Doors Open Days Social Media Guide

Social media platforms are a way for people to communicate and interact online, and for organisations to connect and build relationships with audiences.

Increasingly, heritage organisations are creating social media accounts to reach large online audiences. Social media statistics from 2019 show that there are 3.5 billion social media users worldwide (equating to about 45% of the world's population), and that this number continues to grow each year.

If your organisation is interested in creating and managing social media accounts, this guide will address the key aspects you need to consider to get started with social media and create a social media strategy.

A social media strategy is a summary of everything you plan to do and hope to achieve with social media. Your social media strategy informs what type of content you post and which platforms you use, and sets evaluation methods so you can know what's working and where there's room to improve. In drafting your social media strategy, you should consider:

- What do you hope to achieve with social media?

- What is the difference between different social media platforms?

- What social media platforms do your target audiences use?

- What and how often should you post?

- How can posts be made as accessible and inclusive as possible?

- How do I evaluate the success of my social media posts?

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1. Goals

Before posting on social media platforms, it is important to outline your communications goals. Identifying goals enables you to pin down the key messages that you want to communicate to your audiences and gives you a framework to use when measuring the effectiveness of your communications. We've suggested some possible communications goals below:

Growing brand awareness: To raise awareness of your region's Doors Open Days, or of a venue in your Doors Open Days programme.

Encouraging engagement: To build relationships with audiences and increase virtual and/or physical visitors to your region's Doors Open Days programme or event.

Expanding audiences: To promote events that are representative of and relevant to a range of different audiences; to curate a fun, approachable and accessible tone

Develop networking: To strengthen existing relationships with your Doors Open Days venues; to develop new links with other local venues who may want to take part in Doors Open Days.

Advocate: To evidence the community and economic impacts of Doors Open Days to key funding stakeholders.

2. Platforms

Different social media platforms have different uses and strengths. It is a common misconception that organisations should create accounts across all social media platforms, but this is not necessarily the best course of action. Which social media platforms you use will depend on your goals, content, time and resources.

This section breaks down the most popular social media platforms, and those that we manage for the larger Doors Open Days brand. It is recommended that you begin with a Facebook page, and then branch out to Twitter and Instagram if you have the resources and time to do so.

2.1. Facebook

For audiences, Facebook is centred around developing relationships between friends, family, clubs, alumni networks, etc. For organisations, Facebook is best used for raising brand awareness.

Doors Open Days coordinators and venues could use Facebook to post updates about events or venues, or share interesting stories about their venues' collections or the history of their sites.

Posts with videos receive 59% more engagement than other media types, followed by images and then links.

2.2.   Twitter

Twitter is more immediate and fast-paced than Facebook, so the platform is suited to breaking news and time-sensitive content. Twitter also has a 280-character limit on each post, making it a platform to share bite-sized content. It is common for strangers on Twitter to connect with each other by engaging in conversations around mutual interests. People find conversations to engage in by searching hashtags (similar to keywords, like #heritage #Scotland) that are relevant to their interests.

Doors Open Days coordinators and venues could participate in conversations around mutual interests relevant to the history or current use of sites, or relevant to sites' collections. Coordinators and venues can gain insight into what their audiences are interested in by searching for trending and related hashtags on Hashtagify. Doors Open Days coordinators and venues can also create posts that link their venues, events or collections to annual awareness days and weekly trends.

Tweets with images, GIFs and videos receive 55% more engagement than tweets composed solely of text. If you use hashtags, it is not recommended to use more than 1-2 per tweet.

2.3.   Instagram

Instagram is an image-centric platform, and unsurprisingly, posts that perform well are those with visually striking images and videos. The algorithm prioritises videos and posts that receive a high rate of likes and comments, especially in the hour after posting.

Audience engagement is reliant on hashtag usage, with 11 hashtags being the optimal number per post. You can use tools like Hashtagify, RiteTag and Trendsmap to find relevant and related hashtags for your posts. It is also helpful to check out other heritage organisations' posts to see what hashtags they use.

3.   Audience

Different social media platforms reach different audiences. Which social media platforms you choose to use will depend not only on your goals, content, time and resources, but also your target audience.

