Book Review

Koontz, C. and Mon, L., *Marketing and Social Media. A Guide for Libraries, Archives, and Museums,* **Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2014, paperback, pp. 310**

Museums have been using social media since the mid-2000s and during this period, a number of various projects and initiatives have been launched such as #AskACurator (https://twitter.com/hashtag/askacurator), #InstaMuseum (https://twitter.com/hashtag/instaMuseum), and #MuseumSelfie (https://twitter.com/hashtag/museumselfie). At the same time, social media platforms have continued to change. From being slightly more than IM (instant messaging) services, several social media platforms have been transformed into an essential business tool and money-making enterprises for their owners. For instance, Facebook has gone from a student-targeting platform to a globally recognized and commercially successful brand, especially since the newsfeed algorithm was changed in early 2015, forcing organizations to use paid adverts to maintain visibility.

So, given the circumstances, how can cultural organizations achieve success on social media? A multitude of works (both academic and non-academic) address Internet Marketing; however, only a few are dedicated to the specifics of the cultural sector. Some of them are very practical, based on one particular network or platform and related case studies (for example, Allen-Greil (ed.), 2010), whilst others suffer from being overly theoretical (Drotner and Schrøder, 2013). Many of these books are comprised of a number of articles and case studies that cover very specific areas of marketing, but which can make it difficult to build a comprehensive understanding of the subject. This is what makes *Marketing and Social Media* by Christie Koontz and Lorri Mon from Florida State University different, as the authors offer a very clear and holistic framework in which to understand the use of social media for marketing purposes in cultural organizations.

Published in 2014, this book brings together the basics of marketing theory and provides examples of how it can be implemented in everyday practice in cultural organizations such as libraries, archives, and museums. Compared to such books as *Twitter for Museums* (2010) and *Conversations with Visitors: Social Media and Museums* (2012), which are centred around a number of case-studies, *Marketing and Social Media* is built around a particular marketing model, developed by Persis E. Rockwood, Professor Emeritus at Florida State University). Professor Rockwood's model includes the following steps: marketing research, marketing segmentation, marketing mix strategies, and program-level evaluation (11-12). The authors explain each of the steps carefully, thus bringing together marketing methods and their implementation into social media practices. For instance, when talking about environmental scanning in Chapter 3, Koontz and Mon focus their attention on micro- and macro-environmental scanning principles and then, by using the Florida Museum of Natural History as an example, explain how these principles could be adapted when working with social media sites. The authors follow the same model throughout the book, providing an in-depth discussion of marketing principles that serve as a basis for, albeit quite general, guidelines on using social media.

The book is divided into sixteen chapters, all of which are balanced in terms of size, content and accessibility of language, making it quite easy to follow and focus on separate parts if necessary. Each of the chapters has a similar structure; provided alongside the main content there is a summary, a list of references, discussion questions and key terms. The latter inclusion of questions and key terms is helpful for use in the classroom or for self-study. Museums are not the main priority for the authors, whose research interest is focused mainly

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on marketing and emerging digital technologies for libraries, non-profits, and education. As for the content of the book, one could say that, despite being quite effective in offering marketing strategies, it does not always seem that relevant to the use of social media. Most of the advice given here seems quite general; the authors do not give specific attention to particular projects or ideas, or seem to make the most of social media's potential. For instance, when talking about Twitter, the authors suggest that cultural organizations can use it for "connecting with journalists" (which would actually work well for any type of organisation) and do not mention more sector-specific and well-known projects such as #Ask a Curator (which was launched in 2010). However, one chapter that is dedicated entirely to case studies stands out as useful. Consisting of a collection of student reports (submitted after Marketing of Library and Information Services classes), these reports are the result of analyses of non-profit organizations based on the nine-step model which involves both major elements such as the mission, goals and objectives to more concrete things such as market segmentation. This chapter provides a clear framework of how to perform marketing analysis of a cultural organization, and since there are different types of organizations presented in the chapter — a historical society, a school media centre, a public library, et cetera — the reader can improve their understanding of the subject considerably.

To sum up, *Marketing and Social Media* is a useful piece of reading for those who are new to marketing and would appreciate a straightforward and clear approach, and for those professionals who wish to optimize their everyday practice and develop a strategic approach to using social media as part of a wider marketing model. Although the book does not focus on museums, the methods and principles explained here can be implemented in museums and galleries, and by bringing together examples of various types of non-profits, the authors provide readers with a marketing toolkit that can be applied to everyday practice in a range of organizations. The reader's understanding of the field, however, should be supplemented by more practice-oriented volumes and professional blogs in order to get a better perspective of the potential uses of social media for the cultural sector.

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References

Allen-Greil, D. (2010) *Twitter for Museums: Strategies and Tactics for Success.,* Edinburgh: MuseumsEtcAllen-Greil, D., Stewart, E.P., Tench, B. et al (2012) *Conversations with Visitors: Social Media and Museums*, Edinburgh: MuseumsEtcDrother, K. and Schrøder, K.M. (2013) *Museum Communication and Social Media. The Connected Museum*, London and New York: Routledge