

Police Pinterest piqued

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Deltak has covered the use of social media by state and local governments extensively, including a [three-part blog series](#) this past summer, a June [report on social media](#), and [many others](#). It is clear that Facebook and Twitter dominate the social media conversation when it comes to state and local governments; however, during Hurricane Sandy, the public safety social media spectrum shifted with increased [use of Instagram](#) to share pictures of the storm. Now, we are seeing another shift – this time, to [Pinterest](#).

For those unfamiliar with Pinterest, the site [describes itself](#) as a way to “organize and share all the beautiful things you find on the Web.” It enables individuals to share discoveries with others by allowing everyone to connect “through the ‘things’ they find interesting.” You are probably wondering how state and local governments utilize this social media tool. The Philadelphia Police Department has an answer.

The Philadelphia Police Department has decided to take to Pinterest in an effort to post pictures of criminals at large. The [Philly Pinterest page](#) is divided into various divisions and provides mug shots and other pictures that citizens can view to help solve open cases. The department is definitely the first agency to try this tactic, but with [100 previous successful arrests](#) using other social media platforms, there seems to be nothing to lose.

The city of Philadelphia isn't just coming up with these ideas on a whim. Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter opted to follow in the footsteps of Boston and [establish an Office of New Urban Mechanics](#). The office will pilot and develop in-house applications, develop uses for social media and transform government to better the city. The idea is to create a more open government that allows inclusion from outside sources. Software and app developers can submit ideas that could be developed into tools to further help fight crime.

Analyst's Take

There's no denying public safety agencies' creativity when it comes to utilizing social media. Though using Pinterest may come off as a bit odd, if any of the outstanding suspected criminals are brought to justice, it could be seen as a model to emulate in other cities. Social media, though used extensively across state and local governments, still has not become a standard. Innovative uses like that in Philadelphia will showcase how much good social media can do for state and local governments.