be easier to use than I thought it was. I am able to receive information and updates quicker. I recently found out that the Sheriff's Office has begun to include the links to some websites or documents that I can download.	Faster response times from the Sheriff's Office; More interaction between the Sheriff's Office and the community.	I have experienced increased efficiency in providing services and information to the public.	I have experienced greater awareness of community announcements and activities.	I have experienced increased efficiency in the Sheriff's Office providing services and information to the public.	I have experienced increased efficiency in the Sheriff's Office providing services and information to the public.	I have experienced increased efficiency in the Sheriff's Office providing services and information to the public.	I have experienced increased efficiency in the Sheriff's Office providing services and information to the public.	I have experienced increased efficiency in the Sheriff's Office providing services and information to the public.	I have experienced increased efficiency in the Sheriff's Office providing services and information to the public.	I have experienced increased efficiency in the Sheriff's Office providing services and information to the public.	I have experienced increased efficiency in the Sheriff's Office providing services and information to the public.	I have experienced increased efficiency in the Sheriff's Office providing services and information to the public.	I have experienced increased efficiency in the Sheriff's Office providing services and information to the public.	I have experienced increased efficiency in the Sheriff's Office providing services and information to the public.

QUESTION	CLIENT 1	CLIENT 2	CLIENT 3	CLIENT 4	CLIENT 5	CLIENT 6	CLIENT 7	CLIENT 8	CLIENT 9	CLIENT 10	CLIENT 11	CLIENT 12	CLIENT 13	CLIENT 14	CLIENT 15
Would you recommend they use of the social media platforms to access information within this agency?	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes	Yes.
Why or Why Not?	I believe that social media, when used for business purposes, can be a quick and efficient way to gain information. Social media can even be used find out about activities around the city that I would not have known about.	I believe that the use of social media gives the public the opportunity to be more informed on services and activities within the community.	I believe that social media platforms can be very effective in sharing and accessing information from the Sheriff's Office.	Since becoming a member of social media, I still have a lot to get used to, but I definitely see it being beneficial to sharing information and public awareness. I would recommend people to use it for those reasons.	I believe that social media platforms can be very effective in sharing and accessing information from the Sheriff's Office.	I believe that social media platforms can be very effective in sharing and accessing information from the Sheriff's Office.	I believe that social media platforms can be very effective in sharing and accessing information from the Sheriff's Office.	I believe that social media platforms can be very effective in sharing and accessing information from the Sheriff's Office.	I believe that social media platforms can be very effective in sharing and accessing information from the Sheriff's Office.	I believe that social media platforms can be very effective in sharing and accessing information from the Sheriff's Office.	I believe that social media platforms can be very effective in sharing and accessing information from the Sheriff's Office.	I believe that social media platforms can be very effective in sharing and accessing information from the Sheriff's Office.	I believe that social media platforms can be very effective in sharing and accessing information from the Sheriff's Office.	I believe that social media platforms can be very effective in sharing and accessing information from the Sheriff's Office.	I believe that social media platforms can be very effective in sharing and accessing information from the Sheriff's Office.

Appendix G: Observational Summary Form and Field Notes Grid

Doctoral Dissertation Research
Government 2.5: The Impact of Social Media on Public Sector Accessibility
Walden University School of Public Policy and Administration

Observation Protocol

Researcher Name: _____

Agency Name: _____

Agency Type: _____

Proceeding/Appearance

Type: _____

Location Description: (Describe)
_____

Date of Observation: _____

Length of Observation: Start Time: _____ End Time: _____ Total Time: _____

Descriptive Notes:

Other Information:

Themes/Reflections:

OBSERVATIONAL FIELD NOTES GRID

TYPE	DATE	LOCATION	DESCRIPTIVE NOTES	OTHER INFORMATION	THEMES/REFLECTIONS
OBSERVATION SESSION I	1—21—2014	Fulton County Sheriff's Office Entrance; Reception Area	• 32 People entered the Fulton County Sheriff's Office during the observation session • The Administrative Assistant at the reception desk used the Internet to find answers to many clients' questions • Many clients were unaware they could access some public information on the Sheriff's Office's website or social media platforms	• Clients were asked if they were members of Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram. Clients were asked to become a member of the Sheriff's Office's social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) if they have not already.	• Client's ability to access public information is heavily dependent on knowledge of increased technology (Internet, Social Media Platforms) • Diffusion of the Sheriff's Office's platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) result in greater access to public information.

OBSERVATION SESSION II	1—30—2014	Fulton County Sheriff's Office— Public Affairs Unit	• Continuous postings and updates of winter storms, jail escapee, passing of K—9 on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram • It was the responsibility of the Sheriff's Office's Public Affairs Officer to provide posts and updates on social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)	• I observed several phone conversations in which the Public Affairs Officer urged clients to become followers of the Sheriff's Office's social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) • I was allowed to review current user trends of the Sheriff's Office's Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram pages • I observed a month—to—month increase of followers of the Sheriff's Office's social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) • I observed month—to—	• Diffusion of Sheriff's Office's social media platforms to access public information • Increased interaction between the Sheriff's Office and the public

				- month increase of replies and comments to postings made - by the Sheriff's Office	
OBSERVATION SESSION III	2—12—2014	Fulton County Jail	- Notification of Sheriff's Office promotions and community activities on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram - Several postings and updates of upcoming "Scared Straight" episode	Staff provided information to some people who requested information of jail inmates	A need for more efficient access to public information is needed within the Fulton County Jail

OBSERVATION SESSION IV	2—24—2014	Fulton County Sheriff's Office—Administration/Records Unit	• Most information within this unit is classified information • Growing number of clients and open cases have outgrown capacity of current record keeping systems	• Staff within this unit were aware of the Sheriff's Office's social media platforms. Many posted responses or comments to postings made from other units of the department.	• Social media can be beneficial to staff efficiency within this unit • Social media can be beneficial in rapid responses, updates, and public information

| OBSERVATION SESSION V | 3—20—2014 | Fulton County Sheriff's Office—Programs/Community Outreach Unit | • Many clients were unaware of public events or announcements prior to being advised of the Sheriff's Office's social media platforms | • I observed an increase of public responses and comments on social media posting made by the Sheriff's Office | • Social media was beneficial to informing the public of community events.
• The use of the Sheriff's Office's social media platforms resulted increased responses and participation of community events. |

Appendix H: Social Networking Data

Facebook

DATE REVIEWED	FORMAT	TITLE	POST	# of LIKES	# of SHARES	COMMENTS	PICS
1/17/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Jail Kitchen Scores a 100!	The Fulton County Jail Kitchen and Officers Dining Area both scored 100's on a January inspection by the State health department. The evaluator scored the facility on cleanliness and numerous other criteria similar to the strict standards commercial restaurants must meet. Please note, the Fulton County Jail serves 2 million+ meals in a year!	7	0	0	10
1/18/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	N/A	Here are a couple of interesting photos taken at the gun buyback Thursday at Turner Field. These were posted on Instagram by Erik S. Lesser.	6	1	0	0
1/20/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Start your public service journey. Apply today!	Position Openings for Sheriff, Deputy and Detention Officer	7	1	0	0
1/22/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Israeli Police Official Visits Fulton County Jail	Superintendent Tsafrir Moisa of the Israeli Police agency toured the Fulton County Jail with Braselton Police Assistant Chief Lou Solis. In Israel last year, Superintendent Moisa was part of a team that hosted public safety executives from Georgia during the GILEE, Georgia International Law Enforcement Exchange Program coordinated by Georgia State University. Fulton County Sheriff's Office Chief Deputy Jimmy Carter and Fulton	0	11	0	32

			County Jail Command Staff were honored to give Superintendent Moisa a tour of the facility. There was also time to compare notes about the Israeli justice system and the one here in the Fulton County.				
1/23/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	N/A	The Fulton County Sheriff's Office is mourning the loss of K—9 Deputy Marco Henry. Marco was a Belgium Malinois who died Wednesday morning. A veterinarian discovered that Marco developed inoperable cancer and he was euthanized. Earlier this week, 6—year—old Marco had been working as a highly trained "All Patrol" canine assigned to Sergeant Corey Henry, the commander of the FCSO K—9 unit. Marco had not exhibited any signs of being ill prior to Wednesday morning. He gave 110% everyday on the job and was a loved member of Sgt. Henry's family with whom he lived.	8	1	5	3
1/23/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Remembering K—9 Marco	Marco's sudden passing was a shock to the agency and he will be greatly missed. Please leave your condolences on this page and feel free to share with your friends to increase awareness of canine cancer. Thank you.	113	69	103	60
1/24/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Remembering K—9 Marco	Additional Photos	0	0	0	17
1/27/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	AFCEMA Atlanta Fulton EMA ·Jan 27 Snow is expected to arrive in Atlanta by this time tomorrow.	N/A	0	0	0	

		Afternoon commute could be tough. (Shared Twitter Link)					
1/28/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Snow Scenes from the Fulton County Jail	Here's a look at conditions at the Fulton County Jail during Winter Storm Leon. These photos were taken by Sergeant Karland Stokes. Please note, inmate visitation is cancelled until Monday. Please register for visitation at www.fultonsheriff.net as usual.	6	3	0	11
1/28/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Snow in Atlanta	Here are some early pictures taken during the snow event from the Fulton County Courthouse. Be safe out there. — at Fulton County Courthouse.	8	0	0	10
1/28/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	N/A	Earlier, a power line down on Joseph E. Lowery created a hazard for motorists & pedestrians. Be on the lookout for trouble. (7 photos)	1	0	0	7
1/28/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	N/A	Snow scenes from Atlanta & Fulton County Tuesday. Don't travel unless absolutely necessary	5	0	0	7
1/28/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	N/A	Fulton County Schools & Atlanta Public Schools are closed Wednesday. Both systems are on Twitter.	1	0	0	1
1/28/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	N/A	All Fulton County courts are CANCELLED Wednesday. JURORS DO NOT REPORT. A decision regarding Thursday sessions will be made after 2 p.m. Wednesday. Stay tuned for updates. Here's a photo of a marker at the Courthouse from Fulton County Government.	7	0	0	1

1/29/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	N/A	Visitation at the Fulton County Jail is CANCELLED Wednesday. Check back for updates concerning Thursday.	5	1	0	1
1/29/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	N/A	From Fulton County Government: Atlanta Fulton County Emergency Management Agency Urges Motorists to Exercise Extreme Caution The Atlanta Fulton County Emergency Management Agency urges motorists to exercise extreme caution if they have to venture out today or are still on the roads trying to make their way home. They Agency is providing the following tips to help you be careful: How should you drive in winter weather? · Buckle up before you start driving. Keep your seat belt buckled at all times. * OTHER TIPS*	5	0	2	0

1/29/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Shared Link via Fulton County Government	Fulton County Public Facilities will be closed on Wednesday January, 29, 2014	1	1	0	0
1/29/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Shared Link of MARTA's Status	Due to the inclement weather there is no Bus service at this time. We will continue to monitor the road and weather conditions and provide updates as soon as they are available. Our Rail service is running but is experiencing lengthy delays, please allow extra time to complete your trip.	1	0	0	1
1/29/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Update of Winter Storm	A special thanks to the Kroger on Hwy 138 where the manager is Sherry Nelson & the Kroger in Alpharetta at 3000 Haynes Bridge Road where the manager is Suzette Myers. They provided food for the Union City and Alpharetta Jail Annexes without immediate payment to feed inmates in those annexes.	7	0	0	0

1/29/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Update of Winter Storm	Reserve Deputies with 4—wheel drive vehicles are being deployed to assist in transporting essential personnel to the Fulton County Jail and the Justice Center Complex. Please do not get on the road ways unless you absolutely must.	13	0	0	0
1/29/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Shared Update from National Guard	From the Georgia National Guard Georgia Guardsmen load cases of MREs for distro to stranded motorists.	9	0	0	1
1/29/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Update of Winter Storm	Fulton County Sheriff Ted Jackson would like to thank staff and the families who support them as employees perform their duties during the storm. Many Fulton County Sheriff's Office staff members have been working around the clock to maintain the Fulton County Jail in Northwest Atlanta and Jail annexes in Union City and Alpharetta.	8	0	5	0
1/30/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Shared Link of MARTA's Status	From MARTA RAIL: We are still operating on reduced frequency, with 30—min schedules from end—of—line stations. That means 15—min frequency between Lindbergh and Airport.	0	0	0	0

