

CONVERSING WITH YOUR COMMUNITY: SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGIES



Social media has become a major source of news for people of all ages. Are you using it to promote your library's resources? If not, consider the following statistics:

- More than half of U.S. college students who use the Internet report that they visit social networking sites daily.
- There are more than 12 million adult Twitter users in the U.S.¹
- Even as far back as 2007, nearly a quarter of all Canadians were on Facebook already.²
- Today, more than 250 million people around the world use Facebook to share information.³

By connecting with users in *their* online communities and sharing information about the library's unique resources, you can drive traffic to those resources and even into the library. The ideas below can be used to help you launch a pilot program focused on social media or to help you add content to an existing blog or social media site.

Blog Posts

Your library's blog is a great place to publish current content about library resources and programs. RSS and social media sharing features allow your users to stay up to date with library happenings and share posts on a variety of social networks. Below are some topic ideas and sample posts about historical resources. Don't be afraid to have fun with the content in your historical resources. An unexpected article from a newspaper archive can wake up the imagination of your readers, encourage online feedback and two-way conversations, and even drive new visitors to the library.

Ideas for Posts

- Announce the availability of ProQuest Historical Newspapers™ at your library.
- Write about interesting articles found in the newspapers. Provide a snapshot of the article and a link to encourage readers to view the full article. Remind them that they will either need to be in the library or signed into the database to view the article.
- Provide research help and tips.

¹EContent, July/August 2009, p. 8.

²Chris Sorensen, "1 in 4 Canadians on Facebook," *TheStar.com*, December 10, 2007.
<http://www.thestar.com/Business/article/284017>

³Facebook.com, August 12, 2009. <http://www.facebook.com/press/info.php?factsheet>

Sample Posts

Title: Looking for Primary Resources?

Generalized Web search engines are useful tools for providing a broad sweep of information available openly on the Web. However, not all that information is accurate. If you need reliable historical information for a school assignment or professional project, try our ProQuest Historical Newspapers resource. These digitized, searchable newspapers, available online in the library or from your computer, provide reliable primary source material. And, you can see how they looked when they were printed decades—even centuries—ago!

You can access the following newspapers from the library's electronic resources page *[include a link to the electronic resources page]*:

- Newspaper 1
- Newspaper 2
- Etc.

Title: Discover the Story Behind the Names

Take your genealogy research to the next level with ProQuest Historical Newspapers. Search for your relatives' names in the birth, marriage, and death announcements, certainly. But remember to take your research to the next level. For example, did your relative own a business? Search the display ads as well as news stories for more information. Was he or she involved in civic or social organizations? Search the newspapers for photos and articles about their meetings and events. Did a tragedy or triumphant event occur during his or her lifetime? Read what eyewitnesses reported at the time. Browse the comics and editorials to see what your ancestors found amusing, troubling, and thought-provoking. Lives, not just names, are captured between the pages of these newspapers.

The library offers continuous runs of the following digitized newspapers:

- Newspaper 1
- Newspaper 2
- Etc.

You can access these newspapers in the library or from home. Visit the electronic resources page *[include a link to the electronic resources page]* to start researching today!

Facebook & MySpace

Today, Facebook is the fastest growing social network, appealing to people across the generations. And, while MySpace is no longer growing at the pace of Facebook, it continues to be popular among teens and the place to find entertaining content. You can set up profiles on either or both services—but first, figure out where your users are. Through your page(s) you can maintain an active dialog with your users, and create an access point for library services, the announcement of programs, and the highlighting of resources. Keep your profile fresh by updating the content regularly. Below are some suggestions to help you highlight your historical resources:

- Wall post or Bulletin about ProQuest Historical Newspapers availability.
- Wall post or Bulletin about interesting articles or research tips.
- Add the ProQuest Search Widget (**widgets.proquest.com**) for your ProQuest Historical Newspapers.
- Add training sessions to “Events.” (See the “Support & Training” tab at **www.proquest.com** for information about free training for you, your staff, and your users).
- Add a link to the library’s electronic resources page.
- Be proactive in seeking friends or fans of your page(s) to build your base of contacts.

Twitter

Twitter is like a tiny (140-character or less), real-time blog that you can use to instantly inform your “followers” about what is happening at your library, provide them assistance, put a smile on their faces, and more.

ProQuest uses Twitter, for example, to let our followers know when we release the latest issue of *Retroview*, our ProQuest Historical Newspapers newsletter:

- Removable lips: a great look for summer! Learn more ... in *Retroview* @ <http://bit.ly/pqsummer>
- Mmm, rhubarb-flavored ice cream! Get the recipe in *Retroview* @ <http://bit.ly/pqsummer>
- How does a 3-month summer vacation sound? Learn more ... in *Retroview* @ <http://bit.ly/pqsummer>

When you get ready to “tweet,” consider:

- Recommending your historical newspapers as a research tool for students ... or historians ... or genealogists ... or sports buffs, etc. Newspapers cross many disciplines!
- Providing a daily example of interesting articles from a historical newspaper to engage new visitors.
- Posting a “this day in history” link.
- Inviting followers to a historical newspaper training session. (Remember to learn more about ProQuest’s free training. Click on the “Support & Training” tab at **www.proquest.com**).
- Providing helpful research tips.

For more ideas on ways to use Twitter, check out the Sonja Cole’s article, “20 Ways for Librarians to Use Twitter.”⁴

⁴Sonja Cole, “20 Ways for Librarians to Use Twitter,” a sidebar to the story titled “Working the Social: Twitter and Friendfeed,” *Library Journal*, June 15, 2009, p. 25. <http://www.libraryjournal.com/article/CA6663770.html>