

Social Media Technology

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Link to Exhibits:

<https://www.srmml.org/>

<https://digitalvgw.omeka.net/>

<https://www.facebook.com/easthartfordpubliclibrary/>

Social Media Technology Examples

Many of the major museums have created or implemented a type of Social Media Platform or even an interactive aspect to their collection. In this comparison of social media formats, we can notice clearly that the East Hartford Public Library is trailing far behind other libraries and museums. Given that there is no budget for the East Hartford Public Library to create its online database or even interactive website, separate from the town's main website, the East Hartford Public Library relies entirely on the activity produced on their Facebook page, as well as the daily foot traffic.

When accessing other similar libraries with museums website, in this case, the Scottish Rite Masonic Museum and Library, there is a stark difference in the complexity of each entity. For example, on the screenshot below, we can notice the Scottish Rite Masonic Museum and Library providing various options for users to explore the vast collection of artifacts and documents. Meanwhile, the East Hartford Public Library is struggling to make an impact with events to involve the community, the low "foot traffic" on a post shows two things:

1. The East Hartford Public Library relies on outsiders, and not staff, to create events to promote library usage.

2. The low number of likes, no comments or shares, shows that even though there are dedicated patrons, it is not enough to spread the “word” and bring in new users to be involved.

The image shows two side-by-side screenshots. On the left is the website for the Scottish Rite Masonic Museum & Library. The website has a dark header with the museum's name and navigation links. Below the header, there are several sections: 'Exhibitions, News & Events' with a photo of an exhibit, 'The Museum At Your Fingertips' with a 'Digital Initiatives' banner, 'General Information & Digital Resources' with a 'Library & Archives Digital Collections' section, and 'Museum & Library - Quick Links' with icons for 'Visit Library', 'Online Collections', 'Online Exhibitions', 'Blog', and 'Digital Collections'. On the right is a Facebook post from 'East Hartford Public Library' dated April 1 at 6:23 PM. The post text says 'Join the Friends of the East Hartford Library at their upcoming meeting!'. Below the text is a photo of Vanessa Kelman and the text 'Vanessa Kelman created an event for Friends of the East Hartford Library. April 1 at 5:21 PM'. The event is titled 'Friends Of The Library Monthly Meeting' and is scheduled for 'TOMORROW AT 6 PM'. It shows '2 people going' and an 'INTERESTED' button. At the bottom of the post are icons for 'Like', 'Comment', and 'Share'.

Social Media Features & Targeting the Audience

“The Scottish Rite Museum has effective engagement,” remarked my husband Michael, who is a 32nd degree Scottish Rite Freemason. “Sharing updates through email and Facebook, and then signal-boosted by other Masonic Facebook pages which share the content. Plus, featuring new collections in the print and digital magazine for the Northern Masonic Jurisdiction called *The Northern Light*. Being an active Scottish Rite Mason, generally, means knowing what is going on with the museum.”

The Scottish Rite Masonic Museum serves a broad demographic ranging from Millennials to the Greatest Generation. Consequently, coverage takes both a digital and a print form. The Scottish Rite Masonic Museum shares online exhibitions through Omeka, a sharing service for digital collections. Navigating the collection is easy and allows web surfers to sort by type of exhibit, keyword, or date. An example that can be utilized by the East Hartford Public Library's collection is below.

Objects

Viewing Record 9 of 80

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Masonic Knights Templar Apron

1825-1850

Richard Fowler, painter

USA: New Hampshire, Dover

paint on silk, bullion, cotton

body: 17-3/4"h x 17-1/4"w

Museum Purchase [Eldrid's Auctions]

2015.078.2a

Masonic Knights Templar apron. Black silk with triangular body and flap. Trimmed with a black ruffle and flat silver tape along the edges. Black twill tape ties are stitched at the upper corners. Painted on the flap in gold and silver is a pair of crossed swords. Painted on the body in gray, black and red is a skull and crossbones with three seven-point stars. Each star has a red Christian cross in the center. Painted in red under the flap is "Painted by / Richd. Fowler, Dover, N.H." Lined with dark brown glazed cotton.



This distinctive black apron shows painted symbols associated with the Knights Templar degree. It was signed by the artist under the flap, "Painted by Richd. Fowler, Dover, N.H." Fowler was a Freemason; he joined Strafford Lodge No. 29 in 1825. "Recent Acquisitions," June 2016 - July 2017

Given that most of the collection housed at the East Hartford Public Library is of fragile and delicate condition providing an online format, in which users can see in greater detail from their various screens is a perfect way to receive greater exposure. Another example is the Van Gorden-Williams Library & Archives Digital Collection page. This site provides the user with various manners to explore delicate documents that are in climate-controlled settings, or fragile states. This site also provides the user with the ability to search by Tags, although it is not fully

functional, it is a sophisticated step in the right direction to provide users with the ability to conduct their searches and research.



The target audience for every platform is different. The East Hartford Public Library is trying to expand its involvement within the community, but the reality of the fact is that the priority is on the library programs and events, not the museum aspect of this information organization, and it shows. The lack of social media posts, the nonexistent digital catalog, and the low foot traffic for the museum are all indicators of a missing factor: The Users. To create and expand all the services that this small, yet important institution can provide the “Social” part of social media needs to be tapped and squeezed out. The users can provide valuable input on what they want to see and know from the Library’s collection and be a part of a grander plan to make the small library, one of great stature next to the state’s capital.

References

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