



Social Media Strategy for Museums in Wiltshire

August 2020

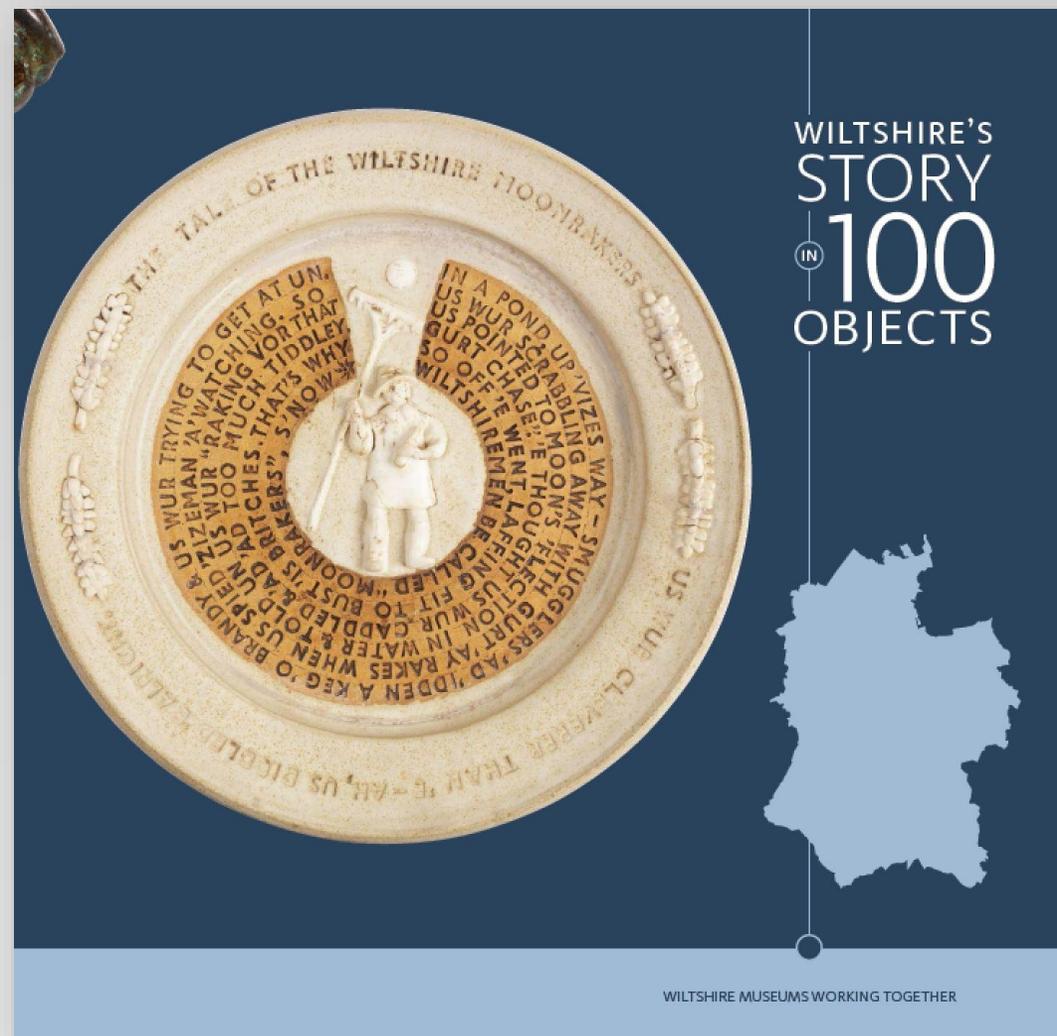


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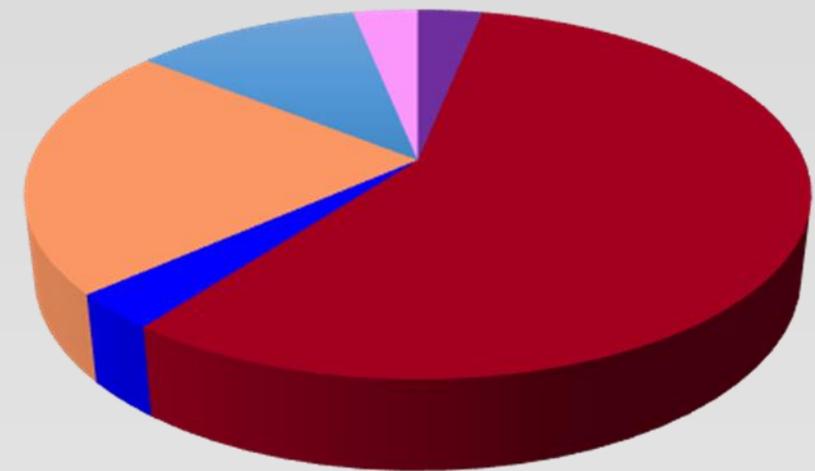


