How-To Guide:
Managing Your
Social Media Presence

HERITAGE MONTGOMERY

HISTORY ∎ CULTURE ∎ NATURE

Why Social Media is Important for your Museum

Social media allows you to:
- Engage and connect with audiences.
- Promote exhibits and events.
- Expand reach within the local community and beyond.

Goals of this Guide

- Maximize your social media presence with minimal time investment.
- Provide actionable steps to manage Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube effectively.
- Provide a set of policies that enables museum staff members and volunteers to assist with social media management.

Chapters

- Introduction to Facebook for Small Museums
- Introduction to Instagram for Small Museums
- Introduction to YouTube for Small Museums

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Why Focus on Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube?

Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube are three of the largest and most widely-used social media platforms in the world, making them ideal for reaching diverse audiences.

Facebook:
- Great for engaging with a broad audience through event promotion, detailed posts, and community interaction.
- All demographic groups use Facebook, making it a good way to get in front of people of all ages, races, and education levels.

Instagram:
- Perfect for showcasing the visual aspects of your museum—photos of exhibits, behind-the-scenes glimpses, and engaging Stories.
- 71% of Instagram users are under the age of 35, making it key to reaching younger audiences.

YouTube:
- Second largest search engine, right after Google.
- Ideal for sharing longer video content—curator talks, virtual tours, and educational content.
- 70% of viewers say YouTube content helps them learn about new topics, making it great for museum education and outreach.

Planning Your Social Media Strategy

Know Your Audience:
- Identify target demographics (e.g., local community, tourists, families, history enthusiasts).
- Tailor content to resonate with specific interests.

Who are your museum's target audiences?

_____

_____

Setting Goals:
- Define your objectives (e.g., boost foot traffic, increase event participation).
- Use social media to share your museum's story and mission.

What are your museum's social media goals?

_____

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What are Hashtags?

- Hashtags are keywords or phrases preceded by the # symbol (e.g., #museum, #history).
- They categorize content, making it easier for users to find posts related to specific topics or themes.
- Clicking on a hashtag takes users to a feed of posts that have used the same hashtag, increasing visibility beyond just your followers.

Why Use Hashtags?

- **Increase Discoverability**: Hashtags help your posts reach a broader audience by making your content searchable to people interested in those topics.
- **Join Conversations**: Using popular or trending hashtags (like #MuseumFromHome or #ArtExhibit) can place your posts in the context of larger conversations happening online.
- **Engage Local Audiences**: By using location-based hashtags (e.g., #YourCityNameMuseum), you can attract local visitors or tourists interested in cultural activities in your area.

Hashtags to Use

#_____   #HeritageMontgomery
#_____   #VisitMoCo
#_____   #MDinFocus

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What is Tagging?

- Tagging means mentioning another user or organization by using the @ symbol followed by their username (e.g., @YourMuseumName).
- When you tag someone in your post, they get notified, which can lead to increased engagement, cross-promotion, and new followers.

Why Tag?

- **Increase Engagement**: Tagging partners, sponsors, or influencers can encourage them to engage with your post, helping it reach a wider audience.
- **Build Relationships**: Tagging collaborators (like other museums, artists, or local businesses) fosters partnerships and may lead to content shares or future collaborations.
- **Encourage Visitor Interaction**: Tagging visitors or reposting content they've tagged you in helps build community and encourages others to engage with your content.

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Creating a Content Calendar

Plan twice-weekly posts in advance to stay consistent.

Work a week in advance. Have staff/volunteers take photos and videos for the next week's posts. This gives everyone time to create compelling content without having to rush.

Sample Content Calendar:

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		Post about an artifact, exhibit, or upcoming event.			Share behind-the-scenes content or staff stories.	

Repurpose Content Across Platforms

Use the same content with slight variations for each platform to save on work and to keep your messaging consistent.

Adapt visuals and captions to fit the style of Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube.

Facebook	Instagram	YouTube
• Longer-form content and event announcements work well. • Include links to articles, events, or YouTube videos. • Use the Facebook Events feature for upcoming programs.	• Visual platform—focus on high-quality images/videos. • Use shorter captions with relevant hashtags. • Take advantage of Instagram Stories for real-time updates.	• Ideal for longer video content (e.g., tours, lectures). • Link YouTube videos on Facebook and Instagram for cross-promotion. • Short 1-2 minute videos work best for regular posts.

Step-by-Step Guide to Creating Content

1. Brainstorm content ideas

2. Capture visual content

3. Write captions and text

4. Optimize for reach platform

5. Schedule and post

6. Engage with your audience

7. Track what works

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STEP 1: Brainstorm Content Ideas

Goal: Choose a topic or theme that resonates with your museum's audience and can be adapted for multiple platforms.

Examples:
- Artifact Spotlight: Highlight a unique piece from your collection.
- Event Teaser: Preview an upcoming exhibit or event.
- Behind-the-Scenes: Show the setup process for an exhibit or artifact restoration.

