Marketing the Genealogy Library: Social Media

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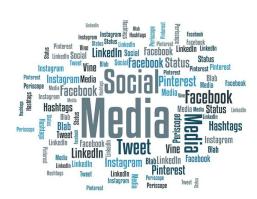Facebook.com/AmyJohnsonCrow

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Social media should be a critical tool for your library or organization. But just creating a blog or a Facebook page isn't enough. There are proven strategies and best practices to get the most out of social media, without spending all day on Facebook.

Choosing Your Platform

You don't have to be on every platform! Choose the ones that you can do well consistently.

At a minimum, concentrate on your blog and Facebook.
Add others only if/when you have a plan.

Myth: Social media for your library is just like social media for you.

Reality: Your organization's social media needs to be deliberate.
- Post regularly
  - Keep people's interest
  - Helps the Facebook algorithm
- Provide good content
  - People should be able to tell it's you and what you're about
  - Focus on your area/topic of interest and your organization
  - If you're posting to everyone, you're posting to no one

Myth: You shouldn't have the same topic in two places (AKA "everything needs to be original").

Reality: Different people will see your message in different places.
- It won't be a "repeat" for many people
- Use this to your advantage
- Newsletter > Blog > Facebook and Twitter

Sources for Content:
Repurposing content allows you to approach the same topic from a different angle, so even if someone has seen that topic, the new post might resonate with them differently.

Example #1:
Look at back issues of your newsletter. Are there articles that are still useful? (Abstracts of records, research tips, etc.) Turn those into blog posts, either in whole or in part.

Example #2:
Take a main point from an old blog post or article and turn it into a graphic for your Facebook page.

Example #3:
Take specific items from an event flyer and highlight each in separate social media posts. Instead of just announcing the event, have different posts about the keynote speaker, specific sessions, the venue, lunch options, nearby research facilities, etc.

Myth: You shouldn't repeat yourself.

Reality: Most people miss it the first time, even on the same platform.
- Spread out the posts.
- Find different angles.

Myth: You can have the same message on every platform.

Reality: Different platforms have different strengths. Tailor for those.
- Blogs are perfect for longer form, lots of images, links, etc.
- Use Facebook, Twitter, etc. to point back to your blog or website as appropriate.

Myth: All you need is text.

Reality: Images are a must.
Every post (blog, Facebook, Twitter, etc.) should have an image.

Image sources:
- Flickr Commons: flickr.com/commons
    - Public domain for free-to-use with attribution
- Library of Congress: www.loc.gov/pictures
    - Not all are public domain!
- FreeImages.com and Pixabay.com
    - Public domain; don't even require attribution
- Canva.com

- o Create your own, either with their images or upload your own and build from there.

Best Practices for Your Blog and Social Media:
- Have killer headlines
- Include images and video
- Use subheadings to break up long blog posts
- Link to other posts on your blog and to other websites
- Answer comments!

REMEMBER: Facebook won't show all of your posts to all of the people who have liked your page! Optimize the timing of your posts.

Your page's Insights can give you a tremendous amount of data, including when your audience is online. Start by clicking on "Insights" on the side of your Facebook page.

Go into "Posts" and "When Your Fans Are Online." Look for times when your audience is increasing. Schedule your Facebook posts accordingly.

You can also use your Insights to see what type of posts get the most engagement.

TIP: Don't stress over your analytics if you aren't being consistent with your posting. Work on posting consistently first. Only then will you have reliable data to work from.

Spread the Word
Include your organization's social media links in all of your emails, newsletters, etc. Don't assume people know about them.

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