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Walking the Tightrope: Balancing Access and Protection on Social-Media Platforms in Museums

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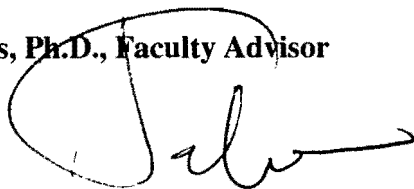
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**Submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Museum Professions**

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May 2011**

Jürgen Heinrichs, Ph.D., Faculty Advisor

for J. H.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Heinrichs", written over a large, faint circular stamp or watermark.

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Abstract

The Digital Balancing Act: Museums walk the Tightrope of Social-Media Platforms

Michele L. Sabol

Museums are keepers of objects in public trust. As part of this trust, museums have given access to their objects through private and public viewing within its physical building. Curators develop content to inform visitors about certain subjects pertaining to the museum's collections. These curators act as the authoritative figure. Museums have physical possession and control over these objects in order to preserve, protect, and provide directed access to their tangible, cultural treasures. Recently, with the development of Web 2.0 social-media sites, museums have evolved to allow more access to their digital property, to allow online posting of criticism by the public, and to allow online visitors to act as curators. As users of social media, museums are able to distribute information and their collections to mass participants. Social-media sites such as Facebook, YouTube, MySpace, and Twitter have become extremely popular ways to communicate and stay connected with a large number of people, as well as sharing user-generated content. Millions of individuals update their status, watch "viral" videos, and send Tweets at a mile-a-minute. Museums want to participate, but struggle co-habitate with this new authority; "you."

This thesis addresses concerns among museum professionals using social-media platforms to reach audiences, spread missions, and deliver information.

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1. Introduction

a. A Traditional Voice in a New Digital Age

Social-media platforms are society's new memory and communication institutions that contain the principles of traditional memory institutions such as: social remembering, preservation, and conservation under the umbrella of user-generated content.¹

The Brooklyn Museum has a great involvement in social-media applications. It has a Facebook page. It is called Art Share. It contains a little-larger-than-thumbnail images of the museum's collection are located on this tab. Each image includes catalogue entry information about the work such as: title, artist, dimensions and provenance history. When clicking the image, users are redirected to the museum's main website to view small thumbnail images of various works in the collection with links to search by medium or artist.²

The National September 11 Museum and Memorial had a website called Make History where 1,000 users have uploaded more than 3,000 photos and personal stories from the events on that tragic day. In 2009, a web user uploaded a photo of a young fireman running through a tunnel. This young man died in the attacks. His identity was recognized by his father who viewed the photos on the Make History website. It was the only known photo to have been taken of Mr. Box's son on September 11. As a result of users uploading digital photos from the events, Mr. Box was able to find some closure

¹ Pessach, Guy. "[Networked] Memory Institutions: Social Remembering, Privatization and Its Discontents." Yeshiva University, Cardozo Arts & Entertainment Law Journal. 2008. 4

² "Art Share." Brooklyn Museum Facebook Page.
<http://www.facebook.com/add_email.php#!/brooklynmuseum?v=app_7723691927&ref=search>.

and also to identify his son in the photo for the museum's collection. The photos on the site will be featured in exhibition spaces at the museum when it opens to the public.³

The Australian Museum's social-media site participants were used to ask visitors to help shape exhibition concepts. The exhibition *All About Evil* included 900 objects and contemporary/ popular culture content. Since the subject matter was controversial, the museum wanted input from the public.⁴ It first created an online blog. The blog had 24 followers. Even if people did not comment, they were still reading the blog. Those that did comment had passionate responses regarding the issues. The museum noted that the group "demonstrated that this dialogue can help shape the exhibition content" and Facebook "provided more discussion and interaction" than the blog.⁵

The Smithsonian Institution, in the nation's capital, has been an example of the wide arrange of study that museums can focus on and the vast collections that they can display. At 164 years old, the museum has been seen almost as an ivory tower of the museum community.⁶ The Smithsonian is not immune from the social-media band wagon and is attempting to change its image "from an authority-centric broadcast platform to one that recognizes the importance of distributive knowledge creation."⁷ Smithsonian social-media projects have included posting collection photographs online.

