

Social Media and Information Agencies

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Summary: This document outlines ten technologies that information agencies, libraries specifically, can use to increase and manage their presence on social media platforms.

LinkedIn <https://LinkedIn.com/>

LinkedIn has quickly become one of the most important tools for modern professionals. This business-centered social media network is designed primarily for career networking, allowing users to create profiles to post their skills, job experience, education, and professional interests.

Of the many benefits of LinkedIn for libraries and librarians, LinkedIn offers paid eLearning tools specifically for libraries to empower their staff and patrons through a comprehensive library of online courses (through Lynda online learning, <https://learning.linkedin.com/for-libraries>).

However, many libraries have opted for a cost-free way to help their patrons use LinkedIn by holding information sessions about best practices for the site (see this 2015 event at the University of Houston Libraries <http://weblogs.lib.uh.edu/blog/2015/08/05/linkedin-at-the-library/>). Additionally, LinkedIn can be a great tool for libraries to present a cohesive professional image online, and to share job listings and event updates with patrons. Librarians, as well, can use LinkedIn to advance their own professional careers by collaborating with other librarians around the world, sharing best practices, and keeping up to date with library news.

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/>

In January 2015, Elizabeth Weise mentioned that approximately 81% of the U.S adult population has a personal Facebook profile, according to the survey by the Pew Research Center. If a library creates a homepage on Facebook, it would be easier to connect with patrons of those 81% that are Facebook users. However, the library can also lose that connection to patrons if the administrator does not do a good job at organizing the Facebook profile, photos, and video. There are many articles and videos showing how to organize Facebook profiles as well as photos, videos, etc. for the library. Linda Bomba (2016) demonstrates how to manage a video library on Facebook well.

Twitter <https://www.twitter.com>

Twitter is a social and news app on which people post brief thoughts or messages. The posts are limited to 280 characters or less and use hashtags to categorize the type of post. Categories of posts include news and politics, sports, pop culture, influencers, and utility posts. Hyperlinks, photos, videos and more can be posted. Twitter can be used by anyone 13 years of age or older, it is used by individuals and businesses. A strong link exists between library patrons and twitter users. Libraries use Twitter for marketing of services and programs. Twitter can be managed using programs such as Hootsuite and Tweetdeck. Twitter can be used for book reviews in 280

characters or less, announcements for closings, events, and books, and job opportunity posts. (Lists of libraries using twitter can be found here: <https://www.libsuccess.org/Twitter>.) Library Journal wrote an article on the 10 Golden Rules to Take Your Library's Twitter Account to the Next Level which includes the advice to add links to the twitter account on their homepage, on other social media, and any printed materials to encourage patrons to follow their account (Potter, 2013).

YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/>

YouTube is a public video-sharing platform used widely across the internet. To reach this expansive audience, librarians can register for free and create a page (referred to as a channel) for their institution. With this, librarians can easily upload and share videos on websites and other social media pages, as well as track each video's reach to users. For ideas, see how the New York Public Library uses its YouTube channel

(<https://www.youtube.com/user/NewYorkPublicLibrary>) to showcase Library Stories, NYPL LIVE shorts, and other special series organized into playlists. The American Library Association's YouTube channel

(<https://www.youtube.com/user/AmLibraryAssociation>) also provides special videos speaking directly to its users, discussing subjects like upcoming changes. While other video sharing websites, such as Vimeo, offer similar features, YouTube has the advantage of unlimited video uploads, a vast audience range, and channel customization.

Snapchat <https://www.snapchat.com/>

Snapchat, a social app for sharing photos ("Snaps") and audio-visual "Snap stories," has a primarily teen and young adult user base. This makes it a great tool for librarians to connect with their younger patrons. The app's customizable

geofilters are a low-cost way for libraries to engage young patrons by allowing them to label their Snaps with the library's logo or other fun graphics (see this example from the Nashville TN Public Library:

<https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/2016/11/01/snapchat-in-the-library/>). Snap stories can allow librarians to give live updates during events, share information about upcoming events, and share information about the library and its staff in fun and relatable ways. If used correctly, Snapchat can be a great tool for connecting with teen audiences and engaging them in your library.