THE BENEFITS OF USING A JOINT SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is a fast and efficient way to keep audiences informed of what is going on at your museum, and it is hoped that through a joint social media page, the museums across Wiltshire will be able to work together in not only sharing audiences, but also in creating a space for the public to engage with the work of these museums, as well as discover new sites that they may not yet have heard of. Due to the popularity of social media, along with the nation-wide reach it can have, this is the best way to showcase what Museums in Wiltshire have to offer to both locals and tourists alike. The chart shown on the right-hand side uses data from Wiltshire Museum's recent Culture Counts survey to illustrate the power of Facebook groups. Although this is only related to one museum, Facebook groups are evidently a popular way to find out, whether purposely or not, about the activities of organisations such as museums, meaning it would be counter-productive to ignore this tool.

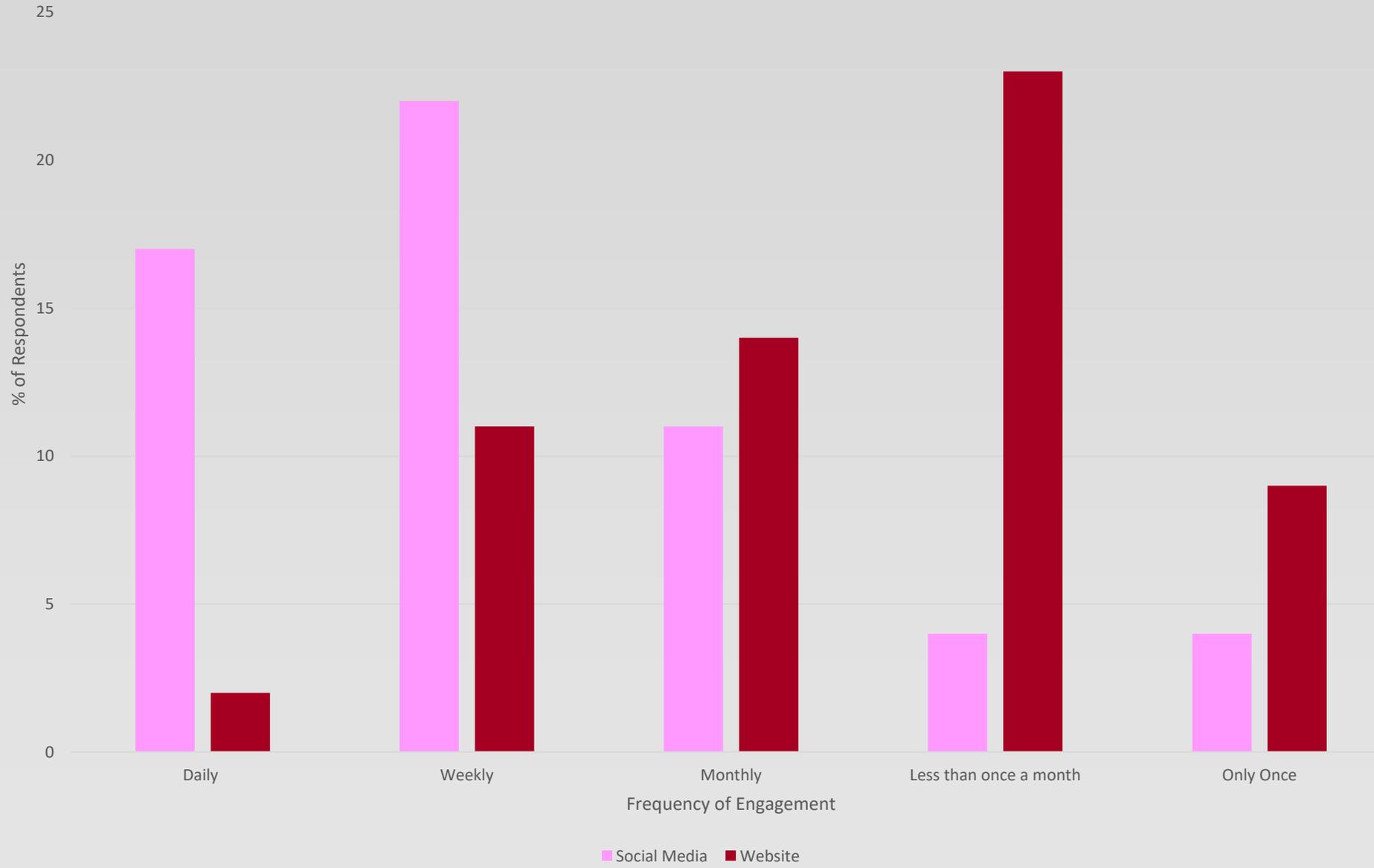
In order for this venture to be successful, however, there need to be clear goals in place. Throughout this document, the goals of the Museums in Wiltshire Facebook group have been categorized into short and long term aims. These will be explored alongside a discussion regarding the content that will be posted onto this page, and the audience for whom this will be targeted.

