

MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES

INTRODUCTION

These guidelines are meant for all MHS staff interested in how social media can help us deliver our message and support the over all strategic goals of the organization.

This information will familiarize you with our social media philosophy, invite you to find, join, and participate in our social media presence, and guide you in creating your own department's social media presence.

This is a working draft being developed by the Social Media Working Group. If you have suggestions, please contact Joe Hoover at joe.hoover@mnhs.org in Marketing Communications.

Social networks such as Wikipedia, Facebook, Flickr, YouTube, LinkedIn and Twitter are exciting new channels for you to share knowledge, express your creativity and connect with others who share your interests. The Minnesota Historical Society supports your participation in these and other online social media communities.

SETTING UP A SOCIAL MEDIA SITE

- If you want to propose a site then submit a **Social Media Project Charter**
- Social media site proposals will be examined by your department manager and Marketing & Communications and will determine the blog's need and/or the best delivery format.
- All social media sites for the Minnesota Historical Society and it's historic sites and museums (MHS) whether internally or externally hosted must be set up and established by Enterprise Technology. Staff may not set up a MHS social media site without the permission and direction of Web Services/Marketing since it may not support the over all strategic goals of the organization.
- Any hosted MHS social media sites need to have a username and password on file with Enterprise Technology.
- Personal social media sites identifying the owner/user as a MHS employee and are covering MHS issues/products/services should seek approval of Marketing & Communications otherwise please make it clear to your readers that the views you express are yours alone and that they do not necessarily reflect the MHS' views.
- Most social media sites are ongoing with no end date, while they are cheap to set up they are expensive in the form of staff time to maintain and keep audience interest.
- Some sites like Facebook require that an employee use their personal account to access the business site. If the employee is uncomfortable using their personal account contact Marketing and Communications to set up an account to access business page.

SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLS

The following is a list of the currently most popular social media tools that we maintain a presence on.

With all of them follow these points (much of this even applies to Flickr and YouTube):

- Be creative
- Engage your audience - invite readers to get involved
- Tell important stories
- Share your process
- Share your successes and challenges
- Write short, action orientated posts
- Link to interesting local news
- Link back to the institution
- Find your niche
- Be a subject matter expert
- Be conversational
- Post regularly and reasonably often, keep a consistent schedule.
- Utilize multiple channels to achieve goals. Integrate Twitter, Facebook, Googlemaps, blogs, Flickr, YouTube, etc.
- Measure Results

FACEBOOK

MHS maintains a Facebook presence for all of its historic sites and museums. For a consistent brand and so our followers know they are dealing with us and not a Facebook fan site, we maintain similar profile pictures on all our historic sites and museum Facebook pages. Sites can manage their own Facebook page only after approval of a submitted Social Media charter and by demonstrating their own web site at MHS is in good standing, up to date and well maintained. Groups and Pages that are no longer needed will be deleted. Sites that are unable to maintain or monitor their Facebook page must turn off wall, discussion and public video/photo uploading options.

News and Events can be promoted through Minnesota Historical Society's official Facebook Page, please contact Marketing & Communications which administers the site with your event information request.

PAGE

Facebook Pages are used for all of our historic sites and museums.

Fan Pages are open to anyone who chooses to join.

Fan pages allow an administrator to measure the viewing statistics and metrics of the page

GROUP

Facebook Groups are used for temporary or project orientated initiatives. Ex: [Arts & Cultural Heritage Fund Minnesota](#) Groups require a moderator to approve a person to join the page.

FLICKR

- It is better to have a few photos that have a title, description and tags rather than dozens that have no information.
- Event photos should tell a story rather than just people smiling at the camera.
- Please respect the dignity and privacy of our visitors.
If you can see the faces of visitors in a photo, you must obtain a signed photo release before posting the photos. If you take the photos at events or if people aren't easily recognizable, you won't need releases. For children, you will need a photo release from the parents.
- Make sure you do have permission to upload the photos.
- If possible consider posting the photos under the [Creative Commons Share-a-like license](#) on Flickr to allow people to copy and redistribute the photos.

YOUTUBE

MHS maintains a single [YouTube account](#) currently all videos submitted to YouTube need to go through this account.

- Videos must be 10 minutes, or less, in length, less than 10 gigabytes (10GB) in size and have a short description and title.
- The following formats are preferred: .WMV, .MOV, .MP4, .MPEG, .FLV. Marketing & Communications cannot rip/extract videos from DVDs.
- If you can see the faces of visitors in a video, you must obtain a signed photo release before posting the video. If you take the video at events or if people aren't easily recognizable, you won't need releases. For children, you will need a photo release from the parents.

TWITTER

MHS maintains a [Twitter account](#). Events and news can be posted on Twitter through his account.

Twitter takes more time than Facebook to maintain and monitor. Do you have at least one person to tweet every day?

OTHERS

There are many other venues available including Ning.com, LinkedIn.com, Wikipedia.org, Gather.com, iTunes U, [TeacherTube](#), some MHS has a presence on, some MHS does not have a presence. If you are interested in having a presence on any social media site please contact Marketing and Communications.

FRAMEWORK

LISTENING

Listening to the conversations currently taking place.

