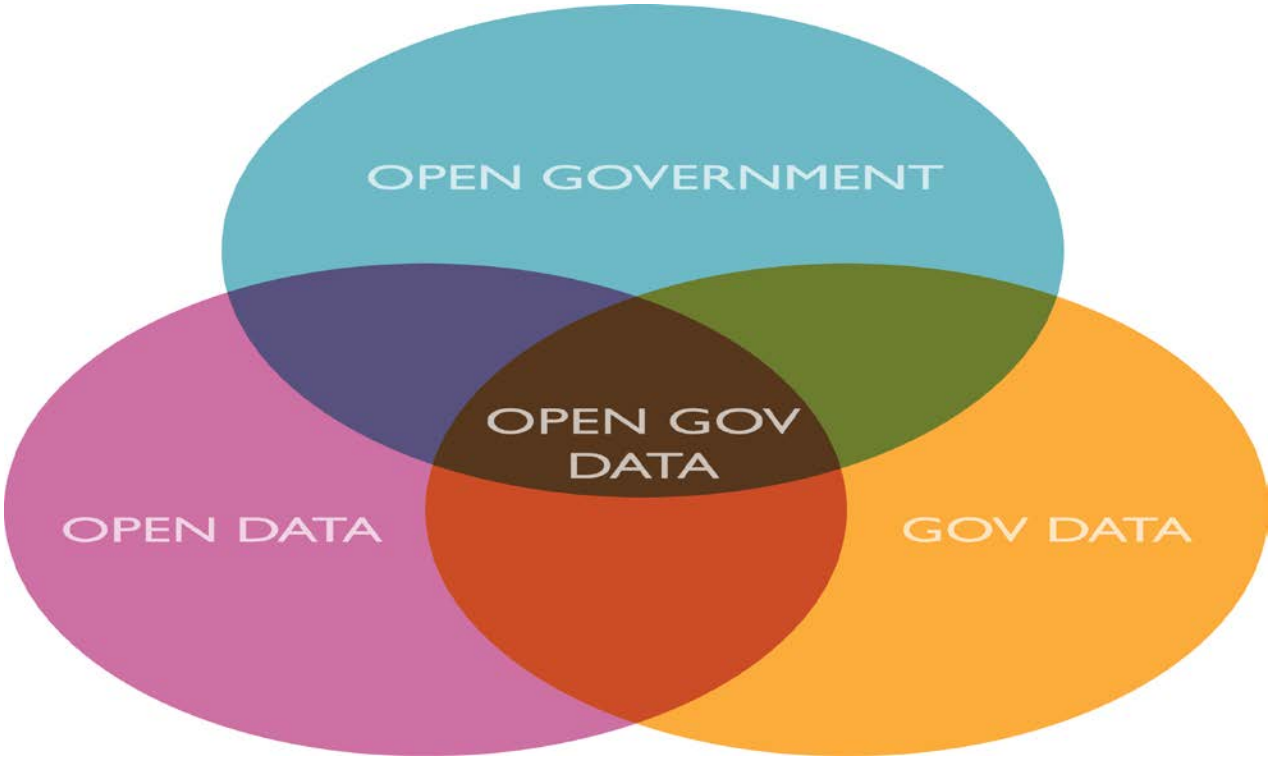
Social Media and Open Government

International Municipal Lawyers Association Conference

September 10-14, 2014

Baltimore, Maryland



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Marisa A. Trasatti

Overview

- What is Open Government?
- What is Social Media?
- The Emergence of E-Government
- The Politics of Open Government
- The Relationship between Social Media and Open Government
  - *Examples of Social Media Use by Agencies*
  - *Pros*
  - *Cons*
- Three Keys to Social Media and Open Government

What is Open Government?



AN APPRECIATION OF SUNSHINE LAWS

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What is Open Government?

- **Open government** is the concept that citizens have the right to access the documents and proceedings of the government to allow for effective public oversight



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Origins of Open Government



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Origins of Open Government

- *European Enlightenment*: Debates about the proper construction of a then nascent democratic society
- *American Revolution* (1776): Freedom of the press enshrined provisions and requirements for public budgetary accounting
- *Nineteenth Century Influences*: Attempts by statesmen to set back freedom of the press were vigorously opposed by a number of eminent liberal politicians and writers, such as Jeremy Bentham, John Stuart Mill and John Dalberg-Acton

The Politics of Open Government

- The use of information technology to transform government is not a new notion.
- In the U.S., federal government engaged in two broad initiatives under the Clinton administration and Bush 43 administration.



