Appendix 1. Interview guide

Part 1 – Introduction

The interviewer introduces her/himself. It is stated from the start that this research is part of a project conducted jointly by the University of [...] and the University of [...]. The main goals of the study are exposed at the start of the interview, including the two research questions: how are social media adopted and used in Nordic municipalities? And what are the drivers of engagement on local government's social media accounts? All interviewees are told that the study relies on their expertise and experience as communication managers in Nordic municipalities. They are also told that the interview will last approximately 30 minutes and will be conducted in a semi-directive format, meaning that new ideas can be brought up during the exchange, beyond the questions asked. Reminders are also raised by the interviewer. They concern the fact that interviewees speak on behalf of the organization; they must mention if/when they speak on behalf of themselves. Additionally, the content of the interviews will be treated anonymously and presented in an aggregated manner in academic publications. Finally, the interviewer thanks the interviewee for their time.

Part II – Adoption of social media

Main question: How and when did the city council start communicating on social media profile?

Sub-questions:

- Could you talk to me about the mission and goals that you have with your city council social media profile?
- Do you think there is leadership at the head of your institution supporting social media usage?
- Who fostered the adoption process and use of social media by the city ?
- How did regulations (local, regional or national) shape the social media adoption process?

Part III – Use and management of social media

Main question: How are social media accounts of your organization managed?

Sub-questions:

- Who is leading the process, how are decisions taken?
- Could you describe a normal day in your office regarding social media management?
- Could you tell us how many people work in social media management?
- How are you organized? Who is posting? Do you respond to comments?
- Do you have an editorial charter to define how to post and/or respond to comments?
- Did your organization propose social media management training to their employees?

Part III – Engagement on social media

Main question: What are some of the most important policies governing social media profiles in your organization? Is engagement part of it?

Sub-questions:

- Is engagement important for your communication on social media?
- What is the most important aspect of engagement in your opinion?
- Which tools/means are used to increase engagement?
- How do you measure engagement? What are the most important factors identified?
- Does fostering engagement backfire in certain cases? If yes, how, and what are you doing to prevent and/or solve these problems?

Part IV – Interviewee's role and organization

Main question: What is your role in the municipality you work? How is the communication division or department organized?

Sub-questions:

- How long have you been working with social media in public administrations?
- Do you have previous experience in social media management in another sector?
- Did you receive training for social media management from your City Council?
- What do you think are the most difficult challenges in managing social media in public organizations?

Part IV – Additional questions and conclusion

- Is there anything important we haven't covered? Would you like to add anything?
- If this isn't the case, we would like to thank you again for your time and your valuable inputs.
- We will now transcript your interview and analyze the content with a thematic nodes methodology. As mentioned earlier, it will be fully anonymized.
- Would you be interested in receiving the results once published ? (Yes / No)

Appendix 2. Survey questions

Part 1 – Introduction

Dear respondent,

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this survey regarding communication and engagement on social media in Nordic municipalities. This study is conducted by the University of [...] and the University of [...].

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this research is to shed light on how municipalities address citizen engagement on social media. Time to complete the survey should not take more than 15 minutes. This is an academic study; while we will gladly share our results with you, we will not create a ranking where cities appear individually and compare to each other.

Confidentiality

The information collected will be used for research purposes only and will be kept confidential. In our publications, the data gathered in this survey will be presented in an aggregated manner. This means that your city's name will never appear in our studies, and there will be no possibility for our readers to know to which city we are referring.

Your personal opinion

Your answers will only be considered as your personal opinion, based on your expertise. You are participating in a constructive debate by sharing about your own experience and this has nothing to do with any official statement.

Part II includes questions on your city's presence and communication on social media.

Q1. Which social media platforms are used in your city to communicate with citizens? (multiple answers possible)

☐ Facebook
☐ X (Twitter)
☐ Instagram
☐ YouTube
☐ LinkedIn
☐ TikTok
☐ Other (please specify)

Q2. In terms of frequency, how often do you communicate on these social media platforms?

	Multiple times per day	Once per day	Once in a few days	Once per week	Less than once per week	The city doesn't use this platform
Facebook	o	o	o	o	o	o
X (Twitter)	o	o	o	o	o	o
Instagram	o	o	o	o	o	o
YouTube	o	o	o	o	o	o
LinkedIn	o	o	o	o	o	o
TikTok	o	o	o	o	o	o
Other (please specify): _____	o	o	o	o	o	o

Filter: Display this question if Q1 = Facebook

Q3. How would you rate the city's main communication goals on **Facebook** (1=not important at all; 5=very important)?

