# Social Media Posting Guides

*Created by Rebecca Hopman, 2012*

These guides are intended to be one-page, ready reference sheets for archivists and librarians using social media. The guides include suggestions on what to post and when to post, tips for good content, a few projects to try, a few options for measuring social media "success," and some repositories who I think use that platform to their advantage.

I based each guide on my experience managing social media programs for several archives and libraries, advising archivists on social media best practices, and as someone who follows archives, libraries, and other cultural institutions on a number of social media platforms. I also took into account advice from other institutional users of social media (including the non-profit and corporate sectors), archives and library literature on the subject, and the results of my "2012 Social Media Use in Archives and Special Collections" survey.

I created these guides with a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 Unported License](). With these guidelines in mind, feel free to print, share, and repost. If you use them, please link back to [rebeccahopman.com/resources/socialmedia]().

# Archives on blogs

# SOCIAL MEDIA POSTING GUIDE

## WHAT TO POST

- Text, photos, videos & audio from your holdings
  Provide context & link to collection if possible.
- Photos from exhibits, classes & events
  At repository & that your repository is a part of.
- Links to online resources, online exhibits, etc.
  No raw links! Make sure to provide context.

## TIPS FOR GOOD CONTENT

- Blogs are for text, but don't overdo it
  Best range: 200-500 words; try to stay < 700.
- Always include images or videos in post
  Breaks up text & keeps posts visually interesting.
- Tag posts with relevant keywords
  Lets readers find similar posts & broadens reach.
- Create categories for posts
  Lets readers navigate blog & track themes & series.
- Offer multiple ways to subscribe to blog
  Through platform, RSS, email, etc. Broadens reach.

## METRIC FOR SUCCESS

Several possible ways to measure effectiveness

- Use analytics to track link clicks & page visits
  Most blogging platforms offer analytics.
  Free services include Google Analytics, bit.ly, etc.
- Number of likes, reblogs & comments
  These stats are useful, but don't rely solely on them.
- Increase in reference queries
  Both by traditional means & through social media.
- More visitors at events, exhibits & repository
  Ask where visitors heard about event & repository.

## WHEN TO POST

- Post 1-2 times a week
  Best frequency to get & keep readers.

## A FEW PROJECTS TO TRY

- "Archival mysteries" posts
  Either stories from holdings or mysteries you want
  users to help solve (e.g. – unknown ppl in photos).
- Behind the scenes text, images & videos
  Activities like preservation, processing, etc.
- Themed series of posts
  "Facial Hair Friday," "What's Cookin' Wednesday,"
  weekly image/document, Haunted Halloween,
  American Archives Month, Nat'l Library Week, etc.
- Recent acquisitions: image & text
  Encourage users to come in & see collections.
- Profile people and organizations
  Highlight interesting collections in your holdings.
- Special blog: diary / letters
  Create separate blog to follow a series of posts
  revolving around a diary, letters, etc.

## A FEW ARCHIVES ON BLOGS

Get inspired by these repositories

- What's Cookin' @ Special Collections
  http://whatscookinvt.wordpress.com
- Prologue
  http://blogs.archives.gov/prologue/
- Joseph F. Culver Civil War Letters
  http://blog.lib.uiowa.edu/culver/
- Terrapin Tales
  http://umdarchives.wordpress.com

# Archives on **facebook**

# SOCIAL MEDIA POSTING GUIDE

## WHAT TO POST

- Text, photos & videos from your holdings
  Provide caption & link to collection if possible.
- Photos from exhibits, classes & events
  At repository & that your repository is a part of.
- Short blurbs about your holdings, exhibits, etc.
  Show users what your repository is working on.
- Links to online resources, online exhibits, etc.
  No raw links! Make sure to provide context.
- Share relevant posts from other users
  From other repositories, parent institution, etc.
  Should be no more than 10-15% of your content.

## TIPS FOR GOOD CONTENT

- Think headline, not article
  Get attention. Then add question, photo, or link.
- A photo is worth 1,000 words
  Don't let your page become too text-heavy.
- Tell stories from your collections
  Helps users & stakeholders relate to materials.

## METRIC FOR SUCCESS

Several possible ways to measure effectiveness

- Use analytics to track page visits & link clicks
  Facebook Insights offers a variety of statistics.
  Free services include Google Analytics, bit.ly, etc.
- Number of likes, shares & comments on posts
  These stats are useful, but don't rely solely on them.
- Increase in reference queries
  Both by traditional means & through social media.
- More visitors at events, exhibits & repository
  Ask where visitors heard about event & repository.

## WHEN TO POST

- Post every other day
  Best frequency to get and keep likes.
  Posting too often buries new content too quickly.

## A FEW PROJECTS TO TRY

- "On this date": image & text about hist. events
  Try to connect it to your holdings.
- Connect archives to current events
  Video of football game in 1952 for game in 2012.
  Image of Twain book & call no. on Twain's b-day.
- Publicize events for your repository
  Exhibits, genealogy workshops, class visits, etc.
- "Found in the archives": image & text
  Get submissions from researchers if possible.
- Featured image of the week
  Try to relate to an event, season, holiday, etc.
- Recent acquisitions: image & text
  Encourage users to come in & see collections.
- Use Facebook's timeline feature
  Chronicle the history of your parent organization.

