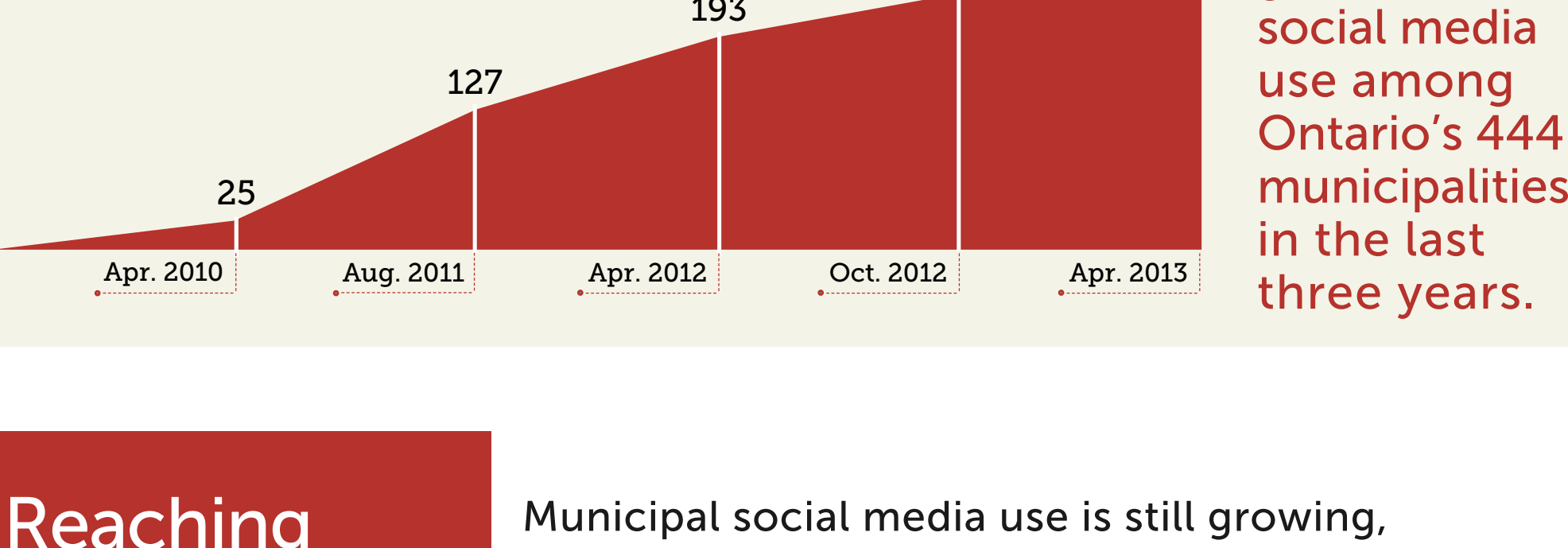
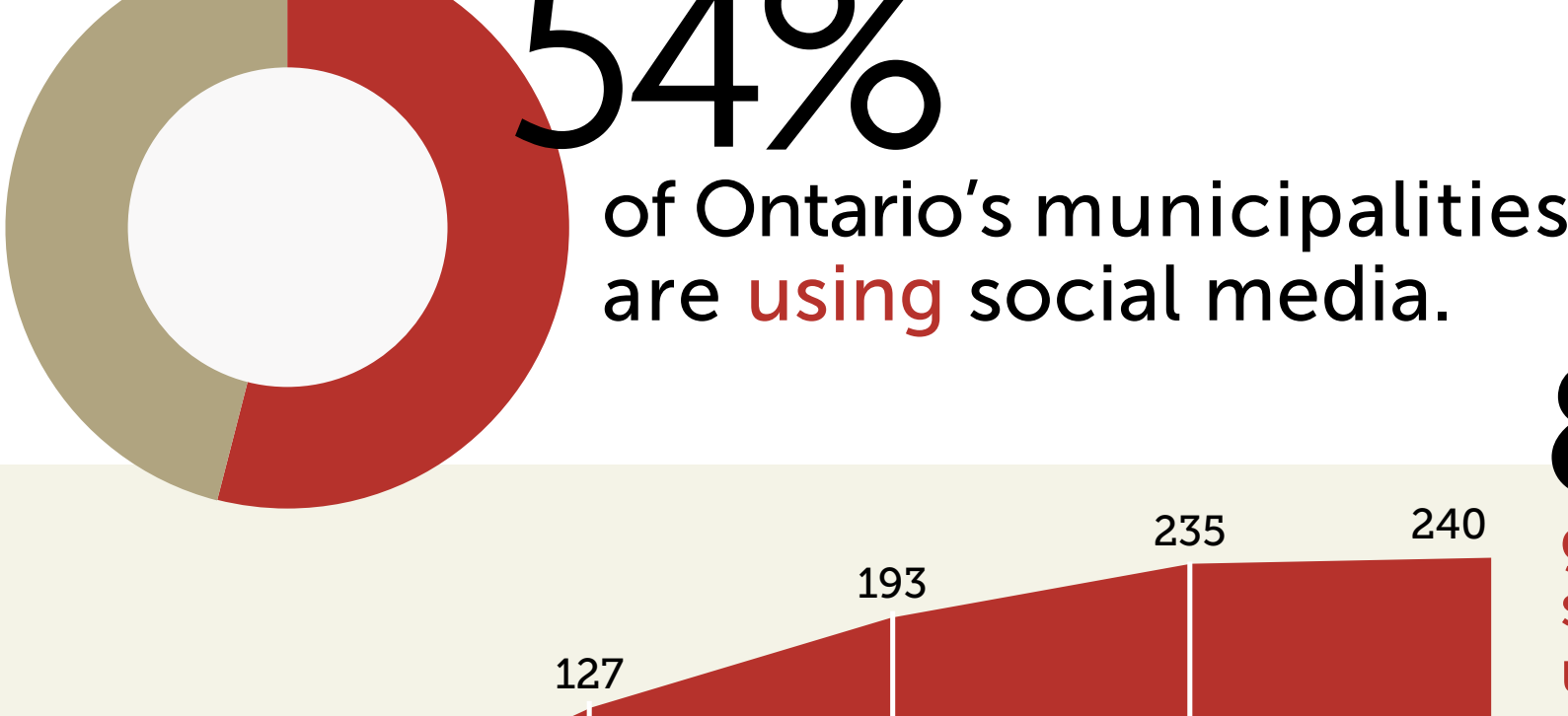




