Date: Tuesday 22nd March
Venue: Reid Building, Glasgow Scholl of Art

Social Media Skill Share

Community Engagement Topic Support Network

Attendees:

Trudy	Cunningham	University of Dundee	
Sarah	Ford-Hutchinson	The University of Edinburgh	
Gillian	Gibson	EAUC	
Paul	Jefferson	Edinburgh Napier University	
Bruce	Laing	Queen Margaret University	
Severine	Monvoisin	Edinburgh College	
Rebecca	Petford	EAUC	Coordinator
Viola	Retzlaff	University of Glasgow	
John	Thorne	Glasgow School of Art	Convenor

Apologies:

David	Charles	University of Strathclyde
Georgina	Massouraki	Heriot-Watt University
David	Somervell	ECCI
Kate	Thornback	SRUC

Welcome and Introductions

Welcome to all present. This is a skill share, so we can learn from each other.

Main platforms used by participants: Facebook, Twitter, Blogs, Vine, Instagram, YouTube

Comments about use of social media for sustainability in FHE:
- Where you are located within the University / college impacts your influence on a lot of things, including autonomy over social media
- Corporate narrative and formal channels necessary for some, with corporate branding
- Struggle by some to engage with students – they seem to be moving away from social media
- Travel and transport is an area of activity that has a lot to do with communication
- Challenge of expanding activity and deciding whether to expand scope of a social media channel or start a new one
- Some use existing institution social media channels (University, Student Association, research institutes) as they have a wide reach, providing them with info or tagging to share
- Twitter most effective for event reminders on the day
- Important to give up on (or give less attention to) channels which are less effective
- Social media mostly used for events promotion

Strengths and Weaknesses of Different Platforms

Facebook
- + Event pages
- + Good for sharing
- + Inbuilt stats, including on post itself
- + Stays on feed longer
- + Can provide extended information
- + Different types of group/page/individual
- + Good for engaging with Student Unions
- + Can share posters / images

- - Less reach – filtered out by algorithms
- - Old platform
- - Too much on there
- - Too much text can make finding the important info hard
- - Lack of interaction
- - Don't see what people are doing with the info you share

Twitter
- + Current and relevant
- + Good interaction
- + Can tag using handles
- + 'While you were away' feature of key tweets which should be of interest
- + Hashtags make following a topic easier
- + 140 characters – easy to skim

- - Overwhelming
- - Tweets can get lost in the sea of information
- - Global, not necessarily local
- - Twitter tune-out

LinkedIn
- + People who see it are interested usually, especially within groups
- + Digest to inbox handy feature
- + Professional engagement
- + Good for sharing content
- + Good for connecting with others
- + Relaxed interface

- - Mixed staff & students – can't segment
- - Not good for student engagement
- - Not social
- - Trawling happens
- - Too corporate
- - Too much marketing
- - Need people to join a particular group

Instagram
- + Good for storytelling
- + Visual

- - Have to have decent photos – links etc not easy to share

Flikr
- + Good for storing images

- - Doesn't have tagging link with Facebook

YouTube
- + Link and embed videos elsewhere
- + Good quality
- + Lots of text space for info and links
- + Good for demonstrations

- - Global rather than local reach

Platforms Best for Particular Types of Post

Team activities today – Twitter / Facebook
Organisational news – Twitter / Newsletter
Local / national news – Depends on the platform you find it on
Events – Facebook

Photos – Facebook / Instagram
Personal reflections – Twitter
Requests for engagement (e.g. surveys) – Twitter / Facebook

Posting to Multiple Platforms

Change the info for different channels – e.g. add more text on Facebook, target to audience
Share button on phone useful to get from one platform to the next and alter the content

Ownership of Accounts

Some institutions have their own sustainability social media accounts, while others share on general institution accounts.

Issues with aligning with corporate branding and policy have meant teams have had to work through requirements or distance the accounts enough from the organisation enough to be out-with them. Depends on the organisation and internal structures and rules.

