

Internal Social Media at Marshall Space Flight Center - An Engineer's Snapshot

In the brief span of about six years (2004-2010), social media radically enhanced people's ways of maintaining recreational friendships. Social media's impact on public affairs (PAO) and community engagement is equally striking: NASA has involved millions of non-NASA viewers in its activities via "outward-facing" social media, often in a very "two-way street" fashion. Use of social media as an internal working tool by NASA's tens of thousands of civil servants, onsite contractor employees, and external stakeholders is evolving more slowly. This paper examines, from an engineer's perspective, Marshall Space Flight Center's (MSFC) efforts to bring the power of social media to the daily working environment. Primary emphasis is on an internal Social Networking Service called Explornet that could be scaled Agency-wide. Other topics include MSFC use of other social media day-to-day for non-PAO purposes, some specialized uses of social techniques in space flight control operations, and how to help a community open up so it can discover and adopt what works well.