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Below are a few notable real-world cases signifying these risks.




ONLINE CHANNEL	AGENCY	AMOUNT OF FINE & OTHER SANCTIONS	DESCRIPTION
 Domelights.com	Philadelphia police	\$10 million	A group of black Philadelphia police officers filed a federal lawsuit against their department, alleging an online forum geared toward city police is “infested with racist, white supremacist and anti-African-American content.”  <a href="http://edition.cnn.com/2009/CRIME/07/17/police.racism.lawsuit/">http://edition.cnn.com/2009/CRIME/07/17/police.racism.lawsuit/</a>
 Facebook	Fayette County school	\$2 million	Teen says she was publicly humiliated when Fayette school official used her picture in a public speech on dangers of social media posts.  <a href="http://www.grsmb.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/StudentSuesOverFacebook.pdf">http://www.grsmb.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/StudentSuesOverFacebook.pdf</a>
 Facebook	City of Wapato, City Mayor ( WA)	Claiming \$1.5 million in damages	An officer sued City after the Mayor posted : In his Facebook post, Guzman called Campos a murderer and said he “deserves to die in prison.” He also said Campos was a “disgrace” to the Wapato police department and told Campos that “if you have an ounce of dignity, never show your face in Wapato.” Campos fatally shot 38-year-old Mario Martinez-Torres when responding to a domestic disturbance call on July 31. Police reports say Campos shot Martinez-Torres as he struggled with Campos and another officer. The Yakima County Prosecutor’s Office ruled the shooting justified.  <a href="http://q13fox.com/2017/02/04/officer-sues-city-over-mayors-post-after-police-shooting/">http://q13fox.com/2017/02/04/officer-sues-city-over-mayors-post-after-police-shooting/</a>
Social Media Policy	City of Petersburg, Police Department	\$1.35 million	Police Department was sued after the revisions made to its Social Media Policy violated First Amendment.  <a href="https://www.techdirt.com/articles/20161215/18455936294/court-says-police-chiefs-social-media-policy-violated-first-amendment.shtml">https://www.techdirt.com/articles/20161215/18455936294/court-says-police-chiefs-social-media-policy-violated-first-amendment.shtml</a>
 Facebook	Sparta Township, Sparta Police Department	Claiming \$500,000 in damages	A couple sued department after police post the details of their arrest over facebook.  <a href="http://www.njherald.com/20160731/woman-to-sue-police-sparta-over-facebook-post-on-arrest#">http://www.njherald.com/20160731/woman-to-sue-police-sparta-over-facebook-post-on-arrest#</a>
 Website	Sheboygan city ( WI)	Claiming \$250,000	Jennifer Reisinger says the Sheboygan city attorney ordered her to remove from her Web site a link to the city’s police department, in what she believes was retaliation for her support of recalling Mayor Juan Perez, according to the suit filed. The city went further, the lawsuit claims, launching a criminal investigation of Reisinger for linking to the department on one of her sites.  <a href="http://archive.jsonline.com/news/wisconsin/32597854.html">http://archive.jsonline.com/news/wisconsin/32597854.html</a>

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 Facebook	Genesee County	\$212,500	<p>Genesee County paid \$212,500 to avoid a lawsuit over alleged “malicious” Facebook posts about the sex life of a public dissenter of Sheriff Robert J. Pickell, records show. A proposed lawsuit complaint -- obtained from the county by MLive-The Flint Journal through the Freedom of Information Act -- alleges Lenhoff was “viciously defamed” on Facebook via “fictitious accounts” as retaliation after he spoke out against Pickell during a 2014 sexual misconduct case involving the sheriff’s department.</p> <p><a href="http://www.mlive.com/news/flint/index.ssf/2017/03/county_pays_212500_to_settle_a.html">http://www.mlive.com/news/flint/index.ssf/2017/03/county_pays_212500_to_settle_a.html</a></p>
 Website	Spokane County	\$130,000	<p>Spokane Public Schools will pay a Spokane woman with a history of needling officials \$130,000 after failing to comply with a 2009 public records request. She had filed a request for all “promotional materials on the 2006 and 2009 bonds and levies.” The district failed to fulfill her request for records when it took a narrow definition of her inquiry and made missteps.</p> <p><a href="http://www.spokesman.com/stories/2013/oct/09/spokane-public-schools-to-pay-130000-in-public/">http://www.spokesman.com/stories/2013/oct/09/spokane-public-schools-to-pay-130000-in-public/</a></p>