Glasgow School of Art have two – the Sustainability one fits corporate branding but the Radial project account is more student-led and independent. Some use particular platforms to host anything which may be controversial.

Can be good to establish a relationship with relevant accounts with the right audience who can share your posts and vice versa to help you reach wider – University of Dundee has this with the CECHR research centre. Not a formalised relationship.

Getting PR through channels such as local newspapers or radio often requires the initiative to be open wider than the University – with social media you produce your info and hope others share it.

Creating content
Posts are created in attendee institutions by staff, interns with that responsibility or student participants as part of the event. They generally are linked to blogs (particularly University of Edinburgh, where these are used very effectively to explore technical or opinion-based topics) or an online link rather than just text. Sometimes they are photo-based.

Using social media to distribute surveys can be very successful – get it out through as many channels as possible, ask the questions you don't already know the answers to, and incentivise responses.

Best times to post depends on audience. Aimed at organisations can be posted any time during working hours; staff and students before 10am, lunchtime and after 6. Scheduling is good for long campaigns or things you need to get out at a particular time each week.

Scheduling tools are useful, with Hootsuite used by a few of those present. You can set up a feed on Hootsuite of items you have liked, then use Hootsuite to schedule retweets or quotes.

Who is good to follow (Twitter & Facebook)?

National:
- Changeworks
- Cycling Scotland
- Ellen MacArthur Foundation

- Energy Saving Trust
- Greener Scotland
- Guardian Sustainability
- Keep Scotland Beautiful (KSB)

- Love Food Hate Waste
- National Union of Students (NUS)
- Resource Efficient Scotland (RES)
- Scottish Renewables
- SEPA
- Social Bite

- Sustainable Scotland Network (SSN)
- Sustrans
- Visit Scotland (photos)
- Zero Waste Scotland (ZWS)
- Local community organisations
- Subject specific

Scottish FHE:
- Centre for Environmental Change and Human Resilience at University of Dundee (CECHR)
- University of Edinburgh Social Responsibility and Sustainability Department
- University of Glasgow Sustainability
- Environmental Association for Universities and Colleges (EAUC)
- EAUC-Scotland (UCCCfS)
- Your own Student Association and Institutional accounts

Working Together as a Sector

Having a shared hashtag of things others might be interested in not seen as too useful and would take up space on tweets.

Twitter lists allow you to compile a shortened feed of particular organisations of interest, or with a particular focus. EAUC-Scotland has some Lists you are welcome to use – select one of the Lists and click subscribe to add it to your own profile.

Driving up Interactions

Tag key community / internal accounts for retweets, especially if the subject that matters to them.

Not much interaction between institutions – use of the EAUC-Scotland lists above might help.

Hashtags tend to get the reach out beyond the intended audience, and aren't used much for events. They also can make tweets harder to read.

Good to have a call to action that links elsewhere, especially your own website – share your own information as much as possible.

Turn on notifications on your phone or email so all interaction is noticed and responded to.

Emoticons, photos and videos get more interaction.

Facebook can now host videos, and this is prioritised on their feeds at the moment

Dealing with Difficult People and Complaints

Top tips:
- Acknowledge the message
- Take it offline if possible – don't get stuck private messaging
- Clearly explain if there is a misunderstanding or lack of knowledge (particularly useful if there is a misinformed rant to provide a useful link)

- Offer a solution – come and meet us and talk about it, ask what could be done better next time (particularly useful for complaints or questions)
- Guidelines of the official response are helpful to develop, and be sure they are known by all who control the account, along with the policy and strategy
- Remember who your audience are!

