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## **Electronic Records Management: Strategies for Managing Retention of Inappropriate Social Media Comments**

**Purpose: Provide guidance to state and local agencies on how to manage inappropriate social media comments.**

Agencies sometimes receive comments on social media posts that are considered “inappropriate”. Inappropriate social media comments may contain:

- Bad language
- Bullying
- Factually incorrect information regarding an agency
- Threatening language
- Offensive images

Agencies should not delete comments on a social media post, as they could relate to agency business.

Here is one strategy for retaining inappropriate social media comments:

1. **Write and make available an agency social media policy** that defines “inappropriate comments” and states that they may be removed from view.
2. **Hide inappropriate comments** if they are disrespectful in nature, or contain factually incorrect information or threatening language regarding a situation or agency.
3. **Retain** inappropriate comments for the appropriate retention period, based on their content and function.

An agency may also decide to disable comments on a social media post or platform. However, there are some issues with this approach:

1. **Comments could** relate to agency business.
2. **Comments may be needed or desired** as input and feedback.

**Additional advice regarding the management of public records is available from  
Washington State Archives:**