3.1.   Age

10-24 year olds (Gen Zers) and 25-40 year olds (Millennials) and are the age brackets with the highest use of social media. 90% of both generations report being active social media users. They are followed by 41-56 year olds (Gen Xers), 77.5% of whom are active social media users, and 57-75 year olds (Baby Boomers), of whom 48.2% are active social media users.

Facebook has an older and ageing user base. Over 25s account for 70% of all Facebook users, with the highest demographic in the U.K. being Millenials and Gen Xers. Younger

users (Gen Zers) are increasingly leaving Facebook or not signing up at all, and more older people (Baby Boomers) are joining.

Twitter has a more even distribution of users across age demographics than Facebook does. 18-49 year olds (ranging from Gen Z, millennials and Gen X) comprise 76% of Twitter users, split evenly across the 18-24, 25-34 and 35-49 age brackets.

Instagram is the most popular social media platform with younger generations. Under 25s (Gen Z) account for 71% of all Instagram users, with the highest demographic of users in the UK being 18-24.

Not only do different generations favour different platforms, but different generations use social media differently. A majority of older generations (Gen Xers and Baby Boomers) use social media to share pictures and updates, whereas younger generations like Gen Z and Millenials are most likely to use social media to hang out with friends and get ideas for new purchases and experiences. Interestingly, all age groups turn to social media to get advice or to access how-tos.

3.2.   Gender

Facebook users in the U.K. are skewed slightly towards women with 52% of users identifying as women and 48% of users identifying as men. Twitter users in the U.K. are majority (60%) men. Instagram users in the U.K. are slightly skewed towards women, with 54% of users identifying as women and 46% of users identifying as men.

3.3.   Other demographics: race, sexuality

Whereas social media platforms collect information on audiences' ages and genders, data on race and sexuality of social media audiences in the U.K. is not widely collected. However, research from the United States suggests that the invention of smartphones increased access to the Internet and has resulted in the Internet population aligning more closely with the racial composition of populations.

This being said, those of different races and sexualities tend to form segregated communities online due to the often segregated nature of interactions offline. Twitter in particular is a platform used by marginalised communities to create virtual networks, such as the anecdotally named "Black Twitter."

Those for whom digital poverty remains an issue are refugees and those from areas of deprivation. If you are interested in reaching these audiences, you will need to consider alternative methods of communication than social media, like SMS texting and phone calls. If you're interested in engaging with refugees or those from areas of deprivation, begin by contacting organisations that serve those people and areas. They will be able to tell you how they reach their audiences, and may even offer to circulate your Doors Open Days programme through their networks.

4.   Content

Everything you post on social media platforms is called "content." Interesting social media accounts vary the type of content that they post and share. Some options for types of content include:

4.1.   Promotional

These types of posts promote your virtual and in-person Doors Open Days offerings. You can make posts more interesting to your audiences by including a [hook with a provocative question](#), or sharing a [fun fact about the venue or talk/activity/resource topic](#).

4.2.   Adjacent content

If someone is following your account, it's a safe bet that they have a general interest in Scotland, the built environment, culture, storytelling, events in Scotland, etc. To keep your feed active, you could share content for events or blogs related to those topics.

4.3.   Responses

Not every post has to stem from original ideas of yours; you can [respond to other people or organisations that are already posting](#). Audiences like when organisations get involved in conversations and show their personality.

4.4.   Jokes

Jokes can be a bit tricky, and will depend on your brand voice and tone. For the national Doors Open Days accounts, we like to use jokes and puns, but we ensure that they are [family-friendly and light-hearted](#). It's best ensure that you're not unintentionally posting anything offensive by testing the joke amongst your colleagues, friends and family, and by quickly entering the joke into an Internet search. Always air on the side of caution with sensitive topics like histories of exploitation.

4.5.   User-generated content

User-generated content is when [audiences (Doors Open Days visitors) post about your organisation or event](#). User-generated content is 9.8 times more impactful and trusted than content created by organisations themselves, so it can increase your audience engagement if you share user-generated content like visitors posting photos of themselves in venues.

5.   Tone

To ensure that your content is consistent and that you connect with your target audiences, you may consider having a clearly defined brand voice. Some brands are cheeky on social media (like [The Museum of English Rural Life](#)), while others maintain a fairly formal tone (like [Scottish Civic Trust](#)).