³ Wright, Alex. "Online, It's the Mouse That Runs the Museum." The New York Times. 20 Jan. 2010. <<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/20/arts/design/20museum.html>>.

⁴ Kelly, Lynda. "The Impact of Social Media on Museum Practice." Paper presented at the National Palace Museum, Taipei, 20 October 2009, Australian Museum Eureka Prizes, Web and Audience Research, Australian Museum, Sydney, 7

⁵ Ibid, 10

⁶ Olson, Elizabeth. "Smithsonian Uses Social Media to Expand its Mission." The New York Times. March 16 Mar. 2011. <<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/17/arts/design/smithsonian-expands-its-reach-through-social-media-and-the-public.html>>.

⁷Wright, Alex. "Online, it's the Mouse that Runs the Museum." The New York Times. 19 Jan. 2010. <<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/20/arts/design/20museum.html>>.

These may not have had full information associated with them. The public has been able to view the photos and add missing information or identify individuals in the photographs.⁸ Previously, the institution may have relied on curators and experts to fill in these information gaps. Despite the Smithsonian's efforts to be more open, it has received criticism. Patricia Aufderheide, Professor and Director at American University, criticized the Smithsonian for not making materials available to the public:

The issue of principle: The Smithsonian needs to make its materials available to the public equitably. The Smithsonian controls unique, irreplaceable resources to tell the nation's histories, to explore cultural heritage, the natural world and the progress of science; these stories can and should be told in many different ways. Stories that assert and reassert our contested understandings of who we are and what we can do will be crafted from that material. Without that material, those stories will be diminished- if they can be told at all.⁹

Aufderheide's testimony implies that the institution is using tax-payer money inappropriately by restricting access to information due to corporate interests or other concerns. Her focus is mainly on a controversy dealing with an agreement between the Smithsonian and Showtime.¹⁰ The organizations signed a contract in 2006 whereby the Smithsonian increased restrictions on access to its Smithsonian archive and collections. Unless these individuals were using materials for a Smithsonian/Showtime program, then they could access the collections for producing a film. Before, filmmakers would have to pay to use the collections for research purposes. The provision would restrict access even more. If the materials were not used through Showtime, use would be limited to news

⁸ Olson, Elizabeth. "Smithsonian Uses Social Media to Expand its Mission." *The New York Times*. 16 Mar. 2011. <<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/17/arts/design/smithsonian-expands-its-reach-through-social-media-and-the-public.html>>.

⁹ Aufderheide, Patricia. "Testimony on the Smithsonian Controversy to the House Committee on House Administration 5.25.06." Center for Social Media, School of Communication, American University. 2011. <<http://www.centerforsocialmedia.org/future-public-media/documents/articles/testimony-smithsonian-controversy-house-committee-house-admin>>.

¹⁰ Ibid.

programs. Some academic professionals as well as filmmakers were “astonished” because the Smithsonian holdings are “public sources.”¹¹ Aufderheide states the need for access to information with the popularity of online platforms:

We are at the beginning of an era in which America’s history and the stories of our physical world can be told by many, many more of America’s people, for new networks and previously unrecognized communities, on new platforms and media. Do-it-yourself producers who are today pouring content into Youtube, Google Video and Yahoo Video are only the harbingers of a more participatory media era. Professional filmmakers today need access on an equitable basis to the Smithsonian’s holdings. Their needs are those, eventually, of all of us.¹²

These are examples that show how museums are involved with social-media activities. They are using them to increase speech among individuals and provide access to information. In the last example, we see how a large museum complex, such as the Smithsonian, desires to be more open, but has also been criticized for its inability to be accessible. Social-media platforms are seen as a threat as well as a positive tool for museums in the digital world.

b. Thesis Overview

In the beginning of this thesis I discuss the evolution of the Internet and its start as a government project. Then, I explore how it evolved into the World Wide Web allowing for personal use as a tool for information access and communication. Following, I give a brief introduction to Web 2.0.