# ONTARIO MUNICIPALITIES: WHO'S ON SOCIAL MEDIA?

## Spring 2013 Edition

Social media use by Ontario municipalities continues to grow, right across the province. This infographic from Redbrick Communications provides a snapshot of who's using it, what platforms they are using and how.

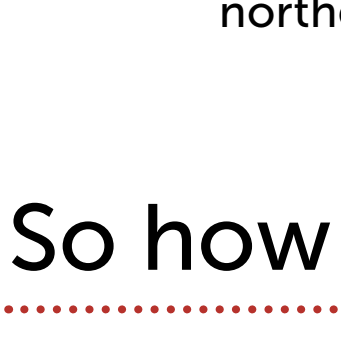


## Reaching a plateau?

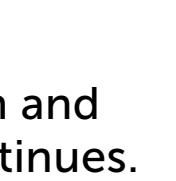
Municipal social media use is still growing, but with just over half currently using social media, that growth has started to slow down. Here are our thoughts on current trends:



Before launching a social media presence, many are taking time to research and plan the approach that makes the most sense given a municipality's particular circumstances.

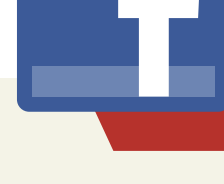


High-speed **broadband capacity** is still expanding across rural, eastern and northern Ontario. We may expect to see future growth as this trend continues.



A perceived lack of **time and resources** may be preventing some municipalities from signing up and logging on, but many are learning how to manage accounts in simple, but effective ways, with limited resources.

## So how are municipalities **using** social media?



94%



70%

Municipalities **"like"** Facebook the best, but they're tweeting too. Of the 240 Ontario municipalities using social media, most are using Facebook, and more than two-thirds are using Twitter.

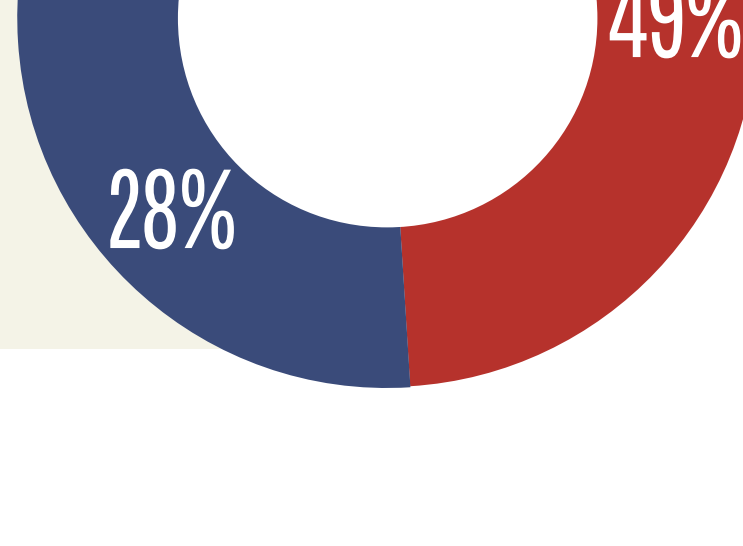
“The City of Mississauga has embraced social media as a two-way communications channel with our citizens, allowing them to access information at a time and place that is preferred by them. We currently have **17** Facebook and **11** Twitter accounts along with a dedicated YouTube channel so that we can interact and build an engaged, online community.”  
**Ivana Di Millo, Director, Communications, City of Mississauga**

