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Chapter 4: Marketing with Social media

The term 'social media' describes any kind of online platform in which the users can exchange content. That content can be actual digital objects (films, music, and other files) or literally just opinions, news and views. As such, these platforms represent a fabulous possibility for libraries. It is not something to fret about or agonise over; it is an opportunity to be seized. Via social media libraries can market directly to their patrons and potential patrons, and engage them in the kind of proper *dialogue* which marketing should be all about.

Using social media as a marketing channel is very straightforward. Here is a quick analogy to try and explain the value of social media to the sceptics. Imagine you have a poster advertising your library – it contains some (static) information, presents it well, and you put your poster up all over town and hope the right people see it. You never know for sure how many people see it, or what they think of it. But you cross your fingers and hope it works. Now imagine a poster which is interactive and whose information can change from day to day – imagine taking that poster individually to hundreds or even thousands of potential patrons at once and getting their feedback on it, answering their questions, even monitoring what they say about the poster in your absence and adapting it to suit them better. That's what social media does.

And on top of all that, it's mostly free.

Do your patrons use social media?

The short answer is: yes. The longer answer is: of course there will be exceptions, but increasingly more and more of your target audience will be using one form of social media

or another. Worldwide, people spend on average more time on social media each week than they do on email (TNS, 2010).

At the time of writing there are 11.7 million active social networkers in Canada, 114.5 million in the USA, 7 million in Australia. The UK has 19.3 million active social networkers (GlobalWebIndex, 2011) – when you consider how many of the approximately 65 million people in the UK are either too young or too old, that represents a huge percentage of the population. Throughout this chapter the figures can only go so far to represent the situation, as they are changing all the time – in most cases, increasing rapidly. By the time you read this, the numbers above will almost certainly have increased considerably.

The rest of this chapter assumes some familiarity with social media platforms. To list all the different types of social media tools and what they do would leave very little space for tips on how to market with them; for this reason I've put a basic overview of social media platforms in Appendix B. If you've never used social media before, it might be best to read the Appendix first – it begins on page 00 – and them come back and finish off this chapter.

The tools we'll be discussing in this chapter are blogs, microblogs, and social networks. Other web 2.0 tools and new technologies, such as wikis, QR codes, video sharing and so on, are discussed separately in the next chapter, 'Marketing with New Technologies'.

The case studies in this chapter are from the British Library on all aspects of their social media marketing, Manchester Libraries on their use of Facebook, and New York Public Library on their use of Twitter.

General principles of marketing with social media

- **Know why you're there.** Each of your library's social media profiles should have a purpose and a focus of its own.

- **Don't over commit.** Defunct social media profiles can do more harm than good – so make sure you can provide enough resources to run each profile well, or don't run it at all.

- **Get the tone right.** Because Web 2 is all about dialogue, the tone you use on social media sites should be conversational. Many libraries start off rather stiffly on social networks – that's okay, as long as over time you become less formal and relax a little. What you should be aiming for is informal but not overly familiar, friendly but not overly personal, colloquial but grammatically, syntactically and orthographically correct. It's a hard balance to strike! But if you're friendly, informal, authoritative and you spell everything correctly, you're more than halfway there.

- **Listen!** Marketing is an on-going conversation between the marketer and the target audience, so social media platforms are a fantastic way to listen to what is being said by that audience. Imagine how many focus groups you'd have to set up to garner as much feedback as you can from asking questions to hundreds of followers via social media. Many marketers talk about 'the one in four rule' on social media platforms, and on Twitter in particular – only one in four updates or tweets should be directly promoting your own brand, and the other three should be replies; reconstituting other people's content; or something else not directly related to whatever it is you are trying to market. I wouldn't advise sticking rigidly to this but it does give some indication of just how important the 'conversation versus broadcast' principle is.

- **Get the message across.** In my opinion, library use of web 2.0 platforms should be aiming to accomplish the following: add value in order to increase engagement so that you can deliver key messages to a wider audience. In other words, make your Twitter feed (or whatever) more interesting so more people follow you, so that more people then get the really important messages you want to market about your library. The added value parts (the replies, the links to external content and so on) are what give your social media presences personality, and the personality is what draws in more followers. Then when you have the really important messages to impart (new opening hours, new collections, new services or whatever you really need to convey) there are more members of your captive audience. If on the other hand you *only* communicate those really important messages, people will think you're boring so you'll reach fewer patrons and potential patrons.

- **Make social media part of something bigger.** Your social media marketing shouldn't exist in isolation – it works best when combined with more traditional promotion. More on this below

- **Act quickly if it all goes wrong.** Sometimes human error creeps in and the person tweeting or updating a Facebook status gets mixed up between their personal and institutional accounts. Inappropriate content (most usually simple opinions or anecdotes) can be inadvertently shared via social media and when this happens, respond quickly, honestly, and apologise with the appropriate level of seriousness. A little slip does not require a huge and sombre apology – that only draws attention to what has happened and makes people over-estimate its gravity. A quick 'Oops, sorry – wrong account there!' may well be fine. On the other side of the coin, a serious slip (such as tweeting something obscene or otherwise offensive) needs swift and

decisive action. An hour is an absolute eternity in social media terms – the mishap may have been ReTweeted by others a hundred times by the time you delete the original offending item...

Before we go into the specific marketing applications of each tool, we can get a feel for how libraries can market with social media via a case study, from the British Library.

Case study 10: Social media at the British Library's Business and IP Centre | Frances Taylor

The British Library's *Business and IP Centre* is a multifaceted organisation – it is attached to a public library but its operation has more in common with a Special Library. They use five main social media platforms for a variety of purposes: two networks, blogs, microblogs, and video sharing. Marketing Manager Frances Taylor gave in an-depth overview of their marketing activity.

