

EXCLUSIVES

A Quick Start Social Media Primer for Early Career Archivists

Increasingly, archivists are playing a larger role in social media outreach by leading content creation or collaborating with marketing and communications teams to share archival documents, objects, and images online in creative ways. Archivists use social media as a tool for both entertainment and education, so it is important to look at quality of content over quantity. It's also important to consider focusing first on a single platform to learn the ins and outs of sharing content and getting to know the online community without becoming overwhelmed by the pressures of managing varied content over multiple platforms.

The following is a quick start social media primer developed with early career archivists in mind:

Choose a Single Platform and Create a Profile

With so many options, where to begin? The reason platforms like Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, Pinterest, LinkedIn, Snapchat, YouTube, and others have proliferated is because they appeal to diverse audiences and offer distinct functionality. It helps to

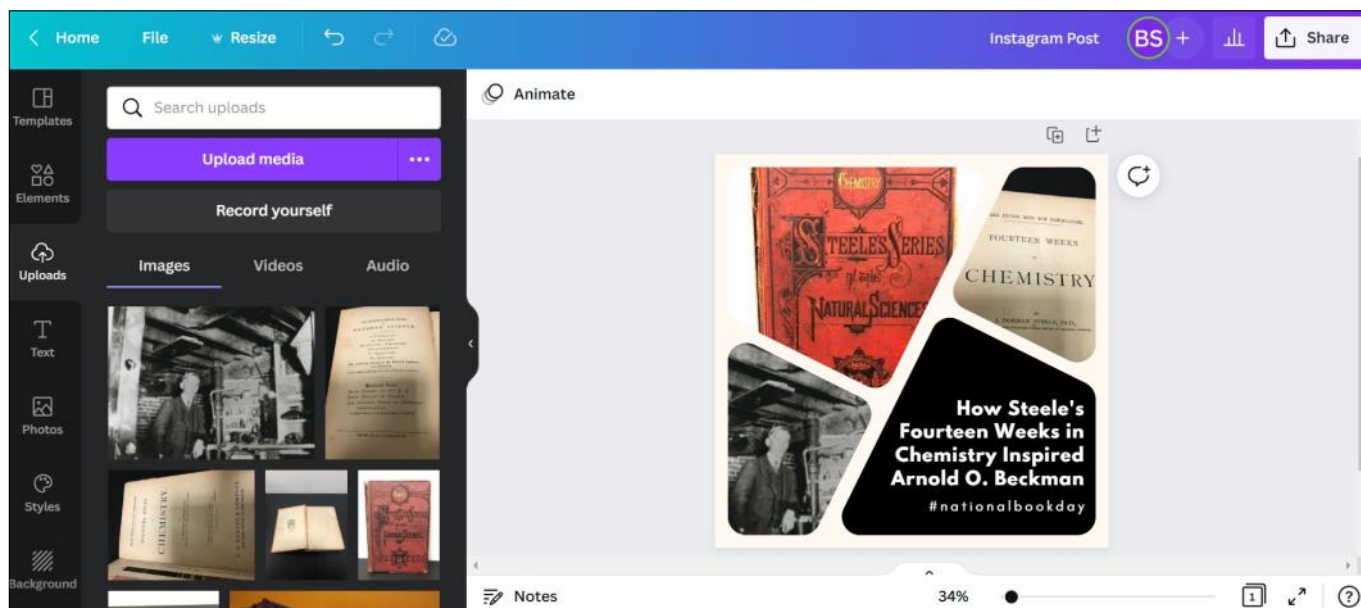
create a list of three to five platforms from which a single selection can be made. Enter "Name of platform + user statistics and demographics" in an Internet search engine to view results that can enable an informed decision.

[Instagram](#) is a popular platform because of its ease of use, number of active users, high engagement among 18- to 35-year-olds, and photo-based visual nature. For these reasons, it will be the focus of this article. First, download the app for use on a cell phone, or visit the site from a computer or other device. Next, open the platform and click sign up by entering a phone number or email. Then, provide a name and password when prompted and account creation will be complete.

Identify Different Types of Content to Share

Social media is about inspiring conversations and creating community. Those objectives are met by sharing interesting and exciting content with catchy and informative captions. Archivists have unlimited

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Instagram post customized within Canva.