Monitoring Effectiveness

How do you get feedback?
- Follower numbers
- Google analytics – where did people come to a webpage from?
- EAUC-S use Twitter to share information and connect but also to gain knowledge
- No one asks people directly

Other communications channels:
- Email and Blackboard don't work well as people don't look at them
- Posters are returning – but have a limited lifespan. Great to get students developing posters. Need access to affordable printing. University of Edinburgh SRS experimented by just using social media (paying to have this reach more people) to advertise an event, and attendance was lower than usual and feedback showed people wanted posters.
- Lynda.com good for learning skills such as Photoshop, but can use Publisher or Powerpoint to make posters, using own or Creative Commons photos.
- Having a space on campus great for interaction

Using social media and IT for feedback:
- University of Edinburgh get event feedback using iPads to sign in, smiley faces to rate as people leave, and follow up emails from people there on the day asking for feedback
- Get on-the-spot feedback through social media

Changing Behaviour with Social Media

Sometimes you are providing info to change small behaviours, but you tend to be engaging with the engaged if you have your own sustainability social media accounts.

Information from MSc Dissertation by Rebecca Petford (2013): Sticky, Spreadable and Good for You? Use and Potential of Social Media in Community Environmental Initiatives to Reach, Engage and Influence Local Audiences

How can social media influence behaviour?
1) Affiliation and identity – by 'Liking' or following people are registering affiliation, and increasing their exposure, both of which increase how they identify with the organisation.
2) Reinforcing social norms – sharing photos of action by others, or comments and feedback, particularly if they are of friends or a respected person, can make others see the action as more normal. Especially effective if the people taking the action share it themselves.
3) Assisting social diffusion – supporting the spread of ideas around society as above
4) Social marketing / nudging – suggesting particular behaviours by highlighting the benefits
5) Providing information – sometimes people just need to know where to find a recycling point or veg box scheme

Value of social media content depends on its stickiness and spreadability (Jenkins, Ford and Green, 2013). Sticky content sticks in the mind and can have influence, and usually would be accessed for longer (e.g. webpages, blog post). Spreadable content is short information which is easily shared, but is interpreted by each viewer who makes a decision on whether to share it onwards and how / where / what caption (e.g. social media posts). Sticky content needs spreadable content to get people to access the page, and spreadable content needs something sticky to direct people towards if it is to have any influence.

Social media can influence behaviour beyond just getting someone to come to an event, but it is very complex, hard to control, and very difficult to measure. Top tips:

1) Consider whether your social media and organisational aims align – and if they should
2) Consider whether the identity you portray on social media reflects your organisation – ask!
3) Post regular friendly, clear and attractive items and reply to comments – increases affiliation
4) Share a positive vision and show where viewers fit in – increases affiliation
5) Share photos – normalises and nudges by showing benefits of behaviours
6) Share reflections by others – normalises and nudges by showing benefits of behaviours
7) Provide information and reminders to help people implement – help with social diffusion
8) Ensure your communications are both sticky and spreadable (can mean linking channels)
9) Beware of causing offence, no comms are value free and spreadability can lead to a crisis!
10) Measure interaction and remember you will be influencing – but don't rely on social media

Remember with social media, if it doesn't spread it's dead!

Key Learning by Participants

- Need to think about who in-house can support work – possibly media students? Student volunteers who might then work harder and be better placed to share with peers?
- Personal touch works best
- Hit people on what they care about – free, food!
- Lecture shout-outs still important and effective to get the word out
- Try different platforms – Facebook is getting old! – see where the audience is
- Put more photos on Facebook not other sites where they can't be easily tagged and shared
- A specific sustainability account can work well in an institution for promoting activity
- Think about the audience for each account and target content to them
- Use of Hootsuite would help get things out at the right time
- Look at the analytics and see how to make more impact
- Think about how we work together as a sector – tag EAUC / EAUC-S!
- Daily hashtags can be good for filling content - #meatfreemonday #tiptuesday #throwbackthursday #followfriday

Training Needs:

- General Social Media training (1)
- Wording posts, especially Twitter (1)
- Analytics (1)
- Taking and sharing photos and images (1)

Minutes prepared by: Rebecca Petford, EAUC Scotland Programme Coordinator, March 2015