Before attempting any social media tools, the first step is to listen. Discover and monitor the discussions taking place about or related to your product or service AND who is talking about them. Using a variety of tools you can monitor to social networks to determine the current level of conversation, references and links to, and associations with a particular brand.

The analysis of social activity monitoring can also yield valuable information about brand sentiment and uncover hidden strategic opportunities.

Once this baseline is established, ongoing alerts and feeds are put into place to continue listening in real time. This engagement serves as the baseline listening exercise.

The listening phase is also a good time to study what similar are doing.

Evaluate best practices.

Take cues from the successes and challenges of your colleagues.

INTERACTION

Interacting with key audiences and influencers via relevant social networks

ENGAGEMENT

Engaging in a two-way dialogue with key influencers and niche audiences help spread your message and drive action

POSTING

Decide if you have the capacity to regularly update a site. Choose a handful of employees and volunteers who are eager to share their perspective

COMMENTS

- Approve comments as quickly as possible.

- Post regularly.
- Reply to comments from your readers!
- Read the blogs of your regular commenters, and comment on THEIR blog as much as possible.
- Add a “window” to the comments. If you get a really good post you may wish to acknowledge the post at the bottom of the blog with a link to it.
- Ask your readers for their comments!

NEGATIVE COMMENTS

One of the biggest concerns organizations have over starting site is how to deal with negative comments, especially those from Trolls (a troll is generally someone who tries to get attention by posting things everyone will disagree, like going to a City of St. Paul fan page and writing "Minneapolis is better than St. Paul" on the wall.) If your blog/sites accepts comments, then you have several alternatives when you receive a negative comment to your blog or post.

The Air Force Public Affairs Agency (not surprisingly) has come up with a flow chart that [aids in deciding how to access and deal with comments](#).

The following is from Intel’s Social Media Guidelines:

“Follow these three principles: the Good, the Bad, but not the Ugly. If the content is positive or negative and in context to the conversation, then we approve the content, regardless of whether it's favorable or unfavorable to us. But if the content is ugly, offensive, denigrating and completely out of context, then we reject the content.”

6 TIPS FOR HANDLING HATERS, TROLLS AND NEGATIVITY

One of the biggest concerns companies have over starting a blog is how to deal with negative comments. Especially those from Trolls (a troll is generally someone who tries to get attention by posting things everyone will disagree, like going to a City of St. Paul fan page and writing "Minneapolis is better than St. Paul" on the wall.) If your blog/sites accepts comments, then you have several alternatives when you receive a negative comment to your blog or post.

1. Ignoring them or delete them.

This usually isn't the best course of action. If you consistently ignore negative comments on your company's blog, that will likely generate more as your community begins to question whether or not you actually want to interact with them. If you delete them, that will make matters worse, because the bloggers whose comments you deleted will then go back to their blog and post about how you are censoring comments to your company's blog. This should always be a last resort.

- a. Don't Engage: If there is a troll making comments on your blog/post, kindly ask that person to refrain from unkind remarks. Don't engage and request your community not engage. Feel free to

delete comments and lock or delete threads if things get out of control. Trolls want you to volley. They want to make things uncomfortable for the rest of your community. Instead, ignore the troll. Hang up if on the phone. Hopefully when he finds out he has no one to push around, he'll leave.

2. Attempting to pacify them.

This might include giving the commenter an incentive such as a coupon/discount to 'make up' for the complaint they have raised. This might stop the negative comments, but really doesn't help your issue, since you are simply trying to make the problem go away.

3. Addressing them.

This is always the best course of action. You can't please all your customers all the time, but you CAN listen to them. Let them speak their peace, and see if they are trying to bring to your attention problems in your business processes that can be addressed and corrected. If so, a negative comment becomes a powerful opportunity for your company to not only improve its processes, but likely convert a complainer into an evangelist for your company.

a. Don't Antagonize them.

This is probably the worst thing you can do. Your community won't remember the person that slammed MHS but they will remember how you shot your mouth off at the person that left a comment on your blog. As with ignoring comments, this will draw even more fire from your community.

4. Contacting the "Powers that Be"

If you are in doubt what to do or would like advice contact your department supervisor, or contact Marjorie Nugent, at 651-259-3145 / marjorie.nugent@mnhs.org or Jessica Kohen 651-259-3148 / jessica.kohen@mnhs.org in Marketing and Communications.

5. Have a firm policy in place on the site

Have a comment or anti-negativity policy in place. Offer a warning or a reminder if it's needed, and anyone not following the rules should be asked to leave. If they keep it up.

6. Banning the offending party

Don't be afraid to ban someone who constantly creates a negative environment. It's not the troll's community, it's yours. Many moderators feel that by diffusing a negative situation, they're only going to make things worse because the troll will get angry. The troll is not in charge, why put them in a position to call the shots?

COPYRIGHT, PERMISSIONS AND CITATIONS

- When quoting any other blog or publication, be sure to provide a web link to the original (if possible) and use quotation marks or block quotes (for longer texts). If you can't link to a publication, cite the title, author, publisher and year of publication.
- When using a photograph found elsewhere on the web, you must do one of the following:

- Get permission from the original copyright holder (which may not always be same as the site displaying the image)
- Use an image that is not encumbered by copyright, such as an image that is available under a creative commons license.
- Make sure images other than your own are properly credited, citing the source and photographer's name.

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