	1	2	3	4	5
Promote the city's image			▮		
Collect citizen feedback			▮		
Communicate about the city's activities			▮		
Inform about government decisions			▮		
Communicate about the last press release			▮		
Inform about the next government meetings			▮		
Diffuse prevention campaigns			▮		
Better understand citizens' needs and priorities			▮		
Other (please specify): _____			▮		
Other (please specify): _____			▮		

Q4. How would you rate the city's main communication goals on **X (Twitter)** (1=not important at all; 5=very important)?

	1	2	3	4	5
Promote the city's image			●		
Collect citizen feedback			●		
Communicate about the city's activities			●		
Inform about government decisions			●		
Communicate about the last press release			●		
Inform about the next government meetings			●		
Diffuse prevention campaigns			●		
Better understand citizens' needs and priorities			●		
Other (please specify): _____			●		
Other (please specify): _____			●		

Q5. How would you rate the city's main communication goals on **Instagram** (1=not important at all; 5=very important)?

	1	2	3	4	5
Promote the city's image			●		
Collect citizen feedback			●		
Communicate about the city's activities			●		
Inform about government decisions			●		
Communicate about the last press release			●		
Inform about the next government meetings			●		
Diffuse prevention campaigns			●		
Better understand citizens' needs and priorities			●		
Other (please specify): _____			●		
Other (please specify): _____			●		

Q6. How would you rate the city's main communication goals on **YouTube** (1=not important at all; 5=very important)?

	1	2	3	4	5
Promote the city's image					
Collect citizen feedback					
Communicate about the city's activities					
Inform about government decisions					
Communicate about the last press release					
Inform about the next government meetings					
Diffuse prevention campaigns					
Better understand citizens' needs and priorities					
Other (please specify): _____					
Other (please specify): _____					

Q7. How would you rate the city's main communication goals on **LinkedIn** (1=not important at all; 5=very important)?

	1	2	3	4	5
Promote the city's image					
Collect citizen feedback					
Communicate about the city's activities					
Inform about government decisions					
Communicate about the last press release					
Inform about the next government meetings					
Diffuse prevention campaigns					
Better understand citizens' needs and priorities					
Other (please specify): _____					
Other (please specify): _____					

Q8. How would you rate the city's main communication goals on **TikTok** (1=not important at all; 5=very important)?

	1	2	3	4	5
Promote the city's image			▮		
Collect citizen feedback			▮		
Communicate about the city's activities			▮		
Inform about government decisions			▮		
Communicate about the last press release			▮		
Inform about the next government meetings			▮		
Diffuse prevention campaigns			▮		
Better understand citizens' needs and priorities			▮		
Other (please specify): _____			▮		
Other (please specify): _____			▮		

Q9. How would you rate the city's main communication goals **on the other platform you mentioned** (1=not important at all; 5=very important)?

	1	2	3	4	5
Promote the city's image			▮		
Collect citizen feedback			▮		
Communicate about the city's activities			▮		
Inform about government decisions			▮		
Communicate about the last press release			▮		
Inform about the next government meetings			▮		
Diffuse prevention campaigns			▮		
Better understand citizens' needs and priorities			▮		
Other (please specify): _____			▮		
Other (please specify): _____			▮		

Q10. Has the city enacted an editorial charter or guidelines regarding social media use? (only one answer possible)

☐ Yes
☐ No, but this is in progress
☐ No, there has been no reflection about it so far
☐ No, there is no need for it

Q11. Does the city plan its communication ahead on its social media platforms?

	Facebook	X (Twitter)	Instagram	YouTube	LinkedIn	TikTok	Other
No, the city publishes posts spontaneously	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
Yes, a few days ahead	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
Yes, 1-2 weeks ahead	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
Yes, but less than a month ahead of publication	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
Yes, more between 1 month and 3 months ahead	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
Yes, more than 3 months ahead	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
The city is not active on this/these platform(s)	o	o	o	o	o	o	o

Q12. The city uses social media **mainly** to:

	Facebook	X (Twitter)	Instagram	YouTube	LinkedIn	TikTok	Other
Complement information already published on other communication channels	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
Publish the same information already shared on its other communication channels	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
Publish exclusive content, not shared on its other communication channels	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
The city doesn't use this platform	o	o	o	o	o	o	o

Q13. Did your registration on social media require additional resources? (several answers possible)

☐ No
☐ Yes, hiring of new collaborators
☐ Yes, training of current staff
☐ Yes, increasing working time
☐ Yes, acquisition of new material (e.g., software)
☐ Yes, other (please specify): _____

Q14. Does the use of social media in city communications benefit from political support from the city authorities? (only one answer possible)

☐ No, they don't support social media use
☐ Yes, they show little support for social media use
☐ Yes, they show moderate support for social media use
☐ Yes, they show strong support for social media use

Part III includes questions on your city's monitoring and evaluation of citizen engagement on social media.

