

Using Government Information in Social Media: Opportunities & Challenges



Image Credit: SAMHSA, <https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/988/partner-toolkit/social-media-shareables>

Elizabeth Sanders, Lamar University
Federal Depository Library Conference
October 17, 2023

Elizabeth Sanders



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FDLP Coordinator
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Presentation Outline

- Background
- Why Government Information?
- Opportunities
- Challenges

BACKGROUND



Image Credit: Architect of the Capitol,
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/uscapitol/6833981080/>

My Experience

- FDLP Coordinator Experience
 - Southeastern Louisiana University: 2016-2022
 - Lamar University: 2022-Present
- February 2023
 - Person responsible for library social media leaves
 - I take over responsibilities
- Social Media Experience: Zero

Social Media at Mary & John Gray Library

- 3 platforms + LinkTree
 - Facebook
 - Instagram
 - Twitter
 - LinkTree: links to 24/7 chat and all social media accounts
- Social Media Goals
 - Promote 24/7 chat to students
 - Advertise & Share pictures of Library events
 - Share pictures of Outreach & Engagement events
- Types of Posts
 - Days of Significance
 - Heritage Months
 - Library, Outreach, & Engagement events

WHY GOVERNMENT INFORMATION?



Image Credit: European Space Agency,
<https://twitter.com/esa/status/1689578677799993344>

First Assignment: Background

- Series of Posts for Women's History Month
- Posts for Monday, Wednesday, Friday for March
- Made template for posts to give series standard look
- Needed women to highlight & pictures of them
- Department strives to highlight culturally & professionally diverse individuals

First Assignment: Using Government Information

- Started with what knew: government figures
- Pulled women from various departments, agencies, and branches and checked for images
- Located images at same time, plus checked for images of other identified women
 - 6 of 14 identified women government related
 - 7 of 14 images from government sources
- Drawing on what knew (government information & resources) raised confidence in making and designing posts

First Assignment: Examples

March 3, 2023



Ketanji Brown Jackson is the first African American woman to become a Supreme Court Justice.

[#WomensHistoryMonth](#)
[#womenshistorymonth](#)

First Assignment: Examples, continued

March 22, 2023



Deb Haaland, member of the Pueblo of Laguna, is the U.S. Secretary of the Interior. She is the first Native American to serve as a cabinet secretary and was one of the first Native American women to serve in Congress.

[#WomensHistoryMonth](#)

[#womenshistorymonth](#)

OPPORTUNITIES



Image Credit: U.S. Department of Energy,
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/departmentofenergy/24339227443/>

Opportunities: What I've Done

- Highlight diverse individuals that may be overlooked historically
- Highlight contemporary diverse individuals in various fields, either working in government or in finding free-to-use images
- Promote and celebrate current events
- Link to government content, either solo or as a series

Example: Historic, Diverse Individuals

May 29, 2023



Photo Credit: Courtesy of the United States War Department.

442ND REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

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The 442nd Regimental Combat Team was an Army unit comprised of Japanese Americans from Hawai'i and the mainland United States during World War II. They earned approximately 4,000 Purple Hearts, 21 Medals of Honor, and 7 Presidential Unit Citations. This Memorial Day, we recognize them and all members of the armed forces for their service and sacrifice.

[#AAPIHeritageMonth](#)

[#aapiheritagemonth](#)

Example: Contemporary, Diverse Individuals

June 24, 2023



**Kris
Sivertson**

Diplomat in
Residence for Texas,
U.S. Department of
State

**International Day of
Women in Diplomacy**

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Kris Siverston is the Diplomat in Residence for Texas for the U.S. Department of State. She has served abroad in Angola, Argentina, Spain, Pakistan, and Brazil. She also served on the Joint Terrorism Task Force in Houston and in the Bureau of Diplomatic Security. [DOS Diplomat in Residence - Texas](#)

Example: Contemporary, Diverse Individuals, continued

September 29, 2023



Photo Credit: U.S. Department of Labor

DOLORES HUERTA

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Dolores Huerta is the co-founder of the United Farm Workers, which seeks to improve farm workers' working conditions. For more than 30 years, she has served as a prominent Chicana labor leader. In 2012, she was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom.
#hispanicheritagemoth

Examples: Current Events

April 12, 2023



**INTERNATIONAL DAY OF
HUMAN SPACE FLIGHT**

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a Librarian 24/7**



Happy International Day of Human Space Flight! This image shows the women of NASA's Artemis Launch Team, led by Charlie Blackwell-Thompson, NASA's first woman launch director.