Firstly can you tell us which social media platforms you use, and what you use them for?

We use all the big social media sites: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube. Our aim is to raise awareness of the Business & IP Centre and promote our services, to provide a platform for entrepreneurs to network and to engage with our partners and customers.

Social media has been invaluable in helping us to engage with our target audience of entrepreneurs and small businesses. We have found that each site works well in different ways:

Facebook is great for promoting events and running competitions. However it isn't as business focused and doesn't work as well as a platform for serious debate.

Twitter allows us to stay in touch with our partner organisations and stakeholders more easily. We use it to monitor our brand and as a customer services tool. If a customer has a negative or positive experience at the British Library and writes about it on Twitter, our aim is to pick it up quickly and to respond.

LinkedIn is useful for giving people a place to engage with each other. It works well for business discussions and promoting events. Although it can be difficult trying to stop users of our LinkedIn group from adding spam.

We run a series of high profile events called 'Inspiring Entrepreneurs' with previous speakers including Lord Sugar, Stelios Haji-Ioannou and the late Dame Anita Roddick. We film all of our events and put them on our YouTube channel. So far we have had over 218,000 video plays.

Lastly, the manager of the Centre, Neil Infield, and our expert in patents, Steve van Dulken, both write blogs for the Centre. They get thousands of views every month and drive the third most traffic to our website after search engines and Facebook. We have found that blogs can be a useful way of enhancing your ranking on Google.

The process of marketing is about understanding the market as well as promoting services to that market – do you use social media to gather information on patrons, potential users, business partners and other organisations in your area?

Definitely! Our approach to social media is to make sure that we spend as much time following and listening to other people as posting information about ourselves. We try to immerse ourselves in the world of business support and stay informed of all the latest news and trends.

When organisations only post information about themselves on Twitter it can be very off-putting. I use the analogy of going to a party – you wouldn't stand in a corner of the room and shout at people. It's exactly the same on Twitter. You need to ensure that you're interested in the people that you follow, and that you engage with them.

Can you tell us about any interesting social media campaigns you have run?

We are particularly proud of a campaign we ran for an 'Inspiring Entrepreneurs' event on social media. We arranged for the event to be streamed live over the internet and online viewers could submit questions to the panel of speakers. We encouraged viewers on-site and on-line to use our Twitter hashtag #bipcsocial. We also partnered with our equivalent in the US, the New York Public Library. They put on a free event where their members could watch the event live from one of their meeting rooms. On top of this, Real Business magazine and Business Zone wrote live blogs about the event. Lastly, to bring it all together, we ran a live Twitter feed on the stage which, admittedly, was quite daunting for the speakers, but great fun.

I'm really interested in the relationship between social media and physical spaces as I think the two can work extremely well together. Last year we ran a networking event called 'Facebook vs. LinkedIn' where we invited our followers from each of the sites to

come together and meet face-to-face. It was a big success, and places sold out in a few hours.

More recently, I have been experimenting with competitions and using Twitter hashtags to generate user content.

Was there resistance to using social media initially? Did you get comments along the lines of 'I'm not sure our users really want to be friends with us on a social network' etc.?

Luckily, staff at the British Library are open-minded towards social media and I didn't face any resistance. I have also been an active user of social media in my personal life for a number of years, which I think really helped when persuading other people of its value.

Saying that, it's important to approach it from a business perspective. When persuading your managers to let you have a presence, you need to be really clear of the outcomes that you want, how you will ensure quality and how you will monitor success. One of the big challenges is time – social media can take a lot of resource to set up and maintain. Saying that, in this economic climate social media is also an attractive marketing tool to use, in that it is often free.

Can you explain a little about how using social media fits in with the rest of your more traditional marketing efforts?

I'm trained as a traditional marketer, therefore I see social media as one piece of a larger puzzle. Often I will run campaigns that involve the full marketing mix, including press, e-newsletters and e-flyers, the website, advertising campaigns, working with partners, etc. By using a range of media, you can ensure that your campaigns have maximum impact.

In an ideal world, an entrepreneur would see an advert for the Centre, read an article about us in a newspaper, be recommended to us by a partner organisation and then follow us on Twitter.

It's also important to ensure that people can find you easily on social media sites. You can add links from your emails and website as a way of gaining more followers.

What advice would you give to a library just starting to promote their services using social media?

Here are my top five tips for libraries:

1. Have a strategy. Be very clear about who your target audience is, which social media sites your customers use and why you're doing it.
2. Start small. It's better to do one thing properly than to end up with lots of sad, neglected profiles all over the web.
3. Think about success measures. It isn't about having 1,000 followers on Twitter: what happened as a result of them following you? Did you change their behaviour or their perception of your library?

4. Develop a tone of voice. You need to think about your writing style – ours is informal but we are careful to ensure that we use correct grammar and spelling. It's useful to have a 'house style'.

5. Train your staff and share ideas: I like the idea of developing a culture within organisations that allows people to experiment and support one another. It's important to ensure that any social media activity is of the highest quality, but you also give staff the opportunity to experiment. A common mistake is when organisations say that they want to 'control' social media and set up complicated sign-off processes for messages. For me, it is all about developing people's skills and confidence.

