

CONVERSING WITH YOUR COMMUNITY: SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGIES



Social media has become part of everyday life for people of all ages. Are you using it to promote your library's resources? If not, consider the followings statistics:

- More than half of U.S. Internet users read blogs at least monthly in 2010.¹
- More than 500 million people are active Facebook users², making it the third largest Web site after Google and Microsoft.³
- Twitter hosts 65 million Tweets per day⁴, and more than 100 million new users signed on in 2010.⁵
- 69% of adult Internet users download or watch videos online.⁶
- Social networking site usage has quadrupled for those 74 and older since 2008.⁷

By connecting with users in *their* online communities and sharing information about the library's unique resources, you can drive traffic to those resources and even into the library. The ideas below can be used to help you launch a social media pilot program or help you add content to an existing blog or social media site.

Blog Posts

Your library's blog is a great place to publish current content about library resources and programs. RSS and social media sharing features allow your users to stay up-to-date with library happenings and share posts on a variety of social networks. Below are some topic ideas and sample posts about historical resources. Don't be afraid to have fun with the content in your historical collections. An unexpected article from a newspaper archive can stoke the imagination of your readers, encourage online feedback and two-way conversations, and even drive new visitors to the library.

Ideas for Posts

- Announce the availability of ProQuest Historical Newspapers™ at your library.
- Write about interesting articles found in the newspapers. Provide a snapshot of the article and a link to encourage readers to view the full article. Remind them that they will either need to be in the library or signed into the database to view the article.
- Provide research help and tips.

¹EContent, January/February 2011, p. 7.

²Facebook, <http://www.facebook.com/press/info.php?statistics>, February 22, 2011.

³"Facebook Overthrows Yahoo to Become the World's Third Largest Website," *TechCrunch*, <http://techcrunch.com/2010/12/24/facebook-yahoo-third-largest-website>, December 24, 2010.

⁴"Twitter: Comparing Its Velocity, Not Downtime," *ReadWriteWeb*, <http://www.readwriteweb.com/cloud/2010/07/twitter-how-its-down-time-comp.php>, July 10, 2010.

⁵"How Twitter Users Changed in 2010," *Mashable*, [http://mashable.com/2010/12/16/twitter-stats-2010/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+Mashable+\(Mashable\)#](http://mashable.com/2010/12/16/twitter-stats-2010/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+Mashable+(Mashable)#), December 16, 2010.

⁶"The State of Online Video," *Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project*, <http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2010/State-of-Online-Video.aspx>, June 3, 2010.

⁷"Generations 2010," *Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project*, <http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2010/Generations-2010.aspx>, December 16, 2010.

Sample Posts

Title: Looking for Primary Resources?

Generalized search engines are useful tools for providing a broad sweep of information available openly on the Web. However, not all that information is accurate. If you need reliable historical information for a school assignment or professional project, try our ProQuest Historical Newspapers resource. These digitized, searchable newspapers, available online in the library or from your computer, provide reliable primary source material. And, you can see how they looked when they were printed decades—even centuries—ago!

You can access the following newspapers from the library's electronic resources page *[include a link to the electronic resources page]*:

- Newspaper 1
- Newspaper 2
- Etc.

Title: Discover the Story Behind the Names

Certainly, you can use ProQuest Historical Newspapers to search for your relatives' names in the birth, marriage, and death announcements. But, remember to take your research to the next level. For example, did your relative own a business? Search the display ads as well as news stories for more information. Was he or she involved in civic or social organizations? Search the newspapers for photos and articles about their meetings and events. Did a tragedy or triumphant event occur during his or her lifetime? Read what eyewitnesses reported at the time. Browse the comics and editorials to see what your ancestors found amusing, troubling, and thought-provoking. Lives, not just names, are captured in the pages of these newspapers.

The library offers continuous runs of the following digitized newspapers:

- Newspaper 1
- Newspaper 2
- Etc.

You can access these newspapers in the library or from home. Visit the electronic resources page *[include a link to the electronic resources page]* to start researching today!

A Few Resources to Help You Get Started

Feel free to borrow ideas and materials from ProQuest's free e-newsletters:

- *Retroview*, an entertaining "quick read" that features content from ProQuest Historical Newspapers. Subscribe at: <http://prq.st/RetroviewSignup>
- *ProQuest Genealogy News & Notes*, which illustrates how to use various genealogical and historical resources together to trace histories of people, places, and events. Subscribe at: <http://www.proquest.com/go/geneasignup>

Facebook

Facebook continues to be the fastest growing social network, appealing to people across the generations. Libraries can create a Facebook Page (i.e., a public profile) on which they can maintain an active dialog with users, provide an access point for library services, announce programs, and highlight resources. When your patron's "Like" (i.e., connect with) your Page, that connection then appears on your patron's profile, letting their friends know they also might want to check out your Facebook Page. You can learn more about creating one at <http://facebook.com/FacebookPages>.