Tumblr <https://www.tumblr.com>

Tumblr is Described as part blog, part microblog, and a social community (McArdle, 2013). Blogging home to over 300 million users, it is considered the most popular social media brand for people 25 and under. Use Tumblr to publish short posts of text, images, quotes, links, video, audio, and chats. Tumblr allows users to reblog, or share, another user's post, follow other users with similar interests, read posts by those you follow on your dashboard, and tag posts for categories. Tumblr users use gifs, especially to promote their mood or a fandom they belong to. Tumblr is used by libraries, authors, and readers to promote books. Information agencies use Tumblr in a variety of ways, including: book reviews, reading lists or reader advisory, book club or online book discussions, to announce new collection items, and post book trailers. Information agencies using Tumblr are aiming for the younger readership and use it to increase transparency. (see article here: <http://www.adweek.com/digital/u-s-agencies-using-tumblr-to-increase-transparency/#/>)

Pinterest <https://www.pinterest.com/>

There are many social media formats that libraries choose to use; however, patrons usually prefer social media or the topic that they can

easily follow, such as new books, special collections, or kid-friendly material. Pinterest is a social media platform that takes into account how people use simplicity and variety to their advantage. Pinterest has a very unique layout of their contents. Think of book covers and historic archives - they are posted in a way that engages patrons to check them out. Pinterest is also a supportive technology that can help libraries create a reading list. According to Lee Lofland, "Pinterest makes it simple to create visually appealing reading lists for just about every topic under the sun. Some common lists include books made into movies, librarian recommendations, and kid-friendly fare" (Lofland, 2012). Jennifer Hall is a teen/adult services librarian in Sacramento, California who has discussed the reasons to why libraries should use Pinterest. It not only connects patrons on Pinterest, it is also a helpful resource that can be beneficial to patrons because of all of its available content.

Hootsuite <https://hootsuite.com/>

An effective social media strategy is crucial for engaging your audience. To reach a large audience, you will need to utilize several social media platforms. A social media management tool is necessary to successfully manage multiple platforms. **Hootsuite** is a social relationship platform designed to manage multiple social media accounts and networks. Users can manage many platforms including Twitter, Facebook, Google+, LinkedIn, and Instagram on a single dashboard. The dashboard allows users to schedule content, monitor streams, and engage with their audience in one place. The dashboard also allows users to collaborate. Effective social media management will increase reach, establish credibility, and grow your community.

Trello <https://trello.com/>

Trello is, at its core, a collaboration tool used for web-based project management. Trello users

create boards to fill with cards that can contain checklists, media attachments, due dates, and comments, amongst other things. This allows for greater flexibility in how Trello can be used to manage social media accounts. Trello is a great choice for libraries because all of these features are all included in the free-forever plan meaning there is no need to upgrade to a paid version. Other popular project management tools include Asana and Jira which do not offer such an extensive free version. Trello can be used to organize individual social media posts or to plan long-term social media goals. Ohio University Library found that using Trello allowed them to include student workers on their social media team and ultimately grow and expand their social media reach (Hagman & Carleton, 2014, pp. 241-243).

Zapier <https://zapier.com/>

Managing social media accounts is time consuming. Many librarians are already working with fully-packed schedules and do not have much time to dedicate to posting. Zapier, a task automation tool, can help with time management by linking multiple apps together and completing tasks automatically. Users create “zaps” which consist of a trigger and then actions. These zaps can help libraries manage time-consuming tasks for social media accounts. Some examples of time-saving zaps include automatically tracking twitter mentions on a Google spreadsheet and automatically thanking new Twitter followers. While there are many automation tools available on the web today, such as IFTTT, Zapier stands out because of its ability to complete multi-step tasks and link to an unlimited number of different accounts. The University of Dayton Libraries utilized Zapier in this way by setting it up to email them anytime the word “library” was tweeted within a 1.5 mile radius of campus (Kelly & Escobar, 2015).

Resources

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