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Specific platforms and how to market with them

With these general principles in mind, let's look at specific platforms, with some case studies to expand upon the most important. One of the absolutely key things Frances Taylor said in the British Library case study above is, 'It's better to do one thing properly than to end up with lots of sad, neglected profiles all over the web.' I can't stress how much I agree with this – social media marketing is remarkably un-intensive in terms of time versus reward, but *it is a commitment.* Only create a social media profile in your library's name if there are plans in place to maintain it – not just for six months or even a year, but for as long as your users are on that platform.

For this reason, I'd recommend developing your social media profiles in roughly the following order.

Twitter

Many more people are on the social network Facebook than are on the microblogging platform Twitter (www.twitter.com) - around five times as many at the time of writing - but there are a few reasons I'd advise starting out with the latter. Firstly it takes very little work to set up a Twitter profile, less than any other platform. Secondly, research has shown that patrons engage with libraries more on Twitter than on other networks; they seem to prefer interacting via this medium. And thirdly, Twitter users are much more influential than those on other networks, so can help build your brand. A report from Exact Target (2011) found that regular Twitter users are generally more active and participatory on the web: they blog, they comment on other blogs, they review things online and so on. They are, in fact, three times more likely to amplify (draw attention to) a brand than a regular Facebook user. This makes them a great asset to have – word of mouth is, after all, a hugely powerful marketing tool, as we have already discussed. As Sherilynn MaCale of thenextweb.com puts it, 'n essence: what happens on Twitter, doesn't stay on Twitter.' (MaCale, 2011)

Getting started

So you've registered for a Twitter account for your library – what next?

1. Firstly choose as short a username as you can whilst still making sense to people – famously Twitter only allows people 140 characters per tweet, so users dislike having to sacrifice too many of those to the name of the person or institution they're talking to.

2. Put in a bio. Don't do anything else until you've updated the bio – and try and convey *why* people might enjoy engaging with you, rather than just putting in factual information. Instead of just writing 'This is the Twitter account for the Library of X' you could put 'Library of X, tweeting useful tips for using our resources, recommended reads, details of our workshops, and more besides. Got a question? Send us a tweet!'

3. Upload a profile picture right away – people on Twitter are hugely put off by the default avatar. Although Twitter is a personal medium, a profile picture of a library is inevitably going to be of a building rather than an individual, which is fine. Keep in mind that most people will be viewing the picture very small on screen, so an arty shot of your library taken from far away won't look great in everyday use.

4. Upload a background image for your profile. When people click on your name or go to your Twitter URL, they'll see your most recent tweets, your profile picture, your bio, and some information about who you follow. All this appears floating atop the background of your choice, and now is the time to show off a really nice picture of your library. If you want to make your account more personal, upload a background image which includes photos and nameplates for the people who tweet via the library account. You could even combine this with a technique the delivery service UPS use – they edit their profile each time someone new takes over tweeting duties, to say 'On duty: [employee's first name]'. This kind of thing helps ease the transition of the institutional account into the personal realm that is social media.

Start tweeting, then start following

You now have everything in place to start actually tweeting.

5. Over a period of a couple of hours, write about 10 tweets. Most people's Twitter accounts start off with the usual sort of 'Hello world!' introductory tweet – that's fine, although tweets along the lines of 'Thought we'd find out what this Twitter lark was all about' are to be avoided. If possible start strong – 'Hi all! This is Library of X. We're on Twitter to share information, news, advice, and links with users and non-users alike.' Then get stuck in to doing exactly that with a mixed approach – tweet useful links to useful resources on your own site, ask a question ('What kind of thing would you like to see us tweeting about on here?' often elicits really useful responses) and perhaps ReTweet (or RT) some content from another account, which your potential followers might find relevant (e.g 'Do these match your top 10? RT @SomeAccount Readers choose top 10 books this decade.') The point of these first 10 tweets is to provide a microcosm of the kind of content you intend to provide via Twitter, so that when people click on your profile (which they are going to do after step 6) they'll be greeted with something which inspires them to follow you.

6. Now, and only now, should you start to follow other people and institutions. When a Twitter account gains a new follower, its administrator will receive an email telling them of the fact, and giving them some information about that new follower (unless they've turned this feature off). Most Twitter users will at least give the new follower a cursory glance and decide whether or not to follow them back. This decision usually depends on the profile (picture and bio particularly) and the user's last few

tweets – this is why it's essential to undertake steps 1 – 5 and have one's ducks in a row before starting to follow other people.

For an institutional account it's good to follow several institutions which regularly feature ReTweetable content. By which I mean, information which is nothing to do with your library specifically, but which may nevertheless be of value or interest to your patrons if you RT it to them. These include the Twitter accounts of major newspapers and news organisations, and local institutions. For public libraries, following other council services is a must; for academic libraries, following other departments within the University (not forgetting student-run enterprises like the student newspaper) is also essential. The idea is that your followers will come to appreciate that you will keep them in the loop with important events, as well as just library related matters. It adds value to your account.

Another category is of accounts to follow is that of 'exemplars' – essentially, other library and archive Twitter accounts who successfully engage with and market to many followers, so you can pick up some tips for best practice from watching them operate. The final and most important category is 'Patrons and Potential Patrons.' This is also the most tricky. When people follow you, it is often possible to ascertain whether they fit into this category by checking their bio and location, but proactively seeking out patrons is more difficult. One good way is to use searches to find out who is talking about your library – there's more information on how to do that below.

I would recommend you sort these groups of people and institutions into lists on Twitter, making it easier to find the content you're looking for. Once you start following more than a couple of hundred people, it becomes tricky to scan through and find the kind of content to which you might wish to draw your followers' attention; having a 'local institutions' list saved on Twitter becomes a useful shortcut, particularly if you don't have much time to Tweet on a given day.

