Putting the “social” in social media

Leveraging social media to engage visitors in new ways
Agenda

- Introductions
- Workshop series
- Philosophies and principles
- Tools and techniques
- Questions/discussion

Hashtag: #ExploringEngagement

Twitter handles:
@mdcivilwar
@aunigelles

You’ll get out of this workshop what you put in. Please participate by asking questions, sharing examples, etc.
Introductions

- Name
- Organization
- Social media handles

Pictured:

#CivilWarSelfies
Exploring Engagement series

- Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area
- Extension of millennial engagement workshop with Museum Hack last fall
- Focus on interpretation, education in museums/historic sites
- Quarterly meetings in alternating locations across Heritage Area
- Let us know if you have suggestions for topics, speakers, locations, sponsors
- Complete survey
Philosophies & Principles
New vs. traditional media

What is the biggest difference between new and traditional media?

Blogs, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Periscope, YouTube, Flickr, Pinterest, TripAdvisor, Yelp...

Press releases, newspapers, magazines, guidebooks, radio, television, websites...
Key difference: Interaction

Make the most of social media by using it to listen, interact with, and therefore engage your online visitors.

Social media can be a powerful tool for museums and other organizations.
Distracted or engaged?

“Reflecting the Museum: How Instagram brings back seeing” by Russell Dornan

“I couldn’t help but notice how many people were looking at their phones. But they weren’t bored, restless, or looking for a distraction. They were engaged, enthusiastic, inspired to create.”

-Dave Krugman, photographer & founder of #empty movement at the Met
Why should museums use social media?

• Smartphones and social media are here to stay.
• Not an enemy you should fight against
• An asset that can increase your site’s reach (especially to younger and diverse visitors), share your content with the wider world, and further your mission.
• For many visitors, social media enhances their relationship with a museum.
Basics

- Social media (and internet) world changes very quickly
- Facebook: can post text, links, photos, videos (recorded or live streamed), etc. Algorithms ➔ organizations need to pay to boost posts. Hashtags not very helpful. Great for events. Audience skews older.
- Twitter: can post text, links, photos, GIFs, videos. 140 character limit. Hashtags are often used. Beloved among museum educators.
- Instagram: all about images (photos/video). Captions can be long, but don’t contain links. Hashtags are important. Recently adopted algorithms. Audience skews younger.
- Snapchat, Periscope, other platforms – definitely worth looking into!
- In general, posts with photos or video do better than just text
Listen

- **Follow** other relevant accounts and **like** others’ posts
- **Check** early and often (the internet moves quickly!) - don’t just log in when you are ready to post your own content
- Set up **notifications** for mentions and direct messages
- Start a stream for certain hashtags in HootSuite
Tag speakers & partners

Whether on Instagram, Twitter or Facebook, tag or mention partners, speakers, etc. whenever possible.

They will be likely to re-post it and raise awareness about your organization to their followers.
Tag partners

- Guest blog post from The Conservation Fund
- Posted about it on social media
- They re-posted and raised awareness about HCWHA to new audiences
Tag partners
Tag organizations when visiting historic sites, museums, parks, etc. on your own.

Museum professionals visiting other museums:
#ITweetMuseums
Hashtags

- Designate your own hashtag for visitors to post about exhibit/site (and include it on marketing materials). Make sure it’s unique!
- Be part of a national conversation about a big issue (#historyrelevance)
- Connect with colleagues (#musesocial, #ITweetMuseums, #MuseEdChat)
- Comment on current events unrelated to your museum (#SuperbOwls)
- Correlate with TV events (#MercyStreetPBS)
- Best for Twitter and Instagram
Repost others’ content

- Visitors, members, board, volunteers, and partners can capture moments that you will never be able to document.
- Do not just broadcast your own events. Show that you are listening by sharing what others post.
- Balance scheduled content with posts in real time
- Suggest asking for permission
- Repost app for Instagram

Antietam’s Salute to Independence by @scantner_shots
You never know what kind of discussion a particular post will generate.

A recent post about a lockhouse along the C&O Canal on Instagram launched a somewhat long (for social media) conversation between followers, with 13 comments.
● Connecting with descendants who may not be able to visit in person
● Hearing from experts on specific topics
● Tagging friends
Open a conversation

Post a historic photo from your collection and ask about something that everyone can relate to (food, childhood, familiar places, etc.)
Cranky people

- Not everyone will be interested in every topic.
- Not everyone will be nice about it.
- Cranky people are inevitable.
Cranky people

- Create a social media policy outlining how/who will respond
- Worth your while or troll/spam?
- Delete a comment = censorship
Cranky people continued
Tools & Techniques
Geolocation

- Search by location, even if they didn’t tag your site or use hashtag (works best on Instagram) - on a regular basis
- Keep tabs on your “word of mouse.” Read/see what visitors took away from your site
- Thank visitors for coming
- Develop relationships with your regulars
- May want to try a few variations, especially for places with long names
Example: Destination Gettysburg