2/4/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	MANHUNT FOR INMATE WHO ESCAPED FROM JAIL BUS	Please be on the lookout for an escaped Fulton County Jail inmate. The inmate was able to escape from an inmate transport bus around 5:30 p.m. in the area of English Avenue in Northwest Atlanta. The inmate's name is Ulysesse Cleckley, Black male, 21 years of age, 6 feet tall, 200 pounds. At the time of the escape, Cleckley was wearing a blue jail jumpsuit.	1	1	1	2
2/4/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	UPDATE: MANHUNT FOR INMATE WHO ESCAPED FROM JAIL BUS	Subject is back in custody and on his way back to the Fulton County Jail. He was captured at the North Avenue MARTA Station at apx. 7:18 PM. More details to come.	16	7	1	2
2/5/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office shared Fulton County Govt. Photo	Please be aware of the weather. The National Weather Service predicts rain tomorrow, possibly changing to snow in the evening.	0	2	**0**	1
2/5/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office shared Fulton County Govt. Link	FYI: National Weather Service_ Severe Weather Warning Advisory	0	0	0	1
2/6/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	Colonel Mark Adger is hosting a meeting of chief jailers from around the region to share intelligence and discuss current topics and technologies	13	0	0	12

2/6/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Chief Jailer's Meeting	Colonel Mark Adger hosted a meeting of chief jailers and other administrators from holding facilities in the region. Participants toured the Fulton County Jail, discussed new technologies, locking systems, and gang trends in jails.	6	0	0	20
2/6/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Honor Guard at Change of Gavel Ceremony	Members of the Fulton County Sheriff's Office Honor Guard presented colors during the Change of Gavel Ceremony. Superior Court Chief Judge Cynthia Wright is retiring and is symbolically passing the gavel to Judge Gail Tusan who will serve as Chief Judge for Fulton County Superior Court. The ceremony was held in Assembly Hall of the Fulton County Government Center.	9	0	2	11
2/6/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	Please be mindful of black ice that may form overnight and linger through the morning commute.	2	0	0	0
2/6/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office Shared U.S. National Weather Service Peachtree City, GA Photo	Black ice will be a threat tonight in areas that saw precipitation this evening. www.weather.gov/atlanta	1	0	0	1
2/7/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	Sparkling trophies & awards in Jail Administration. The largest trophies were earned by the FCSO softball team. Go team!	2	1	0	8
2/9/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office Shared U.S.	FYI: Sorry for any confusion. There are two watches for two different event times.	0	0	0	2

		National Weather Service Peachtree City, GA Photo					
2/10/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	Jail Visitation is cancelled for Tuesday, February 11 through Thursday, February 13, 2014 in preparation for inclement weather this week and in an effort to reserve our resources. It is anticipated that normal operations will resume on Thursday. Please check back for updates. Thank you for your cooperation.	2	2	0	1
2/10/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Georgia Governor Nathan Deal expands state of emergency	Gov. Nathan Deal has expanded the state of emergency to include 31 additional counties, bringing the total to 45.	2	0	0	1
2/10/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office Shared Fulton County Government's Status	Fulton County Government offices will be closed Tuesday. Due to the threat of severe weather in Fulton County and throughout the metro area, Fulton County Government facilities that are normally open to the public will be closed on Tuesday, February 11, 2014.	3	1	0	0

Date	Source	Title	Text				
2/10/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	After the storm, there will be a service to remember K—9 Marco on Friday, February 14, 2014. In January, Marco died after being diagnosed with inoperable cancer. Learn more by visiting the link below.	26	2	0	1
2/13/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Operation Snowman II — February Ice/Snow Storm 2014	Weathering Winter Storm Pax and pulling long hours at the Fulton County Jail. Lieutenant Colonel Thaddeus Lee dubbed this storm event "Operation Snowman II". Staffers worked long hours, had access to resting stations, food, and it occurred during Employee Appreciation Week so there was ice cream.	22	0	4	63
2/13/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Department	Inmate visitation has been cancelled for today and Friday. Visitation should resume Monday. Please check back for updates. Also, remember to register for visitation via www.fultonsheriff.net.	7	0	0	1
2/13/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Department	Fulton County Government offices will reopen Friday.	0	0	0	0
2/14/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Department	Please be on the look—out for Black Ice! This BOLO is in effect this morning for the all of Metro Atlanta and northern Georgia. Drive safely.	11	0	0	1
2/14/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	K—9 Marco Remembered as a Hero	The Fulton County Sheriff's Office held a special gathering to remember K—9 Deputy Marco Henry. Law enforcement officers from across Metro Atlanta attended the service to mark the passing of this extraordinary All Patrol K—9	33	8	17	128

			and to support his handler Sergeant Corey Henry whose wife and two young daughters were in attendance.				
2/17/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office shared Douglas County Sheriff's Office K—9 Unit's photo.	A kind tribute to K—9 Marco to benefit other animals from Douglas County Sheriff's Office K—9 Unit's page This year our 5th Annual "Pennies for Police Service Dogs" penny drive will be held in memory of K—9 Marco of the Fulton County Sheriff's Office!!! K—9 Marco passed on Jan, 22nd 2014 after it was discovered he had Canine Cancer!!! All proceeds raised will be donated to Chase Away K9 Cancer in memory of K—9 Marco!!! Gone but Never Forgotten, R.I.P. Marco!!!	12	1	2	1
2/19/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Law Enforcement Officials Discuss At Risk Youth	Sheriff Ted Jackson and Chief Deputy Jimmy Carter met with Sheriff Alex Underwood of the Chester County, S.C. Sheriff's Office to discuss at risk youth and ways that law enforcement officers can intervene to improve the lives of young people. Sheriff Underwood and Sgt. J. Neal wanted to observe Sheriff Jackson's Youth Intervention Program which is led by Lieutenant Brian McGee, Commander of the Community Outreach Section. Lt. E. Sinclair of the Macon Police Department also wanted to see the program.	21	0	0	7

2/20/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Apply Today: Sheriff's Deputy	N/A	8	2	0	1
2/21/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Apply Today: Detention Officer	N/A	3	1	0	1
2/24/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Crime Stoppers Greater Atlanta is always on the case. Please give them a "Like".	Did you know that Crime Stoppers is partnered with more than 60 metro Atlanta law enforcement agencies? "Like" our page to get access to the latest news and safety information. The best way to prevent crime is to be informed!	7	0	0	1
2/25/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Atlanta Business League meets with Sheriff Jackson	Members of the Atlanta Business League met with Sheriff Ted Jackson as part of the organization's series "Tuesday Talks with ABL CEO's". Sheriff Jackson gave them an overview of the agency and answered members' questions. The Fulton County Sheriff's Office is transparent and Sheriff Jackson welcomes opportunities such as these to discuss the agency's mission	5	0	0	12

2/27/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office Shared a Link	"I get sick and tired of seeing the young faces that are coming in [the Fulton County Jail every single day," said Fulton County Sheriff's Lt. Brian McGee.	4	0	0	1
2/28/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	The Fulton County Sheriff's Office Honor Guard is looking for a few good men and women. The Honor Guard is an elite unit consisting of deputies who are highly trained and dedicated to representing the agency with dignity at special events and ceremonies. Internal candidates should contact Sgt. D. Butler or Capt. K. Walker for more information.	15	1	2	1
3/3/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Apply Today: Sheriff's Deputy	N/A	3	1	0	1
3/6/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	K9 Duke stopped by the PIO's office to say hi to his FB family. Stay safe out there!	22	1	2	1
3/7/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	Here's a compliment sent in by a citizen concerning the kindness shown to her and a friend by Reserve Deputy Edward Leidelmeijer	24	0	3	1

3/10/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	K—9 Duke says it is a beautiful day for a long walk after work.	12	2	1	1
3/13/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	PUBLIC NOTICE: The FULTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE is scheduled for an on—site assessment as part of a program to achieve accreditation by verifying it meets professional standards.	9	4	2	1
3/13/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	Leadership Johns Creek tours Fulton County Jail (78 photos) Members of the current Leadership Johns Creek class toured the Fulton County Jail to wrap up their Government Day. The group visited the Capitol, the Fulton County Government Center, and the Fulton County Courthouse before making their way to the Jail. The extensive tour began with a question and answer session with Sheriff Ted Jackson and Jail commanders. — at Fulton County Jail.	5	1	2	78

3/15/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	St. Patrick's Day Parade in Atlanta 2014 (80 photos) Everyone had a blast at the 2014 St. Patrick's Day Parade in Atlanta. Our photographer set up at Peachtree Street and 5th Street to catch all the action including Sheriff Ted Jackson and his family in the SWAT tank, Reserve Deputies on motorcycles and 4—wheels. The parade route was new this year. The procession began near the High Museum of Art on Peachtree Street near 15th Street and ended at 5th Street.	11	0	2	80
3/17/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	Happy St. Patrick's Day from the Fulton County Sheriff's Office. Be safe out there.	19	0	0	1
3/17/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	Here's a special movie trailer of highlights from the Fulton County Jail tour for Leadership Johns Creek On March 13, 2014 created by Colonel Mark Adger.	0	2	0	0

3/18/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	NOW HIRING DEPUTY SHERIFFS AND DETENTION OFFICERS. Apply today at www.fultoncountyga.gov (4 photos)	0	4	0	4
3/19/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	Please Share: Sheriff's Office Citizen's Academy is Coming Soon Sheriff Ted Jackson welcomes the public to participate in the Citizen's Academy sponsored by the Fulton County Sheriff's Office. This will be an opportunity for participants to learn more about the agency from the behind the scenes. Applications are being accepted now.	0	2	0	4
3/19/2014	Facebook Page (Event)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	Recruiters at Congressman David Scott's Job Fair Friday, March 28 at 10:00am Georgia International Convention Center in College Park, Georgia	(Shows that 4 People Went)	0	0	1
3/20/2014	Facebook Page (Shared Link)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	Meet FCSO Recruiters and discuss your future in Law Enforcement	0	1	0	0
3/20/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	Leadership Sandy Springs tours Fulton County Jail (107 photos) Members of the Leadership Sandy	5	0	0	107

			Springs class toured the Fulton County Jail to increase their awareness of issues affecting one of the largest jails in the state of Georgia. After a brief overview from the Chief Jailer, Colonel Mark Adger, Mr. Calvin Lightfoot, the federal monitor and jail staff, the tour began in jail Intake where inmates are brought in for processing. Class members saw screening procedures including searches, fingerprinting, Pre—Trial Services, mug shots, medical, and the changing area where inmates relinquish their street clothes for jail gear.				
3/20/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	Check out this movie by Chief Jailer Mark Adger featuring the Leadership Sandy Springs class touring the Fulton County Jail.	11	0	9	1 Video
3/20/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	Sheriff Ted Jackson presented service awards to three dedicated supervisors in the Law Enforcement Division. Sergeant S. Allen marked her 15 year anniversary. Sergeant G. Johnson has 20 years on the job. Sergeant S. McWilliams leads the way with 25 years of service. Each received	30	0	1	9

			certificates and pins. Congratulations and thanks for your service! (9 photos)				
3/21/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	Adopt a Pet Day in Fulton County at the Government Center.	0	1	0	1
3/24/2014	Facebook Page (Shared Link)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	Come meet F.C.S.O. Recruiters at the 13th Congressional District Job Fair Friday.	0	0	0	1
3/25/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	Fulton County Jail staff have done it again! Perfect scores from the health inspectors for the Jail kitchen & officers dining area. Join us in congratulating kitchen staff for a job well done!	38	0	14	3
3/26/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	Recruiters at Congressman David Scott's Job Fair

Friday, March 28 at 10:00am

Georgia International Convention Center in College Park, Georgia | 3 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 3/27/2014 | Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office) | Fulton County Sheriff's Office | Sgt. Scott Farron explains why the new cell door locks will prohibit Fulton County Jail inmates from popping locks and causing trouble. The project to enhance all locks should wrap up later this year. | 12 | 1 | 0 | 1 |

3/27/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	Sgt. S. Johnson shows us the dialysis room at the Fulton County Jail in the Medical Unit. Providing this treatment on site is a more efficient and safe way to give mandated care to inmates.	9	0	0	1 Video
3/28/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	FCSO Recruiters are at the Georgia International Convention Center in College Park for Congressman David Scott's jobs fair. Stop by for a face—to—face chat about your future.	6	0	0	0
4/1/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	K—9 Duke says, "I wanna work." Have a great day!	7	0	0	1 Video
4/3/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	Throwback Thursday 1998: The Atlanta Daily World published this article & photo capturing then Deputy Rueben Wingfield showing Sheriff Jacqueline Barrett one of the FIRST COMPUTERS installed in FCSO patrol cars. Thank you, Major Rueben Wingfield for this week's	16	0	0	1
4/8/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	The Fulton County Sheriff's Office is recruiting Deputy Sheriffs and Detention Officers. Apply today at www.fultoncountyga.gov. Please share.	15	1	0	1
4/9/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	It's time to recognize the newest supervisors to earn promotions. More photos to come.	15	0	1	1