 Mugshots.com	Bensalem Township	\$75,000	<p>A website that publishes information about criminal defendants over claims that the defendants violated state law when they both failed to have the plaintiff’s criminal record properly expunged and subsequently allowed the publication of his mugshot and supposed crimes on the Internet.</p> <p><a href="http://pennrecord.com/stories/510552688-newsinator-bensalem-pa-police-website-operator-sued-by-n-j-man">http://pennrecord.com/stories/510552688-newsinator-bensalem-pa-police-website-operator-sued-by-n-j-man</a></p>
 Facebook	Minnewaska Area Schools, Minnewaska Area Public Schools	\$70,000	<p>Suit was filed after school officials invited a student into a room and forced her to give them her facebook password.</p> <p><a href="http://www.startribune.com/minnewaska-student-wins-70k-from-school-over-facebook-post/252263751/">http://www.startribune.com/minnewaska-student-wins-70k-from-school-over-facebook-post/252263751/</a></p>
 Facebook	Sheriff Eric Watson and Bradley County, Sheriff	\$41,000	<p>American Atheists Legal Center filed a lawsuit against Bradley County Sheriff’s Office. Allegedly, the department used its official Facebook account to promote and favor religion (Christianity).</p> <p><a href="http://www.patheos.com/blogs/friendlyatheist/2016/08/11/tn-county-owes-atheists-41000-after-sheriff-promoted-christianity-on-departments-facebook-page/">http://www.patheos.com/blogs/friendlyatheist/2016/08/11/tn-county-owes-atheists-41000-after-sheriff-promoted-christianity-on-departments-facebook-page/</a></p>
 Facebook	Officer Stroik and the Village of Arena Police Department, Village of Arena police	\$35,000	<p>Thomas Smith, a Village of Arena - Wisconsin resident, was arrested after posting profanity on the local police department’s Facebook page. His comments were posted in criticism of the department, whose original post he felt contained racial tones. Smith filed a lawsuit against Arena Village Police.</p> <p><a href="https://www.dailydot.com/layer8/village-of-arena-wisconsin-police-department/">https://www.dailydot.com/layer8/village-of-arena-wisconsin-police-department/</a></p>
 Facebook	Village of Arena (WI), Arena Police Department	\$35,000	<p>Man alleges that Arena police violated his civil rights by charging him for calling officers racists on Facebook.</p> <p><a href="https://www.pdwlawfirm.com/2014/11/28/wisconsin-city-sued-over-mans-arrest-for-fb-post-about-police/">https://www.pdwlawfirm.com/2014/11/28/wisconsin-city-sued-over-mans-arrest-for-fb-post-about-police/</a></p>
Social Media Policy	Abbeville, Louisiana, Mayor and Police Chief	\$ 32,900	<p>Suit was filed upon release of Social media policy barring police officers from using social media channels.</p> <p><a href="http://lawenforcement.social/blog/aclu-sues-abbeville-s-mayor-and-police-chief-over-social-media-policy-1">http://lawenforcement.social/blog/aclu-sues-abbeville-s-mayor-and-police-chief-over-social-media-policy-1</a></p>

ONLINE CHANNEL	AGENCY	AMOUNT OF FINE & OTHER SANCTIONS	DESCRIPTION
 Facebook	Honolulu Police Department	\$31,000	<p>After two years of litigation, a Honolulu Federal Court is ordering the Honolulu Police Department to pay \$31K in attorneys fees to Second Amendment activists who sued alleging First Amendment violations after the HPD allegedly removed plaintiffs Facebook comments from an HPD Facebook page.</p> <p><a href="http://www.hawaiifreepress.com/ArticlesMain/tabid/56/ID/12959/HPD-Ordered-to-Pay-31K-over-Censored-Facebook-Comments.aspx">http://www.hawaiifreepress.com/ArticlesMain/tabid/56/ID/12959/HPD-Ordered-to-Pay-31K-over-Censored-Facebook-Comments.aspx</a></p>
 Website	Spokane County	\$ 26,325	<p>A Spokane woman unhappy with an increase in her property taxes won a \$26,325 judgment against Spokane County, which failed to provide a public record she sought as part of a series of requests. She sued the county in for failing to comply with the state Public Records Act after she had sought documents on policies and procedures. The record in question was an old website article on how to improve chances of winning a tax appeal. The county provided thousands of other documents in response to a series of public records requests and contends the failure was an oversight that was complicated by turnover in the assessor's office.</p> <p><a href="http://www.spokesman.com/stories/2014/oct/14/woman-wins-public-records-lawsuit-against-spokane/">http://www.spokesman.com/stories/2014/oct/14/woman-wins-public-records-lawsuit-against-spokane/</a></p>