Taking an established library Twitter account to the next level

Most libraries feel their way gently into using Twitter. Early tweets are characterised by a stiffness and formality which doesn't quite suit social media, but this is understandable because it feels odd for an institutional account to rush straight in to being colloquial and personable. The important thing is to become friendlier over time.

The 'Twitter as party' analogy used by Frances Taylor above can be extended. Not only do people at parties want to be asked questions rather than just listen to you go on about yourself for hours, but people at parties begin to give more of themselves as they settle in to the social situation. They become more friendly and more confident – as should you with your library Twitter account over time.

You can begin to ask your followers questions and RT their answers; recommendations are always good for this, books being the obvious candidate, but there are plenty of other interesting topics such as films, music, museums, even online tools. There are also specific things you can do to operate in a more advanced way – for example, setting up some Twitter searches.

Anyone (even non-Twitter users) can go to https://Twitter.com/#!/search-advanced and set up an Advanced Search; if you have a Twitter account you can save that search so it's quickly available on an on-going basis.

The first and most obvious search to set up is one on the name of your library. This way you'll know what people are saying about you even if they aren't using your Twitter username in their tweets. At my own institution, the University of York, we have searches set up on the names of our major library sites, e.g. 'JB Morrell Library'. The next searches to set up are colloquial derivatives of your library's name: for example a search on 'York Uni Library'.

Then set up a locational search. A locational search will pick up any tweets sent from a specific geographical area – it is worth noting that this only picks up tweets from users who have enabled 'geo-tagging' in their profile settings, and who are tweeting from mobile devices. The majority of users will have geo-tagging turned off, so this search will likely not yield as many results as the previous ones we have described. It is still worth setting up, however, because when you can help a patron who would otherwise not have known the library was on Twitter at all, it is extremely satisfying and represents very good marketing... On the Advanced Search screen there is a 'Places' field – when you type something into this box a sub-field appears below it entitled 'Within this distance'. At York we have a locational search on the word 'library' within 1 mile of our postcode to pick up Tweets from students to their peers like 'In the library: anyone know where the sociology books are now?' The local public library is over a mile away from our site, but we still have its name in the 'None of these words' field just to make sure we don't pick up tweets pertaining to that institution rather than our own.

Depending on the nature of your library (and on how much time you want to devote to this), you may want to set up other locational searches on key-words which fit your demographic, for example on 'research', 'cite', 'journal' or even 'information'.

The final tip for taking your Twitter marketing to the next level is to use some tools to analyse your Twitter use. There are a million and one out there, so the important thing is to stick to the ones which will provide you with *actionable results*. Which is to say, once you learn what the tool has to tell you, can use that information to actually change something? Just knowing that you picked up 8 new followers last week and were RT'd 10 times, does not, in itself, provide useful material for strategic marketing. But there are tools which do.

- www.twocation.com Use **Twocation** to find out where your followers are based. Significant overseas followers might vary the times you tweet information. This is particularly relevant in the Special Libraries environment.

- http://tweetstats.com Use **Tweetstats** to find out what percentage of your tweets are @ replies or RTs. This gives you an idea of how interactive your account really is. If less than 25% of your Tweets involve other people, then make a conscious decision to increase engagement with your followers. Record the percentage over time and make sure it rises.

- http://klout.com Use **Klout** to find out your influence. Don't get caught up with your overall score – Klout uses an algorithm to rate your overall influence, which prizes number-of-followers for number-of-followers' sake, which is not something I'd agree with and it certainly doesn't work for libraries. However, there are sub-scores within your overall Klout score, and these *are* interesting. Use Klout to track your 'Network

Influence' and 'Amplification Probability' – these are much more useful scores to measure and record because they show how likely your followers are to act on what you tweet. An engaged follower tends to be an active follower, so again you should be attempting to engineer a rise in your score for these two categories.

As more and more libraries embrace Twitter, one library is always held up as the most successful example of using the medium well: New York Public Library (@NYPL). It is to them that we turn for the final word on Twitter in this chapter.

Case study 11: Twitter at NYPL | Kathy Saeed

NYPL does Social media in a BIG way. Their 'Connect with NYPL' page (www.nypl.org/voices/connect-nypl) lists ten different platforms at the time of writing, including the usual suspects Facebook, Youtube and Flickr, but with some more advanced outlets like iTunes and Foursquare. Because the individual neighbourhood libraries also have their own social media outputs, there are in fact more than 100 accounts under the NYPL banner. The Library's overall social media efforts are spearheaded by the Marketing and Communications department. On the flagship level, NYPL has implemented a unique decentralised staffing model consisting of over ten editors from different departments of the Library. NYPL also offers its staff writing, blogging, and social media training for those looking to get involved with social media on a local level.

There's very little point in recording figures for social media use in a book like this, because of course the figures change all the time – in NYPL's case, they will undoubtedly have increased a lot by the time the reader sees this. But suffice to say the numbers are huge – only the Library of Congress appears to attract more followers across various platforms, and

I'd speculate that a higher percentage of those are librarians than is the case with NYPL's accounts. As a marketing tool, social media has most value when it is outward facing, towards patrons and potential patrons – although of course there is marketing value in improving your reputation within the field too. NYPL seems to manage both.

Their Twitter presence @NPYL (www.twitter.com/nypl) has well over 100,000 followers and won the library a NonProfit PR Award in 2010 (see www.prnewsonline.com/pr_awards/nonprofit/14336.html). On a given day, ten or more NYPL staff will be contributing to its flagship Twitter account. They use tools like Hootsuite (an application through which to use Twitter, available at www.hootsuite.com) to coordinate their messaging, and SocialFlow (www.socialflow.com) for automated tweeting of blog content. Kathy Saeed, Marketing Associate at the library, took me through their operation.