For example, the national Doors Open Days' tone is welcoming, enthusiastic and positive. All posts support the idea that the Doors Open Days brand is knowledgeable, yet approachable and fun. Language used is relatively casual in nature, with posts directly addressing the audience as "you", and including emojis and puns. Architectural jargon, acronyms and the word "heritage" are avoided.

6. Frequency

You should only post on social media when you have quality and compelling content to share, rather than just posting to meet a quota.

It can be helpful to keep a content calendar so you can stay on top of your posts. You can use tools like [HootSuite](#), [Sprout Social](#) and Buffer to draft and schedule your posts for automatic publishing at future times.

6.1. Daily to weekly

It is best not to post multiple updates in a short time span. This is likely to annoy followers.

It is important to understand that people's newsfeeds update quickly. This doesn't mean that you need to post constantly, but rather that you should understand that posts aren't necessarily visible to a lot of people for a long period of time. Using social media platforms' built in analytics (see section 8) can help you figure out the best time of day to post to reach your audiences.

6.2. Annually

The national Doors Open Days accounts typically go rather quiet outside of the festival period (December - June), as we've found that posting content during this time can annoy audiences and result in unfollows. However, this year we are experimenting with linking to the digital Doors Open Days resources to keep our accounts active throughout the year.

During the festival period (July - November), we typically post a few times a week in July, begin a daily countdown to Doors Open Days in August, and then post multiple times a day throughout September. In October, we promote the Doors Open Days evaluations a few times a week, and in November or December we share the results of our evaluation.

7. Accessibility & Inclusivity

In order to maximise the number of people that can understand, access and feel welcomed by your posts on social media, you may consider following best practices of inclusive communications by establishing house rules, using accessibility functions and using inclusive language and design.

7.1.   Establishing house rules

Brands have increasing levels of responsibility for user-generated content posted on their pages or in comments. You may want to consider drafting social media house rules to outline your expectations for audiences and how you would respond in the case of an offensive comment. House rules are particularly helpful for volunteer-run organisations that may have multiple people managing social media accounts because they set out a clear understanding of how to handle difficult situations. You may feel free to adapt the Doors Open Days social media house rules for your own purposes.

7.2.   Functions

In order to maximise the number of people that can access and understand your messages on social media, you may consider:

- **Using alt text.** Also called "alt tags" and "alt descriptions," alt text is the written text that appears in place of an image on a webpage or social media platform if the image fails to load on a user's screen. This text helps screen-reading tools describe images to visually impaired readers. Facebook, you could include a short description of the image at the end of the caption. On Twitter, you can input alt text by selecting the "Add description" option after you've uploaded a photo to a post (see figure 1 below). On Instagram, you can input alt text by selecting the "Advanced settings" option after you've uploaded a photo to a post (see figure 2 below), and then selecting "Write Alt Text."
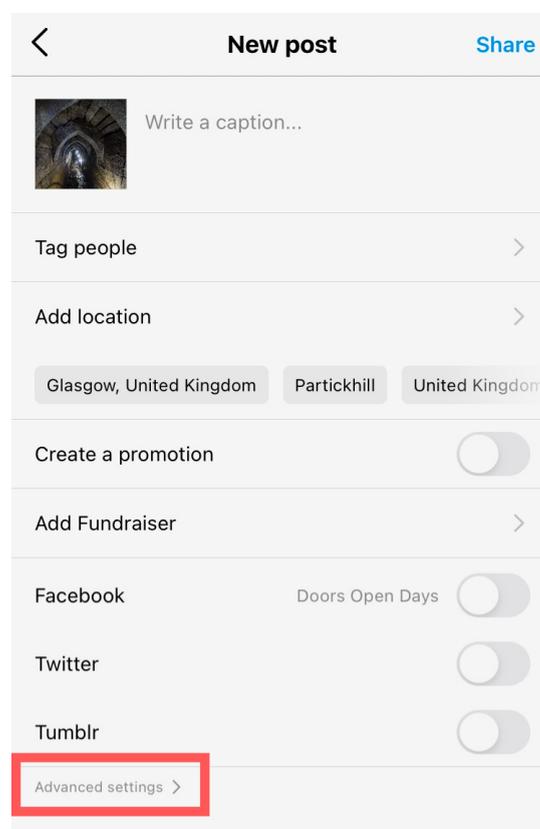

Figure 1

Figure 2

- **Camelbacking hashtags.** Writing hashtags in camelcase (meaning that you capitalise the first letter of each word in a hashtag) makes them easier to read and intelligible to screen readers. For example, you'd write #DoorsOpenDays instead of #Doorsopendays.