 Facebook	San Diego County, Sheriff's Department	\$23,000 Attorney fee	<p>Dimitri Karras, owner of Ares Armor in Oceanside, sued San Diego County in October after sheriff's officials deleted his combative comments and then banned him from posting anything further.</p> <p><a href="http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/sdut-sheriff-facebook-lawsuit-settle-karras-2015feb20-story.html">http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/sdut-sheriff-facebook-lawsuit-settle-karras-2015feb20-story.html</a></p>
 Facebook	Atlanta Police Department	\$20,000	<p>The lawsuit, filed June 26, includes the allegation that the APD coerced Baton Bob, whose legal name is Bob Jamerson, into making a Facebook post to his some 5,000 fans that the police treated him well after taking him into custody after he was arrested last June. The suit also alleges Jamerson's Miranda rights were not read to him after he was arrested.</p> <p><a href="https://thegavoice.com/baton-bob-sues-atlanta-police-department-federal-court/">https://thegavoice.com/baton-bob-sues-atlanta-police-department-federal-court/</a></p>
Social Media Policy	Harris County, Harris County Sheriff	\$13,055 legal fees	<p>When a government goes too far in regulating the social media activities of its employees, there are constitutional implications in addition to labor rights. The former is the subject of a case filed against the Harris County Sheriff (HCSO), where employees allege that a social media policy violated their First Amendment right to free speech.</p> <p><a href="http://abc13.com/careers/deputy-claims-social-media-policy-violates-his-rights/269737/">http://abc13.com/careers/deputy-claims-social-media-policy-violates-his-rights/269737/</a></p>
 Facebook	Beech Grove City	\$7412.50 in damages Undisclosed Attorney Fee	<p>The ACLU filed a lawsuit against the city of Beech Grove, on behalf of two women who said the city censored their Facebook comments. The ACLU of Indiana claimed the city violated the First Amendment.</p> <p><a href="http://wncn.com/2016/06/30/indiana-city-faces-first-amendment-lawsuit-over-facebook-comments/">http://wncn.com/2016/06/30/indiana-city-faces-first-amendment-lawsuit-over-facebook-comments/</a></p>

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 Facebook	City of Elkhart - Martinsville, Martinsville Police Department	\$2,300 in costs and attorney fees for each complainant	The ACLU of Indiana filed lawsuits against two municipal entities on behalf of Richard Wolf, Elkhart, and Carole Bare, formerly of Martinsville, after they were blocked from the Elkhart city and Martinsville police Facebook pages. <a href="http://www.theindianalawyer.com/city-of-elkhart-martinsville-police-facing-lawsuits-after-deleting-facebook-posts/PARAMS/article/41688">http://www.theindianalawyer.com/city-of-elkhart-martinsville-police-facing-lawsuits-after-deleting-facebook-posts/PARAMS/article/41688</a>
 Facebook, Social Media Policy	Howard County, Fire Department	Dismissed in favor of the county	Fire department Chief sued the department after his employment was terminated due to FB post which was not aligned with department's social media policy. <a href="http://www.firelawblog.com/2017/03/22/fourth-circuit-rules-howard-county-fire-social-media-case/">http://www.firelawblog.com/2017/03/22/fourth-circuit-rules-howard-county-fire-social-media-case/</a>
 Facebook	Miami Beach Mayor Philip Levine	Settlement amount not disclosed	When Grant Stern sent a critical tweet to Miami Beach Mayor Philip Levine over the summer, the politician quickly blocked the local activist. So Stern took his comments to the mayor's official Facebook page and was swiftly blocked there too. Soon, he says, he heard from dozens of others who said the mayor had deleted their comments and blocked their accounts after they questioned or criticized him online. <a href="http://www.miaminewtimes.com/news/miami-beach-mayor-philip-levine-sued-for-blocking-critics-on-social-media-8837410">http://www.miaminewtimes.com/news/miami-beach-mayor-philip-levine-sued-for-blocking-critics-on-social-media-8837410</a>
 Facebook	Loudoun County, Loudoun Board of Supervisors, Loudoun County School Board	Case was dismissed without monetary settlement	Loudoun County resident Brian Davison says he had been the victim of social media censorship by various county arms, and believed his right to free speech was infringed upon. When Davison posted a Facebook comment on the Commonwealth's Attorney's Office Facebook page accusing Plowman's office of refusing to investigate perjury from LCPS, he was blocked and his comment deleted. <a href="http://www.loudountimes.com/news/article/lansdowne_resident_files_civil_rights_suits_against_county_officials864">http://www.loudountimes.com/news/article/lansdowne_resident_files_civil_rights_suits_against_county_officials864</a>