How Did You Find Our Website/Social Media?



- Another Website e.g. Visit Wiltshire
- Our Twitter
- Google Search
- Shared to another Facebook group
- Our Facebook
- Other

Frequency of Digital Engagement



Results from the same Culture Counts survey conducted by Wiltshire Museum, as used on the previous page, are shown here to illustrate how effective social media can be. 36% of respondents claimed to engage with the museum’s social media weekly, as opposed to only 19% engaging with the museum’s website weekly. Moreover, 28% claimed to engage with social media daily, as opposed to 9% engaging daily with the website. From this, it can be seen that the preferred method of engagement with museums online, whether for key information or general browsing, is via social media. Therefore, those who are currently static with regards to using social media could in fact be losing a large amount of potential custom.

A Wider Reach...

The key to the Museums in Wiltshire social media group being a success is COLLABORATION. Each museum must play their part in promoting their fellow museums and be committed to sharing news and content. If this role is carried out well, then the reach of information will be far wider than it may have been prior to this group being created. Groups such as VisitWiltshire and Wiltshire Council may be more inclined to share joint content from one page, rather than doing this for each individual museum. This has been seen in the recent Good to Go initiative as it groups museums and organisations into one collective, easy to promote and discuss. With the support of these larger groups, information posted onto the Museums in Wiltshire page has the potential to reach a larger pool of people, thus gradually increasing the number of people aware of the work being done by Museums in Wiltshire.

To give an example of this increased reach, across 2019-2020 Facebook posts from Wiltshire Museum (3,390 followers) reached 295,698 people, with individual posts such as 'where was this photo taken' reaching around 10K people. VisitWiltshire, on the other hand, has 21,632 Facebook followers, and so if similar content from Museums in Wiltshire was shared by VisitWiltshire, this has the potential to reach around 100K provided the rate of engagement was the same.



THE CHOSEN PLATFORM

Facebook has been chosen as the preferred platform for launching the Museums in Wiltshire social media group for a number of reasons:

- ❑ Sharing content is easier than on other sites
- ❑ The site lends itself to providing more detailed information for visitors to access regarding the work of each museum
- ❑ It is currently the most used platform generally across the museums in Wiltshire, so more staff will be comfortable uploading content onto this, as oppose to Instagram, for instance.



There may be the option to go on to create a Museums in Wiltshire Instagram page following the launch of this Facebook group for uploading more visual content, or content that focuses more so on the Wiltshire's Story in 100 Objects project. As a rapidly growing platform, Instagram allows the information being conveyed to visitors to be more visually engaging and, due to its artistic aesthetic, thus appeals to the more creative audiences who, typically, tend to be young adults. This may well, therefore, be an option to explore in order to target 17-24 year olds as potential visitors, yet this would need to be agreed by the Museums in Wiltshire Steering Group.