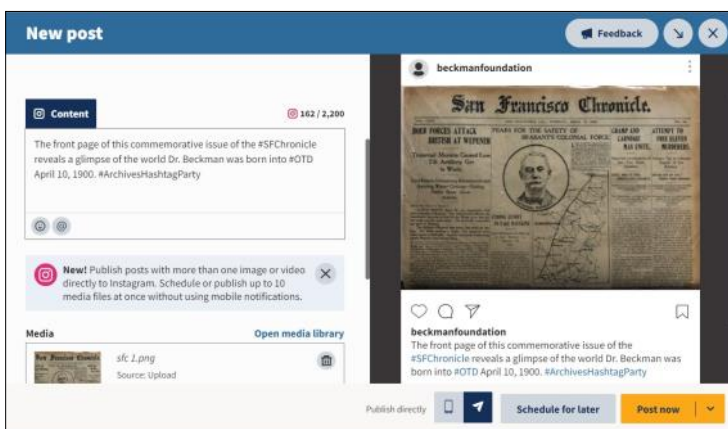
content to share! Highlight an event on its date in history, answer frequently asked questions about the profession, share tips and advice, give a sneak peek at a new acquisition, livestream a tour of the archive, explore a document or book in detail, or curate a mini collection that speaks to current events or hot topics. Caption the content so that users have context, know what is pictured and by what creator, and understand why it matters. [Canva](#) is a no- to low-cost online resource for creating social media graphics. It has ready-to-use templates that can make content creation easy for beginners.

Apply Hashtags to Connect with Interested Users and Increase Exposure

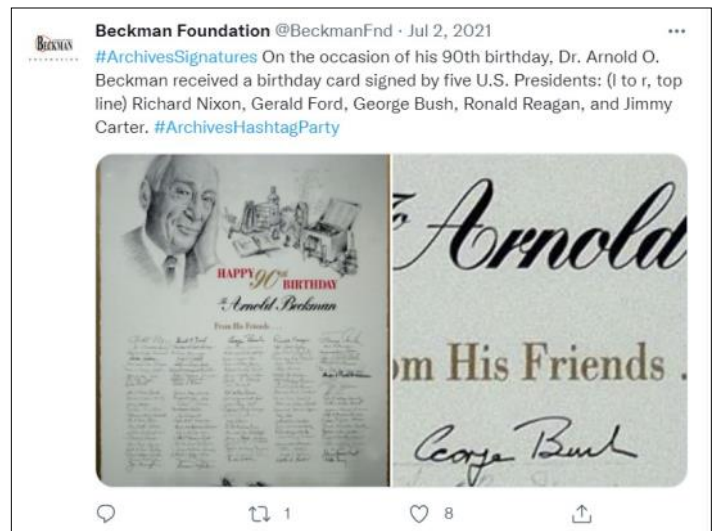
A hashtag is a keyword or phrase that is searchable; it is prefixed with a # symbol and typically speaks to the content to which it is applied. To identify popular hashtags, follow profiles with similar interests and take note of which hashtags get used. Archivists increase exposure for posts by including relevant hashtags that others can look for. Think of them like the subjects or search terms fields in museum archive database software – they act as finding aids that can pluck specific objects out of a sea of records. Try #archive, #history, and #OTD (on this date), or check out #archiveshashtagparty to start.

Implement a Posting Schedule

While social media posts do not need to occur daily, they should occur with regularity so that users will continue to follow an account and look for archivist-



Prescheduled post in Hootsuite.



Twitter post with searchable hashtag.

generated content. Set a manageable posting schedule—perhaps once a week. As familiarity grows, augment the schedule as much as possible and incorporate stories and highlights. Choosing a day of the week to correspond with a specific type of content, such as transcription or textiles with Tuesday, can serve as a calendar for content creation. [Hootsuite](#) is a platform for managing social media that enables prescheduled posts. For archivists just getting started with social media or wearing many hats, prescheduling can free up valuable time.

Interact with the Archivist Community

Sharing archivist-generated content and interacting with and supporting other archivists are equally important. Follow other user profiles, read their captions, like their posts, and add comments. Interaction perpetuates the entertainment and education afforded by the online sharing of content and ideas, and helps create a network that benefits all users.

Kaerie Ray, MBA

*[Arnold and Mabel Beckman Foundation Archive](#)
Beckman Center at the National Academies of
Sciences, Engineering and Medicine
kray@beckman-foundation.org*