- **Subtitling videos.** If you are sharing a video via social media, consider hosting that video on YouTube and using their [automatic captioning services](). Alternatively, you could use a free tool like [MixCaptions]() to add subtitles to your video before uploading.

7.3. Language

In order to maximise the number of people that can understand your messages and feel welcomed and included by them, you may consider:

- **Using simple sentence structures.** This means that subordinate clauses are used sparingly, sentences are concise and ideas are broken up into short paragraphs. A subordinate clause is usually introduced by a preposition and cannot stand on its own. For example: "*During the event on Saturday*, she learned a lot about Scottish heritage."

- **Using the "active" tense.** This avoids inverting simple sentence structure and adding excess prepositions. Active voice means that a sentence has a subject that acts upon its verb. Passive voice means that a subject is a recipient of a verb's action. For example, "The Doors Open Days event was attended by me" (passive) becomes "I attended the Doors Open days event" (active).

- **Addressing readers directly by using "we" and "you".** This language is approachable and encourages audiences to engage with you. Inclusive communications views communication as a partnership in which all people are equal, with equal amounts to give, share and learn from each other.

- **Using gender neutral language**. Address people by their names or they/them pronouns unless they have supplied a pronoun for themselves. It is also good to avoid gendered language such as "man-hours". This ensures that you will not misgender or alienate anyone.

- **Avoiding jargon.** This includes organisational acronyms and sector-specific words like "heritage". The Heritage Blueprint Report (Young Scot, NTS 2017) found that while 34% of young people were interested in 'history', only 16% had an interest in 'heritage'. Oxford Languages (2020) states that the words most closely associated with 'heritage' are inheritance, birthright, estate, patrimony and endowment - words that apply to a legacy of privilege that excludes many. You may consider replacing 'heritage' with culture, buildings, places, spaces, collections, stories and other words as appropriate.

- **Avoiding words that dehumanise people.** This means not reducing people to a certain characteristic - for example "the elderly" or "the Blacks". The emphasis

should be put on one's humanity, rather than characteristics. Communications should only mention characteristics like gender, sexual orientation, religion, racial group or ability when relevant.

- **Avoiding words and phrases that perpetuate stereotypes, stigma, exclusion and dehumanisation.** These include, but are not limited to: special needs, diverse people, minority groups, handicapped, short-sighted, normal, sufferer, wheelchair-bound, brain damage and service users.

- **Providing multiple routes of response.** If the communication includes a call to action like directing people to more information, providing multiple routes of action allows audiences to choose the communication channel accessible or most comfortable to them.

7.4. Design

In order to maximise the number of people who can understand your graphic design content and feel included by it, you may consider:

- **Ensuring an appropriate level of high-colour contrast.** Documents with a high level of colour contrast between background and foreground colours are easier to read. You can check the strength of your colour contrast by using this colour contrast check tool.

- **Using accessible fonts.** San serif fonts (fonts without decorative lines or curls added to them) are generally easier to read than serif fonts. Accessible fonts should also avoid mirrored lettering, i.e. "d" should not be the reverse of "b". Accessible fonts should also have distinct characters for uppercase i, lowercase L and the number 1.

- **Using 12-point font at a minimum.** And 14-point font for any easy read content. This ensures that text isn't too small to read.

- **Providing alternative formats when requested.** A key tenet of inclusive communications is to "keep on trying". Accessibility and inclusivity is maximised when communications are offered in as many alternative formats as possible. For print publications, these may include braille, large print, easy read and translated versions. For digital communications, these may include plain text, easy read, translated and unthreaded versions, alt text for images, subtitles.

- **Ensuring equitable representation.** Images and graphics should portray a diverse range of people. However, tokenism should be avoided.

8. Evaluation

Collecting and analysing data can help you understand what is working with your social media posts, and what you still need to experiment with.

You can collect and analyse two different types of data: quantitative and qualitative data.

8.1.   Quantitative data

Quantitative data is numeric in nature. Social media platforms such as [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) all have Insights features where you can view metrics for your posts. The most common metrics that organisations track is followers/fans, reach, and engagement.

