



UDOT Social Media Strategic Plan

(UPDATED: November 2020)

BACKGROUND

The Utah Department of Transportation is committed to the use of social media to enhance communication, collaboration and the exchange of information in support of the Department’s vision of “Keeping Utah Moving.” Social networking sites (such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram) have become important public information tools through which we can communicate with various stakeholders. The purpose of engaging on social media is to provide information about the department to important audiences and further the public discussion of transportation projects, safety and technology across the state.

The Department administers a number of different Twitter accounts, Facebook pages and groups and Instagram accounts. We also have a library of videos and presentations available on our UDOT YouTube page. Together, these pages have more than 120,000 fans/followers.

Social Media at UDOT

Twitter

Twitter is a global microblogging service made up of 140-character messages known as tweets. With more than 330 million active users in 2020, Twitter is one of the most widely used and accessible social media sites for quick news. This platform is well suited for brief messages or real-time updates that users can view and share from their desktops or mobile devices.

At UDOT, Twitter is used differently depending on the account. Generally it is used to disseminate project information and educate the general public. But we also have accounts that are intended to provide thoughtful analysis and encouragement toward improved driving behavior. The following table outlines the purpose for each of the Department’s current Twitter accounts:

Account	Purpose	Audience
@UtahDOT	Project updates; Department initiatives; Department vision, mission, goals	Utah general public
@UDOTTraffic	Real-time traffic information	Drivers/traveling public
@CarlosUDOT	Thought leadership: Mission, vision, values	Government, industry leaders, employees
@SafeRoutesUtah	Program updates, School safety information, walking and biking to school	K-8 parents and school principals
@TravelWiseUtah	Education; Program updates	General public
@ZeroFatalities	Education; Program updates	General public
@UDOTMVC	Project updates; Online hotline	General public
@i15techcorridor	Project updates; Online hotline	General public
@UDOTavy	Backcountry closures and highway avalanche hazard notifications for northern Utah canyons	Outdoor enthusiasts, backcountry skiers

@UDOTcottonwoods	Weather, traffic, construction and road condition updates for Cottonwood Canyons	Cottonwood Canyon users
@UDOTlceis	Information and updates for Little Cottonwood Canyon Environmental Impact Statement	Those who are interested in the LCC EIS.
@us89daviscounty	Project updates and information for US 89 Project in Davis County	General public
@i15southbound	Project updates and information for the I-15 Southbound project	Traveling public, commuters
Regions		
@UDOTRegionOne	Project updates; region specific news and events	Box Elder, Cache, Rich, Weber, Morgan and Davis County residents.
@UDOTRegionTwo	Project updates; region specific news and events	Tooele, Salt Lake and Summit County residents
@UDOTRegionthree	Project updates; region specific news and events	Juab, Utah, Wasatch, Duchesne, Daggett and Uintah County residents
@UDOTRegionFour	Project updates; region specific news and events	Millard, Sanpete Carbon, Sevier, Emery, Grand, Beaver, Piute, Wayne, Iron, Garfield, San Juan, Washington and Kane County residents

Facebook

Facebook is currently the top social media website, with more than 1 billion active users in 2020. Nearly 50 percent of all users log on at least once a day and spend 20 minutes each time surfing their newsfeeds. The average user interacts with 155 friends and is connected to many various community pages, groups and events.

This platform is ideal for sharing in-depth announcements and updates to define UDOT's brand as being transparent, approachable, and connected with the public. Currently the Utah DOT Facebook page provides news, videos, pictures and other information about the state's transportation system. The page also serves as a forum for civil dialogue on various transportation issues. UDOT encourages comments from the public and hopes that interested individuals will submit thoughts and reactions on a regular basis. UDOT also hopes that commenters will bring to our attention projects and ideas that will help us keep Utah moving.

Account	Purpose	Audience
Utah DOT	Project updates; Planned closures; Department initiatives	Utah general public
Safe Routes Utah	Program updates, School safety information, walking and biking to school	K-8 parents, teachers and school principals
TravelWise Utah	Education; Program updates	General public
Zero Fatalities	Education; Program updates	General public
Mountain View Corridor	Communicate project information	Local residents, businesses
UDOT Cottonwood Canyons Transportation	Weather, traffic, construction, road condition updates for Cottonwood Canyons	Cottonwood Canyons users

Instagram

Launched in 2010, Instagram is a photo- and video-based social media platform with more than 112 million users in 2020. Demographics suggest that Instagram is increasingly the platform of choice for young people. Currently UDOT has six Instagram accounts – @utahtransportation, @zerofatalities, @udotpathways_teri, @udotcottonwoods, @udotavy, @mountainview_corridor – and is exploring the possibilities of this platform with photos, videos and graphics.

