

Book Review

Marketing with Social Media: A LITA Guide, 2d edition edited by Beth C. Thomsett-Scott, Chicago, IL: ALA Neal-Schuman, 2020, 192 pp., \$67.00, ISBN-978-0-8389-1631-5 (paper).

Reviewed by Barbie Keiser

Marketing with social media is part of the LITA Guide series containing “current, practical, how-to information in an easy-to-ready (sic) format” (<https://www.ala.org/lita/lita-guide-series>). Second edition updates include discussions of social media tools not yet launched (or not widely used by libraries) when the first edition was published in 2013. According to the Pew Research Center, 7 in 10 Americans actively use social media (<https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/fact-sheet/social-media/>). This widespread use of social media as well as its low barrier to entry (e.g., cost and expertise) make it important for libraries to embrace the technology. Chapter 1 by Anita Riley Hall, user experience librarian at Spalding University (Louisville, KY), explains why librarians should create a social media plan that takes into consideration the library’s audience, staffing, budget, branding/messaging, and social media objectives. Riley Hall explains how to evaluate the effectiveness of social media content through “reach” (i.e., online views, click-throughs, and interactions) and the effect that this content has on a library’s “real life” metrics, such as use or attendance numbers.

Social media covered in the book include Snapchat, Tumblr, Instagram, memes, Twitter, video platforms, and blogs. Each chapter is similarly organized, offering terminology associated with the tool; a detailed “how to” on account creation; settings (including privacy); icons specific to the platform; and steps to upload and share content. Chapters end with innovative examples of libraries using the platform, analytics for evaluation and assessment, best practices, and a bibliography for further reading. Chapter 10 is a personal account of Tina Irene Hager’s attempt to explore each of these tools. Chapter 11 explains why a library might choose one social network system over another, presenting examples of corporate and library use of each platform for their campaigns.

Readers will learn little from this book that they could not learn by reading one or two articles. Arguably the most helpful segment of the book is Chapter 9 by Julia Stringfellow, university archivist at Central Washington University. Entitled “Developing a social media plan for an archives,” Stringfellow’s chapter presents a series of questions to ask about why an archive would create a plan for posting to social media, what its audience might be, and what the content should be. Stringfellow also makes suggestions about responsibilities for posting and maintaining the platforms, frequency of posts, and the selection of the platform to be used. Her detailed account of social media planning for archives concludes by mentioning, first, a useful web page about the social media platforms used by the University of Montana Archives and Special Collections and, second, a discussion of studies and surveys of archival use of social media as “an effective form of outreach to their audiences” (p. 118).

About the Reviewer

Barbie Keiser is an accomplished information professional with a proven track record for establishing start-up information and knowledge operations and transforming existing libraries into modern information centers. Barbie is an acknowledged talent for innovating, launching new information products, services, and tools targeted for use by existing and potential stakeholder groups. She is an established author and sought-after speaker on advanced research techniques and tools, the future of libraries, emerging information technologies, scholarly publishing, competitive intelligence, knowledge management, and transparent government through open information/data. Barbie teaches at the College of Information and Communications at the University of Kentucky and is a reference and instruction librarian at NOVA Community College.



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