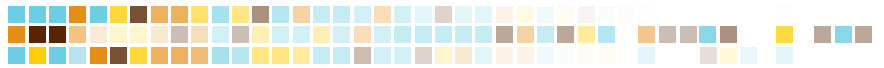


PERSPECTIVES



A monthly look at what's happening in the ever-changing digital world and beyond.



The CDC Knows Social Media

Summary: The CDC has been using social media effectively for some time now. The organization uses it to disseminate important and timely information as well as to keep American citizens actively involved and engaged in the nation's health topics. The strategy is effective due to the CDC's templated, surround-sound creative approach. Marketers can draw lessons from this on how to use social media.

Sara Weiner, Associate Director
Digital Integration & Innovation

Years of planning, prodding & implementing digital stuff. Philadelphia born 'n' raised. Geeky, athletic and green. Go Big Red!

Key Information:

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) began using social media over a year ago and is continually increasing its presence and efforts. It manages Twitter feeds, Facebook pages, YouTube channels, Flickr accounts and more, presenting consumers with information on health topics ranging from H1N1 and teen pregnancy to the CDC's famous Zombie Apocalypse preparedness guide.¹ The organization's efforts have yielded impressive results: over 1.2 million Twitter follows on the @CDCemergency emergency response feed, 150K fans on Facebook, and 2.8 million² people per month visiting the CDC website.

The CDC's social media efforts are effective for three reasons. 1) The CDC is organized—it has different feeds and profiles for different topics, manages efforts in a surround-sound approach across platforms, and utilizes the platform most relevant to the topic at hand. 2) The efforts are efficient and templated—when the CDC issues information about a new topic, it creates a "Tool Kit" of social media icons, portable assets, widgets and buttons. These items are accessible and usable by anyone wishing to spread the word about a health issue. 3) They are creative—their recent Zombie Apocalypse campaign took a serious topic, emergency preparedness, and spun it in a way that got attention and promoted the key message of "Get a kit, make a plan, be prepared," which referred to all emergency situations, not just zombie attacks.

Implications and Action Items:

The CDC's approach is applicable to other brands wishing to engage in social media. While Zombie Apocalypses might not be on-message for every brand, brands can draw key lessons from the CDC as follows:

- **Make it easy for the consumer.** Allow consumers to take the action they want, but facilitate the process through readily available and transportable formats. The CDC's Tool Kits provide consumers with easily accessible and usable content that they can distribute.
- **Let the consumer pick a platform.** Keep in mind that many consumers separate their public from private social networks (for example, Facebook for friends and family, Twitter for business), so providing consumers with options for following and engaging will give your social media efforts more legs.
- **Be everywhere.** The CDC's surround-sound approach maintains a constant voice across the Web, increases brand awareness and lets consumers engage as they prefer, and allows them to match the message to the best platform.
- **Be creative.** Social media and viral topics tend to lean toward the unusual or interesting. Putting a different spin on the everyday topic can give to limited brand messages a variety of new content areas with which consumers can interact and engage.

¹ Social Media: Preparedness 101: Zombie Apocalypse. <http://tiny.cc/zjmbl> (accessed 8/3/11)

² Quantcast.com profile of www.cdc.gov

Social Media and the Phillips Collection

Summary: The Phillips Collection is a private museum in Washington, D.C., that makes expert use of social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, and Flickr to draw millions of visitors each year. Other organizations can learn both from the museum’s established social media presence and the risks it can now afford to take to bring its marketing strategy to the next level.

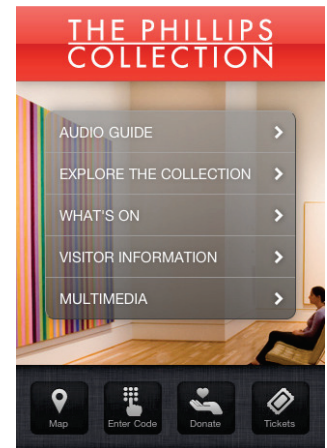
Michelle Fares, Associate
Digital Integration and Innovation

Floridian Hoya. Enhancing communication btwn companies and people thru social media, online communities, and cupcakes. Lots of cupcakes. @michellefares

Key Information:

The Phillips Collection has been a mainstay of the D.C. arts scene since it opened in the early 20th century. In the 1920s, the museum was ahead of its time, breaking ground as one of America’s first modern art museums. Today, it is using a well-formed and integrated social media strategy to promote its events and exhibitions to visitors and position itself carefully in the city’s cultural scene. When considering a social media strategy, other cultural institutions can learn from the Phillips Collection’s actions:

- **Cross-channel integration.** The Phillips Collection has a presence on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Flickr, in addition to a blog and apps for the iPhone, iPad, and Android. It uses these platforms to post information specific to the museum itself, as well as more general articles about the wider art world and the D.C. cultural scene.
- **Coordinating with other citywide cultural events.** The museum uses its social media properties to publicize its partnerships with other D.C. events. For example, D.C. Eats is a food festival celebrating local cuisine. The Phillips Collection has a series of blog posts where local chefs discuss their favorite food-related artwork, and it reposts these on Facebook and Twitter.
- **Working within an ecosystem.** The museum follows other D.C. cultural institutions, such as the Shakespeare Theater Company or the Hillyer Art Space, on Facebook and Twitter; this helps to position it in the context of a larger arts scene.
- **Timeliness.** Content on Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, the blog, and Flickr is updated frequently, and is timely and relevant to current events in the area. For example, a particularly hot day in D.C. inspired a blog post called “It won’t always be this hot...” about the painting “New York in Snow” by Augustus Vincent Tack.



