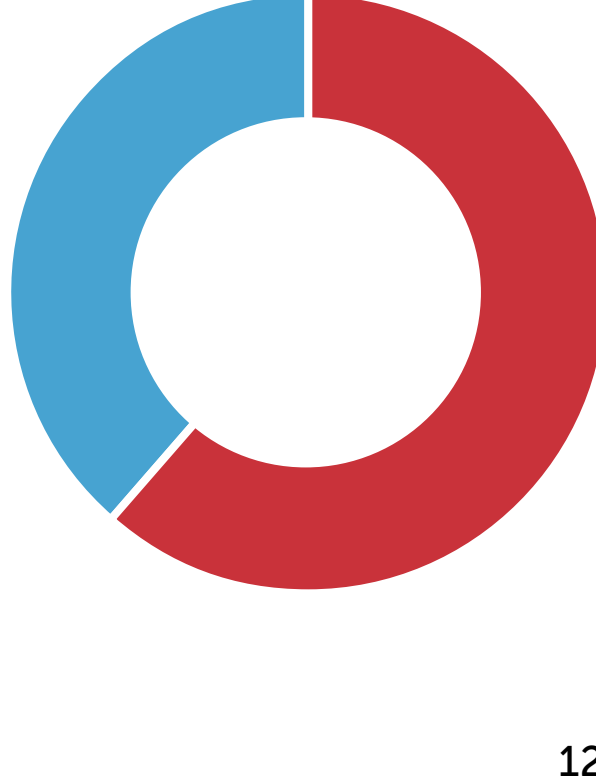




# ONTARIO MUNICIPALITIES: WHO'S ON SOCIAL MEDIA?

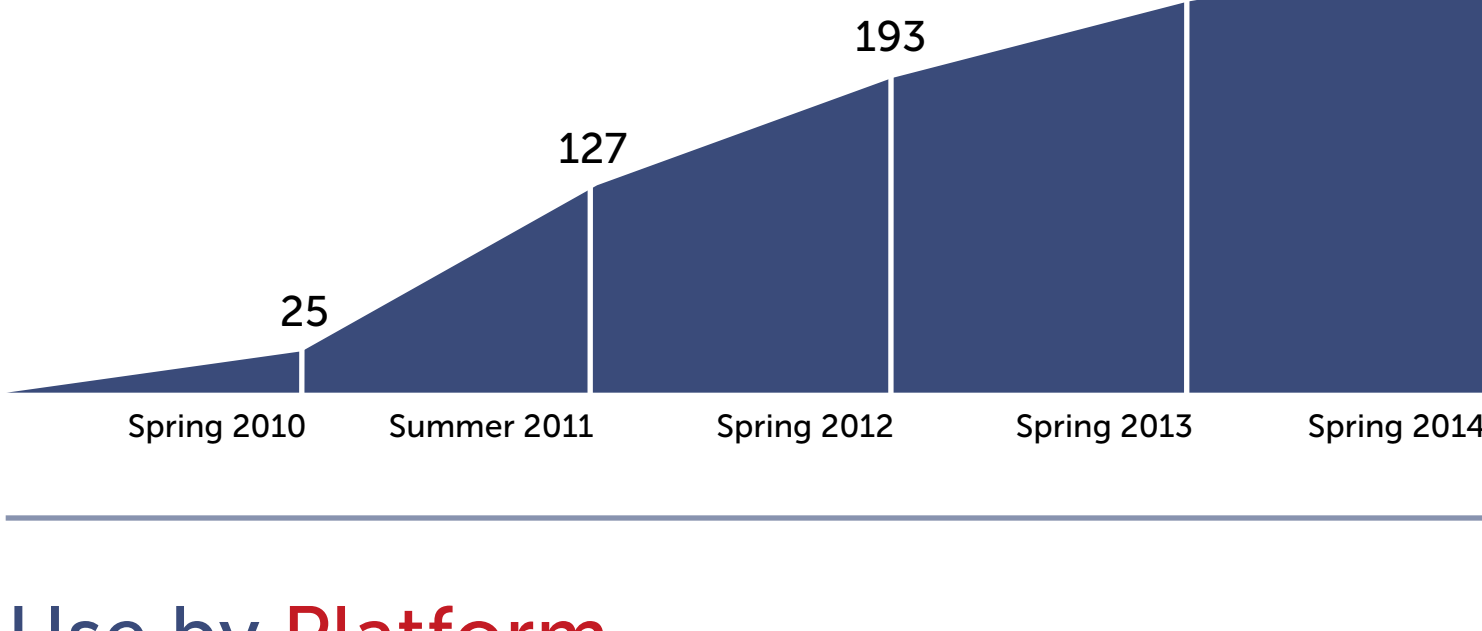
## Spring 2014 Edition

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.