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The Politics of Open Government

The Clinton Administration

- Under President Bill Clinton, Vice President Al Gore led the "*Reinventing Government*" initiative to create a service-oriented and effective government through technology that also created cost savings and efficiencies



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The Politics of Open Government
The Bush Administration

- Under President George W. Bush, the Office of Management and Budget engaged in a number of efforts guided by the E-Government Act of 2002.
- At the forefront of these efforts was the **Office of E-government and Information Technology** (http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/e-gov/), through which the Bush Administration sought to streamline government operations and create more effective services and processes through information technology-based E-government initiatives.

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The Politics of Open Government
The Obama Administration

- President Obama's Administration has continued the efforts of President Bush by promoting open government initiatives guided by three principles:
  - **Transparency,**
  - **Participation, and**
  - **Collaboration**
- Issued the **Open Government Directive**, which requires agencies to issue and implement open government plans, among other key initiatives.

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http://blogs.maryland.gov/socialmedia/



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http://blogs.maryland.gov/socialmedia/



http://blogs.maryland.gov/socialmedia/

Comments Policy

- Each department deploying social media should develop and post a comments policy that may include but not be limited to the following:

  Once posted, we reserve the right to delete submissions that may contain:

- **Vulgar language**
- **Personal attacks of any kind**
- **Offensive comments that target or disparage any ethnic, racial or religious group**
- **Spam**
- **Clearly off topic**
- **Advocate illegal activities**

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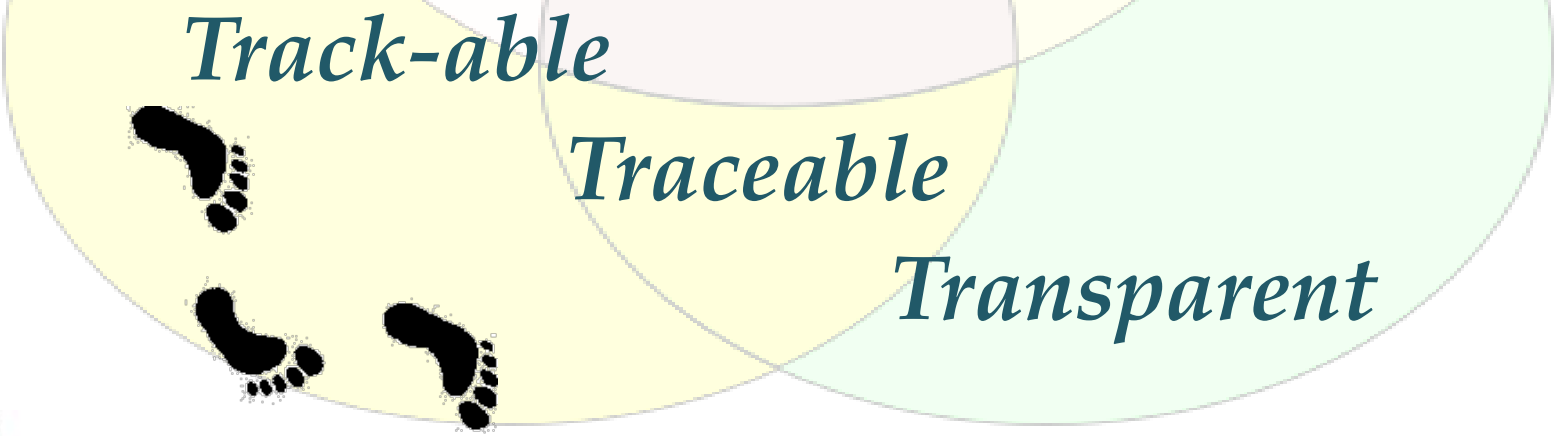
What is Social Media?

- "A group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content."