Overall, the Phillips Collection is doing a great job of maintaining a solid social media presence. However, now that it has mastered the basics, it can afford to take risks, be creative, and experiment with trends and new technologies.

Implications and Action Items:

Like the Phillips Collection, many organizations have established presences on social media sites. For these organizations, however, it may be time to take it to the next level. Cultural institutions and businesses can take advantage of the full potential of social media in the following ways:

- **Inspire user participation.** Although the museum posts frequently on Twitter and Facebook, it doesn’t use these platforms to engage with users. The Phillips Collection can encourage users to participate by posting user-generated content, asking thought-provoking questions, and soliciting fan feedback.
- **Personalize the organization.** The focus of the Phillips Collection’s social media strategy appears to be the art collection and museum events. Fans might enjoy a behind-the-scenes look at the people who actually run the organization or a Q&A session with a museum professional.
- **Encourage viral sharing.** Creating digital videos that are quirky or have more personality could inspire users to share them with each other, allowing them to spread virally and garnering even more fans and visitors to the museum.
- **Be on the cutting edge.** Since its audience is already primed by the museum’s basic use of social media, the Phillips Collection can experiment with technologies or trends like QR codes, hyper-personalization, or location-based marketing.



D.C. Small Businesses: Expand Your Social Horizons

Summary: Facebook and Twitter are so ubiquitous that for small D.C. businesses and organizations, having a presence on both has become a cost of entry. However, those sites should not be small businesses' only social media marketing forums. There are other social media platforms that offer businesses the opportunity to engage with large consumer audiences before they've entered the shop, reinforce their brand after an in-person interaction, and keep their brand in the consumer's conversation.

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Key Information:

For small businesses and organizations, social media is both a necessary marketing tool to drive new business and a critical touchpoint in the lifecycle of a customer's engagement. Yet while Twitter and Facebook are great for awareness, there are other social media vehicles that offer more targeted, engaging, and retention-focused opportunities.

One often-overlooked platform is Yelp, founded in 2004 to "help people find great local businesses like dentists, hair stylists, mechanic, etc." Since then the site has blossomed, with more than 53 million people visiting the site in the past 30 days and over 20 million local, user-generated reviews. D.C. bookstore and coffee shop Politics & Prose features its Yelp page alongside its other social media assets (Facebook and Twitter) on its homepage, allowing visitors to quickly access reviews of the store's books, ambience, food, and neighborhood details.



TripAdvisor, a pioneer of user-generated content, features user reviews and advice on hotels, shops, sites, etc., and offers D.C. museums, monuments, attractions, and even neighborhoods the chance to strut their stuff for tourists and visitors. The site uses submitted ratings to create ranked lists, such as Things To Do, Places To Stay, and Sites To Visit, which over 50 million unique monthly visitors use to determine their travel plans.

UrbanSpoon and OpenTable should be on all D.C. restaurants' social media radar, as these sites are hotspots for both local and visiting diners. Site users can add reviews and ratings, check out menus, see what critics and bloggers reviews, get other dining recommendations based on their profile or browsing history and make online reservations. Restaurant owners can control their restaurant's page, keeping important information and specials up-to-date and creating a restaurant microsite on a search-friendly, highly trafficked website.

Implications and Action Items:

- **Choose wisely.** Small businesses have limited time and funds, so they should be selective and strategic with which social platforms they spend their time on. Pick a platform that's best for your industry, customers, and bottom line.
- **Prepare for feedback.** Unfortunately, not every review is going to be 5 stars. When that negative comment appears, use it as an opportunity to reach out, find out specifically what happened and use this event as a learning and business improvement experience.
- **Look for efficient solutions.** With so many websites and social media platforms out there, small businesses do not have enough time and resources to manage this ever-changing landscape. To save time, look for resources like SinglePlatform, which manages different social media accounts, and post information to those accounts in one place.

About RTCRM

RTC Relationship Marketing (RTCRM) is a full-service direct marketing and relationship marketing agency based in Washington, D.C., in the heart of Georgetown, with an additional office in New York. RTCRM boasts more than 40 years' worth of innovative, targeted solutions that grow its clients' brands and help them forge lasting, valuable relationships with their customers. What distinguishes RTCRM is its unique ability to analyze data and research on both a rational and emotional level. RTCRM's clients include major brands in the telecom, technology, pharmaceutical, and other business sectors such as AARP, Procter & Gamble, Eli Lilly, and Novo Nordisk.

To learn more about RTCRM, please visit www.rtcrm.com or follow the Twitter feed @rtcrm.

About the Digital Integration and Innovation Team

The RTCRM Digital Integration and Innovation team is tasked with keeping track and making sense of the ever-changing digital world. It's our job to understand the nuances of how and why different types of people use technology and what that tells us about them. More importantly, it's our job to help our clients apply this knowledge to better communicate with their customers. We help clients translate business goals into marketing campaigns that build relationships with customers. In the 21st century, understanding how and why someone uses technology is as important as understanding where they live, what gender they are, and how old they are. That's where we come in. From ensuring that technographics are considered in the research phase, to tactical plans that align digital, print and broadcast tactics, we work with clients and internal partners to make sure it all works.

It's not about what's cool. It's about what's smart.

Treffpunkt, Digital Integration and Innovation Team Blog: <http://rtctreffpunkt.blogspot.com>