4/9/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	Promotion Day for Captains, Lieutenants, and Sergeants (216 photos) On Wednesday, April 9, 2014, Sheriff Ted Jackson and Chief Deputy Jimmy Carter held a promotional ceremony to recognize the newest supervisors and their new positions within the Fulton County Sheriff's Office. The 18 promotional candidates invited their friends and family to witness the occasion.	23	0	0	216
4/10/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	The Accounting Section and friends celebrated the birthday of Gina Demons Tuesday. Happy Birthday Gina!	9	0	4	1
4/11/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	Have a great weekend and tell someone you know that the Fulton County Sheriff's Office is hiring Deputy Sheriffs and Detention Officers. Apply online at www.fultoncountyga.gov. Please choose the "Share" option to post to your friends.	9	0	5	1
4/15/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	Please Share: Fulton County Sheriff's Office will be featured on Beyond Scared Straight The upcoming episode of Beyond Scared Straight featuring Fulton County will air on the A&E Network on Thursday, April 24, 2014 at 10 p.m.	5	1	0	1
4/16/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	Happy Birthday to Ruby Swain, a civilian employee who works in the finance unit of the Fulton County Sheriff's Office. For several weeks, Ruby's co—workers plotted to coordinate a surprise birthday party for her after learning that this birthday would be a wonderful milestone. They also arranged for one of her sisters and a	11	0	0	15

			daughter to be in attendance which added to Ruby's joy. As the photographs show, she was very surprised and touched by the gesture.				
4/17/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	The upcoming episode of Beyond Scared Straight featuring Fulton County will air on the A&E Network on Thursday, April 24, 2014 at 10 PM. Sheriff Ted Jackson is very proud of this episode that proved effective in making the young participants consider their unbecoming behavior. This is the most powerful episode yet. The previous 2 episodes were very good but this one is the absolute best. Sheriff Jackson says that he thinks parents should watch the episode with their children who may need to see what jail is really like as a deterrent against bad behavior.	14	0	4	22
4/18/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	K—9 Duke stopped by the office between searches to wish everyone a great Good Friday. He wants you to have a safe Easter weekend!	30	0	11	6

4/22/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	An inmate shares her story with producers of A&E's Beyond Scared Straight.	5	0	0	1
4/22/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	Fulton County Sheriff's Office added 3 photos to the album Behind the Scenes of Beyond Scared Straight.	14	1	4	3
4/22/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	Tune in NOW to WAOK 1380 AM to hear Lt. Brian McGee discuss the premiere of Beyond Scared Straight: Fulton County. Lt. McGee is on Too Much Truth with Derrick Boazman and they're taking your calls. See the show Thursday at 10 p.m. on A&E.	8	0	0	0
4/23/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	The Fulton County Sheriff's Office is participating in a job fair initiated by Fulton County Commissioner Joan Garner and the Housing and Human Services Department, Office of Workforce Development.	8	0	2	2
4/23/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	Happy Administrative Professionals Day! A special thanks to all employees who work in this capacity who keep the agency rolling. Here are some photos from Captain David Hindman of the Training Center where he treated the ladies to roses and balloons. Way to go, Captain!	17	0	0	2
4/23/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	The 2014 Fulton County Sheriff's Office Citizen's Academy classes have begun with the first night which serves as an introduction to the agency. There are 25 citizens enrolled in this year's academy. They live in various neighborhoods covering a wide range of communities within Fulton County.	5	0	0	25

4/24/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office (Shared Link)	A&E 'Beyond Scared Straight' features Fulton County jail April 24 | Radio and TV Talk radiotvtalk.blog.ajc.com	3	0	0	1
4/24/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office (Shared Link)	Beyond Scared Straight: Preview: Fulton County, GA / My Father The Inmate Watch a preview of the next episode of Beyond Scared Straight.	2	0	0	1
4/24/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	T—minus 5 minutes until Beyond Scared Straight on A&E. Are you ready?	10	0	0	0
4/24/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	That was mind—blowing episode of Beyond Scared Straight in Fulton County. It is showing again at 1 a.m. on the A&E network. You can see full episodes on the A&E website and download episodes on iTunes. Thanks for watching with us. Best wishes to the families and their teens.	13	1	8	0
4/25/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	Here are some reactions on Instagram @fultonsheriff: http://Instagram.com/p/nMY8kriFWp/	2	0	0	0
4/25/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	This is a great page to follow in order to learn more about the day—to—day lives of sheriff deputies. Give Sheriff	9	0	0	1

			Deputies a like and show your support to deputies nationwide.				
4/28/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	Severe weather is predicted for parts of the state of Georgia. Follow Atlanta—Fulton County Emergency Management Agency (AFCEMA) to stay in the know.	0	1	0	1
4/29/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	Sheriff Jackson meets with the Intown Alliance (11 photos) Tuesday evening, Sheriff Ted Jackson met with members of the Intown Alliance of Neighborhoods discussion group. Representatives from several Atlanta neighborhoods attended the gathering from Downtown Atlanta, Ansley Park, Druid Hills (City of Atlanta), Midtown, and other communities.	11	0	0	11
4/29/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS: Are you prepared?	8	0	0	1
4/30/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	The 2nd class of the FCSO Citizen's Academy covered Georgia law, traffic stops, self—defense, firearms, tasers, and students were able to use the	18	0	0	58

Date	Source		Content				
			firearms simulator to see what it is like to be a law enforcement officer during a volatile situation. — at Fulton County Public Safety Training Center — Fire/Police/Sheriff.				
4/30/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	It was an electric night during class 2 of the FCSO Citizen's Academy! One of the students really volunteered to be tased. No prongs. The first hit was okay. The second one, not so much. Thanks for being a great sport. #GeorgiaPower	11	1	1	2
5/1/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	Visitors from the Republic of Georgia (89 photos) Justice system officials from the Republic of Georgia are in the United States for an educational visit. The delegates toured the Fulton County Jail to exchange ideas, study practices, and observe new technology being utilized at the facility.	7	0	0	89
5/1/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	FCSO Honor Guard at Georgia Law Enforcement Memorial Ride 2014	13	0	0	1 Video
5/1/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	Check out the latest Jail Authority Film featuring delegates from the Republic of Georgia who toured the Fulton County Jail Thursday. Members of the delegation work in the justice system in	9	1	0	1 Video

			their country & we are honored to host them.				
5/2/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	Promotional Ceremony for Sgt. Angela Clark (28 photos) Newly promoted Sergeant Angela Clark received her new badge and certificate from Sheriff Ted Jackson and Chief Deputy Jimmy Carter on May 2, 2014. Lieutenant Colonel Peter Andresen and Sgt. Clark's partner, Sgt. Ronald King witnessed this special occasion and offered their praise for Sgt. Clark's work and character.	16	0	7	28
5/4/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	The Fulton County Sheriff's Office recognizes National Correctional Officers Week May 4 — 10, 2014. Join us in showing appreciation to all who work in the many areas of the Fulton County Jail System. #flipagram made with @flipagram ♫ Music: Chuck Mangione — Feels So Good	4	0	0	0
5/5/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	It's spring time and that means the Ballers are taking the field! The Fulton County Sheriff's Office co—ed softball team began the season with a win in the first game against DeKalb SWAT. The Ballers welcome you to join the fun.	0	0	0	1

5/6/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	FCSO deputy is alert & talking after an accident @ 12:35am. His patrol car flipped on 1380 Boat Rock Rd. Being treated for injuries. Thanks. (File photo)	14	0	2	1
5/6/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	The sergeant involved in an accident overnight is going to be okay. He is recuperating at home. His patrol vehicle flipped at 12:35 a.m. on Boat Rock Road in South Fulton County. He was responding to a call concerning a fight involving a weapon at some apartments nearby on West Chase Drive.	36	2	12	1
5/6/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	Farewell to Civilian Gina Demons of Accounting (18 photos) The FCSO says goodbye to civilian employee Gina Demons of the Accounting Section...although she is not going far away. After 10 years of service with the Sheriff's Office, Ms. Demons has taken a position with a Superior Court judge in the same building. Her team members in Accounting threw a going away party for her on Tuesday, May 6, 2014.	11	0	6	18

5/7/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	New Colonel Receives His New Badge (16 photos) Newly promoted Colonel Leighton Graham received his new badge and epaulets this morning from Sheriff Ted Jackson and Chief Deputy Jimmy Carter. Colonel Graham has more than 2 decades of service with the agency as denoted by the hash marks on his sleeve. He has been serving as the interim commander of the Administration Division since April.	36	0	12	16
5/7/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	Citizen's Academy 2014 — Administration & Court Services (41 photos) The FCSO 2014 Citizen's Academy met for the third Wednesday evening in a row to learn more about the Administration Division and the Court Services Division. The Admin Division staff discussed budget, training, human resources, hiring, accreditation, and fielded several questions.	8	0	0	41
5/9/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	The Fulton County Sheriff's Office is hiring Deputy Sheriffs and Detention Officers. Apply online today.	6	0	0	1

5/9/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office Shared Link Via Fulton County Fallen Heroes — Public Safety Memorial Page.	Please visit and like the Fulton County Fallen Heroes — Public Safety Memorial Page to learn more about public servants who paid the ultimate sacrifice like Deputy Sheriff Verner J. Yarborough who lost his life in the early 1920's.	3	0	0	1
5/11/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	Happy Mother's Day to all near & far with special appreciation for the working moms at the Fulton County Sheriff's Office.	18	0	2	1
5/12/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	K—9 Zoom Named Top Dog (10 photos) The Fulton County Sheriff's Office congratulates K—9 Handler Deputy Adam Gardner and K—9 Zoom for winning the 2014 Mantracker Detection Dog competition held April 22 – 24, 2014 in Coweta County, Georgia.	1	0	0	10
5/13/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Dawson County Sheriff's Office	Alert from the Dawson County Sheriff's Office: Within the past week, the Dawson County Sheriff's Office has received multiple reports involving officer impersonation. An unknown male suspect, who often identifies himself as Lieutenant John Martin with the Dawson County Sheriff's Office, contacts individuals to advise they have missed jury duty and a warrant has been issued for the subject's arrest if a fine is not paid. If you have any contact similar to the information above, please contact	4	0	0	1

			the Dawson County Sheriff's Office at 706—344—3636.				
5/16/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	The Fulton County Sheriff's Office is hiring Detention Officers and Deputy Sheriffs. Apply online today at www.fultoncountyga.gov.	10	1	0	1
5/16/2014	Facebook Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	Congratulations to the newest cadets to wear the brown & beige! Check out their graduation movie. — at Fulton County Public Safety Training Center — Fire/Police/Sheriff.	18	3	0	1 Video

Social Networking Data

Twitter

DATE REVIEWED	FORMAT	MESSAGE/POST	# of RETWEETS	#of REPLIES	#of FAVORITES	# of SHARES	# of PICS
1/18/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Thanks @erikfoto for coming to the gun buyback Thursday. Great capture. #repost @ Turner Field http://Instagram.com/p/jUMPLciFfH/	0	115	1	3	1
1/18/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Another great photo by @erikfoto at the gun buyback Thursday. In this photo, a #fcso #swat member… http://Instagram.com/p/jUMuXXiFf3/	0	115	3	4	1
1/18/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office) Retweeted by Fulton County PIO	My gun buyback photo in the Newark Star Ledger. @FultonSheriff pic.Twitter.com/yOZLnRLp1Z	2	115	1	6	1
1/19/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Full photo of #FCSO #SWAT member examining a weapon at the gun buyback. Nice skyline view in the… http://Instagram.com/p/jWsCHwCFTJ/	0	125	0	0	1
1/20/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	The Fulton County Sheriff's Office salutes Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. This Fulton County resident… http://Instagram.com/p/jZOzmXCFUg/	0	125	0	0	1
1/23/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office) Retweeted by Fulton County PIO	Fulton sheriff's office mourning death of K—9 deputy. http://bit.ly/1hnv58i pic.Twitter.com/MJAVkxlORL	11	122	8	0	1
1/24/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Great article about K—9 by WSB Radio: Fulton Co. loses 6 year old officer http://shar.es/UkAKA	1	125	0	0	1