STEP 2: Capture Visual Content

Goal: Take high-quality photos and/or videos that can be adapted across platforms.

How to Capture:
- Use a smartphone or camera with good lighting.
- **Photos**: Take a mix of wide shots (for Instagram and Facebook) and close-ups (for Instagram posts and Stories).
- **Videos**: Record short clips (15-30 seconds) that can be used for Instagram Stories, Reels, or YouTube.
- **Tip**: Shoot videos in landscape (horizontal) format for YouTube and portrait (vertical) format for Instagram Stories/Reels.
- **Tip:** Keep a camera with video capability at your front desk, so staff and volunteers can easily capture images throughout the day.

What is Considered High Quality for Photos/Video?

- **Clear and Sharp Focus**:
  - Ensure your images and videos are in sharp focus with clear details.

- **Good Lighting**:
  - Use natural light whenever possible or ensure your subject is well-lit. Avoid harsh shadows or overexposure.

- **Framing and Composition**:
  - Follow the Rule of Thirds: Position your subject slightly off-center for a more visually pleasing result.
  - Avoid clutter in the background—keep your focus on the subject, whether it's an artifact, a person, or an exhibit.

- **Steady Camera**
  - Use a tripod or stable surface when recording videos to prevent shakiness.
  - If filming handheld, try to keep the camera as steady as possible to avoid distracting movements.

- **Natural Sound** (For Videos):
  - Ensure there's minimal background noise in videos. If possible, use an external microphone for clearer sound during interviews or narration.

STEP 3: Write Captions and Text

Goal: Write platform-specific captions that convey the message in different lengths and tones.

Facebook	Instagram	YouTube
• Write a 2-4 sentence caption. • Include relevant historical facts, background information, or event details. • End with a call-to-action (e.g., "Visit our museum to see this piece up close!").	• Write a shorter, engaging caption (1-2 sentences). • Add relevant hashtags (e.g., #Museum, #History, #Art). • Use a conversational tone and emojis if appropriate to make it feel approachable.	• Write a brief description of the video. • Include keywords to help with search (e.g., "18th-century artifact," "museum exhibit"). • Add links to your website or event page.

STEP 4: Optimize for Each Platform

Goal: Adapt the content visually and contextually to fit each platform's strengths.

Facebook	Instagram	YouTube
• **Post Type**: A mix of photo(s) and a longer caption. • **Format**: Choose 1-2 high-quality images and the detailed caption. • **Links**: Include links to event registration or your website.	• **Post Type**: Single image or carousel (multiple images) with a shorter caption. • **Format**: Choose 1-3 images that are visually striking. • **Stories**: Create a short Story using behind-the-scenes footage or an artifact teaser (10-15 seconds). • **Hashtags**: Add relevant hashtags and location tags.	• **Post Type**: Longer video (1-2 minutes) with a more detailed narrative or behind-the-scenes walkthrough. • **Format**: Combine multiple video clips into one, with transitions or voiceovers if possible. • **Thumbnail**: Select an eye-catching thumbnail image. • **Description**: Use keywords and include links to your website or ticket page.

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STEP 5: Schedule and Post

Goal: Schedule your posts for optimal times on each platform.

- **How to Schedule**:
  - **Facebook**: Use Meta's built-in scheduling tool to schedule posts in advance.
  - **Instagram**: Use Meta's built-in scheduling tool to schedule Instagram posts and Stories.
  - (Meta owns both Facebook and Instagram, so you can link your accounts and save time by posting to both.)
  - **YouTube**: Upload your video and either schedule it for a later time or post immediately.

- **Timing**:
  - Post content on the same day (or within a close time frame) for consistency across platforms.
  - **Tip**: Weekdays around late morning or early afternoon are often the best times for engagement.

STEP 6: Engage with Your Audience

Goal: Encourage interaction and respond to comments and messages.

- **How to Engage**:
    - Ask questions in your captions (e.g., "What's your favorite artifact in our collection?").
    - Respond to any comments or direct messages within 24 hours.
    - Repost user-generated content, such as visitors sharing their own photos from your museum.

STEP 7: Track What Works

Goal: Review how well your content performed on each platform and adjust your strategy as needed.

- **How to Analyze**:
    - **Facebook Insights**: Look at post reach, likes, comments, and shares.
    - **Instagram Insights**: Check engagement metrics such as likes, shares, and hashtag performance.
    - **YouTube Analytics**: Review video views, watch time, and audience retention.

- These tools will help to identify what content is resonating with your audience, and you can create more content that is similar.

Keeping it Manageable

- **Stick to Your Schedule**:
    - Twice a week is enough—be consistent.
    - Focus on quality over quantity.

- **Leveraging Visitor-Generated Content**:
    - Encourage visitors to tag your museum in their posts and reshare their content.
    - Always give credit when reposting visitor photos or stories.

- **Training and Collaboration**:
    - Hold simple training sessions on social media best practices.
    - Encourage teamwork and ideas from staff to maintain fresh content.