

Using Social Media for Libraries



INTRODUCTION

Digital Marketing is the future of marketing. Social media makes it easy and fun to reach your audience and collect information on who is seeing the content for better targeting.

Social media websites have become communities of their own. In order to successfully market and get the word out about the library and its events social media is a cheap, easy to use tool to accomplish this. A vital part of marketing for a library is communicating the value of the library to current users and future users.

Social media can be used in a variety of different ways; sharing events, showing photos, communicating important information and creating a dialogue between the users of a service and the providers. Users use social media to search for information. Therefore it is very important for a library, a community institution, to be available in all the locations where people are. Social media can help determine what people feel are lacking from the library but can also assist in finding out what people love, this helps to shape future programming and how funding should be allocated.

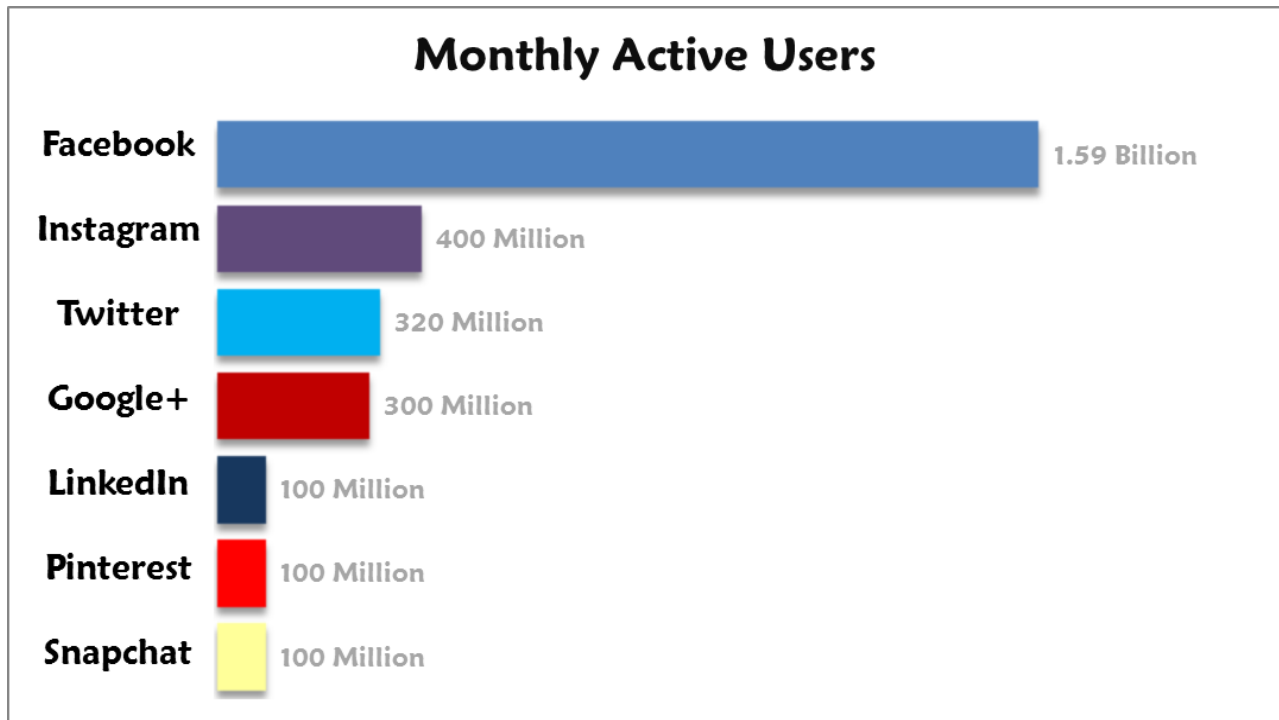
There are various websites that can be used to promote the library. As the years pass and technology evolves the major social media sites will change. It is important for libraries to change with their users and adopt new sites as they become popular.



Source: <http://www.djpages.com/wp-content/themes/djpages04/images/main/djpages-main.jpg>

WHICH SOCIAL MEDIA SITE SHOULD OUR LIBRARY USE?

There are a lot of different social media websites out there, each having its own purpose and functionality. This prevents an issue when trying to determine what site is best for your library. This guide focuses mainly on three: Facebook, Twitter and Instagram but there are many others such as YouTube, Pinterest or LinkedIn that may also be beneficial to your library. Why focus on just three then? These sites are best suited towards the uses a library will have for social media and have very large user bases allowing for maximized community interaction with minimal time input.



Source: <http://www.adweek.com/socialtimes/heres-how-many-people-are-on-facebook-instagram-twitter-other-big-social-networks/637205>

Facebook

If your library has a lack of time or are very small in a rural location I recommend using Facebook only. Facebook has the largest number of active users and is easy to get started with. When looking for a business or information Facebook is one of the first places many people look. It is a place for community members to connect online. Therefore every library in the Peace Library System should have a Facebook page. For the smaller, rural locations this is all that is necessary, however, if there is time and desire to use others that is completely acceptable.

Twitter

Twitter, like Facebook, has a large number of members, however a significant number are not active. It is a wonderful platform for creating a dialogue between a business/community centre and the members of the community. Twitter has a higher demand on time than Facebook as posts can disappear faster

and more posts are necessary. This is great for up to the minute news and instant feedback, somewhere Facebook is lacking.

Instagram

Instagram is relatively easy to use and is a great platform for sharing photos and interacting in a photo/video format with the community. Facebook owns this company so integration between the two platforms is great. This is a primarily mobile app so will require having a cellphone with photo taking capabilities. It is a photo based communication service rather than the traditional text based. Like Twitter this involves a time commitment as well. It is not as easy as just simply posting photos – to be successful on Instagram it is important

The most important part of choosing social media sites is only using the ones which you will have time to update. Cross posting is very popular and makes it easy to update several sites at once. All libraries at the very least should have a Facebook page, but the option to expand further and get more from digital marketing is there. This guide will have a significant focus because of that on Facebook but will also include a large section on Twitter for those libraries who wish to use both.

If you are still unsure after reading this guide what is for you – check out the social media accounts for other libraries. Libraries are already using social media accounts and these are a great source if you are stuck on what to post or just want to check out examples. Each social media account is designed for interaction – like or follow to have a feed of inspiration every time you log in to share, enjoy or imitate.

The Government of Canada has put together a more comprehensive list and description of social media types and site, please take a few minutes to read here: <http://canada.pch.gc.ca/eng/1444248295106#06>