1/24/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Thanks for your concern. Marco was extraordinary. @TheChewAtlanta	0	109	0	0	1
1/24/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Marco was amazing. He became the best due to his remarkable handler, Sgt. C. Henry. @PettigrewCNN Thanks.	0	111	0	0	1
1/27/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office) Retweeted by Fulton County PIO	Atlanta Fulton EMA @AFCEMA Jan 27 Snow is expected to arrive in Atlanta by this time tomorrow. Afternoon commute could be tough. #BePrepared #GaWx pic.Twitter.com/mQKwCQmUCX	3	117	1	0	1
1/28/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Snow in Atlanta. Photo taken from the Fulton County Courthouse at Central & MLK pic.Twitter.com/0Z7ZZQTfTI	0	125	0	0	1
1/28/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Snow in Atlanta. The Georgia State Capitol and Atlanta City Hall as seen from the Fulton County Courthouse. Be safe pic.Twitter.com/0oga2dndve	1	125	0	0	1
1/28/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office) Retweeted by Fulton County PIO	Fulton County Schools – including all schools and administrative offices – will be closed Wednesday, January 29.... http://fb.me/1huKUkJZ3	389	108	126	0	0
1/28/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office) Retweeted by Fulton County PIO	Our buses are in route north. They are moving, but moving slowly. We are continuing to dismiss students and will provide updates.	6	114	3	0	0
1/28/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office) Retweeted by Fulton County PIO	APS schools & offices will be closed Wed, January 29. All scheduled events, including extra—curricular activities, will be rescheduled.	249	114	37	0	0
1/28/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office) Retweeted by Fulton County PIO	All Cobb County Schools and facilities will be closed Wednesday, Jan. 29, 2014. No staff report.	880	112	298	0	0

1/28/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton Co Sheriff's Deputies are transporting 911 & essential Jail staff to work. Only travel if you must. Leave space between you & others	2	125	0	0	0
1/28/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office) Retweeted by Fulton County PIO	Due to inclement weather, Spelman College will be closed Wednesday, January 29.	164	109	23	0	0
1/28/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office) Retweeted by Fulton County PIO	Road Hazard @ CLEVELAND AVE SW / I—75 NB EXPY SW ; Road Hazard @ 1630 METROPOLITAN PKWY SW @ATLANTA METRO COLLEGE http://maps.google.com/maps?q=33.71012, —84.40781 …http://maps.google.com/maps?q=33.6811 2,—84.39837 …	4	104	3	0	0
1/28/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office) Retweeted by Fulton County PIO	Accident @ NORTHSIDE DR NW / MARTIN L KING JR DR SW http://maps.google.com/maps?q=33.75465, —84.40281 …	1	113	1	0	0
1/28/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office) Retweeted by Fulton County PIO	Accident @ 3424 MARTIN L KING JR DR SW http://maps.google.com/maps?q=33.75503, —84.50014 …	1	113	0	0	0
1/28/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Earlier today, a down power line on Lowery Blvd was a challenge. BOLO for hazards & take it slow. pic.Twitter.com/6OHtiUUmg5	1	125	0	0	1
1/28/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office) Retweeted by Fulton County PIO	For an up to date list of all of the CLOSED ROADS in Roswell, visit our Facebook Page https://www.Facebook.com/RoswellGAPoli ce	1	108	2	0	0

1/28/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office) Fulton County	WATCH LIVE: Gov. Deal's winter storm response ———> http://gov.georgia.gov/tv	17	111	2	0	0
1/28/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office) Retweeted by Fulton County PIO	2 Roswell HOME DEPOT stores are offering SHELTER to motorists 1580 Holcomb Br Rd & 870 Woodstock Rd http://Facebook.com/roswellGApolice	10	108	2	0	0
1/28/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office) Retweeted by Fulton County PIO	Fulton County Fire Stations are available as shelter for individuals who are stranded. They are located in... http://fb.me/19t6W2GH0	11	113	1	0	0
1/28/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office) Retweeted by Fulton County PIO	SHELTER offered — The Roswell Cultural Arts Center 935 Forest St (by City Hall) has opened the doors as shelter http://www.Facebook.com/roswellgapolice	6	108	0	0	0
1/28/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office) Retweeted by Fulton County PIO	This Facebook group is currently serving as a place for people offering shelter and looking for shelter in the storm. http://ow.ly/t3sI9	9	112	0	0	0
1/28/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County courts are CANCELLED Wednesday. Jurors do NOT report. A decision regarding Thursday should happen after 2 p.m. Wed afternoon.	4	125	0	0	0
1/28/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Let's do a Wednesday recap: No courts, no jury duty, no jail visitation, no school in Fulton & the… http://Instagram.com/p/jvfhwbiFQd/	2	125	0	0	0
1/29/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office) Retweeted by Fulton County PIO	MARTA Alerts @MARTAalerts Jan 29 Rail service has resumed, but our Rail service is experiencing lengthy delays, please allow extra time to complete your trip	12	112	1	0	0

1/29/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office) Retweeted by Fulton County	Due to the inclement weather there is no Bus service at this time. We will continue to monitor the road and weather conditions and provide	32	112	2	0	0
1/29/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	All FulCo Govt. facilities are closed today which means no jail visits, no court, and no jury duty. https://www.Facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=10203085847209148&id=46520703030 …	3	125	1	0	0
1/29/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Per FC 911: operators taking calls. FCPD working w/Nat'l Guard to asst. folks. Drivers should stay alert	2	90	0	0	0
1/29/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office) Retweeted by Fulton County PIO	Atlanta Fulton County Emergency Management urges motorists to exercise extreme caution ... please see these... http://fb.me/2Ia4FXZve	4	113	0	0	0
1/29/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	There is a storm update from the Fulton County Sheriff's Office on our FB page. Please visit and share http://www.Facebook.com/fultonsheriff	4	125	1	0	0
1/29/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office) Retweeted by Fulton County PIO	Fulton Government TV @FGTV Jan 29 @FultonCoSchools CLOSED Thursday.	8	102	1	0	0
1/29/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Special thanks to the Kroger on Hwy 138 & the Alpharetta Kroger at 3000 Haynes Br Rd who gave food to Union City & Alpharetta Jail Annexes.	5	125	0	0	0
1/29/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Reserve Deputies w/ 4—wheel drive vehicles deployed to transport essential personnel to Fulton County Jail & Justice Center Complex.	1	125	0	0	0

1/29/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Jail Visitation Canceled Staff Working Overtime to Deal with Weather http://www.dailyreportonline.com/id=1202640554228/Fulton—County—Jail—Visitation—Canceled,—Staff—Working—Overtime—to—Deal—with—Weather …	0	112	0	0	0
1/29/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office) Retweeted by Fulton County PIO	Due to continued icy road conditions, Fulton County Gov. facilities that are normally open to the public will be closed Thursday, January 30.	5	113	2	0	0
1/29/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	GCIC Unit (Georgia Crime Information Center) members are continuing their work. These are critical duties and they are answering the call.	0	125	0	0	0
1/29/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Thanks. Their dedicated service is appreciated. Stay safe. pic.Twitter.com/rW9RMyuZQm	0	116	0	0	1
1/29/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	No court or inmate visitation Thursday. Moisture on roads expected to refreeze. County offices… http://Instagram.com/p/jxlbaliFY8/	0	125	0	0	1
1/30/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office) Retweeted by Fulton County PIO	Good afternoon Parents, Fulton County Schools will be closed Friday, January 31. This includes the cancellation... http://fb.me/XK9xtHSb	1,032	108	364	0	0
1/30/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office) Retweeted by Fulton County PIO	ATL Public Schools @apsupdate Jan 30 Superintendent Erroll Davis has announced that APS will be closed Friday, January 31, 2014. All after—school activities & events canceled.	166	114	27	0	0
1/30/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	No inmate visitation Friday until Monday. Otherwise, normal operations resume. Updates at http://www.Facebook.com/fultonsheriff pic.Twitter.com/lvGCzM1krh	1	125	0	0	1

1/30/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office) Retweeted by Fulton County PIO	Fulton County operations will resume at 10 a.m. on Friday. Employees should report.	7	113	1	0	0
1/30/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office) Retweeted by Fulton County PIO	Gov. Deal extends state of emergency for 2 additional days — through Sunday night — https://gov.georgia.gov/press—releases/2014—01—30/deal—extends—state—emergency …	42	111	4	0	0
2/4/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Manhunt for escaped inmate: Ulysesse Cleckley in NW Atl. near English Ave. Call 911 if you see him. Please RT his pic pic.Twitter.com/EIukw0CeF2	0	0	0	0	1
2/4/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Multi—Agencies Manhunt for escaped inmate Ulysesse Cleckley, 21, BM, 6', 200 lbs. Cleckley escaped… http://Instagram.com/p/kA3FxECFeb/	0	125	0	0	1
2/4/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Manhunt continues for inmate Ulysesse Cleckley, 21. Cleckley escaped from jail bus @ 5:30 pm, English Ave, NW Atlanta pic.Twitter.com/no9HtkW3BL	15	125	3	0	2
2/4/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	FCSO casts wide net in search for escapee Ulysesse Cleckley, 21. Escaped from jail bus @ 5:30 in NW Atl. RT photo pic.Twitter.com/jPiXzEDNGM	0	0	0	0	1
2/4/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Cleckley is back in custody. Captured at apx 7:18 p.m. Thanks for your help! pic.Twitter.com/keI7Y8g99E	0	0	0	0	1
2/4/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Inmate Ulysesse Cleckley was captured at apx. 7:18 PM Sheriff Jackson thanks all agencies that responded quickly to end the manhunt.	1	125	1	0	1
2/4/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	To all: This subject was recaptured earlier this evening. Thanks for the RT'SEARCH	0	0	0	0	1
2/5/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office) Retweeted by	Current snow chances can occur as early as 6 PM and last until 12 PM Thursday. http://fb.me/6lMYQVufY	5	113	2	0	0

	Fulton County PIO						
2/6/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office) Retweeted by Fulton County PIO	Atlanta Fulton EMA @AFCEMA Feb 6 The main concern is still the potential for any remaining water on the ground to freeze once the temperatures get below freezing. (1AM—8 AM)	3	117	0	0	0
2/9/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office) Retweeted by Fulton County PIO	Glenn Burns @GlennBurnsWSB Feb 9 Big winter storm coming Monday night. Kids will likely be out of school Tue—Fri. Will see around 24—36 hrs of rain and winter precip. #wsbtv	1,913	113	535	0	0
2/9/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office) Retweeted by Fulton County PIO	FultonCountySchools @FultonCoSchools Feb 9 Fulton County Schools will end all activities no later than 6:30PM on Monday, February 10. This would include all... http://fb.me/CqI4rnyM	46	108	26	0	0
2/9/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office) Retweeted by Fulton County PIO	ATL Public Schools @apsupdate Feb 9 #APS continues to monitor weather conditions&reports provided by national/state/local agencies. We'll post any school related changes here.	34	114	19	0	0
2/10/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Jail Visitation is cancelled Tues, February 11 thru Wed, February 12 due to weather. Check back for updates. Thanks. pic.Twitter.com/a5cTT1dj8e	1	125	0	0	1
2/10/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office) Retweeted by Fulton County PIO	ATL Public Schools @apsupdate Feb 10 #APS will be closed Tuesday, February 11 and Wednesday, February 12 for inclement weather.	345	114	57	0	0

2/10/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Update: Jail Visitation cancelled Tuesday — Thursday due to weather. Please check back for updates. Thanks. pic.Twitter.com/DK6HPyqxra`	5	125	0	0	1
2/10/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office) Retweeted by Fulton County PIO	Cobb County Schools @CobbSchools Feb. 10 Due to inclement weather, all CCSD schools & facilities will be closed on Tue., 2/11 & Wed., 2/12. Employees should not report to work.	1,095	112	458	0	0
2/10/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office) Retweeted by Fulton County PIO	Robert Avossa @Supt_Avossa Feb 10 @FultonCoSchools – all schools and administrative offices – will be closed Tuesday, Feb. 11 and Wednesday, Feb. 12 due to bad weather	38	95	17	0	0
2/10/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Hello from Fulton County. Any word on school closings? Thanks.@HenryCoPolice	3	110	0	0	0
2/10/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office) Retweeted by Fulton County PIO	DeKalb Co. Schools @DeKalbSchools Feb 10 All classes in the DeKalb County School District will be closed for Tues., Feb. 11, 2014. All District employees are not to report to work.	298	110	111	0	0
2/10/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office) Retweeted by Fulton County PIO	Rockdale Co. Schools @RockdaleSchools Schools Closed Friday — 12 Mo. Employees Report at Noon. Many roads and campuses still have hazardous icy conditions and are not safe.	68	108	11	0	0
2/10/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office) Retweeted by Fulton County PIO	Paulding Sheriff @PauldingSheriff Feb 10 Paulding County Schools will be closed tomorrow (02/11/14) due to inclement weather.	4	108	2	0	0