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Andreas Kaplan & Michael Haenlein, *Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of Social Media*, 53 Business Horizons 59–68 (2010)

Examples of Social Media



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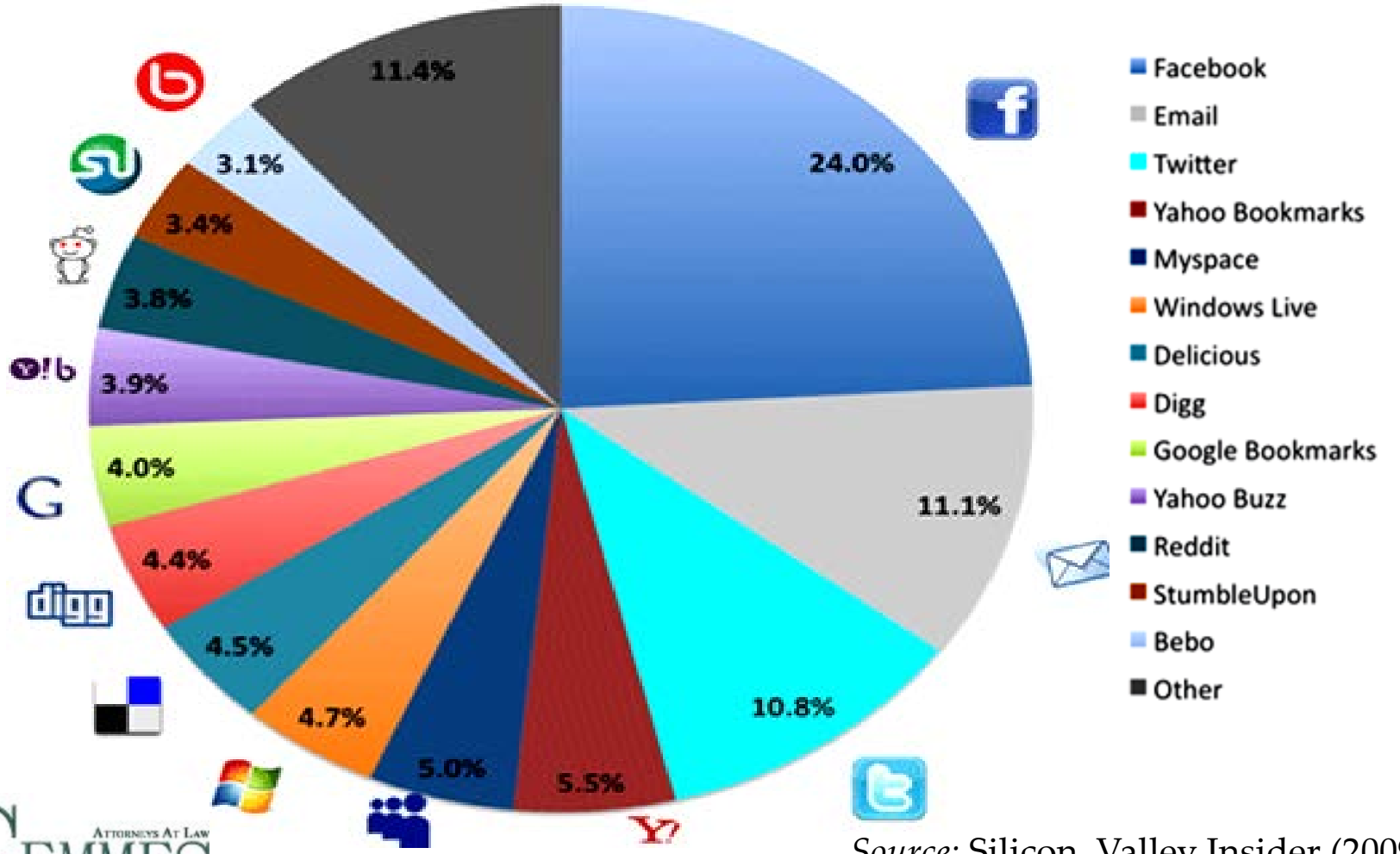
Information Sharing in the Digital Age



Source: Silicon Valley Insider (2009)