Instagram is a highly visual platform. Our purpose in using Instagram is to highlight the visual story of keeping Utah moving. Through photos and short videos, we can show Utahns the art of transportation, and provide insight into the work being done every day by UDOT crews. Content should be focused on unique photos, videos and graphics. The use of hashtags is also very important for having a broad reach on Instagram.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a business and employment-oriented online service that operates via websites and mobile apps. It is mainly used for professional networking, including employers posting jobs and job seekers posting their resumes. While many UDOT employees have LinkedIn accounts, UDOT doesn't officially use the platform except to occasionally post articles from the Executive Director on important industry-related issues.

YouTube

YouTube is a video-sharing website that allows users to upload, view, rate, share and comment on videos. With more than a billion users, YouTube can have impact in many ways – even in shaping world events. UDOT has one YouTube site: <https://www.youtube.com/user/UtahDOT>. With more than 900 subscribers (as of July 2016) the goal is to tell our story, both internally and externally, through video. These videos focus on project updates, future project introduction. The channel also serves as a hosting site for internal videos.

NextDoor

Nextdoor.com is a neighborhood-based social media platform where users are grouped based on their address. Neighborhood groups are hyper-local forums where users can ask questions, advertise local businesses and sell items. UDOT began looking into the use of Nextdoor.com in 2017, but the platform was limited to city and county organization use. In 2019, the platform was opened to state agency access. Access by state agencies allows posting to the feeds of all users living in the state of Utah (or any combination of defined neighborhoods). However, by 2020, Nextdoor made the decision to charge state agencies to use the platform (with the exception of governor's offices, law enforcement and emergency service agencies). Price for access is determined by the estimated number of Utah households with accounts. As of Aug 2020, there were an estimated 13% of Utah households with accounts on Nextdoor.com. The department has decided not to engage on Nextdoor.com at this time.

GOAL

These social media accounts present an opportunity for the Department to communicate directly with individuals as well as to broadcast to a wide mass audience. In addition, news outlets often report stories after seeing it posted on one of the UDOT accounts.

UDOT's various social media platforms serve as a forum for civil dialogue on transportation issues. UDOT encourages comments from the public and hopes that interested individuals will share thoughts and reactions on a regular basis.

It is our overarching goal, then, that we will use social media to advance UDOT's vision, mission, strategic goals and emphasis areas by engaging in public conversation, discussion and education. This document outlines how we will do that.

OBJECTIVES

UDOT's objectives for employing social media outreach are:

- To communicate openly, honestly and regularly with all of UDOT's stakeholders, which includes the general public, employees and government and industry leaders.
- To increase public perception that UDOT:
 - ✓ Communicates traveler information in an effective, timely manner (rated at 77 percent according to the 2019 UDOT Annual Survey)
 - ✓ Builds safe roads and bridges (81 percent)
 - ✓ Values innovation and plans proactively for future transportation needs (54 and 57 percent, respectively)

KEY AUDIENCES

The following audiences will be targeted to accomplish the stated goal and objectives:

Primary

- General public
- Motorists

Secondary

- State government officials
- National transportation industry (AASHTO, state DOT leadership)
- UDOT employees

STRATEGIES AND TACTICS

Primary Audiences

General Public, Motorists

This audience is mostly concentrated along the Wasatch Front because of population density and the location of employment. There are also significant populations outside the Wasatch Front that are in this audience, and their needs and concerns will be addressed through our social media outreach as well.

The self-interest of this group is primarily to get where they want to go as quickly and easily as possible. They desire more time for family, recreation and personal pursuits, and resent that time being reduced because of traffic delays. They are typically less concerned about UDOT until construction, maintenance issues, or hazardous weather conditions on the roadway inconvenience them.

