

TALES FROM THE TRENCHES

Social Media Use at the Sheridan Libraries, Johns Hopkins University

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We're thrilled to share with fellow institutions the best communication practices we've developed over the years for blogging, Twitter and Facebook. Please incorporate any and all of these ideas into your own social media empire.



Our Social Media Policy

The Library's various social media outlets are used to promote services, provide timely updates and foster community engagement. Talking to people—over the internet or otherwise—comprises a significant portion of the librarian's day, making these platforms a natural extension of reference consultation. While Research Services staff is responsible for maintaining the sites, we welcome contributions from across the library.

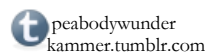
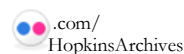
Our basic motto is "one message, many platforms." Content should be tailored to the known audience while matching the strengths of the given outlet. That being said, we've developed certain strategies that work across all mediums.

- **Frequency** - Post often and on a regular schedule.
- **Responsiveness** - Reply to messages in a timely manner: if not immediately, within 24 hrs.
- **Educational** - Highlight our resources on a particular topic and share professional insight.
- **Entertaining** - Don't be afraid to show humor and personality.
- **Relevant** - What information is our audience interested in? Play to their passions.
- **Cyclical** - Show an awareness of the academic calendar.
- **Accessible** - Be sure to proxify all necessary links.
- **Neighborly** - Forge relationships with the University, other libraries, Baltimore & beyond.
- **Human** - Avoid automated updates.
- **Integrity** - Respect copyrights and fair use.

All contributors are responsible for what they write, so exercise good judgment and common sense. University policies on anti-harassment and discrimination extend to all forms of communication, including social media, both inside and outside the workplace. Transparency is encouraged, but staff should continue to protect confidential and proprietary information.

While contributors must be mindful that they are speaking on behalf of the Library, and by extension, the University, they should feel comfortable communicating in an authentic manner. We are proud to share the breadth of expertise and personality of the Sheridan Libraries staff.

Poster & handout available here:
<http://bit.ly/talestrenches>



Our Platform Guidelines

Blog

- **Subject** - Pick a relevant topic with an explicit connection to the library & our resources.
- **Engagement** - Grab readers with a good headline. Then keep them glued to their seat with personable tone or humor and an eye-catching graphic.
- **Images** - All images should exhibit a meaningful tie-in with text and be properly cited. Annotated screenshots or archival images are appreciated.
- **Length** - Posts should be concise without sacrificing clarity of the information provided. In most cases 3-5 paragraphs will suffice.
- **Resource Integration** - Wherever possible, add links to library resources and related examples around the web. Proxify as necessary for off-campus access.
- **Multimedia** - Links aren't just about quantity. There should also be a good mix. What's available on YouTube, Flickr, etc.?
- **Interactivity** - Solicit feedback by including a poll or asking for comments.

Twitter

- **Variety**- Strive for a balanced message mix.
 - 30% conversational @mentions
 - 30% retweets
 - 30% broadcast tweets
 - 10% self-promotional
- **Exemplary** - Strive to be the one retweeted and not the other way around.
- **2 Ears, 1 Mouth** - Do twice as much "listening" as "talking" so messages match audience.
- **Originality** - Be creative when tweeting a news item---don't just copy/paste the headline.
- **Relevance** - Explain why you're sharing a story with your followers if it isn't obvious.
- **Conversational** - Tag the person or group you are talking about with an @mention.
- **Breaking News** - To avoid repetition, refrain from posting older stories.
- **Outreach** - #Hashtags are Twitter's keywords. Add them to join a larger conversation.
- **Timing** - Space tweets an hour apart unless responding to a question or comment.
- **Random** - Tweet at "off" times rather than fixed intervals to add a human element.

Facebook

- **Timing** - Afternoon and evening posts are preferable to morning.
- **Spacing** - Max of 2 messages per day, spaced several hours apart.
- **Entertain** - Keep it short, make it funny.
- **Hip** - Informal language and cultural references.
- **Visual** - Add photos and link to videos often.
- **Community** - Host fan appreciation events like candy giveaways.

Keep in Touch!



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Ellen served on the team that founded the Sheridan Libraries blog and co-administers the Libraries' blog, Twitter, and Facebook accounts.



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Adriane serves as co-administrator for the Libraries' blog, Twitter, and Facebook accounts and in October 2010, overhauled the Facebook page, posting content that doubled the fan base in less than a year.