Social Media Toolkit

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 3E: BLOGGING

What Is It
Blogging is a way to share in-depth knowledge, information, and opinions on a regular basis, usually from a company's website or from a blogging platform.

Why People Use It
Blogs allow businesses to be their own publishers and share news and actionable content that their audience can return to over time. Depending on where your blog is hosted, you'll have a large amount of control over the look, feel, and format of how content is presented. Blogs can also easily incorporate content from other social media accounts through embedded posts.

Pros
A dedicated space for you to own your knowledge base and set your library apart in the industry. It can help expand the story for press releases and other library news or respond to trending news relevant to you and your community.

Best for:
- Sharing expertise and knowledge
- Industry trends and predictions
- News and crucial communication distribution
- Sharing customer experiences and stories
- Evergreen content (content that has renewed relevance in the long-term and doesn't expire quickly) that your audience can reference over time

Cons
One-way communication. Allow for readers to leave comments and add to the story.

Wrong for:
- Promoting only your library and services in a way that feels like advertising
- One-off ideas without a plan in place for consistent themes and posting

Engagement
Invite comments from readers, including other ways they've approached similar ideas. Always make sure to share blog posts on your social media channels right after publishing and, if it's evergreen content, again in a few days, weeks, or months.

Measuring
Most blogging platforms require an external measurement dashboard, the most common is Google Analytics, to monitor views and click-throughs, time spent on the blog, and bounce rates (how many viewers leave the website after viewing only one page). All blog posts should be cross promoted on social media channels to gain additional data via likes, shares, and comments.

Time Commitment
A blog needs to remain relevant and timely to be credible. A good benchmark to plan for is blogging once a week.

Suggested Posts

1. Take a deeper dive into exploring a new piece of technology, a special collection, or an exhibit. Tell your readers what's available and why it's a valuable resource.
Example: Albertsons Library at Boise State University wrote a blog highlighting an exhibit on international students in Boise State's history. See the full blog post at library.boisestate.edu/2017/01/31/international-student-experience-boise-state-retrospective.

The International Student Experience at Boise State: A Retrospective

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"Boise State International Students, February 1978."

A new exhibit opened last week in Boise State's Special Collections & Archives, located on the second floor of Albertsons Library. Curated by librarians Elizabeth Ramsey and Alessandro Meregaglia, the exhibit focuses on the international student experience at Boise State throughout its history.

2. Write a listicle, a blog in the form of a list, on ways the community benefits from a specific resource or technology available at your library. Highlight fun, interesting, and lesser-known facts to spark ideas and conversation with your readers.
3. Interview staff members, patrons, or community leaders involved with your library's efforts to highlight the steps you're taking to grow the critical support you offer to education and workforce development.

How

General guidelines:

- Make your words count: The ideal blog post is a minimum of 300 words. Google, the dominate search engine, monitors and ranks website pages and content based on multiple factors including word count and keywords. Google prefers longer blog posts, reaching up to 2,500+ words but posts with at least 300 words have a minimum of content to perform well in search engine rankings. The most important thing in blogging is to write enough that you thoroughly explain the topic and make it interesting and enjoyable for readers. You should be able to reach 300 words with almost any post. If not, consider broadening the topic or combining it with another relevant story.
- Keep it conversational: When you're writing, keep in mind who your end reader is and write as though you are speaking to them. Your voice and tone should be informative yet casual. Avoid using too much jargon or technical language.
- Act like a journalist: Utilize your blog as an opportunity to showcase partners, patrons, and peers in the industry through conducting interviews to help drive content and emphasize your network. People and organizations are more likely to share your content when they are involved.
- Use more than words: Think about embedding videos or incorporating graphics and photos into your posts to break up the narrative. If your library doesn't own a large amount of images that are appropriate, consider using free stock images, memes, or GIFs (see Section 4 for resources).
- Mix it up: Your blog should include posts that are both evergreen and timely. Evergreen content doesn't expire in the short term and stays relevant for months or years. Timely content leverages a trend or news topic that is happening in the present and generally won't stay relevant past a few months.
- Spread your reach: Once a new blog post has been published, share it on appropriate social media channels like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram and in your library's newsletter so your followers know new content is available to read. If the blog post is evergreen, you can continue to share it down the road, such as in a week, a month, six months, etc.