Tell us how you approach the issue of multiple contributors to your main account. I understand you use scheduled tweets, and also assign tweets and responses to specific members of staff?

In order to successfully operate a Twitter feed with multiple contributors, communication is key. With Hootsuite, designated staff members are able to plan and schedule messages on a regular basis. Before tweeting on behalf of @NYPL all team members are given a thorough walkthrough of the tools used, they learn what other team members are working on, and what makes for an interesting tweet. Everyday staff from our Collections team will tweet a quote from a book and link to the Library's BiblioCommons catalog. We also have staff tweeting our Spanish materials as it is the second most spoken language amongst our patrons. Other content includes news, service updates, programs, databases, funs facts, Foursquare

tips, as well as automated tweeting of our blog posts through a tool called SocialFlow. The Marketing department maintains an editorial calendar into which additional social media messaging can be plugged for posting to flagship accounts.

Do you have a formal social media strategy as such, or loose guidelines within which all contributors work?

The New York Public Library has developed a formal social media policy as well as training for those interested in doing so on behalf of the institution. Before any branch or division of the Library begins a page or account, the staff member is required to read and review this policy with their supervisor, and to attend training as needed. Loose guidelines are also put into place on a flagship level to make sure we are actively engaging with users on a daily basis.

How do you manage the blend between tweets relating directly to the Library, and more general things?

Our Marketing and Communications team which manages the Library's main Twitter stream takes the time each day to survey the Twitterverse looking for trending topics, current events, and popular content (literary and / or otherwise). We also look to our fellow cultural institutions, libraries, and supporters for interesting and helpful information that might be worth ReTweeting or repurposing on our other streams. As for Library-related messaging, our decentralised staffing model allows us to provide a little bit of everything to our followers.

With so many followers, I imagine answering all @ replies is pretty much impossible – do you have to prioritise enquiries and if so, how?

We have staff from the Library's Ask NYPL reference service checking in on Twitter every day to address any patron inquires. With tools like Hootsuite, our team members are also able to assign different tweets (or inquiries) to the appropriate staff member for assistance. We try and make sure that any questions tweeted directly @nypl are answered within a few hours.

Apart from NYPL's status as a venerable institution, to what do you attribute the run-away success of the Twitter account?

The run-away success of @nypl's Twitter account can be largely attributed to the content and resources our staff offers the public through this channel. Consistently providing patrons with service updates, and (for the most part) free and low cost ways to take advantage of the Library has users coming back for more.

Have you attempted any analysis on the impact your Twitter account (or your social media presence generally) has had on library use?

The Library is using a variety of tools to regularly monitor and report on its various social media accounts and online activity. We are currently using Google Analytics, Convio, Radian6, SocialFlow, Hootsuite, and Facebook Insights. As new tools continue to be developed, we are always looking for and testing for more robust reporting methods. Our goal is to continue growing NYPL's audiences on social media, e-communications and driving more web-traffic which we hope will lead to more visits to the Library. In the past, our advocacy campaigns on Twitter have successfully generated letters written to City Council members as well as donations.

As of yet, we have not found a way to measure the direct correlation between tweeting and physical library visits.

On a related note, has your recent partnership with Foursquare yielded any results in terms encouraging library use?

NYPL's partnership with Foursquare helped get the Library on the map in a great way. As the first public library with a Foursquare badge, the partnership generated thousands of brand mentions amongst online users. The badge celebrating the Centennial of NYPL's landmark Stephen A. Schwarzman Building on Fifth Avenue and 42nd Street in New York was unlocked by more than 12,000 users, and tens of thousands are now following NYPL on Foursquare. [There is more information on Foursquare in the next chapter.]

What are the five most important things you'd recommend to other libraries in terms of running a Twitter account that patrons and potentially patrons will want to engage with?

1. Tweeting things that are of value to your customers gives them a reason to follow you.
2. Tap into your staff's expert knowledge to share informative and resourceful content with users.
3. Stay active, respond to patron inquires, and plan ahead using an editorial calendar.
4. Don't be afraid to try new things and learn what works best with your audience.

5. Stay relevant and current, but most importantly don't forget to be personable and have a little fun.

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Facebook

The social media landscape shifts so quickly that the majority of academic studies on Facebook (www.facebook.com) and libraries are completely out of date because they herald from 2009 or before. There was a time when libraries weren't particularly welcomed by patrons on Facebook; this is no longer the case. This is not the same world into which a thousand ill-advised library MySpace accounts were born.

Your users ARE on Facebook. The site has close to a billion active users (perhaps more by the time you read this), and if you think about how many of the world's population don't have access to the internet at all, a billion users equates to a staggering percentage of the people online. Moreover, over 50% of them log in daily (for up to date statistics, see www.facebook.com/press/info.php?statistics) meaning there is an opportunity to market to them on an on-going basis. The final stat of note is that each user is, on average, connected with 130 other users. So if libraries are producing the kind of high quality content that gets users to hit the 'like' button, the chances are that lots of new people are going to see the content appearing in their own profiles – amplifying the reach of the library.

Studies have shown (and your own experiences as a user may well confirm this) that people use Facebook differently from any other platform. They open it up in one tab of their internet browser – and then they just leave it open. All day. It is a constant companion to whatever other leisure or work-related activities they undertake on their computers. As

such it can help us at pretty much all stages of the marketing lifecycle. You don't have to deliver all the key messages at once, because the opportunity is there to be in contact with users over a long period of time. We can feed into their own daily lifecycle.