**61%** of Ontario's 444 municipalities are using social media.

Social media use by Ontario municipalities has grown by more than **10x** in the past four years.

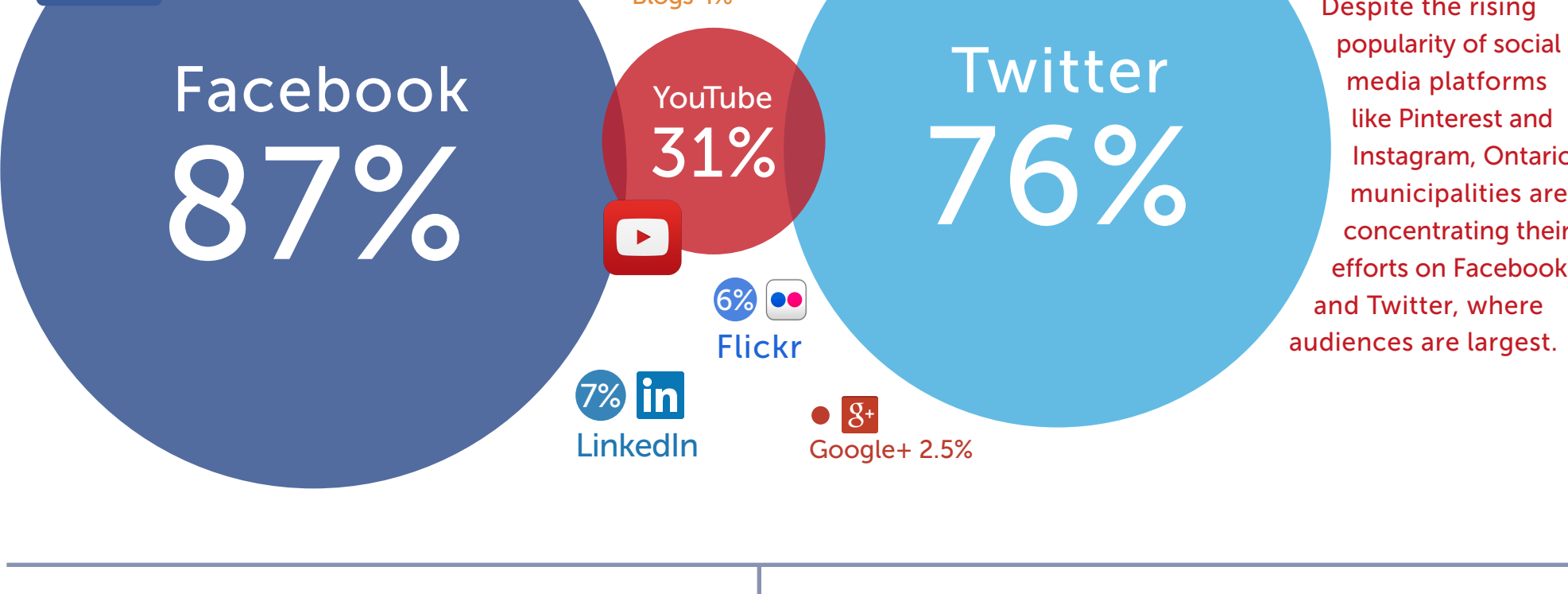


Of the 271 Ontario municipalities using social media, almost **30%** have joined in the past two years.

