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# Chapter 1. Overview of Social Media

#### 1. Overview of Social Media

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| Introduction | This topic provides an overview of VBA’s social media policy and procedures. |

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| Change Date | Revised August 2016 |

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| a. What is Social Media? | Social media refers to online tools and services that allow a user to create public content. It also allows for the easy sharing of information, including existing content. The use of such tools is highly encouraged by [VA Directive 6515](http://www1.va.gov/vapubs/viewPublication.asp?Pub_ID=551&amp;FType=2).  Examples of social media include blogs, wikis, podcasts and social networks. |

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| b. Why Use of Social Media is Important for VBA | The use of social media provides the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) with an opportunity to reach Veterans, survivors, service members, family members and the general public with new methods of communication.  VBA *should* reach out to its constituents through the media environments identified by the Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs (OPIA). Social media venues will allow VBA to engage its stakeholders, who will, in turn, expand VBA’s outreach efforts in an on-line “virtual environment.”  VBA will gain the ability to secure real-time feedback on the quality of various programs and services, a venue to promote upcoming events or announcements, and an avenue to listen to our target audience. |

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| c. Types of Social Media Chosen by VBA | OPIA has identified the use of Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Google+, Pinterest and Instagram as the approved social media for each Administration within VA.  The vision is to provide VA’s external stakeholders with a consolidated social networking experience. |