A particularly useful role a library Facebook site can have is to 'rescue' useful items which have appeared on the main library website in the past but which could do with re-exposure now. Services or classes or even collections which launched amid much fanfare on your library's website may now be forgotten about by most users and not even seen originally by the rest – use Facebook to draw your users' attention back to things they'd value.

If time is limited, it's straightforward to populate your Facebook page with content from elsewhere in the library . RSS feeds from a library blog, tweets from your Twitter feed, perhaps your library events calendar – all of these can be embedded on the Facebook page so they automatically update the pages with relevant content.

Two final tips: keep in mind you can embed a search-box on Facebook page – to the library OPAC or even to resources like the Arts & Humanities database J-Stor. And lastly, take advantage of Insights, Facebook's built-in analytics tool; it's powerful and very useful. Use it to learn more about your users, and adapt the content of your pages accordingly – for example, if a high percentage of visitors to your pages are under 25, you can orientate the content to suit that demographic.

Case study 12: Facebook at Manchester Libraries | Sue Lawson

Manchester Libraries' (UK) use of Facebook is often cited as being absolutely on the money, and their well-designed site has been praised in the influential 'Social Media Examiner' webzine as being one of the best of its kind. They reach over 3,000 people through

Facebook - and unlike New York Public Library which enjoys the kind of cult status that would lead people who've never even been to New York to follow them on Twitter, Manchester Libraries' Facebook followers are probably ALL patrons or potential patrons – apart from the other library services who follow Manchester to learn from their example.

Sue Lawson, who oversees their social media efforts as Service Development Coordinator described what works for them.

How do you use Facebook to market the libraries?

Facebook is a shop window for your library service. We update daily with news and links about events, workshops, wifi, festivals, new books and resources, important messages and changes to services. Facebook makes it easy to include links to specific collections like our archives and photo galleries on Flickr or a time-lapse video of the Manchester Central Library transformation and refurbishment. You can include photos and videos on your page too, we do this a lot and we also provide quick links to useful web resources that often get buried on the corporate website, making navigation simpler and faster. Staff and council colleagues use the page as handy way to quickly look up what's on.

Although we indulge in a fair amount of self-promotion, it's not all we do. Too much will just turn off your hard won fans, they'll get bored and people will start to 'unfollow' you. I make time to find, create and post content that isn't directly related to the library; useful links, Manchester stories, tips, football, bookish furniture, new web service, helpful guides, topical articles, e-book news or exciting updates from other Manchester organisations.

Engaging content is key. A page shouldn't just be a series of broadcasts or announcements. What's the point of a social network if no one is talking? Use your content to get people talking - to the library and to each other. I use Google Alerts and Twitter to find relevant stories and subscribe to lots of blogs in Google Reader and scan the headlines for potential Facebook content. Create a content calendar – you'll find loads of guides online – and use it to organise your content strategy and show your bosses how well you're doing. At the end of each month go through and track how many views and interactions your posts received. This is a good way to see which types of posts are the most popular.

The real beauty of Facebook lies in the connections between people and the potential for your one update to be seen and shared by hundreds and possible thousands of people. If someone using Facebook finds your update interesting, they can 'like' it or 'share' it on their own profile. This means that their friends get to see your update too, even if they are not a fan of your page. This is how Facebook differs from a normal website and this is how Facebook can help you get the word out about what you're doing to a large number of people very quickly.

If you're a public library and you don't have a Facebook page – get one. If your library isn't on Facebook you're definitely missing a trick. Facebook pages are free to set up; simple to control and it's easy to learn how to do it. They also have huge promotional potential and reach.

According to the Social Bakers website there are 30,393,440 UK Facebook users in the UK alone, that's 48.75% of the population. 2,646 420 of those users live in the Greater Manchester area (Source: http://www.socialbakers.com/facebook-statistics/cities) so for Manchester Libraries it was a no-brainer to be on Facebook. Other organisations agree – BBC Bullyproof has 59,000 fans and amazingly 90,528 people have used Facebook to check in while they shop at the Trafford Centre. So if commercial organisations and non-profits clearly appreciate the power of Facebook why should libraries be any different? How can you justify not being there?

How does FB specifically fit into your wider social media activity - does it have a particular and distinct role or style?

We also use Flickr to share photos, Vimeo to broadcast our videos and Issuu to display library brochures and guides. I blog for the library at the Manchester Lit List and we have an active Twitter account with over 4000 followers. I do share Flickr, Vimeo and Issuu content on Facebook because they are visually interesting and they are also popular with our followers. Although it's possible, I don't use our daily blog posts or tweets as automatic status updates on Facebook. I believe each platform has a different audience and engagement statistics show that Twitter followers, for instance, prefer different types of content to our Facebook followers.

I've tried to use our branding, design and content to give our page a unique 'personality'. I've worked hard to build a strong page identity and get a reputation for consistent, valuable and entertaining content. I check the Manchester Libraries page every day and respond to all comments and answer enquires online too. It's the

conversation that gives our page life and it's clear that users really do appreciate the opportunity to talk to us via Facebook. I ask questions and actively seek feedback and participation because I'm aware that people want to join a community, not just another Facebook page.

You have a very impressive front page, with a bespoke banner, some embedded video, and a catalogue search. Can you tell us about this?

Very rarely do fans actually visit your Facebook landing or welcome page. Most interactions will take place on fans own news feed, not even on our wall, but I think it's still important to have a professional looking welcome page. Our graphics were designed by Darren O'Connor, a really talented local graphic designer who did a work placement with us a few months ago. As our Facebook page hadn't yet come under the control of corporate communications I thought I'd take the opportunity to make a splash and Darren's artwork definitely did the job.