## A FEW ARCHIVES ON FACEBOOK

Get inspired by these repositories

- US National Archives
  www.facebook.com/usnationalarchives
- Coca-Cola Archives
  www.facebook.com/CokeArchives
- University of Pennsylvania Archives
  www.facebook.com/pennarchives
- Society of American Archivists
  www.facebook.com/archivists

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# Archives on flickr

## WHAT TO POST

- Photos & videos from your holdings
  Provide context & link to collection if possible.
- Photos from exhibits, classes & events
  At repository & that your repository is a part of.
- Small digital exhibits & exhibit slideshows
  Either an online component to a physical exhibit
  or a stand-alone collection of images.

## TIPS FOR GOOD CONTENT

- Upload high-res images with visual appeal
  Minimize images of documents, static images, etc.
- Set copyright information for all uploads
  Choose your settings & be consistent.
- Tag images with relevant keywords
  Increases chance of discovery; broadens audience.
- Add images to relevant groups
  Start with www.flickr.com/groups/archivists/
  & find other groups in your subject area.
- Use sets & collections
  Helps users navigate page & find interest areas.

## METRIC FOR SUCCESS

Several possible ways to measure effectiveness

- Use analytics to track link clicks & page visits
  Flickr analytics & link service like bit.ly or ow.ly.
- Number of favorites & comments
  These stats are useful, but don't rely solely on them.
- Increase in reference queries
  Both by traditional means & through social media.
- More visitors at events, exhibits & repository
  Ask where visitors heard about event & repository.

## WHEN TO POST

- At least once every other month
  Doesn't need to be as frequent as other platforms.

## A FEW PROJECTS TO TRY

- Small image exhibits
  Mascot images, rare book covers, etc.
- Online component to physical exhibit
  Extra images or making-of images from exhibit.
- Behind-the-scenes images & videos
  Activities like preservation, processing, etc.
- Publicize events for your repository
  Exhibits, genealogy workshops, class visits, etc.
  Sets for each event so users can share w/ friends.
- Mystery images set
  Get help from followers to name people & places.
- Caption contest for images in collection
  Have followers create captions for funny photos.

## A FEW ARCHIVES ON FLICKR

Get inspired by these repositories*

- US National Archives
  www.flickr.com/photos/usnationalarchives
- Walters Art Museum
  www.flickr.com/photos/medmss
- Providence Archives, Seattle
  www.flickr.com/photos/provarchives
- Australian National Film & Sound Archive
  www.flickr.com/photos/nfsa
- Danish State Archives
  www.flickr.com/photos/statensarkiver

*More here: www.flickr.com/groups/archivists/

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# Archives on **tumblr.**

# SOCIAL MEDIA POSTING GUIDE

## WHAT TO POST

- Text, photos, videos & audio from your holdings
  Provide context & link to collection if possible.
- Photos from exhibits, classes & events
  At repository & that your repository is a part of.
- Links to online resources, online exhibits, etc.
  No raw links! Make sure to provide context.
- Reblog content from other users
  Add to a conversation or boost a message.

## TIPS FOR GOOD CONTENT

- Keep it short and sweet
  Tumblr is a microblog. Images > text.
- Engage followers & other users in conversation
  Builds community and expands potential audience.
- Tag your posts to broaden reach
  Use #archives, #history, #lit, #education, etc.
- Always attribute reblogged content
  It's polite to mention your source!
- It's okay to be playful & informal in posts
  Gifs & memes are a big part of tumblr culture.

## METRIC FOR SUCCESS

Several possible ways to measure effectiveness

- Use analytics to track link clicks & page visits
  Free services include Google Analytics, bit.ly, etc.
- Number of likes, reblogs & comments
  These stats are useful, but don't rely solely on them.
- Increase in reference queries
  Both by traditional means & through social media.
- More visitors at events, exhibits & repository
  Ask where visitors heard about event & repository.

## WHEN TO POST

- Post content several times a week
  Both original & reblogged content.

## A FEW PROJECTS TO TRY

- "On this date": image & text about hist. events
  Try to connect it to your holdings.
- Behind the scenes images & videos
  Activities like preservation, processing, etc.
- Connect archives to current events
  Video of football game in 1952 for game in 2012.
  Image of Twain book & call no. on Twain's b-day.
- Publicize events for your repository
  Exhibits, genealogy workshops, class visits, etc.
- "Found in the archives": image & text
  Get submissions from researchers if possible.
- Hold a meme / caption contest
  Have followers create captions for funny photos.