## One account vs. many

Almost half use a **Centralized** approach, using one central account per social media platform.

Just under a third use a **Decentralized** model, using different accounts for different departments or service areas.

The rest (23%) use a mix of the two, using a central account, plus a handful of distinct accounts for specialized areas or departments.



## Getting the **word** out

71%

of active municipalities promote their social media presence on their websites.

29%

don't mention it on their websites.



Find us on Facebook



Follow us on Twitter

“We've been able to leverage our well-established reputation as a tourist destination to build a robust social media program, giving us even more opportunities to share Stratford's great stories with new audiences.”  
**Dan Mathieson, Mayor, City of Stratford**

## By **Population**

Small

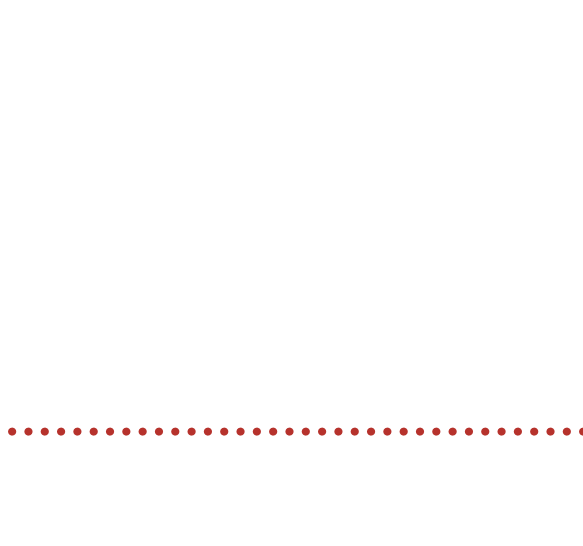
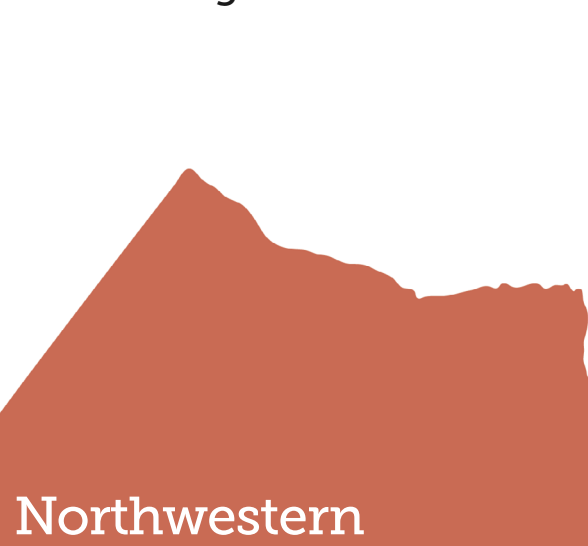
0 to 10,000 people

Medium

10,000 to 75,000 people

Large

75,000+ people



■ = Using Social Media ■ = Not Using Social Media

## By **Region**

Not surprisingly, social media use is highest in Southern Ontario.

Why is social media use so low in Northeastern Ontario? It's partly because of the much higher proportion of municipalities with very small populations (less than 1,000 people).

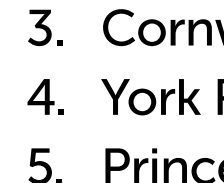
Over the past six months, growth was highest in Western Ontario.