**11%** got started within the past year.

## Use by Platform

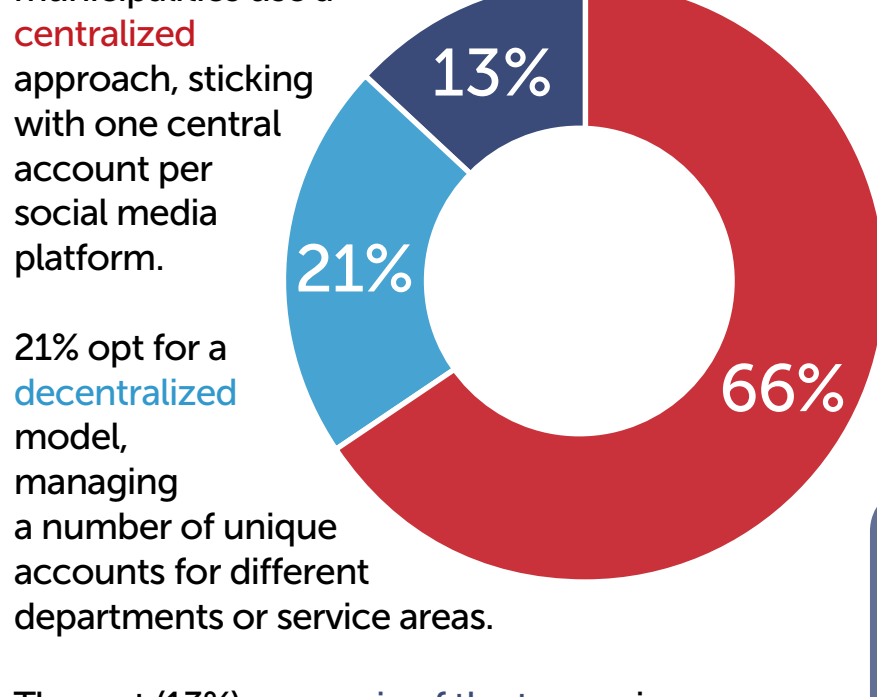
Municipalities "like" Facebook the best, but they are tweeting, blogging and pinning too. Here's where you will find Ontario's social media municipalities:



### Playing Favourites?

Despite the rising popularity of social media platforms like Pinterest and Instagram, Ontario municipalities are concentrating their efforts on Facebook and Twitter, where audiences are largest.

## One account or many?



21% opt for a decentralized model, managing a number of unique accounts for different departments or service areas.

The rest (13%) use a mix of the two, using a central account, plus a limited number of distinct accounts for specialized areas or departments.

## Getting the word out



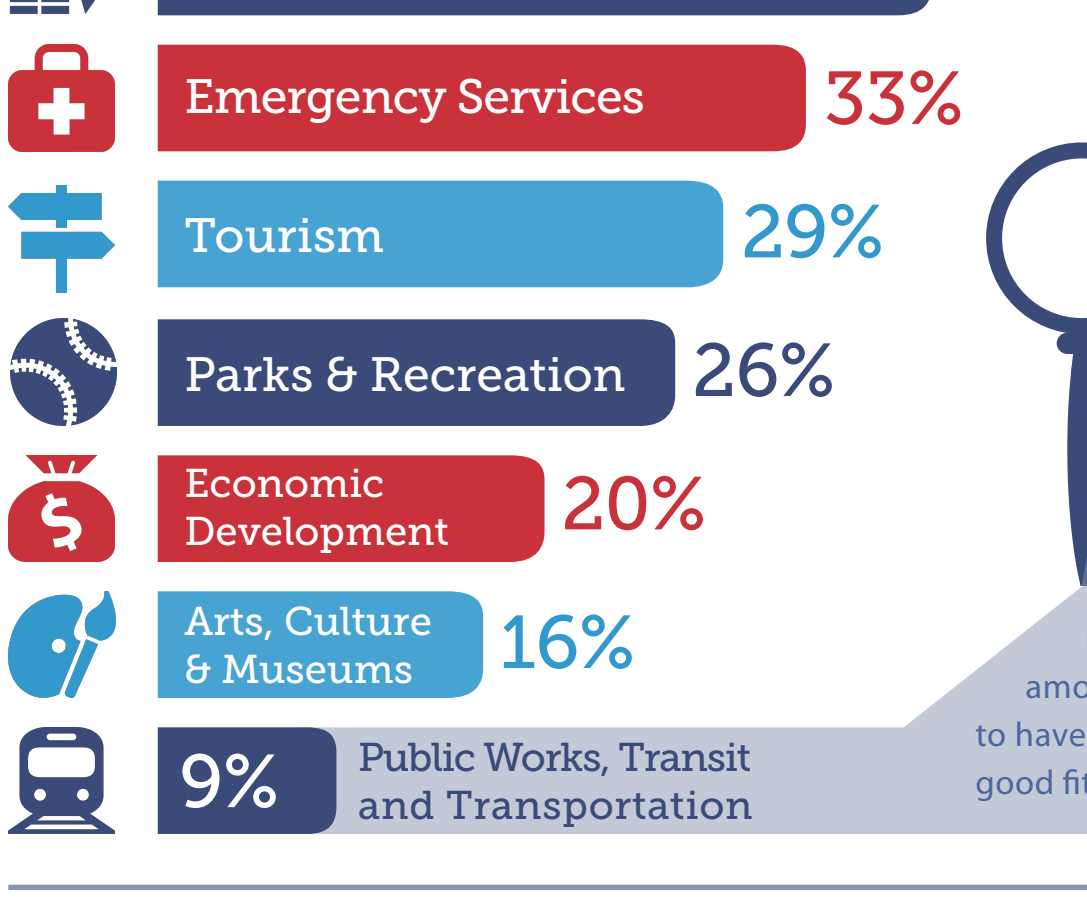
**75%** of active municipalities promote their social media presence on their websites.