 Facebook	Trenton, NJ, Police Department	Closed without awarding monetary settlement	Trenton Police banned and blocked people who had been critical of the arrests of marijuana activist Edward "NJWeedman" Forchion from commenting on its social media page, leading one passionate electrician to sue to uncover a secret memo sent by the city clerk directing the department offline. <a href="http://www.trentonian.com/article/TT/20161029/NEWS/161029679">http://www.trentonian.com/article/TT/20161029/NEWS/161029679</a>
 Twitter	CIA	Case still open/claiming undisclosed amount for damages and legal fees	A Massachusetts doctoral student is trying to force the CIA to open up about how it uses jokes on social media. The CIA has been on Twitter since June 2014 when it tweeted, "We can neither confirm nor deny that this is our first tweet." It was a humorous nod to the agency's secrecy. Now, Amy Johnson, a doctoral candidate at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, is suing the CIA for failing to turn over documents she requested under open records laws in 2015. She is seeking, among other things, any training documents regarding the use of social media. <a href="http://nypost.com/2017/05/18/mit-student-sues-cia-for-info-about-agencys-twitter-jokes/">http://nypost.com/2017/05/18/mit-student-sues-cia-for-info-about-agencys-twitter-jokes/</a>

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 Youtube	City of Owasso, Owasso Police Department	Case was dismissed in favor of the department	Department was sued by a fired police officer for posting video of him abusing a suspect on youtube. Case was dismissed in favor of the department. <a href="https://arstechnica.com/tech-policy/2016/10/cop-unsuccessfully-sued-department-for-releasing-video-of-him-abusing-suspect/">https://arstechnica.com/tech-policy/2016/10/cop-unsuccessfully-sued-department-for-releasing-video-of-him-abusing-suspect/</a>
 Facebook	Las Vegas, Metropolitan Police Department	Case still open/claiming undisclosed amount for damages and legal fees	Police Department's social media policy "fails to inform a person of ordinary intelligence what conduct is permitted or not permitted" and "prohibits various forms of protected speech without a reasonable basis." They assert that enforcement of the policy is "arbitrary and discriminatory". <a href="https://www.reviewjournal.com/local/local-las-vegas/lawsuit-claims-las-vegas-police-have-vague-social-media-policy/">https://www.reviewjournal.com/local/local-las-vegas/lawsuit-claims-las-vegas-police-have-vague-social-media-policy/</a>
Social Media Policy	San Mateo County, Police Department, Mayor, City	Lawsuit was withdrawn after city agreed to update its social media policy	Sunnyvale resident Angela Greben filed the first in what could be several lawsuits asking a judge to weigh in on whether a government agency or elected official is using Twitter in accordance with existing laws. She cited the California Public Records Act, which outlines citizens' rights to access information on government business; as well as First Amendment rights to petition the government for a redress of grievances, meaning complain or seek help without fear of reprisal. Greben argued the city doesn't have a sufficient social media policy to ensure adequate records of Twitter communications are kept, noted the San Mateo Police Department said its account was hacked in January and all direct messages erased, and pointed to Mayor David Lim using his account for both personal and official business. <a href="http://www.smdailyjournal.com/articles/Inews/2017-04-20/city-of-san-mateo-mayor-sued-over-twitter-use-litigation-raises-debate-on-what-information-is-considered-public-under-existing-rules/1776425179052.html">http://www.smdailyjournal.com/articles/Inews/2017-04-20/city-of-san-mateo-mayor-sued-over-twitter-use-litigation-raises-debate-on-what-information-is-considered-public-under-existing-rules/1776425179052.html</a>
Sheriff's office and Trumbull County commissioners	Trumbull County, Sheriff's office and Trumbull County commissioners	Case still open	A Trumbull County sheriff's deputy suspended without pay after posting a controversial statement on Facebook last year is suing the sheriff's office and Trumbull County commissioners for what he describes as a violation of his right to freedom of speech. <a href="http://www.tribtoday.com/news/local-news/2016/09/trumbull-deputy-sues-over-social-media-post/">http://www.tribtoday.com/news/local-news/2016/09/trumbull-deputy-sues-over-social-media-post/</a>
