

Social Security Administration Privacy Impact Assessment

- **Name of project**

Social Media Third-Party Websites and Applications System

- **Unique project identifier**

N/A

- **Privacy Impact Assessment Contact**

Social Security Administration
Office of Communications
440 Altmeyer Building
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- **Background**

Internet-based services using social media have become increasingly popular. Web-based technologies such as blogs, wikis, and social networks enable people to communicate and share information and resources. The Social Security Administration (SSA) is using these technologies as a platform for providing information about the agency to the public. In using such technologies, we follow the President's Transparency and Open Government Memorandum (January 21, 2009) and the OMB Director's Open Government Directive Memorandum (December 8, 2009).

We use third-party websites and applications to promote transparency, encourage public participation, and increase collaboration. Social media is an excellent tool to inform people about programs, receive feedback from the public, and announce updates and changes we have made to improve our programs and services.

- **Describe the information we plan to collect, why we will collect the information, how we intend to use the information, and with whom we will share the information.**

Many third-party websites or applications request personally identifiable information (PII) when a user registers. Such websites or applications may ask for PII, such as first and last name, contact information, and user name. While SSA has access to the public's registration

information, we do not use this information in our social media applications and we do not collect, maintain, or disseminate any PII from them. We have a comment policy to discourage posting PII and we advise users to read this policy before making any publicly accessible comments. We monitor sites regularly and remove any PII a person submits in the comments section. We use filters provided by the third-party sites to identify PII, such as the numeric pattern of an SSN to prevent posting publicly viewed information. While the agency uses third-party applications, we do not capture any information using automated tracking technologies.

Since SSA does not maintain any PII in connection to our Social Media Third-Party Websites and Applications System, we do not share any information with other agencies or organizations.

- **Describe the information we retain, and for how long.**

SSA will not retain any PII made available by third-party websites or applications.

- **Describe the administrative and technological controls we have in place or that we plan to use to secure the information we will collect.**

The Senior Agency Official for Privacy will keep the agency security unit informed of current statutory and regulatory privacy protection requirements for PII and provide information required to meet privacy-related security requirements. We have implemented security risk analyses by examining the third-party website's or application's privacy policy to evaluate risks and determine whether the website or application is appropriate for SSA's use. Also, we have reviewed the terms of service for each third-party website or application to address potential privacy risks. In addition, we will monitor such social media tools to remove personal information users may post. The agency has a limited number of employees that may access social media and we provided them guidelines for acceptable use of social media applications for official work purposes.

We also prominently brand our official seal on third-party websites and applications to distinguish our activities from those of non-government entities.

- **Describe the impact on individuals' privacy rights.**

Do we afford people an opportunity to decline to provide information?

Yes. Members of the public use third-party websites or applications voluntarily. We do not require users to provide any PII. Individuals may continue to access agency programs through our homepage at www.socialsecurity.gov and www.segurossocial.gov and may continue to use other resources to obtain information on SSA's activities.

Do we afford people an opportunity to consent to only particular uses of the information?

Yes. Third-party websites or applications require users to provide information to gain access to the site but allow users to set their own privacy settings. Since the settings vary for each website or application, we recommend users visit the privacy controls settings to learn more about modifying privacy levels. We recommend that users also remain aware of a website or application's current privacy policy.

When the agency collects information in the course of our business, such as processing claims for Social Security benefits, we always advise claimants of the purposes for which we are collecting the information.

- **Does the collection of this information require a new system of records under the Privacy Act (5 U.S.C. § 552a) or an alteration to an existing system of records?**

No. The Social Media Third-Party Websites and Applications System does not require a new Privacy Act system of records or an alteration to an existing system of records. This system is not intended to collect or maintain PII.

PIA CONDUCTED BY PRIVACY OFFICER, SSA:

Nancy Swyzyn
Signature

9/9/11
Date

PIA REVIEWED BY THE SENIOR AGENCY PRIVACY OFFICIAL, SSA:

David F. Bloch
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13 Sept 11
Date