## A FEW ARCHIVES ON TUMBLR

Get inspired by these repositories*

- Archives of American Art
  http://archivesofamericanart.tumblr.com
- Preservation at the National Archives
  http://preservearchives.tumblr.com
- Today's Document
  http://todaysdocument.tumblr.com
- U of Iowa Special Collections & Univ Archives
  http://uispeccoll.tumblr.com
- University of Southern California Libraries
  http://usclibraries.tumblr.com

*More here: http://ex-tabulis.tumblr.com/archivists

# Archives on twitter

# SOCIAL MEDIA POSTING GUIDE

## WHAT TO POST

- Text, photos & videos from your holdings
  Provide context & link to collection if possible.
- Announcements about repository & events
  Changes in hours, website changes, event info, etc.
- Links to online resources, online exhibits, etc.
  No raw links! Make sure to provide context.
- RT relevant tweets from other users
  Should be no more than 30% of your content.

## TIPS FOR GOOD CONTENT

- Keep it short and sweet
  <125 characters allows for manual RTs.
- Shorten links & place at end
  Highest probability of CTR*
- Engage followers & other users in conversation
  Builds community and expands potential audience.
- Use hashtags intelligently & sparingly
  Incorporate #words into natural language & make tags to track an event/series (#fire1912, #saa12).

## METRIC FOR SUCCESS

Several possible ways to measure effectiveness

- Use analytics to track link clicks
  Free services include bit.ly, goo.gl & ow.ly.
- Number of favorites, RTs/MTs & comments
  These stats are useful, but don't rely solely on them.
- Increase in reference queries
  Both by traditional means & through social media.
- More visitors at events, exhibits & repository
  Ask where visitors heard about event & repository.

## WHEN TO POST

- Post at least once a day
  More is better & vary timing.
- Space out tweets
  No more than 1/hr (excluding replies).
- Best CTR*: 8:30-11:30am, 2:00-5:00pm
  Test it for yourself! Bad: 1-7am, 12-1pm, 6-7pm.
- Tweet on the weekend
  Less busy means greater CTR but less RTs.

## A FEW PROJECTS TO TRY

- #onthisday: image & text about hist. events
  Try to connect it to your holdings.
- Study campaign (i.e. #UMDStudy)
  Tips for students & links to relevant resources.
- Publicize events for your repository
  Exhibits, genealogy workshops, class visits, etc.
- Trivia about holdings & parent institution
  Engage users with fun facts and contests.
- Extended campaigns (only occasional)
  Create new account for special exhibit, diary, etc.

## A FEW ARCHIVES ON TWITTER

Get inspired by these repositories
- US National Archives (@USNatArchives)
- The British Postal Museum & Archives (@postalheritage)
- University of Iowa Special Collections & University Archives (@UISpecColl)
- Niels Bohr Library & Archives (@AIPhistory)

*Click-through rate

# Archives on YouTube

# SOCIAL MEDIA POSTING GUIDE

## WHAT TO POST

- Videos & audio from your holdings
  Provide context & link to collection if possible.
- Videos of speakers, classes & events
  At repository & that your repository is a part of.
- Video tours of repository, exhibits & collections
  These videos can serve as orientation for users or a tour for people who can't visit your repository.

## TIPS FOR GOOD CONTENT

- Upload high-resolution videos
  Don't post blurry, fuzzy film (unless unavoidable).
- Add descriptive titles & captions to your videos
  Improves chance of being chosen in search results.
- Create playlists with your content
  Helps users find what they want on your account.
- Specify YouTube category for your videos
  (e.g. – music, sports, education, etc.)
  Increases chance of discovery; broadens audience.
- Determine YouTube license for your videos
  Makes sure users know video's copyright situation.

## METRIC FOR SUCCESS

Several possible ways to measure effectiveness

- Use analytics to track video views & link clicks
  YouTube analytics & link services like bit.ly or ow.ly.
- Number of likes, shares & comments
  These stats are useful, but don't rely solely on them.
- Increase in reference queries
  Both by traditional means & through social media.
- More visitors at events, exhibits & repository
  Ask where visitors heard about event & repository.

## WHEN TO POST

- Once every few months
  Doesn't need to be as frequent as other platforms.

## A FEW PROJECTS TO TRY

- Series of videos / audio clips from holdings
  Sports footage, commercial jingles, oral history interview clips, musical performances, etc.
- Guided tour of exhibits & collections
  Expands reach & potential visitor base.
- Behind-the-scenes interviews & tours
  Interview staff members about their work.
  Show activities like preservation, processing, etc.
- Recordings of classes, speakers, etc.
  Make available to users who couldn't attend event.
- Instructional slideshows
  How to use finding aids, primary sources, etc.

## A FEW ARCHIVES ON YOUTUBE

Get inspired by these videos

- DePaul Spec Coll & Univ Archives 2 min tour
  http://youtu.be/1PuyFEvtcD0
- SDSU Spec Coll & Univ Archives tour
  http://youtu.be/boZdrwlJQPY
- Digitization Services at the National Archives
  http://youtu.be/fyKsNOTlwJk
- Columbia Archives 2012 WalkAlong Tour
  http://youtu.be/RbDSY3NdU70
- WSU NDSA PSA Preserving Your Digital Past
  http://youtu.be/iF39aQBTVVc
- Using finding aids in SDSU Spec Coll
  http://bit.ly/UqQ4xe

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