¹¹Trescott, Jacqueline. “Smithsonian Deal by Showtime Restricts Access by Filmmakers.” The Washington Post. 4 Apr. 2006. <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wpdyn/content/article/2006/04/03/AR2006040301699.html>>.

¹² Aufderheide, Patricia. “Testimony on the Smithsonian Controversy to the House Committee on House Administration 5.25.06.” Center for Social Media, School of Communication, American University. 2011.<<http://www.centerforsocialmedia.org/future-public-media/documents/articles/testimony-smithsonian-controversy-house-committee-house-admin>>.

The second part of this paper discusses the function of social media on a general scale, followed by a look at how social-media platforms are applied to museums. I will give examples of popular social-media platforms and how they work. Additionally, I will focus on examples of social media being used in museums for programming, exhibitions, and collections. I will introduce some of the broader themes such as: commercialism, cultural preservation, and democracy.

In the third section, I examine some of the issues facing museums that are looking into social-media platforms as vehicles to reach audiences. These issues will include: free speech, copyright, and privatization. Each of these issues is prevalent in online spaces, including that of the museum. I will attempt to explain the importance of each of these and how they are applied to the museums' involvement online. I will give examples of how these topics have influenced specific museums and/or how they potentially can.

Lastly, to summarize, I will make a proposal for museums to create a social-media policy. I will give examples from large institutions and smaller ones. I will address similarities and differences, as well as the tools needed and concepts to understand in order for a museum to be successful when engaging in social-media platforms. I will also address concerns arising from formulating a plan such as time and staff requirements.

2. History of the Internet and Web 2.0

The Internet started as a government operation as a result of the Cold War. It began as a means of communication and data sharing between researchers and the military. The ultimate goal was to sustain access to information in the event of a nuclear

attack. From this initial goal, the net evolved from government control to academic information sharing, to business opportunities, and finally, to serve the communication needs of individuals. The Internet changed from person-to-person communication to a mass, many-to-many communication with Web 2.0. This chapter will discuss the origins and historical development of the Internet and the World Wide Web as a means of communication and access to information. The chapter will conclude with the development of Web 2.0

a. Beginnings of the Internet

In August 1957, the U.S.S.R. test-fired an Intercontinental Ballistic Missile.¹³ In the same year, the Soviet Union launched the satellite Sputnik. In 1961, the Berlin Wall was built, and in 1962, the Cuban Missile Crisis began.¹⁴ The Cold War brought the fear of nuclear technologies and its possibility of destroying US military communications and information systems.¹⁵

As a Cold War defense operation, the air force saw a need for “survivable communications,” and developed the Research and Development Corporation (RAND) in 1946. RAND was the Air Force’s research and development organization to explore these new technologies.¹⁶ Engineer, Paul Baran, joined RAND in 1959 and first proposed his idea of a technology called packet switching. This system would contain hundreds of switching “nodes” connected to one another by a series of lines. There

¹³ Segaller, Stephen Nerds 2.0.1: A Brief History of the Internet. TV Books, LLC, Oregon Public Broadcasting. New York, NY. 1998. 35.

¹⁴ Abbate, Janet. Inventing the Internet. Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Cambridge, MA. 1999. 9.

¹⁵ Ibid. 8.

¹⁶ Ibid. 8-9.

would be stations that would connect users with remote data terminals or that would link digital phones together within the system. Nodes would be located away from prime military targets. The system was constructed so that in the event of an attack, some equipment could fail, while the rest of the system would still function.¹⁷

In the system, messages would start with an origin and an assigned destination. The message would then pass from each node where it would be temporarily stored until it is sent to the next one.¹⁸ The system could adapt and create routes if a line was busy to continue to send the message.¹⁹ Messages could still be sent even if part of the system failed, a feature that differentiated it from other contemporary communication systems.