2/10/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office) Retweeted by Fulton County PIO	Forsyth Co. Schools @FCSchoolsGA Feb 10 Forsyth County Schools will be closed on Tuesday, February 11, 2014 because of the county being placed under a... http://fb.me/2p18ZgKjg	624	112	223	0	0
2/10/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office) Retweeted by Fulton County PIO	FultonCountyGeorgia @FultonInfo Feb 10 Fulton jurors — do not report Tuesday, Feb. 11. Call 404—612—4600 for more info.	2	113	1	0	0
2/12/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Visitation is still cancelled. Streets are slushy. Snow & freezing rain are expected tonight. pic.Twitter.com/mE5Hecll0V	5	125	1	0	1
2/12/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office) Retweeted by Fulton County PIO	Georgia_EMA @GeorgiaEMA Feb 12 Georgia Forestry Commission Warns of Ice Storm Clean—up Dangers: http://bit.ly/1dl9YEa	12	113	1	0	0
2/12/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office) Retweeted by Fulton County PIO	Due to hazardous road conditions all bus and Mobility service will be suspended on Thursday February 13th. We will continue to monitor the	16	111	4	0	0
2/12/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Government offices will remain closed Thursday. More sleet & snow is expected. Stay safe. pic.Twitter.com/3TBrYFLBXp	4	125	1	0	1
2/13/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Greetings. Inmate Visitation is cancelled today & Friday. Visitation should resume Monday. Check back for updates. pic.Twitter.com/TtZzmMjWcy	0	125	0	0	1

2/13/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Law Enforcement Division initiated Operation Ice Cube II to tackle Winter Storm Pax. On FB: https://www.Facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.247060092141735.1073741904.141153622732383&type=1&l=0d81b6833d … pic.Twitter.com/pCBS1yisdz	1	125	0	0	1
2/13/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Operation Snowman II went into effect at the Fulton Co Jail during Winter Storm #Pax. On FB: https://www.Facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.247044318809979.1073741903.141153622732383&type=1&l=61cff1501f … pic.Twitter.com/0gxB8Ery4S	0	125	0	0	1
2/13/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Thank you as well. We are ready to close out this ice/snow episode. Thawing today but some refreezing is possible. Stay safe.@msosheriff	1	113	0	0	0
2/13/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Friday at 10 a.m., there will be a service to remember K—9 Marco, All Patrol. Dedicated servant to deputies & Fulton. pic.Twitter.com/CfXhjelVa6	1	125	2	0	1
2/14/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	There's a BOLO for Black Ice. Please be careful on the roadways this morning. Cruisers photo: Lt. Col. R. Turner. pic.Twitter.com/5etqOuwbq0	10	125	3	0	1
2/14/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	He knew my mind. When...working, he knew what I was thinking before I told him what we were going to do" SGT mourns https://www.Facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.247430252104719.1073741905.141153622732383&type=1&l=3400d07a3e …	3	125	1	0	0
2/15/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office) Retweeted by Fulton Sheriff PIO	Georgia Power @GeorgiaPower Feb 15 8PM Update: The final 10,000. After restoring power to 691,000 customers, our restoration teams are close. We thank you for your patience.	47	111	40	0	0

2/18/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Get better soon! @JasonDurdenWSB	1	109	0	0	0
2/19/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Sheriff Ted Jackson met with Chester County, S.C. Sheriff Alex Underwood to discuss ways to help at risk children. http://twitpic.com/dw20xo	0	0	0	0	1
2/20/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Deputy Sheriff positions available. Apply today! http://agency.governmentjobs.com/fulton/default.cfm?action=viewJob&jobID=717080&hit_count=	0	125	0	0	0
2/21/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Now Hiring Detention Officers. Apply today. http://agency.governmentjobs.com/fulton/default.cfm?action=viewJob&jobID=717079&hit_count=	3	125	0	0	0
2/25/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Members of the Atlanta Business League met with Sheriff Ted Jackson today for an overview of the agency. pic.Twitter.com/aqF1xGqTBi	1	125	0	0	3
2/27/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Lt. McGee delivers a "Tough love message" to local teens http://shar.es/FKXJJ	1	125	0	0	1
2/28/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	FCSO Honor Guard is looking for a few good men & women. Internal candidates pls contact Sgt. Butler or Capt. Walker. pic.Twitter.com/crTT4VhYKQ	1	125	0	0	1
3/3/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Now is the perfect time to apply for a new job as a Detention Officer. See the link below.	4	125	1	0	0
3/3/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Begin your career in law enforcement in Fulton County. Apply to become a Deputy Sheriff today.	4	125	2	0	0
3/3/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Thank you, Sergeant! Definitely a good way to launch a career. We have to get the word out so you may see this tweet again. @SgtFEspinoza	1	90	0	0	1

3/10/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	K—9 Duke says it is a beautiful day for a long walk after work. pic.Twitter.com/vg9MGojHDg	0	125	0	0	1
3/10/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Spring training for the FCSO co—ed softball team starts Saturday. The team won the championship last year. pic.Twitter.com/BhJtTgpxOZ	0	125	0	0	1
3/10/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Robin rocks!!! @RobinRoberts @ATLHawks @GMA	1	96	0	0	0
3/10/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Judge Ryo Takashima of Japan took an extensive tour of the Fulton County Jail including observation of… http://Instagram.com/p/lYiXRNiFfL/	0	125	0	0	1
3/13/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Just wrapped up an informative Fulton Co Jail tour for Leadership Johns Creek. Photos on FB later. Thanks, #JohnsCreek.	0	125	0	0	0
3/14/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	A member of the Leadership Johns Creek class looks inside an empty cell where the new door locks are… http://Instagram.com/p/lhdQwLiFVq/	0	125	0	0	0
3/14/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Members of Leadership Johns Creek toured the Jail Kitchen Thursday afternoon. The group participated… http://Instagram.com/p/lheQuFCFW1/	0	125	1	0	0
3/14/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Sheriff Ted Jackson & staff gave members of Leadership Johns Creek an overview of the Fulton County… http://Instagram.com/p/lhet7xiFXh/	0	125	0	1	0
3/14/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Leadership Johns Creek met Sheriff Ted Jackson & took an extensive tour of the Fulton County Jail Thursday afternoon. pic.Twitter.com/cBRQyErY8j	0	125	0	1	1
3/15/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Sheriff Ted Jackson always enjoys the St. Patrick's Day Parade in Atlanta. #fcso #fultoncountysheriff #stpatsatlanta pic.Twitter.com/TzoN82ujEn	1	125	1	1	1

3/15/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	The Reserve deputies always have a strong presence at the St. Patrick's Day Parade in Atlanta. #fcso #stpatsatlanta pic.Twitter.com/UaIKofly9s	1	125	1	0	1
3/15/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	The Clydesdales are always a crowd pleaser at the St Patrick's Day Parade in Atlanta. #stpatsatlanta pic.Twitter.com/N42jGEBYuM	0	125	1	0	1
3/15/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Vroom, vroom! pic.Twitter.com/FMW6NjdvgO	0	125	1	0	1
3/15/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Atlanta's Finest looking sharp at the St. Patrick's Day Parade. #stpatricksday #stpatsatlanta #atlantapd pic.Twitter.com/9JOtVJi7n7	0	125	2	0	1
3/15/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	U.S. Homeland Security at the St. Patrick's Day Parade. #stpatricksday #stpatsatlanta #weloveatl… http://Instagram.com/p/lk_oNYCFZx/	0	125	1	0	1
3/17/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Happy St. Patrick's Day! Be safe out there. pic.Twitter.com/QqF9U17Y76	0	0	2	0	1
3/18/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	NOW HIRING: DEPUTY SHERIFFS http://agency.governmentjobs.com	1	0	0	0	1
3/19/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	The Sheriff's Office Citizen's Academy begins next month. Sign up today! https://www.Facebook.com/fultonsheriff/posts/259819540865790 …	0	0	0	0	0
3/19/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	FCSO Recruiters will be @ Congressman David Scott's Job Fair on March 28th. Apply online http://www.fultoncountyga.gov https://www.Facebook.com/events/635944886454869/?context=create&source=49 …	1	0	0	0	0
3/19/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	This could be you graduating from the FCSO Citizen's Academy. Sign up at http://www.fultonsheriff.net . http://Instagram.com/p/lva8ibiFRh/	0	0	0	0	0
3/20/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Sheriff's office to host Citizens Academy. Call 404—612—5138 for more info.	4	0	0	0	0

3/20/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Meet FCSO Recruiters at Congressman David Scott's 12th Annual Jobs Fair, March 28th 10a—3p at GA Int'l Conv Ctr in CP http://1.usa.gov/1chop8b	0	0	0	0	0
3/20/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	The FCSO edition of Beyond Scared Straight airs April 24th on A&E @ 10. It's a powerful presentation that you don't want to miss.	0	0	0	0	0
3/20/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Sergeant Gerald Johnson received his 20—year service award pin from Sheriff Ted Jackson today. Congratulations! pic.Twitter.com/GNWHih6klH	0	0	2	0	1
3/20/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Sgt. S. Allen, Sgt. G. Johnson, & Lt. S. McWilliams received their 15—, 20—, & 25—year service award… http://Instagram.com/p/lyfJd—iFRL/	0	0	1	0	0
3/21/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Another beautiful Friday in Atlanta. Have a safe weekend! @ Gordon L. Joyner Bridge http://Instagram.com/p/l0_DPTiFY9/	0	0	0	0	0
3/21/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Adopt A Pet Day in Fulton County. Add a new family member at Animal Services http://www.fultoncountyga.gov … http://Instagram.com/p/l1BIYxiFcX/	0	0	0	0	0
3/24/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Meet FCSO Recruiters at Congressman David Scott's Job Fair Friday, March 28th 10a—3p at GA Int'l Conv Ctr in CP http://1.usa.gov/1chop8b	1	0	1	0	0
3/25/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Public Info Session today at 6 pm. at the Courthouse. FCSO is seeking reaccreditation from CALEA. More details at http://www.Facebook.com/fultonsheriff	1	0	0	0	0
3/25/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Know someone who needs a J—O—B? Send them to the big jobs fair Friday in College Park. FCSO recruiters will be there. http://davidscott.house.gov	10	0	2	0	0
3/25/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Jail staff have done it again! Perfect scores from health inspectors for the	0	0	0	0	0

		Jail… http://Instagram.com/p/l—xyhPCFQL/					
3/25/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	We're in courtroom 1D for the public info session. Be heard. This is for CALEA reaccreditation. Thanks!	0	0	0	0	0
3/27/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Sgt. Scott Farron explains why the new cell door locks will prevent inmates from popping locks and… http://Instagram.com/p/mDlLnsiFaP/	0	0	0	0	0
3/27/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Did you know the Fulton County Jail can provide dialysis to inmates within the facility? This is a… http://Instagram.com/p/mEDr3viFY_/	0	0	0	0	0
3/28/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	The statewide system used to clear inmates prior to release is functioning slowly which is delaying releases from the Fulton County Jail.	5	0	2	0	0
3/28/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	FCSO Recruiters are at the Georgia International Convention Center in College Park for Congressman David Scott's jobs fair. Stop by & chat.	1	0	1	0	0
3/31/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	K—9 Deputy Zoom thinks it is a great day to take a long walk after work. Where are some great places to walk in FC? pic.Twitter.com/wVLJisP8q7	0	0	0	0	0
4/1/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Lt. Brian McGee did an interview w/FGTV to tell everyone about the FCSO. Citizen's Academy. http://www.fultonsheriff.net pic.Twitter.com/XoyudbdT4F	1	0	1	0	1
4/3/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Throwback Thursday 1998: The Atlanta Daily World published this article & photo capturing then Deputy… http://Instagram.com/p/mVYxq2CFQO/	0	0	0	0	0

4/8/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	The Fulton County Sheriff's Office is recruiting Deputy Sheriffs and Detention Officers. Apply today at http://www.fultoncountyga.gov	0	0	0	0	0
4/8/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Sheriff Ted Jackson has a vision for the Fulton County Sheriff's Office. Recruiting good people is… http://Instagram.com/p/miRa8HiFSe/	0	0	0	0	0
4/9/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Congratulations to Sergeant Johnnie Moore & family. The sergeant was promoted today along with 17… http://Instagram.com/p/mldiz5iFd7/	0	0	0	0	0
4/10/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Promotion Day is always a great one. 3 of the new sergeants are all smiles. #fcso #latergram… http://Instagram.com/p/moY2hACFZd/	0	0	0	0	0
4/10/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Congrats Sarge on your new promotion! This all you get to see on Twitter because he works undercover. pic.Twitter.com/R2s0pExB88	0	0	0	0	0
4/11/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Congratulations, Sergeant Gerald Johnson! #promotionday #latergram #fcso #fcsoled #fultoncountyga… http://Instagram.com/p/mpkuqBiFWt/	0	0	1	0	0
4/12/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Metro Atlanta lost a legendary journalist today. We will miss @wsbradio Captain Herb Emory.	3	0	4	0	0
4/15/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	9 days until the next edition of Beyond Scared Straight in Fulton County. This could be the best… http://Instagram.com/p/m1Mh8pCFfD/	0	0	1	0	0
4/15/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Inmates tell their stories during the filming of the next Beyond Scared Straight episode featuring the… http://Instagram.com/p/m1NeMbiFQS/	0	0	1	0	0
4/16/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Only 8 days until the premiere of A&E's Beyond Scared Straight featuring the Fulton	1	0	0	0	1

