Social Media Toolkit

Overview

SECTION 1: ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

This toolkit identifies social media platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, and blogging, for your library to consider using to connect with your audiences and share your messaging. As you move through the toolkit, you'll be able to identify which channels make the most sense for your library when considering resources and communication goals.

Social media is an integral part of how the world now communicates – touching the lives of your patrons, partners, and community leaders. Your voice and participation on social channels is key to ensuring Idaho's libraries are thought leaders in the digital space.

Example posts are customized to an extent but each message should be adapted to fit the platform, audience, and context of the situation.

SECTON 2: SOCIAL MEDIA OVERVIEW

Who Uses Social Media

Social media is now a regular part of life and a key medium for communication for people throughout the country. Various platforms have grown in popularity to attract regular users of all ages and demographics.

According to Pew Research Center, 69% of Americans were using some type of social media by 2016[1]. While Generations X - Z continue to be the most active social media users, Baby Boomers have adopted social media as well to communicate with family and friends. Social media isn't just for personal use. With so many active and engaged users on social media, brands and businesses are taking advantage of this direct marketing platform. In 2015, 88.2% of U.S. companies were using at least one of the major platforms to reach their audience.[2]

% of U.S. adults who use at least one social media site, by age
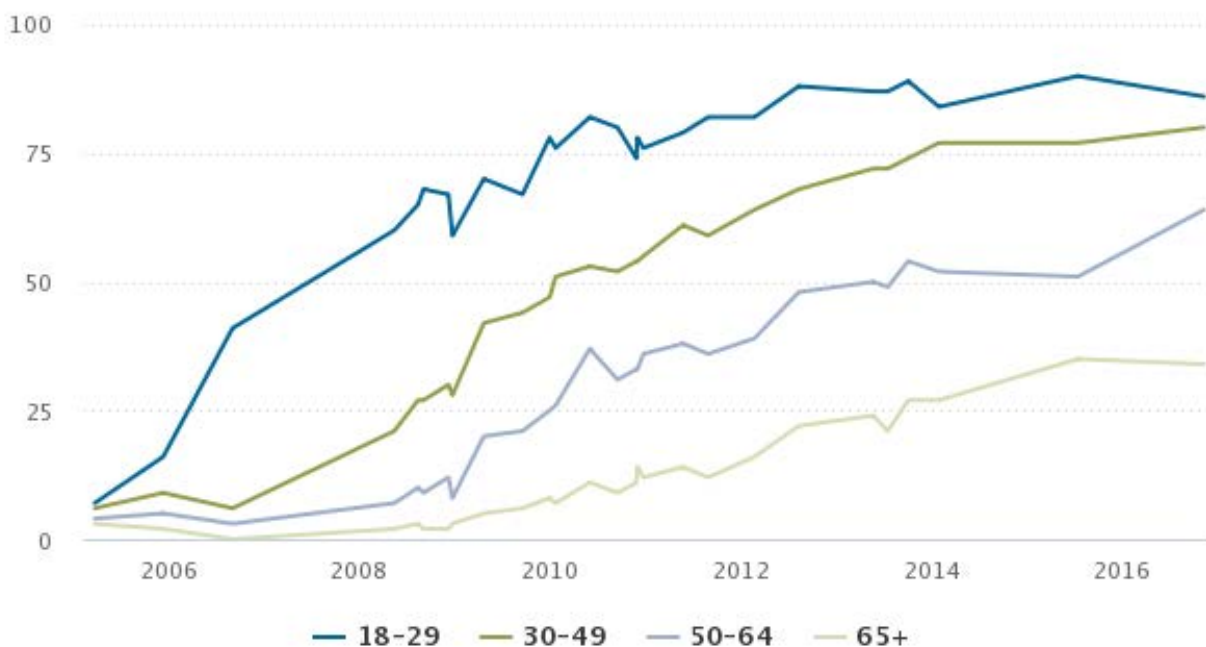
(Source: Pew Research Center)

[1] "Social Media Fact Sheet." Pew Research Center. http://www.pewinternet.org/fact-sheet/social-media/. Retrieved March 4, 2017.
[2] "Number of Companies Using Instagram to Nearly Double Next Year." eMarketer. https://www.emarketer.com/Article/Number-of-Companies-Using-Instagram-Nearly-Double-Next-Year/1013122. Retrieved March 4, 2017.

Benefits

The key benefits of social media are the ease and access it gives people to communicate to nearly anyone and everyone. Users enjoy the opportunity to voice their opinions on public matters and share ideas with those in their circle. For libraries, social media offers a direct communication line to the people in your communities who are directly impacted by your services and who you wish to connect with to grow influence.

- Communicate directly to your patrons, community leaders, and decision-makers on what your library and the industry as a whole is doing to extend access to resources for everyone.
- Share updates on the newest literature and technology available at your library for patrons to get hands-on experience and support.
- Increase customer service response and engagement.
- Distribute news and insights.
- Share videos and photos showcasing what it's like to experience all your library offers.

Pitfalls to Avoid

- Don't confuse communication on social media as another advertising platform. People don't want to be blasted with ads about your library's services. Focus on the benefits you offer and communicate the "why" behind your services to make the conversation about the audience.
- Not every social media platform is created equally. It will be a waste of your library's resources to start using a new social media platform without understanding who uses it and what types of content perform best.

Key Takeaways

- Connect with your audience by focusing on how they benefit from your services.
- Ask questions in your posts and be open to engaging with users in a warm and informative tone.
- Communicate in everyday language with information supported by facts.
- Use storytelling to drive your message and connect to your audience.

Where It's Going

Social media, much like other forms of digital marketing, is continuing to move towards visual, real-time content.

- Video: Video content, especially live video, is the newest frontier for social media and often receives higher rates of engagement than photos or text-only posts.
- Mobile: Most people engage with social media platforms on mobile devices, around almost 80 percent as of April 2016.[3]

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[3] Sterling, Greg. "Nearly 80 Percent of Social Media Time Now Spent on Mobile Devices." Marketing Land. http://marketingland.com/facebook-usage-accounts-1-5-minutes-spent-mobile-171561. Retrieved March 15, 2017.

- In the moment content: People want to see news and events as they are happening. The 24-hour news cycle and prevalent use of social media platforms has sped up how fast news reaches people and they expect to find content as they are searching for it.

Moderating Social Media

When monitoring your library's social media channels, you may come across comments that are unfavorable or possibly even inappropriate. Social media in general is considered a free space for people to share opinions and participate in a limited public forum. With that, it's expected that most comments are safe from being deleted by a page administrator. The exception is when comments cross the line into inappropriate content.

When developing a policy around which comments you will consider removing from your social media pages, you'll need to 1) establish guidelines and 2) train the moderators of your page on how to identify appropriate comments and protected viewpoints vs. inappropriate content that is prohibited. To have a fully protected social media comment policy, you'll need to consult legal counsel. As an example, here are some comment categories you may wish to include in your policy and monitor for:

- Comments that solicit any other business or product
- Comments that include profanity, nudity, sexual language, or similar content
- Comments that discriminate against race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, veteran status, genetic information, citizenship status, national origin, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity/expression
- Comments that threaten another person or organization