Examples: Current Events, continued

July 20, 2023

INTERNATIONAL MOON DAY



Apollo 11

Image Credit: NASA

Artemis II

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International Moon Day celebrates the anniversary of the first people on moon in 1969. NASA recently announced the next planned moon landing with Artemis II in 2024. [NASA - National Aeronautics and Space Administration NASA Artemis](#)

Examples: Government Content, Solo

July 7, 2023

A promotional graphic for World Chocolate Day. The top half features a close-up of several chocolate bars, some broken into pieces, set against a light pink background. Below the chocolate, the text "World Chocolate Day" is written in a large, bold, dark brown font. Underneath the text are three round chocolates: one with a heart shape and dark stripes, one with a swirl pattern, and one with a dark base and white stripes. At the bottom left is the Lamar University logo and name. At the bottom center is the text "Need Research Help? Scan to Chat with a Librarian 24/7". At the bottom right is a QR code.

World Chocolate Day

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Happy World Chocolate Day!
Enjoy a read from the Library of
Congress about the history of
Texas chocolate cake.

<https://blogs.loc.gov/.../04/the-great-sheet-cake-mystery/> The Library of Congress

Examples: Government Content, Solo, continued

September 23, 2023

International Day of Sign Languages



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There are more than 300 different sign languages used around the world. The Library of Congress has digitized a 1913 film showing some early American Sign Language, helping preserve its history.

<https://www.loc.gov/item/mbrs01815816/>

Examples: Government Content, Series

October 23, 2023

Disinformation Stops With You



Recognize the Risk

-  Accounts build trust with non-controversial content then switch to disinformation
-  Disinformation often appears in fun, easy-to-share content like memes or animated GIFs
-  Small audience can spread disinformation into mainstream media & everyday decision making

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Credit: CISA, *Disinformation Stops With You* Infographic Set, <https://www.cisa.gov/mdm-resource-library>

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Disinformation is false information deliberately spread to deceive people. We can help stop it with media and information literacy. Recognize the risk disinformation poses to you and your communities. It may seem harmless at first glance, but it can have big ramifications. For more information, see:

<https://www.cisa.gov/mdm-resource-library>

Examples: Government Content, Series, continued

October 24, 2023

Disinformation Stops With You



Question the Source

Who?
Disinformation often lacks author name or verifiable credentials.

What?
Disinformation pushes a single view and uses inaccurate headlines and information.

Where?
Disinformation often on websites with suspicious URLs, poor editing, and no external sources.

Credit: CISA, *Disinformation Stops With You* Infographic Set, <https://www.cisa.gov/mdm-resource-library>

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Disinformation is false information deliberately spread to deceive people. We can help stop it with media and information literacy.

Question the source to help identify disinformation.

Investigating the author, purpose, and publisher of sources are great places to start. For more information, see:

<https://www.cisa.gov/mdm-resource-library>

Opportunities: Future Ideas

- Coordinate posts on social media with physical displays of government documents collection
- Promote government information LibGuides at institution
- Link relevant government documents from own institution in posts
- Use government made social media posts (e.g., National Suicide Awareness Month)

CHALLENGES



Image Credit: National Institutes of Mental Health, I'm So Stressed Out! Infographic; for more information see: <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/get-involved/digital-shareables/shareable-resources-on-anxiety-disorders>

Challenge: Personal Knowledge

- Social Media Platforms
 - Different text limits
 - Different best image sizes
 - Different hashtags
 - Schedulers (e.g, Meta Business Suite, TweetDeck)
- Creation Platforms (e.g. Canva)
 - QR Codes
- Departmental goals in creating and posting content

How I Handle: Personal Knowledge

- Some basic training from outgoing person on social media platforms
- Use templates in Canva, either provided or self-made
- Start simple and add-on one new thing each time to try
- Trial and error
- Still learning!

Challenge: Institutional Policies

- May have for university, library, or both and must follow
- Determines who can post, what can be posted, and what oversight/approval needed
- Can be complex to navigate, especially if long institutional history
- Can be difficult if don't have information organized (e.g., passwords, purpose)

How I Handle: Institutional Policies

- Made departmental document with all passwords, types of posts, process of approval to use as guide based on initial training & current experiences
- Supervisor added pre-existing policy documents for both university and library
- All posts reviewed and approved by supervisor to ensure meet standards, so discuss in advance to get base approval

Challenge: Time

- More on top of current duties
- Time needs to research, gather resources, and create images and text for posts
- Time to get posts reviewed & approved (and revised if needed)
- Time working with/learning creation tools and social media tools

How I Handle: Time

- Draft ideas in advance and get preliminary approval before start
- Sketch out 3 months at a time, with all dates and topics so can research and gather resources
- Create images and text as “activity between activities” & move where inspiration hits
- Have all images and text ready for review at least 1 month in advance to give time for approval and potential revisions

QUESTIONS?



Image Credit: NPS/David Gluckman,
<https://npgallery.nps.gov/AssetDetail/8890a743-d151-46f2-8839-fb91b728384c>