"Followers/fans" are the number of people who have clicked your "follow" or "like" button and see your content in their feeds regularly.

"Reach" is the number of people who have seen your posts, whether or not your audience members click on it.

"Engagement" is measured in different ways depending on the platform, and is typically represented as a percentage. In general, the engagement statistic represents how often your audience clicks links in your posts, comments, shares/retweets your posts to their followers/friends, mentions/tags you in their own posts, likes/favourites your posts, etc. Engagement rates tell you if your content is piquing your audiences' interest. An average engagement rate for social media is 1-2%, so anything above 3% is considered very relevant and interesting to audiences.

It is helpful to track these measurements over time to measure growth. At Doors Open Days, we produce quarterly reports that compare statistics to previous years. For example, we would compare our gain in followers during July - September 2021 to our gain in followers during July - September 2020 to see if our follower growth rate is being maintained, decreased or increased.

8.2.   Qualitative data

Qualitative data is non-numeric and describes qualities or characteristics. Whereas followers, reach and engagement rate can tell you how many people are interacting with your posts, reading the comments they leave can tell you more about how they feel about and what they think about your content. You can encourage audiences to leave comments by including open-ended questions in posts, or putting [a call out for a user-generated content](#).

8.3.   Evaluation plan

With any data you are collecting, the most important thing to ask yourself is "what can I do with this data?". All the data you analyse should help you understand how you are achieving your goals and should inform your future decision making.

It may be helpful to create an evaluation plan that aligns your mission or objectives with communications goals, actions and metrics. For example, below is an evaluation plan for the national Doors Open Days communications which shows the integration of social media evaluation into a holistic communications evaluation plan:

Doors Open Days Objective	Comms Goal	Communications Action	Metrics
Growing the festival across Scotland	Grow brand awareness	• Develop Doors Open Days brand guidelines • Manage a national Doors Open Days website • Draft press releases • Respond to press enquiries • Post consistently on social media and website • Disseminate Doors Open Days information through tourism, heritage and cultural sector partners	• Social media reach • Social media likes / follows • Print media coverage • Website visits • Number of Doors Open Days venues • Geographical spread of Doors Open Days venues • Region use of branding material
Showcasing venues' events and resources	Encourage engagement	• Promote Doors Open Days events and resources • Share Doors Open Days visitors' and venue's posts • Create communications calendar to ensure regular content	• Social media reach • Social media engagement (shares / clicks / mentions / comments) • Social media ikes / follows • Website visits
Promoting the diversity of Scotland's places and stories	Expand audience	• Compile a network and database of inclusive organisations • Cross-promote volunteering through networking with inclusive organisations • Audit of communications by target audiences • Maintain an image bank of Doors Open Days venues with a variety of visitors. • Commission illustrations that show a diverse range of people enjoying Scotland's buildings and places. • Coordinate alternative formats of Doors Open Days materials.	• Audience demographics from social media and evaluation forms. • Geographical spread of Doors Open Days venues • Feedback from inclusion organisations
Evidencing	Advocate	• Record visitor comments	• Quality of visitor

Doors Open Days impact		• Produce infographics • Produce reports	comments on evaluation form and social media • Reports produced

9.   Final thoughts & additional reading

Please don't hesitate to get in touch with us at dod@scottishcivictrust.org.uk if you'd like further guidance or support for a particular aspect of social media covered in this guide. We're here to help!

You can also learn more about by checking out the following additional resources:

10 Social Media Statistics You Need to Know in 2021 (Oberlo, 2021).

US Social Media Users, by Generation (Insider Intelligence, 2019).

Why Do Different Generations Use Social Media? (Marketing Charts, 2019).

The Beginner's Guide to Social Media (Moz, 2019).

How to Create a Social Media Style Guide for Your Brand (Hootsuite, 2020).

Everything Social Marketers Need to Know About Generation Z (Hootsuite, 2019).

Access for all: Inclusive Communications (English Federation of Disability Sport, 2019).

Social Media Marketing: the Ultimate Guide (HubSpot, 2020).

The Complete Guide to Social Media Marketing (Oberlo, 2019).

How to Find and Use the Right Twitter Hashtags (Sprout Social, 2020).