The embedded videos give the page interest and hopefully make us stand out from the crowd. They're also another way to let people know about the changes at Central Library and the aim is to pique visitor curiosity so users are tempted to visit the more detailed pages of information on our website and website visitor metrics show that the strategy works. The catalogue search feature is simple html form, which I requested from our Library Management System vendor. It's worth remembering that you don't have to have a flashy landing page at all. It's more important to have an active page, to update regularly and to engage with your visitors.

Obviously a lot of work has gone into the whole FB site for the library, but presumably most users will go straight to your Wall the majority of the time. How do you engage with patrons there?

Yes you're right – most of your fans will never return to your page once they've clicked the 'Like' button. I know I don't! They only see and interact with your content in their news feed. So how do you get your content seen in your follower's newsfeed? Well, it's quite an art – Facebook has something called the EdgeRank which is a secret formula that determines who sees your updates. Increasing your EdgeRank score is also called news feed optimisation and fortunately for us there are plenty of tips and articles available for free online.

I've found that, unlike Twitter, content published through third party apps decreases your engagement. Keeping updates short and avoiding URL shorteners in your posts can increase your EdgeRank and updates posted outside the 9 to 5 can often get more views. Here in Manchester we've found engagement rates are highest on Fridays. Go figure!

Once you've mastered the art of the 'EdgeRank' or news feed optimization, you'll also want make sure people are interacting with your content. Don't just post 'Here is a new service' with a link! Instead actively encourage people to participate. Say 'Here's a new service - have you tried it? What do you think?' When someone 'likes' or 'shares' a library update their activity appears in their friends newsfeed too - even if they are not a 'fan' of the library and when content is shared like this there is usually a corresponding rise in page 'fans'.

We have used wall updates to help our followers, to answer questions and to pose questions. We ask for their opinions and encourage users to test new online library services. Manchester Libraries regularly post photos and videos and we've held contests and online book discussions. We post useful information and scam alerts, calls for volunteers and guest bloggers. We've hosted live chats and 'ask an expert' sessions. We are trying to connect with our users in lots of different ways, to have fun, be genuine and drive web traffic to our library website and online services. Don't post too much. We try to post once a day, twice if it's something important but do take the time to check your 'unlike' stats on Facebook insights and discover the optimum number of posts for your followers

Does FB play a role in reaching potential patrons, or is it really just aimed at those you already have?

We want Facebook to do both – to expand the library's audience and to interact with current customers. Facebook can definitely take your content to non-library users. This 'viral' effect, where a single message can be seen by many people by being repeated across a network of followers, is one of the major strengths of Facebook. That's why we use it - to make connections with people who'd never think of using a library, to surprise and entice potential patrons with our resources and also to delight, entertain and build relationships with our current customers.

Can you give us 5 top tips for developing a library Facebook page to the next level?

1) When you are starting out you want to really get momentum going and increase your fan numbers so promote your Facebook fan page everywhere — on Facebook, online, on the web, and offline.

2) Take the time to keep people engaged by posting consistent, valuable content every day.

3) Don't be afraid to have conversations. You don't ignore people in the library so don't do it on Facebook.

4) Keep track of your posts – what's popular and what isn't and use that to create better content in the future

5) Don't be boring - have fun!

Blogs and blogging

Institutional blogs are a great way to communicate with patrons in a way which is less formal than via press release or the main website, but which is still the library imparting information in a way it can control.

The fact that users can subscribe to a blog is particularly attractive for the library – it's essentially a way of being invited into the user's routine on a regular basis, with new posts. Blogging is also very simple and easy – often much more so than editing the library website and creating new pages.

What to blog about?

Because they're so easy to set up and maintain, blogs can serve a variety of functions. They can specifically market aspects of the library service ('Have you seen our new...') but they can also promote the library just by being a useful service in themselves. Book discussions and recommendations are perhaps the most obvious blog topic for a public library; relevant corporate news and new resources are perhaps the most obvious blog topic for a special library; how to use the academic resources on offer is perhaps the most obvious blog topic for a University or College library. All of these 'go-to subjects' have value.

Once established, library blogs can go a little deeper – for example offering guidance on how to use web 2.0 technologies ('Taking your first steps in Social Bookmarking'), or tying in with local or national cultural events ('It's Festival season – check out our recommendations for CDs and Books on music in the 21st century...'). You can inject a little human interest into proceedings (market the personality) by profiling librarians in blog posts, too.

The mechanics

It may be that your library already has blogging software, or it may be that you will need to create an external blog using free software. The two leading blogging platforms (as well as Tumblr, which we'll discuss separately below) are Wordpress and Blogger.

Received wisdom appears to be that Wordpress has a steeper learning curve than Blogger, but is more flexible. I would agree with this assessment, but in my opinion the learning curve isn't so steep as to be off-putting, so I personally prefer to use Wordpress. Blogger is simpler to use and as it's a Google product it integrates seamlessly with many other Google tools; however, if your library blog is in any way successful, you'll probably appreciate Wordpress's increased functionality sooner rather than later.

Top tips

Here are some tips for increasing engagement with your library blog:

- **Most importantly, make it infinitely shareable.** Your patrons should never have to think for more than half a second about how to share your blog – whether via Twitter, Facebook, email, or whatever pertinent platform.