		County Sheriff's Office. pic.Twitter.com/Et1Cv7xC1T					
4/17/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	7 days until Beyond Scared Straight in Fulton. April 24th 10 pm on A&E. #bss #fultoncountysheriffsoffice http://twitpic.com/e1e9jo	1	0	0	0	1
4/17/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Thanks, Colonel Turner for letting the crew use your office for the interview. We'll have to get a close up of	0	0	0	0	1
4/18/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Thank you Sheriff Radio Dispatchers for keeping us connected & safe! @FultonInfo pic.Twitter.com/sAFX2lng3Q	3	0	3	0	1
4/18/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	K—9 Duke is stopped by the office between searches to wish everyone a great Good Friday. He wants you to have a safe weekend. http://twitpic.com/e1gwun	0	0	0	0	0
4/18/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	SIX DAYS until the premiere of Beyond Scared Straight: Fulton County on A&E. Set your DVR for it! pic.Twitter.com/ioELqzBwQg	0	0	2	0	0
4/19/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	FIVE DAYS until #Beyond#ScaredStraight on A&E features the Fulton County Sheriff's Office Youth Intervention Program.	0	0	0	0	0
4/20/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	FOUR DAYS until the premiere of #BeyondScaredStraight #fultoncountyga 4—24 at 10 pm on A&E. Watch & record.	0	0	0	0	0
4/21/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	In THREE DAYS, the next #FultonCountyGA episode of #BeyondScaredStraight will premiere on A&E. Make an appt. to watch this powerful program.	2	0	0	0	0
4/21/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	In case you haven't heard, the Fulton County Sheriff's Office will be featured on Beyond Scared… http://Instagram.com/p/nEdVyniFTS/	0	0	0	0	0

4/22/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Happy Earth Day. Love your mother. #earthday #nasaphoto pic.Twitter.com/KSy0SDnVj6	2	0	1	0	1
4/22/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	#BeyondScaredStraight Fulton County Countdown: TWO DAYS. Check it out & tweet with us Thursday, April 24th at 10p. pic.Twitter.com/ZkW38jpfDG	0	0	0	0	1
4/22/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Listen now to WAOK 1380 AM to hear Lt. McGee talk about Thursday's premiere of Beyond Scared Straight: Fulton County. They're taking calls.	0	0	0	0	0
4/23/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	ONE DAY until the premiere of #BeyondScaredStraight in #FultonCountyGa On A&E at 10p. Tweet live w/us during the show pic.Twitter.com/oCe3WHtkZu	0	0	0	0	1
4/23/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Deputy Pride & D.O. Whitaker met some good people at a job fair today. Apply @ http://www.fultoncountyga.gov http://twitpic.com/e1w51t	1	0	0	0	1
4/23/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Sheriff Ted Jackson greeted members of the #FCSO 2014 Citizen's Academy to kick off 1st class! http://twitpic.com/e1wgwe	0	0	0	0	1

Date	Source	Content					
4/23/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	The #FCSO Citizen's Academy kicked off the 2014 class tonight with introductions & a CPR introduction.… http://Instagram.com/p/nJtISziFd3/	0	0	0	0	0
4/24/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	TODAY is the DAY. #BeyondScaredStraight in Fulton County premieres on A&E at 10p. They saved the best for last. #fcso pic.Twitter.com/pP1aKdSosp	8	0	6	0	1
4/24/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	TONIGHT is the NIGHT for #BeyondScaredStraight Fulton County on A&E at 10p. You won't want to miss it. http://twitpic.com/e1zac7	1	0	0	0	1
4/24/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	From AJC: A&E 'Beyond Scared Straight' features Fulton County Jail April 24	http://shar.es/TU6zR_via @sharethis	1	0	1	0	0
4/24/2014	AJC Twitter Page (Re—Tweeted by Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Jail featured on tonight's A&E season finale of 'Scared Straight." Details here: http://on—ajc.com/1hsIb1T	37	0	8	0	0
4/24/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Sheriff Jackson initiated the Youth Intervention Program after several parents starting calling in for help. #BeyondScaredStraight #fcso	0	0	1	0	0
4/27/2014	Retweeted by Sheriff's Office (@AFCEMA)	Monitor your local media outlets for updates / SVR weather possible Mon night into early Tues AM for Metro ATL pic.Twitter.com/C19oj0h8do	15	0	1	0	1

4/28/2014	Retweeted by Sheriff's Office (@AFCEMA)	Don't wait for tornado warning/Get Ready/Review tornado shelter tips http://1.usa.gov/1lMnmUB_@GeorgiaEMA @NWSAtlanta pic.Twitter.com/vB1P1RN8C6	20	0	6	0	1
4/29/2014	Retweeted by Sheriff's Office (@AFCEMA)	The rain's stopped for now. Use this lull in the Wx as an opportunity to prepare for tonight! More storms to come #beWXaware #GetYourReadyOn	4	0	1	0	0
4/29/2014	Retweeted by Sheriff's Office (@AFCEMA)	If you have not signed up for CodeRed yet... Now's a good time! Hurry before the storms come in tonight! #beWXaware https://public.coderedweb.com/CNE/0206D 3CBDC2E	5	0	1	0	0
4/29/2014	Retweeted by Sheriff's Office (@Governor Deal)	Download the Ready Georgia app on your smart phone so that you're prepared for the storms.	16	0	6	0	0
4/30/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Sheriff Ted Jackson met w/the Intown Alliance of Neighborhoods to give an overview of the agency & project updates. pic.Twitter.com/N3KGxEXyZA	0	0	0	0	1

4/30/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	The second night of the FCSO Citizen's Academy was a blast. Here's a student using the firearms simulator. http://twitpic.com/e2jlct	0	0	1	0	1
4/30/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	It was an electric night during class 2 of the FCSO Citizen's Academy! One of students really… http://Instagram.com/p/nb9EPaCFQC/	0	0	0	0	0
5/1/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	FCSO Honor Guard at the Georgia Law Enforcement Memorial. https://www.Facebook.com/photo.php?v=274261862754891&l=13693922921636485 29 …	0	0	0	0	0
5/1/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Justice System delegates from the Republic of Georgia toured the Fulton County Jail today. Here's an… http://Instagram.com/p/neTXzLiFcT/	0	0	0	0	0
5/2/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	A good deputy is consistent with his/her good habits. This morning, we found Deputy Stewart making… http://Instagram.com/p/ngemtCCFZO/	0	0	0	0	0
5/2/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Congratulations to Sgt. Angela Clark! She received her new badge today. The pink handcuffs are her… http://Instagram.com/p/ngqeT_iFdU/	0	0	0	0	0
5/4/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	The Fulton County Sheriff's Office recognizes National Correctional Officers Week May 4 — 10, 2014.… http://Instagram.com/p/nlYi4IiFYb/	0	0	0	0	0
5/5/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Check out the big trophies. Will the FCSO Co—Ed Softball Team go all the way in '14? They just beat… http://Instagram.com/p/no8H1giFRj/	0	0	1	0	0
5/6/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	FCSO deputy is alert & talking after an accident @ 12:35am. Patrol car flipped on 1380 Boat Rock Rd. Being treated for injuries. Thanks.	5	0	1	0	0

Date	Source	Content					
5/6/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	The sergeant involved in an accident overnight is going to be okay. He is recuperating at home. His… http://Instagram.com/p/nqHM8ZiFW2/	0	0	0	0	0
5/6/2014	Retweeted by Sheriff's Office (@GilmerSheriff)	RIP Police Officer Noel Lee Hawk of the Eatonton Police Department, Georgia End of Watch: Sunday, May 4, 2014... http://fb.me/15lVjQOqk	1	0	0	0	0
5/7/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Congratulations to newly promoted Colonel Leighton Graham who received his new badge today. https://www.Facebook.c http://twitpic.com/e379as	1	2	0	1	0
5/7/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Here is a link to the Facebook album showing the Colonel receiving his new badge and epaulets. twitpic.com/e379as	0	0	0	1	0
5/7/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	The Board of Commissioners issued a proclamation to honor public FC safety personnel killed in the line of duty. pic.Twitter.com/wmMKrtZOR8	0	2	0	1	0
5/8/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Members of the Fulton County Board of Commissioners issued a special proclamation honoring the… http://Instagram.com/p/nvUlzkiFbZ/	0	1	0	0	0
5/9/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Showers predicted this weekend. A good time to go online & apply to be a deputy sheriff! http://agency.governmentjobs.com/fulton/default.cfm?action=viewJob&jobID	0	0	0	0	0

Date	Page	Content					
5/9/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	The Sheriff's Office is accepting applications for detention officers. Apply today. http://agency.governmentjobs.com/fulton/default.cfm?action	1	1	0	0	0
5/11/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Happy Mother's Day to all near & far and a special salute to the working moms at the Fulton County… http://Instagram.com/p/n3Pyx—iFQI/	0	0	0	0	0
5/12/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Congrats to Deputy A. Gardner & K—9 Zoom for earning the Top Dog trophy at Mantracker https://www.Facebook.com/me http://twitpic.com/e3nszz	2	2	0	1	0
5/14/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Today Lieutenant Colonel Maria McKee became 1st female to work her way up from deputy to Lt. Col. by earning each rank. pic.Twitter.com/OLljBAAWm0	0	0	0	1	0
5/14/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Night 4 of the FCSO Citizen's Academy featured presentations by the Law Enforcement Division. #fcso pic.Twitter.com/jE95luOqwn	0	0	0	9	0
5/16/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Good morning. The Fulton County Sheriff's Office is hiring Detention Officers. Apply online today: http://agency.governmentjobs.com/fulton/default.cfm?action	0	0	0	0	0
5/16/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Tell a friend: The Fulton County Sheriff's Office is hiring Deputy Sheriffs. Apply online today: http://agency.governmentjobs.com/fulton/default.cfm?action	0	1	0	0	0
5/16/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Remembering our Fallen Heroes. #fcso #fultoncountysheriffsoffice #fultonfallenheroes #publicsafetymemorialweek pic.Twitter.com/FoTErL4oxb	0	1	0	1	0

5/16/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	The FCSO Ballers take the softball field Sunday against Atlanta Fire. Come cheer the Ballers! #ballersalltheway pic.Twitter.com/UfjQLVGwd6	0	0	0	1	0
5/16/2014	Twitter Page (Sheriff's Office)	Congrats to the newest cadets to join the FCSO! Check out their movie trailer: Graduation Day. https://www.Facebook.com/photo.php?v=278945058953238&set=vb.141153622732383&type=2&theater …	1	0	0	0	0

Social Networking Data

Instagram

DATE REVIEWED	FORMAT	MESSAGE/POST	LOCATION	# of LIKES	# of COMMENTS	# of PICS
1/18/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	Thanks @epalesser for coming to the gun buyback Thursday. Great capture. #repost	Turner Field	18	2	1
1/18/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	Another great photo by @epalesser at the gun buyback Thursday. In this photo, a #fcso #swat member examines one of the guns to be destroyed. Thanks for sharing @epalesser #repost #fcso #fultoncounty #fultoncountysheriffsoffice #gunbuyback #fcsoled	Turner Field	24	1	1
1/19/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	Full photo of #FCSO #SWAT member examining a weapon at the gun buyback. Nice skyline view in the background. Photo credit: @epalesser #fultoncountysheriffsoffice #fcsoled #fultoncounty	Turner Field	17	3	1
1/19/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	Rolling in Atlanta. #fcso #fultoncountysheriffsoffice #fcsoled #charger #lofi	FCSO	66	7	1
1/20/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	The Fulton County Sheriff's Office salutes Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. This Fulton County resident made sacrifices & energized the movement to "let freedom ring" around the world. Photo credit: Time Magazine	FCSO	19	0	1

