

# All Aboard? Social Media and the Kentucky Historical Society

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## Rationale: Why should we bother?



- Goals
  - Increase awareness of the KHS brand and KHS programs
  - Expand existing audience
- Blog
  - Different specialties within organization
  - Never a shortage of words!
  - Give personality
- Twitter
  - Easy, quick
  - Reach a new audience
  - Good examples
- Facebook
  - Obvious demographic for KHS
  - Common use for museums
  - Showcase events, programming and collections
  - Cross-promote with other social media

## The Holdouts

- Holdout #1: Lisa
  - Profile: Traditional communications person
  - Concerns: Negative feedback and comments, cost/benefit, time commitment
- Holdout(s) #2: Collective KHS staff
  - Profile: Older, more traditional staff; research-based, structured approach; deliberate approach to decision-making
  - Concerns: Policy/procedures, negative feedback, general lack of understanding of the media



*Birger and his gang, Harrisburg, Ill., 1927.*

## Convincing the Holdouts



*Fred Runyon in a costume as a Catlettsburg policeman, Boyd Co., ca. 1916*

- Do your homework
  - Professional development
  - Provide examples that pertain to your organization, good and bad
  - Understand the platforms
- Policy Development
  - No need to re-invent the wheel
- Top-down buy-in
  - Convince your director

## KHS Advantages

- History campus=Attraction
  - Good examples of museums using social media
- Progressive executive director
- Ready-made stockpile
  - Artifacts
  - Digitized historic images
  - Design Studio
  - Equipment: Flip camera, digital camera, existing collection of digital photos
- Three P's: Variety of people, positions and programs

## Initial Action Steps

- Choose media and draft basic design
  - Naming
- Pick teams!
  - Select based on personality, expertise, communication skills
- Present policy, drafts to team
  - Communications department lead team
  - Discuss concerns, questions
  - Ensure that all team members are comfortable with policy
- Set a timeline
  - And maintain it! Make sure you have an established launch date.



duPont Manual High School baseball team, Louisville, 1907.

## Jumping In!

- Establish a schedule
  - Twitter, Facebook and blog teams
  - 5 members per team
  - Consistency in posting
  - KHS examples
- Implementation
  - Pre-game jitters
  - Set evaluation dates
  - Arsenal of material



*Hanging from the diving board at Indian Lake, Hawesville, ca. 1920s*

## Spread the Word!



*Chad Burns, Frankfort, 1948*

- Promote your social media
  - E-marketing
    - Statistics
  - Publications
  - Staff
  - Cross-promote
    - Statistics
  - Prominent placement on website

## The Pay-Off

- Twitter
  - 245 followers
  - Participation in discussions
  - Trivia Tuesday, Theatre Thursday, others
  - Effective at cross-promoting to History Burgoon
- Blog
  - 1,500-2,000 hits per month
  - Limited participation
  - Explanation of programs, events and positions
- Facebook
  - 1,325 followers
  - Active participation
  - Reaching existing and new audiences
- Overall
  - Quantitative data for evaluation purposes
    - Built in gauges
    - Google Analytics
  - Free or inexpensive promotions
  - No negative feedback!



Men smoking and drinking on Henry Shepherd Barton's party boat, Owensboro, ca. 1910s.

## Next Steps

- Constant re-evaluation
- Facebook advertising
  - Inexpensive
  - Extremely targeted
- Grow audience/user base for all platforms
- Track feedback from visits to campus
- Track brand awareness
- Explore fundraising opportunities