This initial proposal leads to Baran's development of packet switching. In this system messages were sent in digital format. It could include digital speech and data. These messages were sent as blocks.²⁰ Small messages were sent in one block, larger ones would use multiple blocks. Another station would assign labels to these "message blocks," indicating the specific addresses of the senders and the receivers. Nodes would determine the appropriate route to take. Each block would be sent independently along different routes.²¹ When all the blocks, or "packets" arrived at the destination, they would be re-assembled together. This process is called "packet switching." This system had benefits that include: the use of inexpensive computers, efficiency and speed, and the intricate use of multiple routes. This system with multiple routes allowed for increased

¹⁷ Ibid. 11.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid. 13.

²⁰ Ibid. 17.

²¹ Ibid. 18.

defense from spy infiltration.²² Baran's version of packet switching would be the founding idea for the first "network" called ARPANET.²³

After Sputnik II was launched in November 1957, President Eisenhower asked Congress to allocate funding to develop a central defense research organization. In January 1958, Congress allocated \$520 million for the Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA).²⁴ It would link the wants of the scientific and academic community with the needs of the government.

ARPA funded computer science research in the United States. Computer research centers formed at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Carnegie Mellon University, and the University of California Los Angeles. ARPA set up computers at various research universities and sought to connect these centers through a networking system called ARPANET.²⁵ Lawrence Roberts was hired to oversee the ARPANET project.²⁶

Roberts took ideas from the developers of packet switching and incorporated them into the new ARPANET system.²⁷ Roberts did not see the system as a military endeavor but as a way to unite researchers.²⁸ The ARPANET would include universities that were designated as ARPANET sites, and IPTO sites were required to participate.

²² Ibid. 19.

²³ Ibid. 21.

²⁴ Segaller, Stephen. Nerds 2.0.1: A Brief History of the Internet, TV Books, LLC. Oregon Public Broadcasting. New York, NY. 1998. 35-36.

²⁵ Abate, Janet. Inventing the Internet. Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Cambridge, MA. 1999. 37.

²⁶ Ibid. 44.

²⁷ Ibid. 38.

²⁸ Ibid. 46.

Time sharing computers would be linked together, connecting distant, remote computers and data sharing between computers.²⁹

More and more universities and research centers joined the network. It started out as four nodes and its inventors wanted to increase these to 15.³⁰ These first nodes included: the University of California at Santa Barbara, the Stanford Research Institute, the University of Utah, and the University of California, Los Angeles.³¹ The ARPANET system was presented to Congress as an administrative tool for military information management.³² The makers of ARPANET did not have the freedom to use the system anyway they pleased. The government controlled the purpose for which it was used. The inventors of the program said the project was for military defense. However, they wished that the program would be used for academic purposes. Eventually, the network would morph into a program used by both the military and by universities.³³

The success of any technology is based on its users.³⁴ ARPANET users started out to use the system for government purposes. However, its academic users wanted something more and began to use it for non-governmental purposes. Government purposes would be sending data or communicating about assigned projects. Non-government usage would be sharing information and data regarding non-government projects such as a study being done by a university or other, unrelated academic

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid. 58.

³¹ Ibid. 56.

³² Ibid. 76.

³³ Ibid. 77.

³⁴ Ibid. 83.

communication. Users of ARPANET added a new application that formed a new way of communicating. In 1971, makers of ARPANET experimented with mail-sending programs that would send simple messages to others within the network.³⁵ Ray Tomlinson, a programmer for BBN Technologies, sent the first email. It started out as a mechanism to only send files, but Tomlinson also decided that it should send a small message along with the file. E-mail allowed network users to connect and communicate in a person-to-person way. Len Kleinrock, a computer science professor at UCLA, thought of this communication as a social change: “As soon as email came on, it took over the network. We said, ‘Wow, that’s interesting.’ We should have noticed there was something going on here. There was a social phenomenon...”³⁶ This new form of communication has great benefits. It could reach multiple time zones and multiple people at once.³⁷ E-mail helped connect employers, contractors, and employees. It allowed for members of the academic community to connect on shared interests without having to be close to one other and without having to use a telephone line.³⁸

ARPANET users now wanted something that could reach more individuals and connect other networks similar to ARPANET. Robert Kahn, an ARPA researcher, wanted to develop a way to inter-connect these systems. The Internet project was funded by the Department of Defense for a period of time.³⁹ It was decided that in order for

³⁵ Ibid. 106.

