Collections Advocacy Toolkit
Social Media Primer

Prepared for the Conservation Center for Art & Historic Artifacts by

Canary Promotion
Communications for Arts, Culture and
Mission-Driven Clients

www.canarypromo.com

Social Media Primer

Your organization and its collections have a specific story to tell that makes them unique, significant, and worth saving. Social media offers a chance to tell the story of your collections and the history they illuminate, to communicate your passion for them, and to encourage others to demonstrate their support by visiting, sharing, and donating.

Facebook

As you may already be aware, Facebook is a one-stop-shop for social media users to quickly become familiar with the "voice" of your organization as well as to learn important information. Mashable's The Beginner's Guide to Facebook is a good go-to resource for a Facebook primer and best practices.

Engagement

Engagement on Facebook, from how often your fans comment or like your posts to how often you respond to them, is key. In the simplest terms, if you can increase how often your fans interact with your page, Facebook's formulas will increase how often your message appears on your fans' Newsfeeds.

Across the board, whether promoting an artist, a brand, a cause, or an organization, **posts with photos that are accompanied by a short message make for the most engaging posts**, up to 7x more engaging than status updates alone. In second place, videos with a short description. The least engaging? Plain links with no description.

To engage your audience, you have to encourage them to interact with you.
- Ask users to caption a candid photo from a recent event.
- Ask users to share their own stories or photos that include your institution on your page.
- Answer all questions and acknowledge posts, tags, and comments from users.

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Great Facebook Page Examples

- [Metropolitan Museum of Art](#)
- [Eastern State Penitentiary](#)
- [National Trust for Historic Preservation](#)

Twitter

[Twitter](#) is a great platform for listening to the communication of others in new ways. Tweets (messages using 140 characters of text or less) have evolved to cover more than everyday experiences. They can take the shape of shared links to interesting content on the web, conversations around hot topics (using [hashtags](#)), photos, videos, music, and real-time accounts from people who are in the midst of a newsworthy event.

Twitter Is NOT Facebook

While it's safe to say virtually everyone using social media is familiar with Facebook, not everyone has a Twitter account. However, this does not mean that posting a Facebook status update to Twitter is effective: what you'll often find are posts that end abruptly, seem out of context, and turn off listeners. Take the time to create Twitter-specific content. The overall content can be the same, but the style should be tailored to the communications style and the followers you have on Twitter.

Again, Mashable's [Beginner's Guide to Twitter](#) is a good starting place.

Great Twitter Examples

- [Philadelphia Museum of Art @philamuseum](#)
- [Tenement Museum @tenementmuseum](#)
- [Museum of Modern Art @MuseumModernArt](#)

Pinterest & Instagram

Use the image-sharing platforms [Pinterest](#) or [Instagram](#) only if you have the time and resources to tell your story in a highly visual way. Keep in mind that you should be able to consistently post images and video of your institution and collections. It's important to keep content fresh.

HootSuite

[HootSuite](#) helps organizations use the social web to launch marketing campaigns, identify and grow audiences, and distribute targeted messages across multiple channels by allowing users to log into one centralized location (as opposed to multiple accounts and platforms). Using HootSuite's social media dashboard, teams can pre-schedule updates to Twitter, Facebook, and other social networks.

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HootSuite manages your social media accounts in one place. When you log in, you'll see a set of tabs, where you can see what's going on in any of your accounts at any time. These tabs have several columns, which you can customize (pending posts, page feed, direct messages, etc.). At the top of the page, there's a text box where you can enter content. To the right of the text box are icons, which will allow you to choose the platform where you'll publish the content.

General Etiquette

Nobody likes a spammer. Choose your messaging and timing carefully. Don't post the same update two times (or more) in a row. If you feel that you're not reaching your audience effectively, or you feel they aren't getting your message, try experimenting with the times at which you post messages. Maybe your followers are more active in the afternoons, or in early morning hours. Take a look at the trends of when your audience interacts with your profile, and what content inspires the most response, to gauge the best time to send out updates and to make your content more effective.

Keep it fresh. Even if you are scheduling your posts in advance, constantly keep an eye out for new content that your readership might enjoy. Types of content might include:
- Links
- Events
- Similar Organizations
- Community
- History
- Content tied to a national observance or current news/trends
- Quotes
- Everyone loves a fun fact!

Encourage interaction and audience engagement. Ask people for their thoughts and opinions, or to share a story or experience related to your mission. People are interested in engagement with the organizations they support, and they are far more likely to pay attention to content coming from a source with which they can interact, and ultimately identify with, thus creating a real relationship that will lead directly to deeper involvement with your organization.

Social Media Resources

Canary Promotion's blog at www.canarypromo.com/birdfeed offers a variety of articles on social media and other arts and nonprofit marketing topics. The blog post "Top Arts Marketing Resources for 2014" is a compilation of recommended sources for tutorials, research reports, and news roundups. Some of our other favorite resources are listed below.

Video Tutorials on Using Social Media

- Twitter in Plain English: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ddO9idmax0o

- Social Media in Plain English: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MpIOClX1jPE
- Blogs in Plain English: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NN2I1pWXjXI

Online How-To Guides to Social Media

Twitter: The Mashable Twitter Guide is an excellent resource for organizations new to Twitter. It includes how-to's as well as a glossary of Twitter terms and concepts for easy reference.

Facebook: Similarly, the Mashable Facebook Guide is an excellent resource for organizations new to Facebook. It includes how-to's as well as a glossary of Facebook terms and concepts for easy reference. Another good place to find successful and effective organizations on Facebook is the Facebook Nonprofit Organizations Page—a Facebook page that encourages best practices and effective social media techniques while promoting successful nonprofit organizations and their campaigns.

Other Great Resources

Industry blogs that focus on social media for nonprofits include Beth's Blog, Nonprofit Tech for Good, and Frogloop.

Museum 2.0 explores ways that web 2.0 philosophies can be applied in museum design. The site includes an interesting post about Twitter best practices for museums.

Know Your Own Bone is a resource for creative engagement in museums and cultural centers.

Here's a short and simple video on using Instagram for business.