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Maryland.gov on Facebook

https://www.facebook.com/statemaryland



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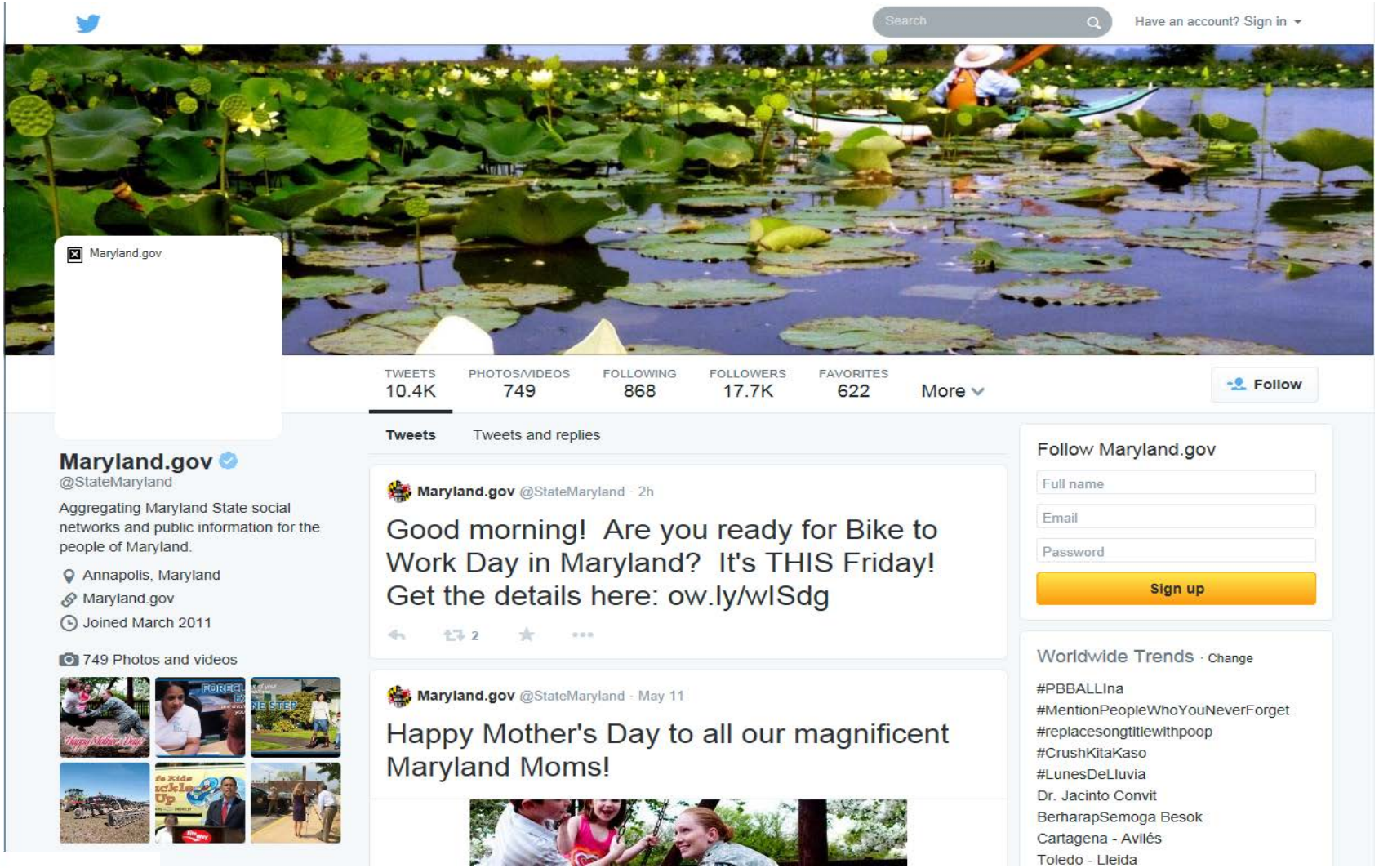
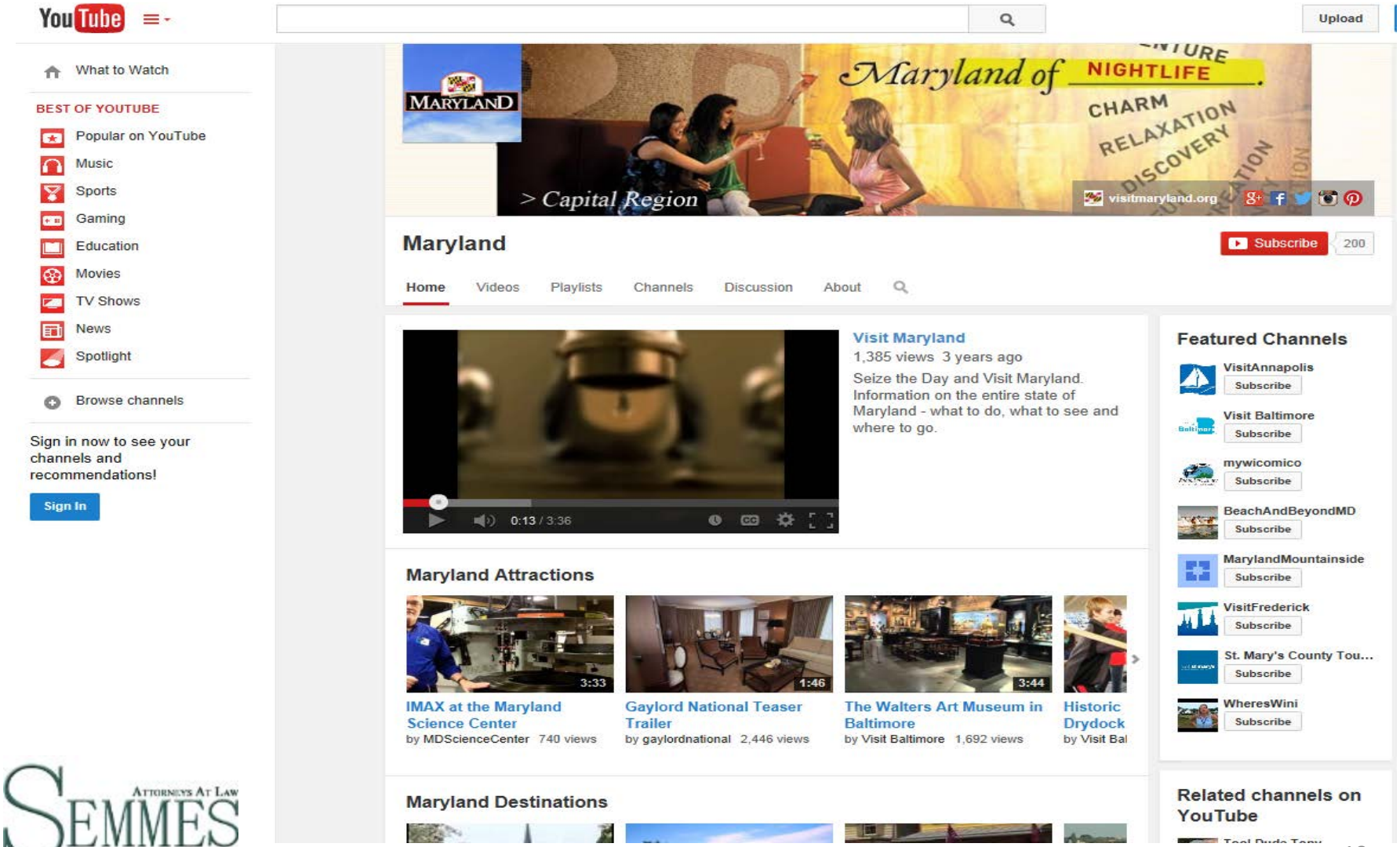
Maryland.gov on Twitter

