

## HOW TO BEST PROMOTE COLLECTIONS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

### WHY DO WE USE SOCIAL MEDIA FOR OUR COLLECTIONS?

Before we delve into using social media for our collections it's important to ask why we would use it.

#### *Interacting with Visitors - A Shift to Digital*

**Interaction with visitors** has always been significant for museums and historical organisations; after all, part of their work is awareness and education.

It is not only guided tours, workshops, or lectures where communication takes place; brochures, flyers, and much more are also contact points with (potential) visitors. As we know, **social media is an integral tool** when it comes to communication in the 21st century.

We often think of social media as a one way street, but the focus is really on social interaction. Unlike traditional media such as newspapers, they are not designed for one-way communication. Instead, commenting, liking, and sharing are essential parts of a successful social media strategy – it's not about simply making information available, but also about **reaction and interaction**.

Historical organisations can take advantage of that: **they get direct feedback and therefore know what their existing or potential audience finds interesting**, which also makes it easier to interact with their target audience.

For example this RHSV post from History News about a 1896 tour of an ensemble group known as the Blind Musicians. We were contacted by a family member of the group!

#### *The Question of Superficiality*

Platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and others are often accused of flattening content and supporting superficiality. That may be one reason why the arts, culture, and historical sector was initially somewhat hesitant regarding the use of social media.

**The accusation is perhaps not entirely false** – you can't get as much content across in a post on Instagram as you can in a catalog or in a guided tour. **However, social media is in no way intended to replace these formats but rather to complement them.**

**Historical organisations can use it to act and communicate at eye level with their audience and attract new target groups. In addition, social media can be a powerful tool for cooperative activities and networking.**

(reference: [Cultural Places](#))

## **CHOOSING A COLLECTIONS POST : OBJECTIVES**

“Collections can be looked at in terms of push services and pull services. What are you comfortable pushing out (marketing) and what for privacy and financial reasons do you want to invite people to physically come in to your historical society and do a search for?”. Jillian, Collections Manager RHSV.

The RHSV and historical societies are different from the State library for example, in that everything is open to the public.

When choosing a collections post for a social media platform “push services”, there are a number of objectives you may have. Choose what you are comfortable with and what best supports the business objectives of your organisation. Some examples include:

- 1) **Letting people know you exist, that you are accessible, and are open for research/visits.**
- 2) **Promoting awareness of existing collections strengths.** That is areas that the collections are rich in, so that researchers that have questions about that particular topic come to you. For example, the RHSVs Images strength is collections from the 2nd half of the 19th century.
- 3) Can also promote the range of the collection, so people know what's there.
- 4) **If you have an area of your collection that you want to grow,** you can focus on that area on your social media, so people are aware that you are taking donations (objects, photos, manuscripts etc.).
- 5) To recruit volunteers for general purpose, or an existing project.
- 6) If you have an active social media presence, with a variety of posts including collections, then you have a digital presence which will be favourably looked on when you are doing **grant applications.**

## **7) Networking with other organisations. You may want to host joint events, stalls with local organisations and promote this on social media.**

Note: you may want to focus on rare parts of the collection. In fact this is a wonderful way to showcase things , but if there is something particularly valuable and you have poor security you may not want to post it.

Also, we always watermark images with the RHSV logo.

### **HOW TO CREATE THE CONTENT: STORYTELLING**

There are a number of ways to tell a story of a piece in your collection. It can be place based (ie. maps), about an individual, organisation, or community etc.. We will explore this in the next marketing clinic.

### **HOW TO CREATE THE CONTENT: TECHNICAL DECISIONS**

The post can be a photo, a photo series, video (max 5 minutes Facebook, 90 seconds instagram), or voice-over content. Then of course on Instagram there are stories and reels as well. Instagram is a very visual platform which suits collections posts.

Hashtags are key in Instagram, (Twitter and LinkedIn) posts. A hashtag is a word or a group of words preceded by a pound (#) sign, which is used to categorize and find conversations around a particular topic or trend. Simply start typing the topic or trend you are talking about in the post and the social media platform will come up with suggestions.

We will keep exploring these types of content, and best-practice for hashtags in following marketing clinics.

### **PROS AND CONS OF DIFFERENT SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS (WITH SOME OF THE LATEST STATISTICS)**

**Instagram** - Great for visual posts, (although limits videos to 90 seconds) and for reaching a younger audience with 60 percent of users aged 18 - 34. 70 percent of Instagram posts are photos. For more interesting statistics visit [here](#).

**Facebook** - In 2022, Facebook will remain the most popular social media platform in Australia across all age groups. 27.2% of Australians aged 16-64 say Facebook is their favourite social media platform.

**Twitter** - good for news and events. Twitter is Australia's eighth most-popular social media platform. Twitter has 330 million monthly active users globally and [5.8 million are from Australia](#). Despite the above, only 2.6% of 16 to 64 year-olds consider Twitter to be their favourite platform.

**LinkedIn** - is mostly for business to business content marketing, that is if you are building a relationship with academic institutions and professional organisations. Interesting - 57.3%, 25-34-year-olds were the largest age group of Aussie LinkedIn users in January 2022.

Note: all platforms are good for networking with different types of audiences. .

Conclusion - if you have a platform that you are posting on, and quite active, it's best to stick to that, and post consistently, unless you have the resources to have two or three social platforms going at once.

The RHSV focuses their collections posts on Facebook and Instagram, and is building a LinkedIn network where it might consider posting there. But we have someone paid working two days a weeks, so work within your resources.

If you are on Facebook and do have the resources (or can ask a young volunteer perhaps) to set up an Instagram account, that might be an option.