**25%** don't mention it on their websites.

Over the past year, more and more municipalities have come to favour a centralized approach. One possible reason? As more municipalities learn the ropes and start to fine-tune their approach, they may be finding that they can manage their time more efficiently and reach larger audiences using one main account. Large municipalities are typically the exception to this rule. The City of Mississauga, for example, has 35 different accounts on either Facebook and Twitter, and the City of Guelph operates 17.

## Specialized accounts

Despite the shift towards a centralized approach, some departments are branching off on their own. Of the more than 120 municipalities that operate specialized accounts, these are the departments that are most likely to have their own dedicated social media presence:



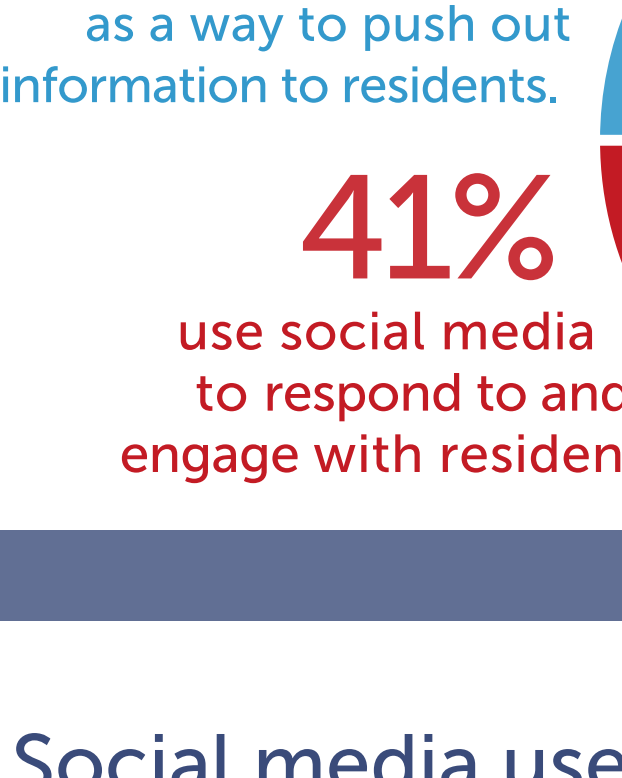
These departments tend to have distinct, specialized audiences, justifying the need for a separate social media presence. For the most part, however, Ontario municipalities are finding that it's more effective to use one or two main accounts to reach a larger audience on a number of different topics.

Relatively few municipalities have public transit systems, but among those that do, it is very common for their transit systems to have a dedicated social media presence. Twitter is an especially good fit for a fast-paced service like transit.

## Putting the "social" in social media

We know that more than 60% of Ontario's municipalities are active on social media, but how many are using social media to actively engage with residents?

### Why are some reluctant to engage?



Smaller municipalities with fewer staff may be pressed to find time to monitor accounts and respond to feedback. The good news? We've seen examples of municipalities of every size managing active, responsive accounts. The time that staff spend on this really varies.

Another reason could be nervousness around how to respond to negative comments and complaints. Redbrick's Social Media Response Chart offers tips on when and how to respond to comments on social media. You can also look to the City of Belleville's Facebook page and the Town of Newmarket's Twitter account for examples of municipalities that are doing this well.