https://twitter.com/StateMaryland



Maryland.gov on Youtube

http://www.youtube.com/user/travelMD



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Federal Agencies on YouTube

- http://www.youtube.com/USGovernment (General Services Agency)
- http://www.youtube.com/user/whitehouse (White House)
- http://www.youtube.com/user/CDCStreamingHealth (Centers for Disease Control)
- http://www.youtube.com/user/statevideo (U.S. State Department)
- http://www.youtube.com/user/USGOVHHS (Health and Human Services)

Maryland Governor's Blog

http://www.governor.maryland.gov/blog/

Maryland.gov Phone Directory State Agencies Online Services

MARYLAND .gov

THE OFFICE OF GOVERNOR MARTIN O'MALLEY

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Take a Moment to Thank a Teacher

May 6th, 2014 by Dr. Lillian Lowery

I am never more proud of our state than when I visit a school and witness the teaching that is taking place in classrooms across Maryland. Students are learning at high levels and the energy, commitment and passion displayed by our teachers is inspiring.

During Teacher Appreciation Week, May 5-9, make time to show your appreciation for Maryland's outstanding educators.

Our state has many great teachers including Sean McComb, Maryland's Teacher of the Year, who last week was named the 2014 National Teacher of the Year. An English teacher at Baltimore County's Patapsco High School and Center for the Arts, he is part of the school's Advancement via Individual Determination (AVID) program, which helps students strengthen their work habits and skills to graduate ready for college or career. Sean is the third Maryland teacher to receive that honor since 2005, a run of success in that program unequaled by any other State during that time.



Sean is a shining representative of our State's outstanding teacher workforce, but he would be the first to tell you that he's just one of thousands of Maryland educators committed to student success.

As Sean told the *Baltimore Sun* after receiving his award, "I feel incredibly honored, but I take it understanding that there are so many educators who … do this every day, so tirelessly."

That is spot on. I have visited classrooms in every county in our State where world class teaching is taking place. Our teachers' instruction prepares students to graduate from high school with the skills needed by local employers and for careers in a global marketplace. Our students have bright futures and many choices ahead of them.

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Apps

- An “app” is a self-contained program or piece of software designed to fulfill a particular purpose; an application, especially as downloaded by a user to a mobile device.



Apps

- **MyTSA** app for the iPhone
- **White House app** for Whitehouse.gov
- **Maryland MVA mobile app**

GSA

Google Apps
Government Edition





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Do Federal Agencies Use Social Media?



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Federal Agencies Using Social Media

- **The Veterans Administration (VA)** has a presence on Facebook, Youtube, Flickr, Twitter
- **The General Services Administration (GSA)**, uses Facebook and YouTube to help people learn about and access government services.
- **Federal Register site (http://www.federalregister.gov/)** – created by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) – to make the *Federal Register* interactive and accessible

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Federal Agencies Using Social Media

- **Regulations.gov** was created as an outreach of the eRulemaking Program led by EPA.
- **Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP)** has blogs on a range of topics. (http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/ostp/blog)
- **Transportation Security Administration (TSA)** has a blog, http://blog.tsa.gov/, for dialogue with commuters.