GOALS OF THIS SOCIAL MEDIA GROUP

SHORT TERM GOALS

- Spread the message to local people that the museums are beginning to open again
- Promote museums that are physically closed, yet remain active online
- Build the confidence of museum staff and volunteers in using digital platforms, particularly smaller museums who do not currently have a big online presence
- Create a unified space for potential visitors to find out more about the museums across Wiltshire



It is hoped that these aims will be achieved over a course of 4-6 months, and that this increased digital confidence across the museums can be used as evidence to support future funding applications regarding projects surrounding digital training. Ultimately, although a short term aim for this particular project, the impact of this group could continue to benefit the museums for a long time to come, and even lead to further funding opportunities or external support for the work being done here.

For museums still unable to open due to current Covid restrictions, this social media group will enable their ongoing work to be noticed, and even attract potential future visitors. Market Lavington Museum, for instance, are still unable to open their museum, yet they have a fantastic regular blog that they post onto their website. Although they do post the link to this onto their Facebook, on here Market Lavington currently have 142 Facebook followers which limits the number of people aware of this blog. If links to this blog were posted to the Museums in Wiltshire page, and this was then shared by Wiltshire Council, this would be seen by their 13,415 followers. As such, it is likely that far more traffic would be directed to Market Lavington's website via the promotion of their blog, and hopefully in turn this would increase visitation once they can re-open.

Moreover, for smaller museums who do not already have their own social media page, this joint Facebook group will work to equally promote their work and news about their museum. As such, information will reach further than it would by simply remaining on their website.



LONG TERM GOALS

- Increase visits from visitors further afield
- Create an ongoing county-wide collaborative marketing effort to promote the work of all museums in the group
- Increase engagement with local audiences
- Attract traffic to the Museums in Wiltshire website and digital 100 Objects page



Through this joint social media venture, museums will be working together in *enlightened self-interest* to in turn share audiences and increase the visits to their own museums individually. In order for this to be a success, collaboration is key. Each museum, or page admin, must be committed to sharing content about all museums involved to ensure that content is spread as widely as possible. If Wiltshire Council share joint content about the museums, this may in turn lead to more attention from VisitWiltshire, as well as similar tourist-focused organisations. Naturally, the content shared by VisitWiltshire will largely be seen by those from outside the county, looking for ways to occupy themselves on their holiday, for instance. This will, in the long term, hopefully increase visitation from people further afield to museums across Wiltshire, whether small or large.

It is vital that the content uploaded remains engaging and exciting to ensure the continued promotion from such tourism groups.

Enlightened self interest is at the heart of this venture, and achieving the long term goals for the social media group depends on this being adhered to by all involved. As more museums arrive in the county, they too will be added into the group to ensure the sharing of audiences is fairly distributed to all. Moreover, the group will share posts linked to the Museums in Wiltshire website, creating unity between the two platforms.

In time, this page will become a 'port of call' for people wishing to find out more about Museums in Wiltshire, whether for a physical visit or just to engage in some digital escapism from home. By sharing the website on here as well, it will be easy for those looking for digital escapism to locate the new website. With the very nature of social media making information easily and quickly accessible, this is, provided everyone remains committed to sharing content, an ideal space for the work of each museum to be showcased to new and local audiences alike.



OUR
AUDIENCE

The target audience for this Facebook group is those not currently aware of the work being done by museums across Wiltshire. As an extension to this, it will be hoped that through carefully selecting content, visitors from further afield, naturally unaware of Wiltshire's museums' work, will engage with the page and in turn visit the museums.

If content were shared by sites such as VisitWiltshire, it is likely that more tourists will become aware of both large and small museums in Wiltshire, and thus visit them when here on daytrips or short breaks.



In order to effectively target this audience, content should:

- Be interesting
- Be engaging
- Evoke excitement
- Be clear and concise
- Invite conversation
- Be friendly



WHAT WILL BE PROMOTED

KEY CONTENT THEMES

The work of museums across Wiltshire

Key news and events about the museums

Upcoming projects

Museums in Wiltshire website and the 100 objects page

Regular engaging features (to be confirmed)

The background features a dark, textured surface with various brushstrokes in shades of brown, grey, and blue. A large, semi-transparent red triangle is positioned on the right side of the image, pointing towards the top right. The text 'UPLOADING CONTENT' is written in white, bold, uppercase letters across the red area.

UPLOADING CONTENT

STYLE AND TONE

It is important that the content on this page is written in a way that encourages two-way engagement. Engagement is an opportunity for communication between museums and the public, and in turn can determine whether someone revisits the page or not, meaning that the power of the tone of posts cannot be underestimated. Whilst the posts should remain professional, the tone should be informal and helpful. Moreover posts should contain terms that invite conversation and allow audiences to feel at ease.