Daily commuters are generally quick to adapt their routes once made aware of construction delays. However, they greatly dislike being impacted without prior knowledge. This group is predominantly cost conscious and concerned with the current economic climate.

The current relationship and trust with this key audience fluctuates throughout the construction season and/or according to the project(s) encountered on the commute. But UDOT's annual public opinion research indicates that the public holds UDOT in high regard and generally trusts the organization. That trust is considered by UDOT leadership to be our currency with our stakeholders, and it is something of which we are fiercely protective.

Strategy 1: *Improve and unify UDOT's social media presence through consistent and relevant messaging and design across all social media platforms.*

- Tactic 1: Review each social media account and develop individual goals for the account.
- Tactic 2: Avoid duplication of social media presence and consolidate social media accounts where appropriate.
- Tactic 3: Follow UDOT Branding Guidelines for logo and cover images for social media channels and accounts.
- Tactic 4: Develop an editorial calendar for each account to show when information will be posted.
- Tactic 5: Develop a quality assurance/quality control plan
- Tactic 6: Review analytics and talk about upcoming social media messages during the monthly UDOT Communications All-Hands Meeting.

Strategy 2: *Increase quality engagement on social platforms by employing process guidelines for posting and responding to comments in a timely and appropriate fashion.*

- Tactic 1: Develop content guidelines.
- Tactic 2: Develop response protocol and guidelines.
- Tactic 3: Require every major project to provide the UDOT social media specialist a fact sheet with contact information, potential hot-button issues and a Q&A.
- Tactic 4: Add UDOT social media specialist to UDOT media alerts email distribution list.
- Tactic 5: Develop weekly editorial calendars for @UtahDOT Twitter, UtahDOT Facebook page and Utah Transportation Instagram page.

Secondary Audiences

Employees

The Utah Department of Transportation's 1,700 employees have a lot of pride in the Department and the work they do. However, morale sometimes needs a boost due to a number of factors (e.g., pay inequalities, erosion of benefits) and there seems to be some skepticism that the Department truly values its employees.

According to UDOT research, employees prize recognition, and they give and receive it regularly among their peers. They don't receive it as often as they would like from their direct managers or senior leaders.

Strategy 1: *Improve employee loyalty, morale and involvement by recognizing internal accomplishments through the employee website and the Executive Director's Twitter account.*

- Tactic 1: Develop monthly editorial calendar for the Executive Director's Twitter account.
- Tactic 2: Spotlight an employee or division once a month on the Employee Website. Share posts on social media.
- Tactic 3: Honor employees who win Silver Barrel Awards and other honors on the Executive Director's Twitter account, UtahDOT Facebook page, and YouTube website.

Strategy 2: Highlight interesting aspects of UDOT and employee accomplishments.

- Tactic 1: Talk to various employees to encourage participation.
- Tactic 3: Share stories on social media platforms to increase exposure and allow for employee sharing.

Government officials, National Transportation Industry (AASHTO, state DOT leadership, Etc.)

The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) is an influential group of state transportation leaders who exchange information, best practices, and innovations to develop and maintain a national transportation network. This audience also promotes national legislation, sets technical standards, and adopts innovative engineering and management techniques. UDOT social media posts targeted to these audiences will help reinforce the Department's standing as a national leader in support of transportation innovation.

Strategy 1: Reinforce UDOT's standing as a national leader in transportation innovation through posting consistently on the UDOT Executive Director's Twitter account.

- Tactic 1: Develop weekly editorial calendar for the Executive Director's Twitter account.
- Tactic 2: Gather news articles and trend pieces to link to and add commentary and share articles on the Executive Director's LinkedIn account. Route through Communications Director.
- Tactic 3: Research other social media outlets that would be appropriate in order to have an industry presence.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR

Each social media platform contains analytic monitoring tools to help gauge the success of social media content and reach. Statistics are typically divided into impressions, interactions, and followers.

UDOT's social media goal is to reach as many Utahns as possible with information about transportation and road safety issues, and engage users to further that reach. Thus, the goal is to consistently increase the number of followers and interactions with users.

Analytic tools should be reviewed regularly to identify what content is performing well and what areas need improvement. UDOT will strive for an average engagement rate of .5%-.9% across social media channels. (Engagement rate is defined as the number of people who liked, commented, shared or clicked on a post/ People who saw the post.)