 Instagram	Albany Unified School District	Lawsuit still under litigation	Four California high school students sued a school district after they were suspended over their responses to Instagram posts that included a black student and coach with nooses around their necks. The suit accuses the district of exceeding its authority to discipline the students because the posts were on a private account with no connection to school activity. <a href="http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-students-sue-racist-posts-20170504-story.html">http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-students-sue-racist-posts-20170504-story.html</a>
Social Media Policy	Baltimore Police Department	Case was dismissed	A high-ranking Baltimore police union official who was reassigned to an overnight security detail after engaging in a series of arguments with local activists on Twitter has filed a federal lawsuit against the Baltimore Police Department and Commissioner Kevin Davis, alleging his reassignment and the department's social media policy governing officers' activities online are unconstitutional. <a href="http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/crime/bs-md-ci-fop-lawsuit-20160427-story.html">http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/crime/bs-md-ci-fop-lawsuit-20160427-story.html</a>

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Social Media App	City of Memphis, City of Memphis and MPD	Dismissed without monetary settlement	Allegedly MPD's use of monitoring Software to monitor social media posts. The lawsuit alleges the violation of constitutional rights because of illegal surveillance. <a href="http://www.fox13memphis.com/news/lawsuit-claims-mpd-used-social-media-software-to-monitor-protesters/496605133">http://www.fox13memphis.com/news/lawsuit-claims-mpd-used-social-media-software-to-monitor-protesters/496605133</a>
 Facebook	Chicago Police Department	-	A former Chicago Police lieutenant is suing the department and his former colleagues for allegedly creating a phony Facebook page under his name with his photo labeled "IAD informant," for displaying a poster at a police station with his photo and the words "sex offender" and for repeatedly stopping his sons on the street. <a href="http://truenewsusa44.blogspot.com/2015/09/former-chicago-police-lieutenant-ron.html?m=0">http://truenewsusa44.blogspot.com/2015/09/former-chicago-police-lieutenant-ron.html?m=0</a>
 Twitter	Jackson Mississippi, City and Mayor	-	Yarber's former assistant, Kimberly Bracey, filed a sexual harassment lawsuit in federal court. Bracey accused the mayor of forcing her to continue a sexual relationship after she tried to break it off or face termination. Bracey was fired in April 2015, according to the lawsuit. This happened after the mayor replied "LOL" on a sexual accusation tweet against him. <a href="http://www.wapt.com/article/mayor-lols-tweet-about-sex-accusations/2643120">http://www.wapt.com/article/mayor-lols-tweet-about-sex-accusations/2643120</a>
All	Attorney General Loretta Lynch	-	Robert Muise and David Yerushalmi of the American Freedom Law Center sued the federal government, specifically the Department of Justice and Attorney General Loretta Lynch, on behalf of Robert Spencer and Pamela Geller. The issue being the discriminatory behavior of Facebook, YouTube, and other major social media, which favor Islam and discriminate against other religions by suppressing material critical of Islam. Such discrimination violates state law, which would override the federal protection against lawsuits granted to Facebook. <a href="http://gatesofvienna.net/2016/07/aflc-sues-loretta-lynch-over-facebook-censorship/">http://gatesofvienna.net/2016/07/aflc-sues-loretta-lynch-over-facebook-censorship/</a>
 Facebook	Atlantic County, local Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals	-	Three volunteers sued an animal shelter, saying the organization deleted critical remarks they made on its Facebook page and then barred them from commenting. <a href="https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/new-jersey/articles/2017-03-17/animal-shelter-volunteers-file-suit-over-facebook-comments">https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/new-jersey/articles/2017-03-17/animal-shelter-volunteers-file-suit-over-facebook-comments</a>