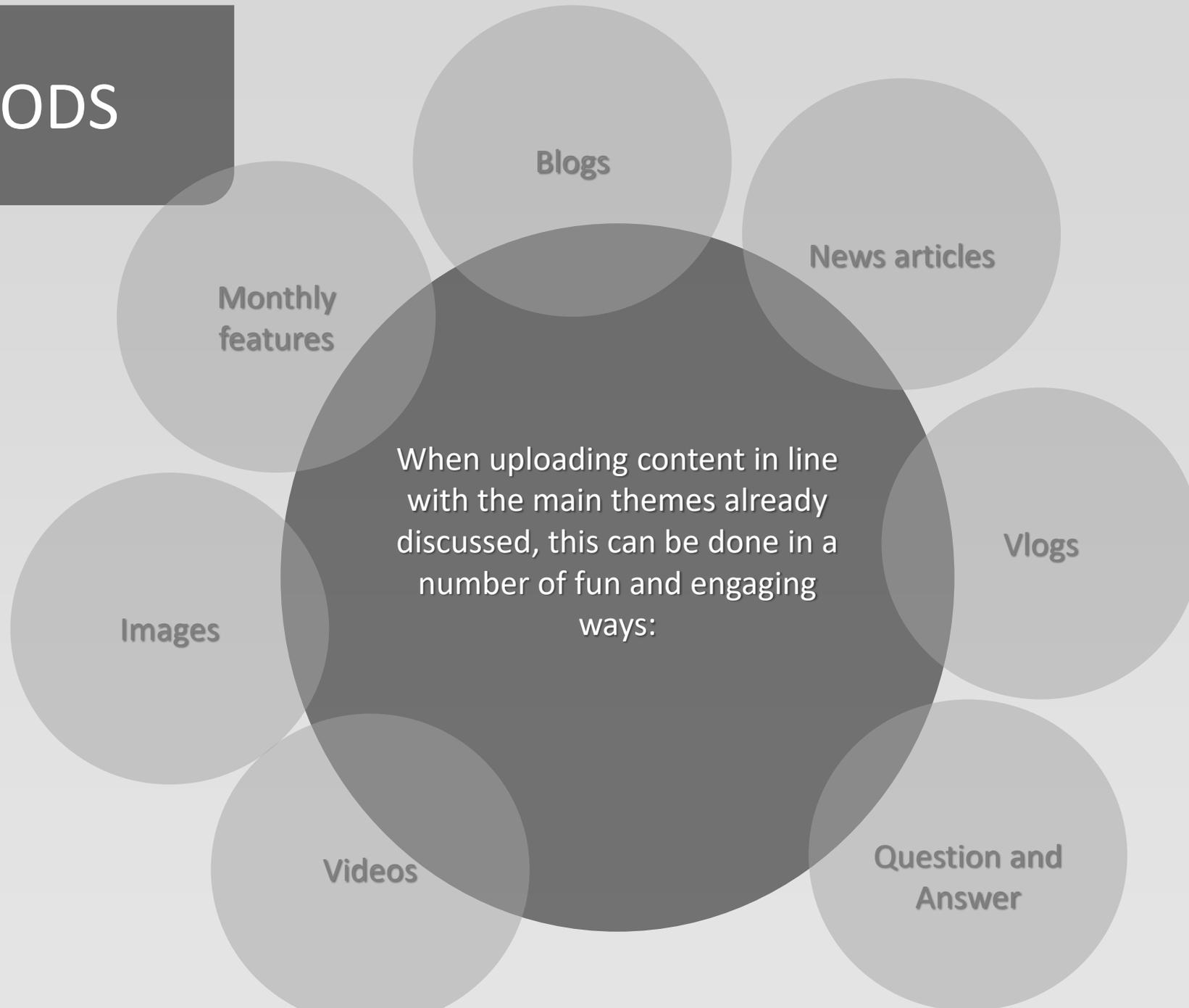
Such terms include:

- Click
- Like
- Comment
- Tell us
- Share with us
- Visit
- Watch
- Ask

Facebook naturally invites more in-depth conversation due to its flexible word count on posts, as oppose to the restrictions given on platforms such as Twitter. Therefore, it is a great site to use when engaging audiences in interactive discussions, such as posts that invite people to 'Guess the place' in a photograph.

