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Social Media for Social Justice

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Social Media for Social Justice

by Lanae Spruce & Kaitlyn Leaf

In this article, Lanae Spruce and Kaitlyn Leaf discuss how the mission of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture inspires and influences their approach to social media management at the museum. The authors explore the connections between social media, storytelling, and educational strategies. This guide is designed to help you examine the relationship between social media and learning, as well as how it can enhance our ability to connect with audiences.

You can [access the article online](#) through our publishing partner Taylor & Francis's *Journal of Museum Education* web page.

1. **"While museums often focus on 'teaching' the public, social media provides the opportunity for us as an institution to learn." (p. 42)**
 - Does your institution use social media to teach or to learn?
 - What are the qualities that make social media a good learning tool?
 - What are the limitations of social media as a learning tool?
 - What do you think you could learn from visitors through social media?
2. **The authors describe their approach to digital engagement with words like "facilitating," "storytelling," and "listening."**
 - How does your institution describe digital engagement?
 - How does digital engagement compare to other modes of communication in the museum like exhibits, public programming, and marketing?
3. **"The Social Corps is a select group of social media users and history fans who share their experiences virtually and act as a liaison between physical attendees and our online audience." (p. 46)**
 - What did you think of this digital engagement strategy?
 - How does your museum engage influencers? Could you adapt a version of this program?

(continued)

4. African Americans comprise 12% of the US population but make up over 22% of the online Twitter audience however, "Museums often join trending conversations like #Olympics, or #SuperBowl, but rarely tweet real-time content that is driven by Black Twitter." (p. 51)
 - Why do you think this is?
 - What are ways your institution's digital engagement strategy could increase access for visitors of color and expand narratives?

5. There can be risks involved when a museum begins to encourage personal engagement through social media.
 - What potential issues concern you?
 - How might you anticipate and overcome them?

6. The authors begin the article by explaining how their digital engagement strategies connected their social media goals and practices directly to the museum's mission and vision.
 - How can digital strategies allow your institution to amplify the meaning of the museum mission and better engage audiences?
 - How might you uplift social justice issues even if your institution's mission does not specifically mention race/social justice/etc.?



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