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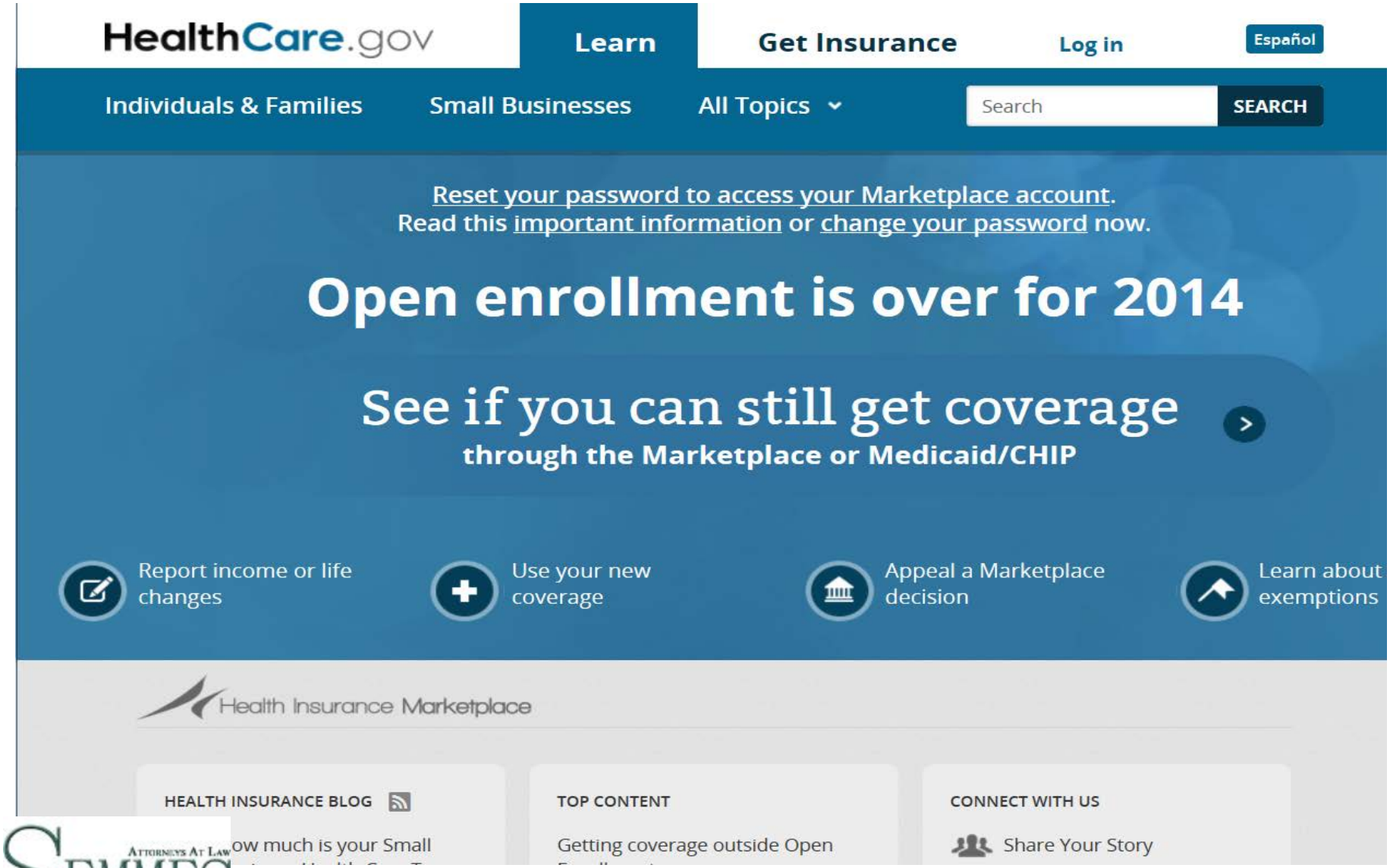
Healthcare.gov



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The Emergence of E-Government



http://www.egov.com/Solutions/Innovative/Pages/Transparency.aspx

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The Emergence of E-Government

- "**E-government** (short for electronic government, also known as **e-gov**, **Internet government**, **digital government**, **online government**, or **connected government**) consists of the digital interactions between:
  - A government and citizens (G2C)
  - A government and businesses/commerce (G2B)
  - A government and employees (G2E)
  - A government and governments /agencies (G2G)
  - Citizen interaction with their government (C2G)