Nevertheless, posts should still, where appropriate, remain concise and to-the-point in order to make key information easily accessible, rather than audiences having to scroll through a lot of content to find what they are looking for. This is particularly relevant when posting important updates regarding opening hours, for example, or even when promoting exciting projects or events. If posting blog posts or news updates, it is a good idea to use short, snappy, and intriguing titles to grab the attention of those who may be scrolling through their timelines and keep them wanting to know more.

METHODS



TIMING

The time that posts are uploaded can greatly effect who sees them, or how engaged they may be with them. During the working week, lunchtime or late afternoon/early evening tends to be the optimum time for engagement with content as this is when people are most active on their social media pages, due to having the time to spare. Analysing engagement analytics data from previous social media posts from each museum will give a detailed, more accurate impression of the optimum time to upload posts. Additionally, mornings on the weekend or half term days are also a good time to upload content as this is when families, for example, are searching for activities to take part in that day.

Along with the timing of posts, quantity is also important to take note of. Those who like or follow the page will not want to be inundated with information on their timelines, and may well unlike a page if this begins to happen. Therefore, prioritizing posts for certain days is a good idea, as well as spacing out information output throughout the week.

USING IMAGES

Images are great visual aids for grabbing the attention of audiences; these should be bright, clear and intriguing. Consider posting unusual objects from the 100 Objects project. However, you should always ensure these are licensed, so do not use images from Google, and, when using images of people, be sure to have the appropriate consent on file.

USING VIDEOS

Videos are another great tool for grabbing attention, and to keep this attention it is vital that the first 6 seconds of the video are exciting, or audiences are likely to carry on scrolling past. Videos posted directly to the Facebook page will usually be received better than those that are links to a YouTube page as they play automatically on the news feed.

JOIN IN WITH SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGNS

In order to stand a better chance of being seen by those who do not already like or follow the page, consider using popular hashtag campaigns. By using these within posts, such as #OnThisDay, posts will appear in a wider pool of locations, rather than just on the timelines of those who would see the post anyway. Moreover, #timeforwiltshire increases the chances of VisitWiltshire sharing the content of the Facebook group. Other such campaigns that would be great to consider are #AskaCurator, and #TakeoverTuesday. #TakeoverTuesday could be a great opportunity to focus on the younger volunteers across a number of Wiltshire's museums to in turn begin to attract younger audiences. Due to being a group page, even those without young volunteers within their organisation can benefit from the showcase of work or experience of the younger volunteers from elsewhere.

The Culture Counts survey showed 76% of respondents were more likely to visit the museums after accessing its digital content. Therefore, by creating visibility for the museums in this way, it could be a key way to begin diversifying the current visitor demographics across Wiltshire.

RESPONDING TO COMMENTS

Different methods for uploading content e.g. videos or blogs, will have varying degrees of appeal to different people, yet due to the informal, conversational environment created through the carefully selected style and tone of posts, it is likely that people will wish to comment. By regularly checking the social media and responding as quickly as possible to comments, whether negative or positive, you are showing that you value the opinion/input of that person. Even if you do not immediately have an answer for queries, by responding quickly the individual is reassured that the matter is in hand and that their needs are still being adhered to, rather than ignored.

If negative comments should arise, it is important that issues are resolved as quickly as possible, in a calm and professional manner. Ideally, this will be done away from the Facebook page by asking that individual to either direct message the page or contact the appropriate party via a given email address. Here, tone is crucial as this can be the difference between the individual feeling valued and feeling attacked; tone should be friendly yet remain professional. Once any issues have been resolved privately, return to the original public comment and write a positive response, such as your excitement for their next visit to the museum, so that others viewing the page see that issues are dealt with appropriately.



WHO WILL DO IT?



There will be a select number of people with editing rights to the page. These will be responsible for uploading content to this social media group, rather than every museum being expected to provide a member of staff to be responsible for maintaining communication and collaboration from their end. Not only could this run the risk of the page potentially returning to a site where each museum is primarily concerned with the promotion of themselves, but it would also be unfair to expect a balanced output of content from the smaller museums who may not have the digital know-how for creating social media content, nor might they currently have Facebook log ins for their institution. The group should be working to help all museums, rather than putting additional stress onto them.