Q15. Does your city evaluate citizen engagement on social media?

☐ Yes
☐ No

Filter: Display this question if Q15 = No

Q16. Why did your city decide to not monitor or evaluate citizen engagement on social media? (several answers possible)

☐ The city doesn't find it particularly useful
☐ It isn't useful, because the city communication on social media isn't frequent
☐ It would be useful, but the city doesn't have enough human resources
☐ It would be useful, but the city staff doesn't have the necessary expertise
☐ It would be useful, but the city doesn't have the adequate evaluation tools
☐ Other reason (please specify): _____

Filter: Display this question if Q15 = No

Q17. Does the city have a plan to evaluate citizen engagement on social media in the future? (only one answer possible)

☐ No
☐ Maybe (still not thinking about it)
☐ Yes, at some point (ongoing reflection)
☐ Yes, in the near future (already decided)

Filter: Display this question if Q15 = Yes

Q18. Which objectives are the most important when exchanging with citizens on social media (1=not important at all; 5=very important)?

	1	2	3	4	5
Increase awareness about the city's projects			●		
Increase the attractiveness of the city's social media pages			●		
Position the city as a responsive actor			●		
Increase citizens' trust in government			●		
Benefit from the interactive nature of social media			●		
Other (please specify): _____			●		

Filter: Display this question if Q15 = Yes

Q19. How do you react to comments posted by users on your social media pages? (only one answer possible)

☐ Systematically
☐ Selectively, if users require clarification or address critical issues
☐ Selectively, we actively monitor and remove comments that violate our policies
☐ Never, the city doesn't have the necessary resources to react
☐ Never, the city doesn't want to engage in a debate with users
☐ Never, for other reasons (please specify): _____

Filter: Display this question if Q15 = Yes

Q20. How frequently does the city evaluate its activity on social media? (only one answer possible)

☐ Daily
☐ Weekly
☐ Monthly
☐ Every 3 months
☐ Every 6 months
☐ Once a year
☐ Never
☐ Other (please specify): _____

Filter: Display this question if Q15 = Yes

Q21. How do you evaluate citizen engagement on your social media pages?

	Never	Sometimes	About half of the time	Most of the time	Always
Quantitatively: we look at the metrics of engagement (reactions, likes, shares, comments, etc.)	o	o	o	o	o
Quantitatively: we look at the number of exchanges between users	o	o	o	o	o
Qualitatively: we look at the type of comments shared between users	o	o	o	o	o
Qualitatively: we look at the quality of our exchanges with users	o	o	o	o	o
We look at the **type of engagement generated by our posts**, based on the different types of posts we publish	o	o	o	o	o

Filter: Display this question if Q15 = Yes

Q22. What tools do you use to assess citizen engagement on your social media pages? (several answers possible)

☐ We use tools provided by social media platforms
☐ We use specific analytical software
☐ We analyze the posts manually
☐ We prefer a general overview of the engagement generated by our posts

Filter: Display this question if Q15 = Yes

Q23. Is this evaluation effort part of a global communication approach to citizen engagement? (only one answer possible)

☐ Yes, the city evaluate citizen engagement on various platforms (website, newsletters, offline channels, ...), including social media
☐ Yes, the city evaluate citizen engagement, but only on social media
☐ Yes, the city evaluate citizen engagement, but only on other channels
☐ No, the city doesn't evaluate citizen engagement

Part IV includes general questions about communications in your city.

Q24. Who is mainly in charge of managing social media communication in your city? (several answers possible)

☐ The communication manager
☐ The community manager
☐ The communication team/department
☐ The head of the municipal administration
☐ The city mayor's team
☐ Other (please specify): _____

Q25. How long has the person responsible for social media communication been working for the city? (only one answer possible)

☐ Less than a year
☐ Between 1 and 3 years
☐ Between 3 and 5 years
☐ More than 5 years

Q26. How many people work for the city's communication on social media (full-time equivalent)? (only one answer possible)

☐ Less than one person
☐ One person
☐ Between 2 and 3 people
☐ Between 4 and 5 people
☐ More than 5 people

Q27. You are:

☐ Head of communications / Communications Director / Communication Manager
☐ Digital Communications Manager / Community Manager (social media)
☐ Public Relations Manager
☐ Head of City Administration / City Manager
☐ Other (please specify): _____

Q28. As of 2024, what is the population range of the city you are working for?

☐ 10,000 - 19,999 inhabitants
☐ 20,000 - 49,999 inhabitants
☐ 50,000 - 99,999 inhabitants
☐ More than 100,000 inhabitants

Q29. In which country and city are you working? The name of your city will <u>not</u> appear in our study.

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