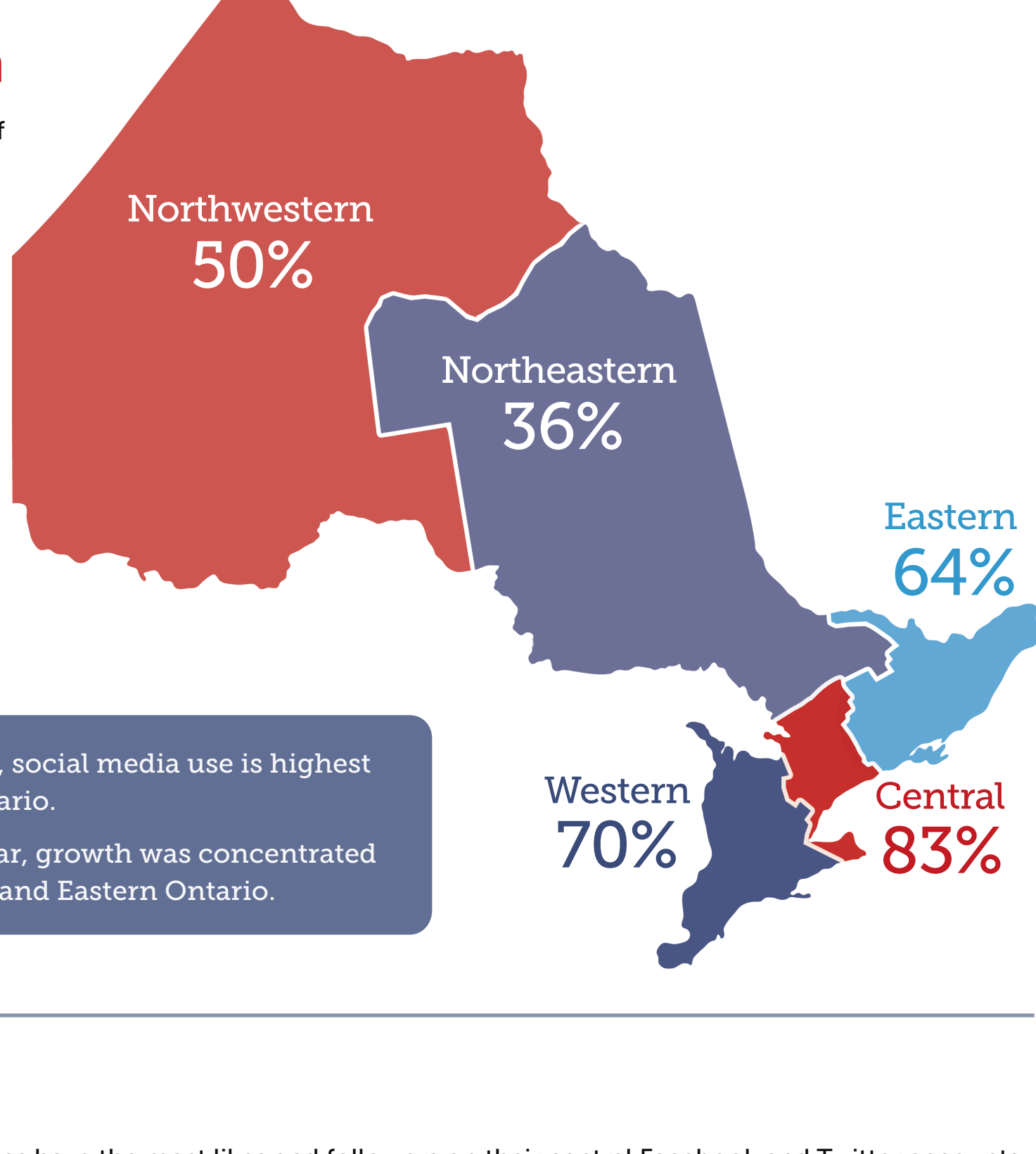
## Social media use by population



Social media use by smaller municipalities is on the rise. Over the past year, municipalities with populations under 10,000 accounted for more than two-thirds of growth.

## Social media use by region

Check out what percentage of municipalities in each region are using social media:



Not surprisingly, social media use is highest in Southern Ontario. Over the past year, growth was concentrated in Northeastern and Eastern Ontario.