Each museum can create a post or collate articles that they wish to make public, for instance, and then send this over to the appropriate admin who will then post this onto the social media group. How these admins are decided is yet to be confirmed.

There are currently 40 museums involved in the Museums in Wiltshire website, and so this could be alphabetically divided into five groups of 8 museums, for example. Each would have a representative responsible for uploading content that is chosen by the group. How this is done, however, can be decided by the Museums in Wiltshire steering group to ensure that everyone has equal support in this.

ESSENTIAL DO'S AND DON'T'S

	
ENGAGE IN CONVERSATION WITH PEOPLE WHO COMMENT ON POSTS	GET INTO CONFRONTATIONS WITH NEGATIVE COMMENTS
MAKE POSTS SHORT AND SNAPPY WHEREVER POSSIBLE	USE LANGUAGE OR TERMINOLOGY THAT IS UNPROFESSIONAL
USE VISUAL AIDS	USE IMAGES LIFTED FROM THE INTERNET/WITHOUT CORRECT PERMISSION
CONTINUE TO SHARE MUSEUMS IN WILTSHIRE CONTENT	ONLY SHARE CONTENT CONCERNING YOUR OWN MUSEUM
MAKE POSTS FUN AND EXCITING WHERE APPROPRIATE	POST AT UNPOPULAR HOURS – COULD BE A WASTE OF CONTENT
USE LANGUAGE THAT INVITES CONVERSATION AND ENGAGEMENT	NEGLECT LOCAL AUDIENCES/THOSE WHO ALREADY VISIT THE MUSEUM

A photograph of a wooden board with a brass tube and a cork stopper. The board is light-colored wood with a vertical grain. The brass tube is cylindrical and has a dark blue or black interior. The cork stopper is round and has a small hole through its center. The background is a solid red color with a white diagonal line separating it from the wooden board.

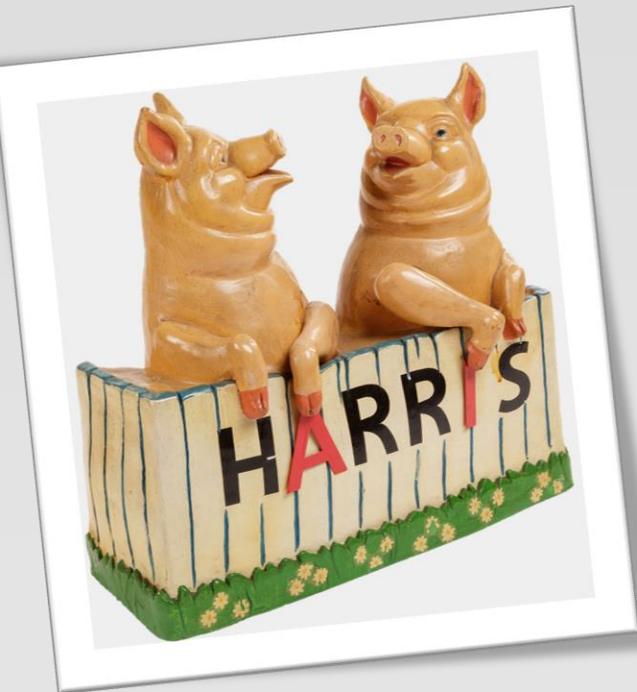
RECORDING ENGAGEMENT

Each social media platform has built in analytics that can be used to review the engagement of users with individual posts throughout different time periods. From this, factors such as the ideal time to post and the most popular form of post, i.e. video, can be determined. Figures for the group can then be collated into a spreadsheet, for example, to eventually give an annual overview of the engagement with this group.

Time (Every 3 months)	Page likes	Page followers	Reach
March			
June			
September			
December			

By putting this data into tables, such as that shown above, data about content engagement becomes more visual, and thus easier to understand. Additionally, it is simple to send the figures to each individual museum when in the form of a table, to see if engagement with their own digital platforms has also increased as a result.

Once the page admins have been decided, from this group one person can then be chosen as being responsible for collating the engagement data from the page's analytics. This will save the same job being carried out multiple times.





WILTSHIRE'S STORY IN 100 OBJECTS



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WILTSHIRE MUSEUM
DEVIZES

WILTSHIRE MUSEUMS WORKING TOGETHER

A report for Wiltshire Museum, Devizes, on behalf of the individual museums