…essentially, it's the government's "social media" platform

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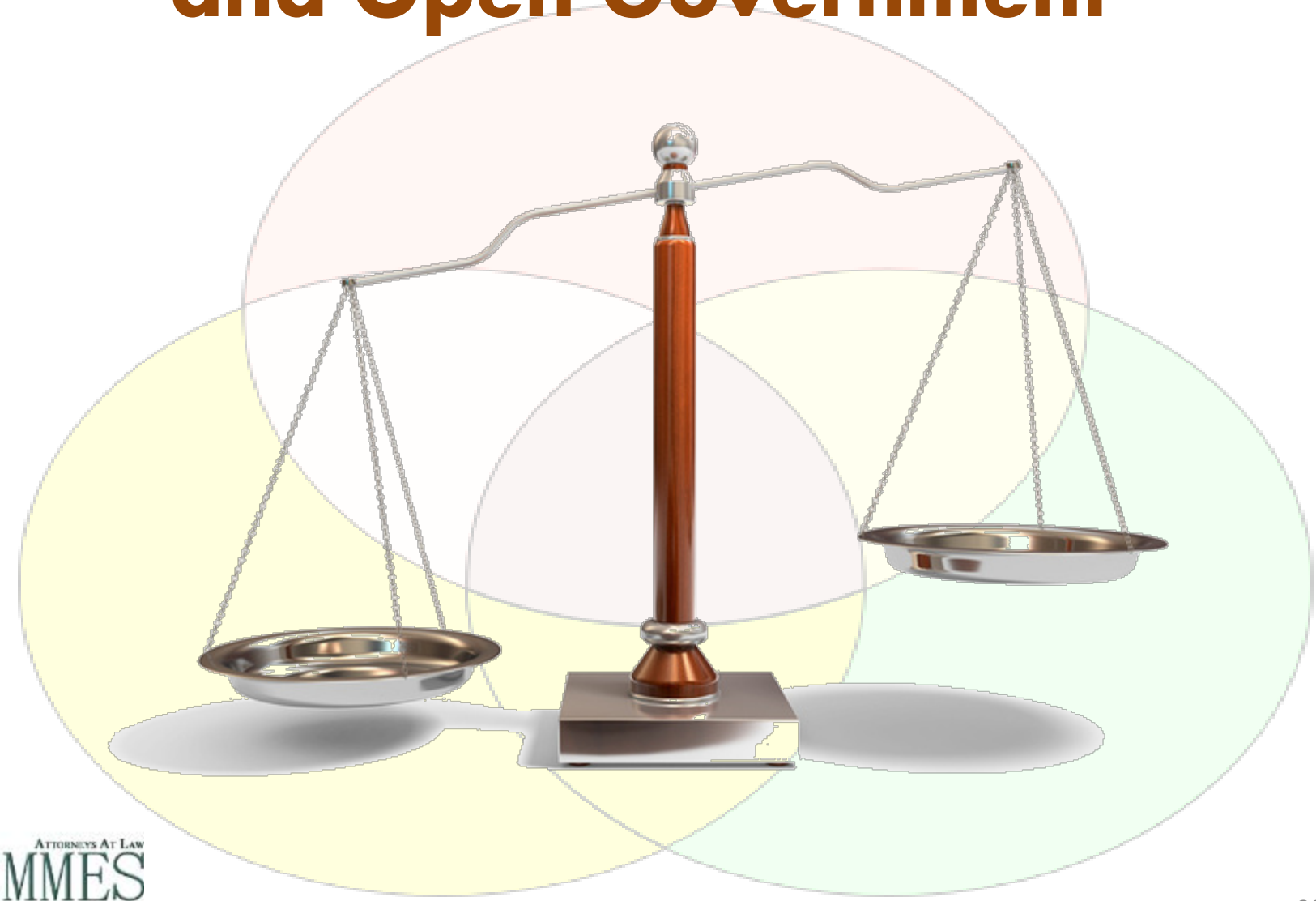
Jeong Chun Hai, *Fundamental of Development Administration,* Selangor: Scholar Press (2007).

Pros and Cons of Social Media and Open Government



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PROS

- Social media technologies hold great promise in their ability to transform governance by increasing a government's **transparency** and its **interaction with citizens**.
- May create new ways of **democratic participation**, encourage new institutional structures, and foster **open and transparent government** on an unprecedented scale

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PROS

- **Local reporting**
- **Local problemsolving**
- Connecting the public in **joint efforts** to better the nation
- Fostering **accountability** in government
- **Modernization** of government processes and operations

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CONS



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CONS

The potential of social media in government is far-reaching, but open government presents challenges in the areas of policy development, effective transparency, and democratic engagement.

For starters, shifting to highly technological approaches for governing can lead to **exclusionary practices**.

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CONS

- **Substantial disparities** when age, income, and education are considered.
- Gaps are highly pronounced among **non-English speaking** users.
- **Not many disability-friendly** social media sites available for the millions of disabled persons in the U.S.
- **Hyper-surveillance** of government
- **Cost**
- **False sense of transparency**

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Three Keys to Social Media and Open Government



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Privacy, Security and Management

- Ensure that no personally identifiable information is released
  - *Secure user information*
- Ensure that data integration does not lead to user profile development that invades
- privacy or otherwise compromises individuals, national security, or agency data security
- Provide a current and continuously updated data.gov registry
- Ensure that government data are consistently available and not removed prematurely
  - *Mechanism to ensure access at all times*
- Ensure that third-party social media technology providers (e.g., Twitter, Facebook, YouTube) adhere to government privacy and security policies and requirements

Thank You



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