- @GettysburgNews on Twitter
- Notifications set up to see any tweets with the word “Gettysburg”
- Re-post visitors’ images
- Visitors feel more engaged with the site and may be more likely to return
- Weekly photo contests on Instagram and Facebook
Voices from the past

Several historic sites and museums use social media accounts (mostly Twitter) to share the voices of historic figures using 21st century technology. Whether they are literally taking excerpts from their correspondence or adopting a looser interpretation of the individual, it helps modern readers understand historic figures in a dynamic and sometimes playful way.
Example: John Quincy Adams

- @JQAdams_MHS
- Project of the Massachusetts Historical Society
- Excerpts from actual correspondence
- Written on that day, two hundred years prior
- Great intern project
Example: John Gadsby

- @JohnGadsby
- 18th century tavernkeeper
- Twitter presence of the Gadsby’s Tavern Museum in Alexandria, VA
- Mix of primary source material + commentary on present day issues/museum events
- All about the voice
Live-tweeting historic events

- Baltimore Heritage live-tweeted the September 1814 Battle of Baltimore using the hashtag #bmore1814
- Advertisements, headlines, and summary of events
- Schedule in advance
- Tag historic sites (i.e. Fort McHenry)
- Links to resources
Voice of a landmark

Some beloved local landmarks (whether historic or otherwise) have their own Twitter accounts and sometimes large followings. These personifications bring a sense of humor to residents and visitors who want to learn more about what’s going on at this icon in their community.
Example: Terminal Tower

- [@TowerLightsCLE](https://twitter.com/TowerLightsCLE)
- An historic icon in Cleveland
- Mostly sharing updates about the lighting changes
- Can interact (make suggestions, questions, comments, etc.)
Example: Mr. Trash Wheel

- @MrTrashWheel
- Run by Waterfront Partnership
- Sense of humor
- Facts about trash collection, pollution, etc. as well as weather, current events, etc.
- Retweets and comments on visitors’ posts
Mr. Trash Wheel @MrTrashWheel · May 27
I was just informed that chargrilled fish guts are NOT an acceptable dish to bring to a Memorial Day BBQ. That just means more for me.

Mr. Trash Wheel @MrTrashWheel · May 27
And I thought I was the only one who loved bad puns. :-( #seastheday

WP of Baltimore @WaterfrontPB
Take a selfie w/ the Juan Sebastian to win @HeavySeasBeer festival tickets #seastheday bit.ly/22rfdsX

Mr. Trash Wheel Retweeted
Erin Saul @E2329 · May 26
Stopped by to see @MrTrashWheel this afternoon! 🌞

Mr. Trash Wheel @MrTrashWheel · May 18
It was delicious. Nom nom nom.

Amy Burke Friedman @amyfriedman02
Happy birthday @MrTrashWheel!!! Enjoy your trash cake! #clientlove

Mr. Trash Wheel @MrTrashWheel · May 17
I wonder what I'll wish when I blow out the candles?

SciTech TU @SciTechTU
Happy Birthday @MrTrashWheel! SciTech is making you a trash cake to eat tomorrow.

Mr. Trash Wheel @MrTrashWheel · May 17
Go be a human trash wheel & pick up trash. You don't have to eat it, unless you're into that ow.ly/4mRqqz

Join a local CLEANUP

![Image: Join a local CLEANUP](image-url)
Now & then photo mashups

- Historic & contemporary images lined up side-by-side
- Printouts created by staff, given to visitors (scavenger hunt)
- Best with images from your own collection
- Examples at right from Gettysburg Foundation on Instagram
Example: photo mashups

Designed by Maryland State Archives for family event in Annapolis.
Meetups

- Invite followers for a special experience (behind the scenes tour, guest speaker, hands-on activity)
- They take photos and post on social media in real time
- Marketing tool: raise awareness of your org. in their networks
- They become enthusiastic ambassadors and partners
- No budget needed
#empty Movement

- High profile influencers visit outside of regular opening hours to capture the spaces and collections in a rarely seen way.
- Began at Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York in 2013 with photographer Dave Krugman.
Other examples

- **Visit Maryland**: #MDinFocus hashtag grants them permission to repost
- **Humans of New York**: Crowdfunding through moving photos. 17M followers
- **Frederick Keys**: “find it Friday” → followers can find free tickets if they identify the location
- **US Department of Interior**: stunning images provided by volunteers
- **Pacific Northwest Ballet**: use of video on Instagram, showing behind-the-scenes views, tagging individual dancers
- **Maryland SPCA**: daily live video stream on Facebook, individual stories. Message isn’t just “help dogs” but “help Buster”
Discussion

● Questions?
● Other examples
● Continue the discussion on Twitter: #ExploringEngagement
● Ask questions via email: agelles@fredco-md.net
● Preservation Summer School: July 21 at Delaplaine & NMCWM