Social in the stacks

Social media in Archives & Cultural Heritage Libraries

Michelle Czaikowski
NC Department of Cultural Resources, State Library

Twitter: http://twitter.com/ncpedia, Facebook: http://facebook.com/ncghl
About NCpedia

• One project managed by the State Library of NC’s Government & Heritage Library

• Updated, expanded, revised from a previous online project, the *eNCyclopedia*. User survey conducted in June, 2009. NCpedia based on the results of that survey.

• NCpedia.org left Beta on September 1, 2010.
What types of social media are used?

- Twitter
- Flickr

And, in conjunction with the Government & Heritage Library’s other accounts:
- Facebook
- Blog

Other interactions come through comments on the site and chat reference assistance.
Why do we use social media?

- Promotes usage
- Improves approachability
- Increases user participation
- Facilitates collaboration

Warning: “Social” is an inherent part of social media.
Promotes usage

- Directs traffic to our resources
- Encourages others to share entries with their followers or friends

There is a fine line between promotion and spam.
- We try to ensure our social media posts contain interesting information, and are not just advertisements that we exist.
Promotes usage

• Social media involved:
  o Twitter
  o Facebook
  o Government & Heritage Library blog
  o Flickr

Our opportunity to candidly discuss or highlight stories, resources, and images from NCpedia, the digital collections, and more!
Improves approachability

• Meeting users where they already are
• The easier we make it for users to interact with us, the more apt they are to do so

Easy ways to improve approachability on any website:
• Enable users to post comments on pages / records
• Embed a chat box
Improves approachability

• We check social media accounts every work day.
• Whenever possible, we respond to inquiries using the same media through which the inquiry was sent.
Increases user participation

- The easier we make it for users to participate, the more apt they are to do so, and to do so again.
Increases user participation

- Social media involved:
  - Flickr

Crowdsourcing:
- Images of all 100 counties in NCpedia (over 3,000 Flickr images tagged "ncpedia" – under 200 in NCpedia account)
- Transcriptions of bible records and genealogy vertical files (NC Family Records Online)
Facilitates collaboration

Prime example = NC State Archives on Flickr + NCpedia

- Subject specific slideshows from NC State Archives Flickr materials embedded in entries:
  - NC in the Civil War
  - Steamboating
  - Barbecue
  - Plott hound
  - O. Henry
  - And many more
Facilitates collaboration

East Carolina University Digital Collections + NCpedia

- Image slideshow about Pitt County
How have we benefited?

• NCpedia has more images
• Feedback on entries we may not have received otherwise
• New partnerships
• More reference inquiries