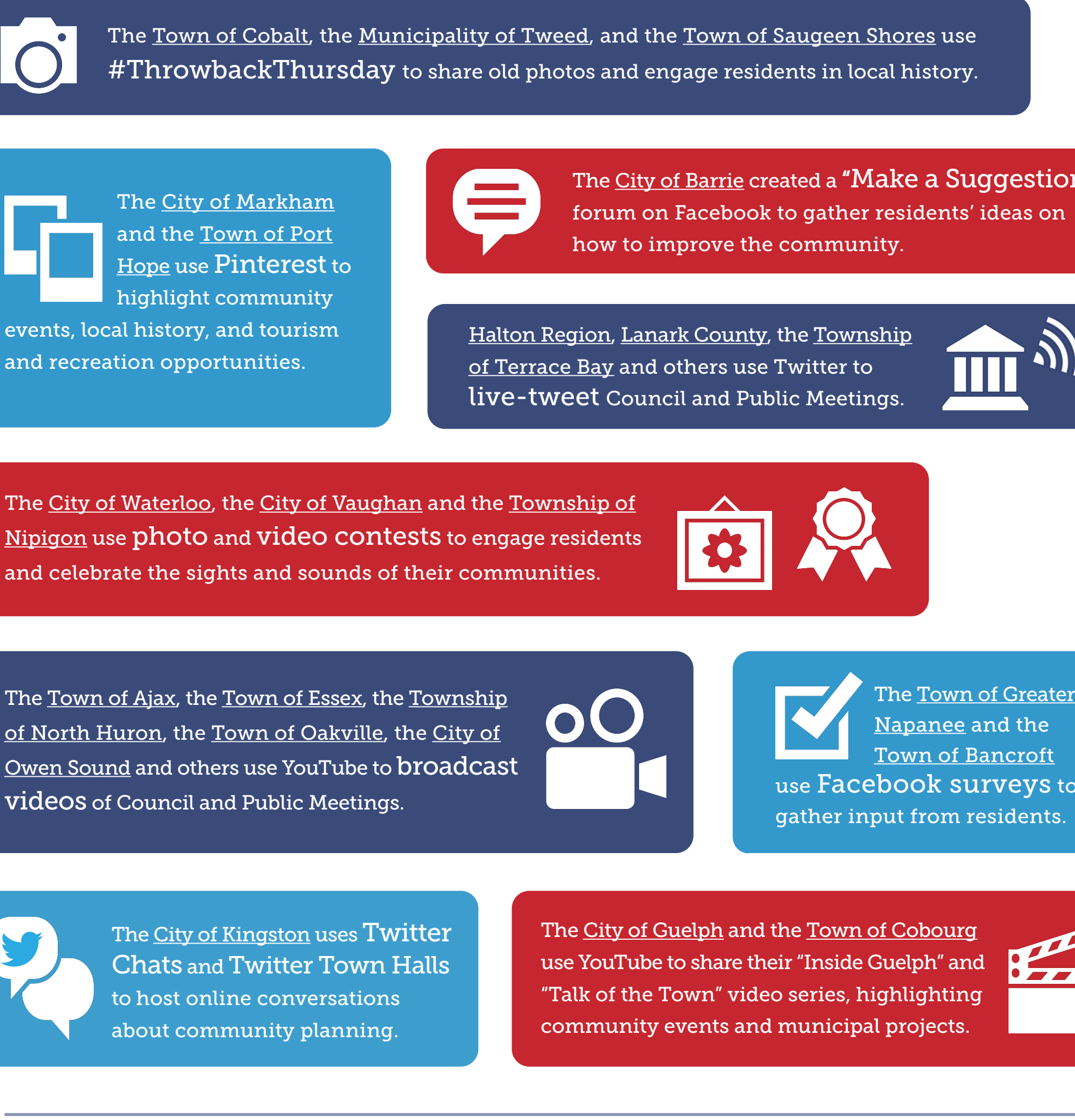
## Most popular

Check out which municipalities have the most likes and followers on their central Facebook and Twitter accounts:



## Most creative

Municipalities are using social media to reach more of their residents with information about municipal events, programs and services. They're also using it to build good will, improve customer service, and strengthen community pride. Here are some municipalities that stand out for doing it in interesting ways:



## Social media policies

About **28%** of Ontario's active municipalities have social media policies in place to guide their use. Another **7%** have policies in development.

## redbrick communications



Redbrick Communications is a Mississauga-based agency with an extensive municipal practice. This research was produced as a part of our ongoing 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](http://www.redbrick.ca/resources.asp) or [bit.ly/RedSMS](http://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 May 2014.
- Data on 'Likes' and 'Followers' applies to central accounts only, and was collected on May 30, 2014.
- 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.