1/23/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	Sgt. T. Nalampoon, Lt. T. Winfrey, & Lt. Col. R. Turner stand with the framed perfect score for the Fulton County Jail kitchen. State health department inspectors examined the Jail Kitchen & Officers Dining Area earlier this month. Both locations earned 100's! The FCJ serves 2 Million+ meals a year. #fcso #fultoncountysheriffsoffice #fultoncountyjail	Fulton County Jail	26	0	1
1/23/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	Israeli Police Superintendent Tsafrir Moisa toured the Fulton County Jail. #fcso #fultoncountyjail #fultoncountysheriffsoffice	Fulton County Jail	14	0	1
1/23/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	Israeli Police Superintendent Tsafrir Moisa toured the Fulton County Jail & compared notes with Jail Command Staff. #fcso #fultoncountyjail #fultoncountysheriffsoffice	Fulton County Jail	22	0	2
1/23/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	K—9 Marco served honorably. For more photos & information, please visit www.Facebook.com/fultonsheriff. There is a photo album "Remembering Marco".	Fulton County Courthouse	17	2	1
1/23/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	Honoring K—9 Marco who developed inoperable canine cancer. He died yesterday at six years of age. Marco was an All Patrol dog that was trained to detect illegal drugs, track, & search for suspects. He and his handler Sgt. C. Henry were recognized by numerous community organizations & law enforcement agencies for their exemplary performance in public safety. Go to www.Facebook.com/fultonsheriff to write a tribute & share to raise awareness of canine cancer. Thank you.	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	42	10	1

1/28/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	All Fulton County courts are CANCELLED Wednesday. JURORS DO NOT REPORT. A decision regarding Thursday sessions will be made after 2 p.m. Wednesday. Stay tuned for updates. This photo of a marker at the Courthouse is from Fulton County Government	Fulton County Courthoue	17	0	1
1/28/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	Visitation at the Fulton County Jail is CANCELLED Wednesday. Stay tuned for updates concerning Thursday.	Fulton County Jail	37	6	1
1/29/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	Let's do a Wednesday recap: No courts, no jury duty, no jail visitation, no school in Fulton & the City of Atlanta, shelter at FC fire stations & Home Depot. Got it? Thanks.	Fulton County Jail	57	11	0
1/29/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	No court or inmate visitation Thursday. Moisture on roads expected to refreeze. County offices closed. Photos by Sgt. Karland Stokes.	Fulton County Jail	45	4	2
1/30/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	Inmate visitation will resume Monday. Otherwise, operations are returning to normal. Fulton County Sheriff's Office members have answered the call to serve the public and should be commended. Stay safe. Photo credit: Sgt. Karland Stokes.	Fulton County Jail	20	0	1
2/1/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	Multi—Agencies Manhunt for escaped inmate Ulysesse Cleckley, 21, BM, 6', 200 lbs. Cleckley escaped from a jail transport bus near English Ave in NW Atlanta around 5:30 pm Tuesday. Please call 911 with any info regarding his whereabouts. Thank you.	Fulton County Jail	18	1	2
2/4/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	Update: Inmate recaptured. A big thanks to all law enforcement, media & members of the public for your efforts which led to the swift and safe capture of escapee Ulysesse Cleckley this evening. More details on FB at www.Facebook.com/fultonsheriff.	Fulton County Jail	36	2	1
2/5/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	Next weather event.	FCSO	12	0	1

Date	Source	Content	Location			
2/6/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	Technology on display during the meeting of the chief jailers from across the region. They met Thursday with Sheriff Ted Jackson, Colonel Mark Adger & Command Staff.	Fulton County Jail	24	0	4
2/9/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	Here's the breakdown.	FCSO	16	0	1
2/10/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	Visitation is cancelled at the Fulton County Jail Tuesday through Thursday and should resume Friday. Please check back for updates.	Fulton County Jail	24	0	1
2/12/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	Visitation is still cancelled. Streets are slushy. Snow & freezing rain are expected tonight.	Fulton County Jail	24	1	1
2/12/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	Making it happen in the slush and ice. A City of Atlanta garbage truck converted to a snowplow circles the Fulton County Justice Center Complex. Fulton County Government is closed again Thursday. Photo credit: Lt. Col. P. Andresen.	Fulton County Justice Center	26	0	1
2/13/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	There will be a service tomorrow to remember K—9 Marco, All Patrol. Marco was diagnosed with inoperable cancer in January. Please joins us as we say goodbye to Marco and recognize the importance of service dogs to law enforcement.	FCSO	20	7	1
2/14/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	The FCSO has issued a BOLO for Black Ice. Subject is dangerous & known to be in middle to north Georgia. Use extreme caution. Lt. Col. R. Turner had a sighting and took this photo of ice covered cruisers at the Fulton County Jail.	Fulton County Jail	35	0	1
2/20/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	NOW HIRING: Detention Officers & Deputy Sheriffs. Apply @ www.fultoncountyga.gov to serve with pride. #fultoncounty #fultoncountysheriff #fcso #honorguard	FCSO	32	0	1

2/25/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	Members of the Atlanta Business League met with Sheriff Ted Jackson today. He gave them an overview of the agency & its mission.	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	17	0	3
2/28/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	The FCSO Honor Guard is looking for a few good men & women. Internal candidates should contact Sgt. D. Butler or Capt. K. Walker. This photo was taken during the national competition in DC in 2013.	FCSO	25	1	0
3/6/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	#K9 Duke stopped by the PIO's office to say hi to everyone on IG. #fcso #fultoncounty #fultoncountysheriff #deputydogduke #d5200 #eod #blacklab	FCSO	43	5	1
3/10/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	K—9 Duke says it is a beautiful day for a long walk after work. 🐾 #fultoncounty #fultoncountysheriff #fcso #eod #k9 #blacklab	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	30	4	1
3/14/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	A member of the Leadership Johns Creek class looks inside an empty cell where the new door locks are being installed on the 6th floor of the Fulton County Jail. The class toured the jail Thursday.	Fulton County Jail	16	0	1
3/14/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	Members of Leadership Johns Creek toured the Jail Kitchen Thursday afternoon. The group participated in Government Day with visits the Fulton County Courthouse, Fulton County Government Center & the State Capitol.	Fulton County Jail	13	0	3
3/14/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	Sheriff Ted Jackson & staff gave members of Leadership Johns Creek an overview of the Fulton County Jail before their facility tour Thursday afternoon.	Fulton County Jail	16	0	1
3/14/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	A beautiful daffodil at Woodruff Park in Downtown Atlanta	Woodruff Park	16	0	1
3/14/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	Training on WebEOC for good communication for the next big event.	Fulton County Government Center	23	0	1
3/15/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	☘St. Patrick's Day Parade☘	Peachtree Street	19	0	1

3/15/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	Sheriff Ted Jackson always enjoys the St. Patrick's Day Parade in Atlanta. #fcso #fultoncounty #fultoncountyswat #fultoncountysheriff #tank #weloveatl #weloveatlanta #stpatsatlanta #stpatricksday	Peachtree Street	26	0	1
3/15/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	usHomeland Security at the St. Patrick's Day Parade. #stpatricksday #stpatsatlanta #weloveatl #weloveatlanta	Peachtree Street	28	0	1
3/16/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	The Crown Vic was extra clean for the St. Patrick's Parade in Atlanta. That's a Reserve Deputy behind the wheel. #fcso #fultoncounty #fultoncountysheriff #stpatricksday #stpatsatlanta #crownvic	Peachtree Street	43	0	1
3/16/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	St. Patrick's Day Parade #latergram#stpatricksday #stpatsatlanta	Peachtree Street	16	0	1
3/16/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	The FCSO SWAT Tank at the St. Patrick's Day Parade in Atlanta. #fcso #fultoncounty #fultoncountyswat #fultoncountysheriff #tank #latergram	Peachtree Street	43	3	1
3/16/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	Happy Tails at the St. Patrick's Day Parade in Atlanta. #happytails #stpatricksday #stpatsatlanta #latergram	Peachtree Street	20	3	3
3/16/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	Atlanta's Finest with the Emerald Society. #latergram #stpatricksday #stpatsatlanta #atlantapd #emeraldsociety #d5200	Peachtree Street	26	0	1
3/16/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	Metro Atlanta Police Emerald Society at the St. Patrick's Day Parade in Atlanta. #latergram #atlantapd #emeraldsociety #stpatricksday #stpatsatlanta	Peachtree Street	28	2	2
3/17/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	Happy St. Patrick's Day from the Fulton County Sheriff's Office. Be safe out there.	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	32	0	1
3/18/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	Now hiring Detention Officers & Deputy Sheriffs. Apply today at www.fultoncountyga.gov.	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	26	0	1

3/19/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	This could be you graduating from the FCSO Citizen's Academy. Sign up at www.fultonsheriff.net. Call 404—612—5138 for more information.	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	18	0	1
3/19/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	This FCSO employee is smiling because she's about to get a new badge for her promotion as a Detention Sergeant. Sheriff Ted Jackson presents promotion certificates to all new supervisors. It's a proud day. Begin your career with us now. Apply at www.fultoncountyga.gov.	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	7	0	1
3/20/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	Sergeant Gerald Johnson received his 20—year service award pin from Sheriff Ted Jackson today. Congratulations!	Fulton County Jail	29	0	1
3/20/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	Sgt. S. Allen, Sgt. G. Johnson, & Lt. S. McWilliams received their 15, 20, & 25—year service award pins from Sheriff Ted Jackson today. Congrats to these dedicated members of the Law Enforcement Division.	Fulton County Jail	32	2	3
3/21/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	Another beautiful Friday in Atlanta. Have a safe weekend!	Gordon L. Joyner Bridge	29	0	1
3/21/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	Adopt A Pet Day in Fulton County. Add a new family member at Animal Services www.fultoncountyga.gov or @caninecellmates. @fultoninfo0 #fultoncountyga #adoptapet	Fulton County Government Center	23	6	1
3/25/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	Fulton County Jail staff have done it again! Perfect scores from health inspectors for the Jail kitchen & officers dining area. Join us in congratulating kitchen staff for a job well done!	Fulton County Jail	20	8	2
3/27/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	Sgt. Scott Farron explains why the new cell door locks will prevent inmates from popping locks and causing mayhem. The project to replace all locks should wrap up before summer. #fultoncountyga #fultoncountyjail #fcso #jaillocks	Fulton County Jail	24	2	1

3/27/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	Did you know the Fulton County Jail can provide dialysis to inmates within the facility? This is a more efficient way of handling mandated healthcare services. It also means fewer inmates require transport to Grady Memorial Hospital or a clinic for treatment. Thanks for the tour Sgt. S. Johnson. #fcso #fultoncountyga #fultoncountyjail #deputysheriff	Fulton County Jail	16	0	1
3/28/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	FCSO Recruiters are at the Georgia International Convention Center in College Park for Congressman David Scott's jobs fair. Stop by for a face—to—face chat about your future. The jobs fair ends at 3 p.m. You can always apply online at www.fultoncountyga.gov. The FCSO is looking for Deputy Sheriffs and Detention Officers.	FCSO	45	2	1
3/30/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	Thanks for the great photo of Sheriff Ted Jackson & family taken by @theseniorone during the ❤St. Patrick's Day Parade! #repost #latergram #stpatsatl #stpaticksday #fcso #fultoncountyga #fultoncountysheriffsoffice	Peachtree Street	40	2	1
4/1/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	Commander of the Community Outreach Section Lt. Brian McGee did an interview this afternoon with Fulton Government Television to tell everyone about the next FCSO Citizen's Academy that starts later this month.	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	40	1	1

4/3/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	Throwback Thursday 1998: The Atlanta Daily World published this article & photo capturing then Deputy Rueben Wingfield showing Sheriff Jacqueline Barrett one of the FIRST COMPUTERS installed in FCSO patrol cars. Thank you, Major Rueben Wingfield for this week's look back at the Fulton County Sheriff's Office. #tbt #throwbackthursday #fcso #fultoncountyga #fultoncountysheriffsoffice #fcsoled	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	19	2	1
4/8/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	Sheriff Ted Jackson has a vision for the Fulton County Sheriff's Office. Recruiting good people is key. There are openings for Deputy Sheriffs & Detention Officers. Apply today at www.fultoncountyga.gov.	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	26	0	1
4/9/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	Congratulations to Sergeant Johnnie Moore & family. The sergeant was promoted today along with 17 others.	GA Dept. of Public Safety Headquarters	28	0	1
4/10/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	Promotion Day is always a great one. 3 of the new sergeants are all smiles. #fcso #latergram #fultoncountyga #fultoncountysheriffsoffice	FCSO	25	0	1
4/10/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	Congratulations to a new sergeant promoted yesterday that you won't see online because he works undercover. Congrats Sarge!	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	39	2	1
4/11/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	Congratulations, Sergeant Gerald Johnson! #promotionday #latergram #fcso #fcsoled #fultoncountyga #fultoncountysheriffsoffice #deputysheriff #lieutenant	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	36	0	1