Keep your Page fresh by updating your content regularly. Below are some suggestions to help you highlight your historical resources:

- Post about ProQuest Historical Newspapers availability.
- Post an interesting article or research tips.
- Add information about in-library training sessions or link to ProQuest's free online training. (Visit www.proquest.com/support for more information about free training for you, your staff, and your users).
- Add a link to your library's electronic resources page.
- Be proactive in seeking "Likes" of your Page to build your Page membership. Advertise your Facebook presence on the library's Web site, in the library's newsletter, and in the physical library itself. Facebook also offers affordable, targeted online advertising opportunities to help you let people in your town know the library is on Facebook. Learn more at <http://www.facebook.com/adsmarketing/>.

Twitter

Twitter is like a tiny (140-character or less), real-time blog that you can use to instantly inform your "followers" about what is happening at your library, provide them assistance, put a smile on their faces, and more.

ProQuest uses Twitter, for example, to let our followers know when we release the latest issue of *Retroview*, our ProQuest Historical Newspapers newsletter:

- Removable lips: a great look for summer! Learn more ... in *Retroview* @ <http://bit.ly/pqsummer>
- Answer in the form of a question: Which historical newspaper collection salutes *Jeopardy!* this month? Hint @ <http://prq.st/JeopardySalute>
- "Pop! Goes the Leg" in *Retroview* @ <http://prq.st/retrobreak1>

When you get ready to "Tweet," consider:

- Recommending your historical newspapers as a research tool for students ... or historians ... or genealogists ...or sports buffs, etc. Newspapers cross many disciplines!
- Providing a daily example of interesting articles from a historical newspaper to engage new visitors.
- Posting a "this day in history" link.
- Inviting followers to a historical newspaper training session. (Remember to learn more about ProQuest's free training at www.proquest.com/support).
- Providing helpful research tips.

For more ideas on ways to use Twitter, check out Sonja Cole's article, "20 Ways for Librarians to Use Twitter."⁸

⁸Sonja Cole, "20 Ways for Librarians to Use Twitter," a sidebar to the story titled "Working the Social: Twitter and Friendfeed," *Library Journal*, June 15, 2009, p. 25. <http://www.libraryjournal.com/article/CA6663770.html>

Location-Based Services

Foursquare, Gowalla, and Facebook Places have emerged on the social media landscape, becoming popular among early adopters of technology and smart phone users. With these applications, users “check-in” at various on-network locations around a community, notifying friends of their presence. They can send tips (e.g., “Soup’s only \$1 at Minnie’s Diner today!” “There are some unused computers at the library right now!”) and share photos with their buddies. Game-like elements make these applications even more fun, such as encouraging users to check in so they can gather points or “badges.” The person who checks in at a location more than any other becomes “mayor” of that location.

Is your library available on each network, making it easy for library visitors to check in? If you live in a tech-savvy community where location-based services are popular, consider incentives such as library tee-shirts or tote bags for the most frequent visitors—especially your “mayor.”

To learn more about using location-based services for libraries, visit David Lee King’s blog at <http://www.davidleeking.com/tag/foursquare/>.

YouTube

YouTube now exceeds two billion views per day.⁹ Chances are, some of these viewers are also your patrons! Why not connect with them where they spend time anyway?

With a YouTube account, you can upload and share brief videos that you—or even your patrons—create to inform, inspire, and educate about resources and events at your library. For example, you could create videos that:

- Demonstrate how patrons can access your online resources.
- Promote your newest or your most underused database.
- Give a quick overview on how to search for information within specific resources.
- Highlight fun and interesting content from one or more of your collections.
- Feature patrons (with their permission) telling others about their favorite online library resources.
- Recognize the young winners of summer reading programs and bookmark-creation contests (with their parents’ permission).
- Salute the visitor who checks in the most.
- Show patrons and others how tax dollars are being used by the library to add value for the entire community.
- Share the library’s secrets (“Did you know...?”).

Remember to keep the videos brief and appropriate for anyone who may watch them. If YouTube viewers add your video to their “favorites,” these library friends can then easily share the video with their friends on Twitter and Facebook. (If a lot of people share it in a very short time, this is known as “going viral,” a very good thing.)

Also remember to promote the videos yourself via Twitter, Facebook, the library’s Web site and/or newsletter, and any other channels available to you. Like Facebook, YouTube also offers advertising opportunities on its site that can be used to target viewers in your community. To learn more, go to http://www.youtube.com/t/advertising_overview.

⁹YouTube, http://www.youtube.com/t/press_timeline, February 22, 2011.