“Eastern Ontario municipalities are driving a \$170 million project to expand rural broadband capacity, and this will create new opportunities for municipalities to engage the public through social media.”  
**Jim Pine, CAO, Hastings County & Project Co-Lead for the Eastern Ontario Regional Network**



## Facebook “All Stars”



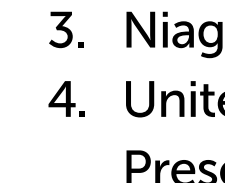
Most Liked

1. Sault Ste. Marie
2. London
3. Cornwall
4. York Region
5. Prince Edward County
6. Ajax
7. Kitchener
8. Mississauga
9. Guelph
10. Brockville



Most Liked Per Capita

1. Ignace
2. Pelee
3. Schreiber
4. Terrace Bay
5. Nipigon
6. Red Rock
7. Kirkland Lake
8. Cochrane
9. St. Marys
10. Goderich



Most Active

1. Kitchener
2. Oshawa
3. Niagara Falls
4. United Counties of Prescott and Russell
5. Kawartha Lakes
6. Saugeen Shores
7. Kincardine
8. Hanover
9. Waterloo
10. North Dumfries

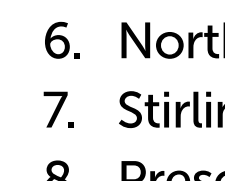


## Twitter “All Stars”



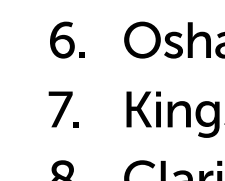
Most Followed

1. Ottawa
2. Toronto
3. Guelph
4. Kitchener
5. Stratford
6. Mississauga
7. Kingston
8. Niagara Falls
9. London
10. Waterloo Region



Most Followed Per Capita

1. Georgian Bay
2. Nipigon
3. Stratford
4. Terrace Bay
5. Gananoque
6. North Kawartha
7. Stirling-Rawdon
8. Prescott
9. Powassan
10. Niagara Falls



Most Active

1. Kawartha Lakes
2. Kitchener
3. Waterloo
4. Stratford
5. Ottawa
6. Oshawa
7. Kingston
8. Clarington
9. St. Catharines
10. York Region

“Nipigon takes a simple, manageable approach to social media. We post relevant, informative and interesting pieces twice a day to Facebook and Twitter and use free measurement tools to understand our audience. We figured out what worked best, we stuck to it, and our following grew over time.”  
**Charmaine McCraw, Economic Development Officer, Township of Nipigon**

## Notable Trends



Population or size is **no indication** of the amount of staff or staff time that's being allocated to managing municipal social media accounts.

We've seen municipalities who manage active accounts using **one or two staff members**, others that dedicate **full time staff** or **teams** to the task, and **everything in between**.

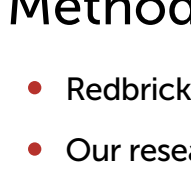
These **differences in approach** are one of the more interesting aspects of current municipal social media use. The **range of sophistication** is also interesting. Our own bias is that **simple works**, and we've seen many examples from municipalities large and small that reinforce our view.

## Social Media in Emergencies

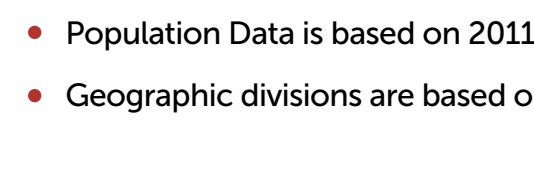


Social media activity spikes significantly in emergency situations. Social media can also be harnessed in a crisis to keep residents informed, to participate quickly in discussions and to correct misinformation or rumours.

Relatively few Ontario municipalities have the capacity to use social media in a crisis. Almost half have no social media presence at all, and those that are using it are unlikely to have the capacity that's needed to keep up with social media demands in a crisis.



Only **20%** of active Ontario municipalities have **social media policies** to guide municipal use of social media. Another **10%** have policies in development.



**Redbrick Communications** is a Mississauga-based agency with an extensive municipal practice. This research was produced as a part of our Municipal Social Media Survey.

Want to receive future survey results?

Follow us on Twitter at: **@RedbrickComms** or **@brianlambie**

For more **free resources** on municipal social media, including sample policies, policy development advice, past survey results and more, visit: **www.redbrick.ca/resources.asp** or **bit.ly/RedSMS**.

## Methodology:

- Redbrick's Municipal Social Media Survey looked at social media use by all 444 municipalities in Ontario.
- Our research has looked at social media activity between April 2010 and April 2013.
- Our Spring 2013 research examined the use of Facebook and Twitter only.
- Data on 'Likes,' 'Followers' and 'Most Active' applies to central accounts only, and was collected the week of April 15, 2013.
- 'Most Active' is based on the total number of posts or tweets in March 2013, for central accounts only.
- Population Data is based on 2011 population census data from Statistics Canada.
- Geographic divisions are based on the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing OnRAMP regional divisions.