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SMART MEDIA

To provide further information on the subject of publicising your toy library, and more particularly, the role social media can play in its promotion. Having implemented an initial advertising campaign to spread the word about your toy library project, the following information offers a brief introduction to the potentialities of social media, including how to use such websites as Facebook and Twitter.

Using Social Media

For non-profit organisations, social media is potentially an incredibly powerful tool to get the word out, connect with the wider community and even raise money. However, like any other method of advertising, social media will only pay dividends if utilised properly. Whether you decide to use Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or Youtube to help raise the profile of your toy library, you must remember that social media requires consistent effort on your part in order to have a positive impact.

What's Social Media

The best way to define social media is to break it down. Media is an instrument of communication, like a newspaper or a radio, and social media is a social instrument of this form of communication. Consequently, this would describe a website that doesn't just give you information, but interacts with you while giving you that information. Therefore, social media is the term used to describe websites that encourage interaction from users and a social network is an online community where members with common interests are able to interact using blogs, messages, comments, videos and photo.



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Facebook – how to set up your page for your project

A Facebook page will allow you to publicise your toy library for free, and enables you and your volunteers to share pictures, stories, links, videos and events at the click of a mouse. To get started you will need to have access to a Facebook account. If there is someone in your toy library who has an account then they can serve as an administrator or you can delegate someone to the position. The following steps should guide you through the process of setting up a page for your toy library:

Step 1 - Once logged in click 'Home' and then locate the 'Pages' section, which will be situated at the very bottom of the list of options seen at the left-hand side of the screen.

Step 2 - The next step is to click 'Create a Page' - and then choose the option which fits your project best (most likely 'Company, Organisation or Institution').

Step 3 - Choose a suitable category and fill in your toy library's name, and then click 'Get Started'.

Step 4 - Add the necessary information about your project - including a picture/logo, information about your project, and links to any associative websites.

Tip: Remember to invite your service users.

Twitter – how to set up an account for your project

Similarly to Facebook, Twitter has also become a popular means of connecting with users and volunteers. In order to create a Twitter account, you will first need to sign up. The following steps are again detailed below:

Step 1 - Visit www.twitter.com and click the 'Sign Up'!

Tip: Your chosen Username is critical, as it will be the means by which everyone on Twitter will first perceive your project. The best practice is to use a short username!

Step 2 - You'll need to provide a name and password.

Step 3 - When you're satisfied with your choices, simply click 'Create my account'.

Step 4 - Twitter will then send you an email at the address you provide, and that email will include a link which will verify your account.

Step 5 - Done! The next step, similarly to Facebook, will be to populate your account with all the information you want to include, and of course, compose your first Tweet!



Instagram – how to set up an account for your project

Instagram is a photo-orientated website in which users can post photos or videos on their account. Users can also post 'stories' which can be accessed by other users by clicking on their profile picture. It is very popular and is a great social media platform to bring awareness to your toy library. However, in order to do this you must first create an Instagram account. The following steps will guide you on how you can do this:

Step 1 - Visit www.instagram.com and click 'Sign Up' or simply download their app from your devices app store and sign up in the app.

Step 2 - You will be asked to provide an email/phone number, a full name, username and password.

Step 3 - Once you're satisfied with these details you will then be asked to provide your date of birth and a confirmation code will be sent to the email you have given.

Step 4 - Add the necessary information about your project - including a picture/logo, information about your project, and links to any affiliated websites.

Step 5 - Once this has been complete you can now go on to make your first Instagram post!

Suggested Play Activities

Now that you have begun to use social media to publicise your toy library, it is important to learn how to use this promotional tool successfully. Remember, no matter what social media sites you utilize - Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram - the most important factor to realise is that social media is a conversation. Consequently, you must engage your followers and friends. This means doing things like asking your followers for feedback and ideas, and involving them in the decision making process of your toy library. Additionally, you must try to keep your social media presence up-to-date. No one wants to follow an inactive Facebook page or dead Twitter account! Post as regularly as you can with the latest information about your project, whilst ensuring your posts are always relevant and have quality content.

Checklist

- Recognised the importance of social media?
- Explored the advertising potential of social media?
- Considered setting up your own Facebook page through the instructions provided?
- Considered setting up your own Twitter account?
- Considered setting up your own Instagram account?
- Researched the best ways to make use of social media?

Smart Play Network Members Support

Member you have access to telephone and email support. For more information about the topics covered in this guidance sheet, or any other queries you may have about your group, please contact us using: 0131 554 2620 or admin@smartplaynetwork.org

It is free to be a member of Smart Play Network, for more information on how to become a member please refer to our website: www.smartplaynetwork.org.



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