- **Make it easy to subscribe.** It's easy to give people multiple ways to subscribe – and it is desirable to build up a captive audience through blog subscriptions. Blogging software will have options built in that allow users to subscribe via email or via RSS feed-readers – make sure you explain these options in plain English, rather than just putting up an image of the RSS icon and leaving it at that.

- **Make sure you're listed.** Have you registered your blog anywhere? It's a lot easier for Google to find it if you tell Google it exists; same goes for other search engines. Also, stick a link on the UK Library Blogs wiki at http://uklibraryblogs.pbworks.com.

- **Get out there.** Comment on other blogs AS your institutional blog – people are happier to engage with you if you're engaging with others, plus it'll link back to your blog.

- **Link your social media presence.** Twitter is a huge driver of traffic to blogs. Make sure you tweet a link to each blog post (depending on your target audience, you may wish to tweet one link 12 hours later too, to catch people in different time-zones – you can set this to happen automatically using services like www.future-tweets.com) and if you're lucky and others tweet a link to it, you'll get a big spike in views.

- **Put a number on it.** For whatever reason, a post entitled '5 tips for doing X' will get more views than the same post entitled 'Guide to X.'

- **Ask a question.** Blogs are a rare opportunity for libraries to give their patrons ownership of something. Ask a question, either in the title of the post or at the end, and give them a voice via the comments section.

- **Put your best foot forward at key times.** If you know that you're about experience a spike in traffic (for example because of a presentation in which you give the URL, or an article appearing with a link to the blog) then make sure there is something of really high quality and overall usefulness on the front-page, to lure the new readers in and hook them... Then is not the time for your most recent post to be an apology about building works creating noise in the library!

Tumblr

Tumblr is a short-form blogging platform which officially counts as a 'microblog' but in practice sits roughly in the middle between Twitter and a regular blog. You can write long posts as you would on a regular blog, but more generally Tumblr is used to share short snippets, quotes, images, videos and audio. Tumblr blogs have 'followers' in much the same way Twitter accounts do, and one-click 'Re-blogging' which works much like ReTweeting on Twitter.

Because of its distinctive nature, Tumblr should be used by libraries in a distinctive way. Short, sharp, focused posts work best – never more than a paragraph or two long – particularly if they are on a specific theme. For example, a new materials blog listing exciting acquisitions and new collections would work well on Tumblr, as would a blog showcasing digitised images from Special Collections. Not all libraries will need or have use for a Tumblr account, but there are some excellent examples of those which do, at http://www.scoop.it/t/libraries-and-tumblr.

Google +

At the time this book is going to print, the newest social network, Google +, is just beginning to be explored by libraries as an opportunity to market to and communicate with patrons. The way in which Google are launching the service means it's being aimed at individuals first and foremost (with some predicting that support and functionality for institutional accounts will come later) so I don't want to take too much space here giving advice which may quickly become outmoded. One feature of Google + I can comment on, however, is 'Circles' – this is the ability to split up your contacts on the network into different circles of friends, family, colleagues, acquaintances and so on. These different Circles then get separate and tailored information sent out to them. So for example if you wrote on your Google + account 'I'm reading a book about marketing – what do you think is the biggest challenge facing libraries in this area?' then you might choose to disseminate that information to your 'colleagues' Circle but not your 'friends' Circle.

From an institutional point of view this is an excellent opportunity: in effect it enables segmentation, as discussed in the 'Strategic Marketing' chapter. It is a really simple way to target specific information at specific groups – in a way that Facebook or Twitter, for example, don't really allow you to do. You get to decide exactly how many Circles you have and what the criteria for each are, so you can divide you patrons and potential patrons into different demographics, and market to them accordingly.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is particularly essential in the Special Libraries sector. Social media affords an opportunity to go where the conversation is, and business librarians in particular find that

conversation often takes placed on LinkedIn. Special Librarians often have less face-to-face or phone contact with their clients than a public or academic librarian may have with their patrons, so as ever social media is an essential avenue to explore.

In the business sector, Mary Ellen Bates (2011) advocates following (or connecting with) the employees of your company individually, and taking note of LinkedIn's status updates when it notifies you of profile changes. If you receive the 'the following people have changed jobs' email and notice someone from your organisation on it, send them a message of congratulations. As Mary points out, this may be the only such message they receive on LinkedIn, and will make them that much more inclined to think well of the library.

If you as an institution are connected with as many relevant patrons (and potential patrons) as possible, you're privy to more discussions to which you can contribute useful information – the upshot of which will be positive promotion of the library. It's also useful to bring people together and catalyse discussions in which you don't necessarily play a leading role, because this can lead to the library being thought of as a place that fosters useful relationships. The library as enabler is a powerful message.

Most people expect their organisation to be on LinkedIn, but they may not expect their library to be there with a separate account. It's up to the library to take the initiative and make contact with the relevant people, alert them to the library's presence, and persuade them of the library's value.

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Social media is becoming more and more important every month. We have a great opportunity to go where our patrons are, and interact with them in a more informal way –

hopefully winning a few new patrons at the same time. People turn to social media for information more frequently now than they did even a year ago, because every search engine brings back about a million hits too many to the queries we type in. So we ask our networks instead; we trust humans more than we trust algorithms. Libraries must be there, providing good quality information as we have always done, but across new platforms.

As a minimum, most libraries should be on Facebook and Twitter. Our patrons expect us to be there. We shouldn't start any social media profiles that we can't resource in the long term, but those we do should be conversational, informative, and entertaining. Through social media, we can expand the audience to which we can then market the key services and resources the library provides.

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For up-to-date advice on these social platforms and others as they arrive online, go to this chapter's web page: www.librarymarketingtoolkit.com/p/marketing-with-social-media.html.