4/15/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	Inmates tell their stories during the filming of the next Beyond Scared Straight episode featuring the Fulton County Sheriff's Office. 9 days to go. This could be the best episode ever. Set your DVR for A&E on Thursday, April 24th at 10 p.m. #bss #beyondscaredstraight #fcso #fultoncountyga #fultoncountyjail #fultoncountysheriffsoffice	Fulton County Jail	44	6	2
4/16/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	Only 8 days until the premiere of A&E's Beyond Scared Straight featuring the Fulton County Sheriff's Office. Check it out Thursday, April 24, 2014 at 10 p.m.	Fulton County Jail	33	2	1
4/17/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	SEVEN DAYS until the premiere of A&E's Beyond Scared Straight: Fulton County!!! Here's a behind the scenes look at the set up for Sheriff Ted Jackson's interview. DISCLAIMER: This is not Sheriff Jackson's office. Lt. Col. Reginald Turner loaned out his office for the shoot. Thanks, Colonel! You will have to show us your artifacts & patches another day. #bss #fultoncountyga #fcso #fultoncountyjail #fultoncountysheriffsoffice #beyondscaredstraight #A&E	Fulton County Jail	24	4	1
4/18/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	Thank you Sheriff Radio Dispatchers for keeping us connected & safe! @fultoninfo #fcso #fultoncountyga #fultoncountysheriffsoffice #fultoncountyjail #fcsoled	FCSO	36	0	1
4/18/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	K—9 Duke stopped by the PIO office between searches to wish everyone a great Good Friday and a safe Happy Easter weekend!	Fulton County Courthoue	24	2	1

4/21/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	In case you haven't heard, the Fulton County Sheriff's Office will be featured on Beyond Scared Straight Thursday at 10 pm on A&E. Here's how they set up for an interview with SWAT Deputy T. Desrosiers for a previous episode. #bss #beyondscaredstraight #fcso #fultoncountysheriffsoffice #fultoncountyjail #fultoncountyga #swat	Fulton County Jail	29	2	2
4/22/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	Celebrate Earth! #repost from @nasa #earthday	FCSO	25	0	1
4/22/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	TWO DAYS until Beyond Scared Straight: Fulton County premieres on A&E THURSDAY at 10 p.m. on A&E. Here's a behind the scenes photo from a previous episode showing an inmate talking with a program participant. #bss #beyondscaredstraight #fcso #fultoncountyga #fultoncountysheriffsoffice #fultoncountyjail	Fulton County Jail	27	4	2
4/23/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	ONE DAY until the premiere of #BeyondScaredStraight Fulton County edition on A&E. Tweet with the Sheriff's Office during the show live on Thursday at ten pm @fultonsheriff Use hashtag #BeyondScaredStraight In this behind the scenes photo, Sgt. J. Farmer observes as inmates share their stories with producers. #bts #bss #fultoncountyga #fultoncountyjail #fultoncountysheriffsoffice #fcso	Fulton County Jail	36	0	1
4/23/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	Deputy Stewart does not tolerate dirty vehicles. It's that #FCSO pride! Here's a shoutout to the Law Enforcement Division! #fcsoled #fultoncountyga #fultoncountysheriffsoffice	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	62	5	1

Date	Source	Content	Location			
4/23/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	The #FCSO Citizen's Academy kicked off the 2014 class tonight with introductions & a CPR introduction. Fulton County Fire Rescue Division Chief Markus Jones showed the class updated techniques. Chief Jones is a tactical medic with the Sheriff's SWAT team. #fultoncountyga #fcsoled #fcsoswat #swat #cpr #fultoncountysheriffsoffice #fcsocitizensacademy2014	Fulton County Public Safety Training Center	31	2	1
4/24/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	TODAY is the DAY. #BeyondScaredStraight in Fulton County premieres on A&E at 10p. They saved the best for last. Record it so you can watch it again with your family. #fcso #fultoncountyjail #fultoncountysheriffsoffice #fultoncountyga #bss	Fulton County Jail	28		
4/24/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	ONE HOUR to go until the premiere of A&E's #BeyondScaredStraight — The Fulton County Edition. Set your DVR. #fcso #fultoncountyga #fultoncountyjail #fultoncountysheriffsoffice #bss #a&e #aetv	Fulton County Courthouse	39	6	1
4/28/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	Be watchful of our weather. #repost from Atlanta — Fulton County Emergency Management via FB. Sign up for Code Red Alerts at www.fultoncountyga.gov. There's a link on the right side of the page.	Fulton County Courthouse	15	1	1
4/29/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	Are you prepared?	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	16	0	1
4/29/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	Tuesday evening, Sheriff Ted Jackson met with representatives of the Intown Alliance which unites neighborhood watch groups from Downtown Atlanta, Ansley Park, Druid Hills (City of Atlanta), Midtown, and others. Sheriff Jackson gave attendees an overview of the agency & updates on critical projects. #fcso #fultoncountysheriffsoffice #fultoncountyga	FCSO	13	1	2

4/30/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	It was an electric night during class 2 of the FCSO Citizen's Academy! One of students really volunteered to be tased. No prongs. The first hit was okay. The second one, not so much. Thanks for being a great sport.	Fulton County Public Safety Training Center	27	3	2
5/1/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	Justice System delegates from the Republic of Georgia toured the Fulton County Jail today. Here's an IG remix of the original Jail Authority Film on the Facebook page. Thanks, Colonel!	Fulton County Jail	7	3	1 Video
5/2/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	A good deputy is consistent with his/her good habits. This morning, we found Deputy Stewart making sure Unit 554 was sparkling clean before his shift. #fultoncountysheriffsoffice #fcso #fultoncountyga #fcsoled #charger #deputy	FCSO	41	0	2
5/2/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	Congratulations to Sgt. Angela Clark! She received her new badge today. The pink handcuffs are her signature	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	42	2	3
5/3/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	"Don't let the nails fool you..." Sgt. Clark will take you to jail. Pink cuffs & all. #Fultoncountysheriffsoffice #fultoncountyga #fcsoled #fultoncountyjail #pinkhandcuffs #pinkcuffs #fcso	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	36	1	1
5/4/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	The Fulton County Sheriff's Office recognizes National Correctional Officers Week May 4 — 10, 2014. Join us in showing appreciation to all who work in the many areas of the Fulton County Jail System. #flipagram made with @flipagram ♫ Music: Chuck Mangione — Feels So Good #fultoncountyjail # fultoncountyga #fultoncountysheriffsoffice #fcso #fcj #nationalcorrectionalofficersweek	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	25	0	1 Video
5/5/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	Check out the big trophies. Will the FCSO Co—Ed Softball Team go all the way in '14? They just beat DeKalb SWAT in game one.	Fulton County Sheriff's Jail	21	2	1

Date	Source	Content	Location			
		#BallersAllTheWay #fcso #fultoncountyga #fultoncountyjail #fultoncountysheriff				
5/6/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	FCSO deputy is alert & talking after an accident @ 12:35am. His patrol car flipped on 1380 Boat Rock Rd. Being treated for injuries. Thanks. (File photo)	Grady Memorial Hospital	52	6	1
5/6/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	The sergeant involved in an accident overnight is going to be okay. He is recuperating at home. His patrol vehicle flipped at 12:35 a.m. on Boat Rock Road in South Fulton County. He was responding to a call concerning a fight involving a weapon at some apartments nearby on West Chase Drive.	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	45	2	1
5/7/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	Congratulations to newly promoted Colonel Leighton Graham! The 28—year—veteran will be commander of the Administration Division. Here he is with Chief Deputy Jimmy Carter & Sheriff Ted Jackson during the promotional ceremony. Today, he received his new badge & epaulets which signify that he is a "full bird" colonel. Join us in wishing him the best on his new job!	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	31	5	2
5/8/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	Members of the Fulton County Board of Commissioners issued a special proclamation honoring the deputies (marshal & sheriff), firefighters, & officers killed in the line of duty. We salute those who made the ultimate sacrifice to protect the citizens of Fulton County.	Fulton County Government Center	21	0	1
5/11/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	Happy Mother's Day to all near & far and a special salute to the working moms at the Fulton County Sheriff's Office. #fcso #fultoncountyga #fultoncountysheriffsoffice #mothersday #k9 #k9Duke #fcsoled	FCSO	43	2	1

5/12/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	Let's give K—9 Zoom a gold star for earning the Top Dog award at the 2014 Mantracker competition. Zoom quickly & accurately out sniffed all the other dogs. 6—year—old Zoom is a Marine—trained EOD dog with superior skills (see trophy) in detecting explosive materials. Good dog, Zoom ⋆ □! #k9 #k9zoom #eod #fcsoled #fcso #fultoncountyga #fultoncountysheriffsoffice #bombdog #mantracker #topdog	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	38	2	5
5/13/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	Alert from our neighbors north at the Dawson County Sheriff's Office: Someone has been impersonating an officer by calling citizens and claiming to be a Lieutenant John Martin with the DCSO. The perpetrator tells victims that they missed jury duty, a warrant has been issued for their arrest & a fine must be paid. Hang up & call DCSO @ 706—344—3636. ⋆ □Tip: Sheriff deputies	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	21	0	1
5/13/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	Good morning! Always inspect your vehicle before hitting the road. #fcso #fcsoled #fultoncountyga #fultoncountysheriffsoffice #charger #dodge #iphone5s #bluelights #fcso554 Note from photographer: Expect a sequel/remake with better angles & smoother.	Fulton County Sheriff's OFfice	42	0	1 Video
5/14/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	History made today: Major Maria McKee became Lieutenant Colonel Maria McKee in a special ceremony today during roll call for her Division, Court Services. Colonel McKee is the first female to work her way up from deputy to lieutenant colonel by earning each rank in between & being a strong leader within the Fulton County Sheriff's Office. Great job, ma'am!!! #fultoncountyga	Fulton County Sheriff's Office	56	7	1

5/14/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	Night 4 of the FCSO Citizen's Academy featured presentations by the Law Enforcement Division. #fcso #fcsoled #fultoncountyga #fultoncountysheriffsoffice	Fulton County Public Safety Training Center	44	1	9
5/15/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	On the move. Have a good day! #fcso #fcsoled #fultoncountyga #fultoncountysheriffsoffice #inmatetransport #transferunit	Fulton County Courthoue	42	0	1
5/16/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	The Fulton County Sheriff's Office is hiring Detention Officers & Deputy Sheriffs. Apply online at www.fultoncountyga.gov. Tell a friend. #fcso #fultoncountyga #fultoncountysheriffsoffice	Fulton County Public Safety Training Center	24	0	1
5/16/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	Remembering our Fallen Heroes. #fcso #fcsoled #fultoncountyga #fultoncountysheriffsoffice #fultonfallenheroes #publicsafetymemorialweek	Fulton County Government Center	24	0	1
5/16/2014	Instagram Page (Sheriff's Office)	Remembering our Fallen Heroes. #fcso #fcsoled #fultoncountyga #fultoncountysheriffsoffice #fultonfallenheroes #publicsafetymemorialweek	Fulton County Government Center	28	0	1

Appendix I: Coded Data Output—Uses and Gratifications Category

Employees

Uses & Gratification Category	Emp. 1	Emp. 2	Emp. 3	Emp. 4	Emp. 5	Emp. 6	Emp. 7	Emp. 8	Emp. 9	Emp. 10	Emp. 11	Emp. 12	Emp. 13	Emp. 14	Emp. 15	OUTPUT SCORE
Internet (IN)	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	15
Social Media (SM)	I	I	I	I	I			I		I		I	I	I	I	11
Accessibility (AC)	I	I	I		I	I	I	I		I		I	I	I	I	12
Engagement (EN)	I		I		I	I		I	I	I		I	I	I	I	11
Economy (EC)	I				I			I		I		I	I		I	7
Information Seeking (IS)	I		I	I	I	I		I	I	I		I	I	I	I	12
Status (ST)	I		I	I	I	I		I		I		I	I	I	I	11
Development (DE)	I		I	I	I	I		I		I		I	I	I	I	11

Coded Data Output—Uses and Gratifications Category

Clients

Uses & Gratification Category	Client 1	Client 2	Client 3	Client 4	Client 5	Client 6	Client 7	Client 8	Client 9	Client 10	Client 11	Client 12	Client 13	Client 14	Client 15	OUTPUT SCORE
Internet (IN)			I	I	I	I	I		I	I	I		I	I		10
Social Media (SM)			I		I	I	I		I	I	I	I	I	I		10
Accessibility (AC)			I	I	I		I		I	I		I	I	I		9
Engagement (EN)			I		I		I		I	I		I	I	I		8
Economy (EC)			I		I		I		I	I			I	I		7
Information Seeking (IS)			I		I		I		I	I		I	I	I		8
Status (ST)			I		I		I		I	I			I	I		7
Development (DE)			I		I		I		I	I			I	I		7