³⁶ Segaller, Stephen. Nerds 2.0.1: A Brief History of the Internet. TV Books, LLC. Oregon Public Broadcasting. New York, NY. 1998. 105.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Abbate, Janet. Inventing the Internet. Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Cambridge, MA. 1999. 110.

³⁹ Ibid. 114..

these networks to be the most useful, they also needed to be connected.⁴⁰ The separated networks would be connected together through special hosts called “gateways.” Packets would be passed between these gateways. Each gateway would have routers to determine the path the packets would take. Each host would have an address within a specified network.⁴¹

The ease of this application led to more civilian use.⁴² ARPANET was split into an academic network and a military network. Abbate notes that other scholars say that the academics using the Internet and ARPANET wanted “open access” to information.⁴³ However, the military wanted an information system that was survivable, so the solution was to split ARPANET into two networks allowing one to be run by civilians and eventually to become a commercial and individualized internet.⁴⁴

The Internet grew when more individual networks began to form and attach themselves to the existing network. It also started out with more civilian researchers at Universities. In 1985, 2000 computers were part of the Internet. In 1989, 159,000 were connected.⁴⁵

The National Science Foundation ran the Internet for non-profit research and education, and prohibited commercial activities for a period of time.⁴⁶ The Internet

⁴⁰ Ibid. 124.

⁴¹ Ibid. 128-129.

⁴² Ibid. 142.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid. 143.

⁴⁵ Ibid. 186.

⁴⁶ Ibid. 195-196.

would finally become privatized with Internet service providers.⁴⁷ By 1992, Congress passed a bill that allowed the Internet to be commercialized.⁴⁸ By transferring the Internet to private control, more people could be involved for the sake of commercial, social, and private use.⁴⁹ Applications and software were created to meet user needs for social interaction and expression.⁵⁰ Soon, users would want more, especially a more visually pleasing Internet.

b. The World Wide Web

The next innovative development of the Internet is marked the phrase World Wide Web (WWW), which has been invented by Tim Berners-Lee.⁵¹ Before the Web, the Internet was made up of a text-only interface.⁵² This type of interface was not aesthetically pleasing to users. Additionally, it was hard to search for documents and other online information. The Web solved these user issues.⁵³ Before this new application was even in place, 60 million people worked in networked offices.⁵⁴

⁴⁷ Ibid. 198.

⁴⁸ Segaller, Stephen. Nerds 2.0.1: A Brief History of the Internet. TV Books, LLC. Oregon Public Broadcasting. New York, NY. 1998. 295.

⁴⁹ Abbate, Janet. Inventing the Internet. Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Cambridge, MA. 1999. 199.

⁵⁰ Ibid. 200.

⁵¹ Segaller, Stephen. Nerds 2.0.1: A Brief History of the Internet. TV Books, LLC. Oregon Public Broadcasting. New York, NY. 1998. 210.

⁵² Abbate, Janet. Inventing the Internet. Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Cambridge, MA. 1999. 212.

⁵³ Ibid. 213.

⁵⁴ Segaller, Stephen. Nerds 2.0.1: A Brief History of the Internet. TV Books, LLC. Oregon Public Broadcasting. New York, NY. 1998. 214.

Berners-Lee created the Web in 1990. He wanted a system that would include more than just text and offered a more visually pleasing environment through which users could share multimedia files.⁵⁵ The WWW was built on a hypertext system that linked files together on various computers in the world and had the ability to use multimedia files which included audio, video, and graphics.⁵⁶ The WWW provided increased access and the ability for users to have Web software on their computers.⁵⁷ Companies started to distribute Web application software over the Internet in 1991.⁵⁸ The National Center for Supercomputing Applications created a “browser” called Mosaic. Its commercial version was called Netscape Navigator.⁵⁹ This browser was developed in 1994.⁶⁰ It allowed users to type in a Uniform Resource Locator (URL) that would find websites. It could contain graphics and links. In addition to the browser, the “search engine” was created. This search engine allowed users to find information faster.⁶¹ Netscape Navigator was used by 65 million people.⁶² For a period of time, this browser was free for the academic community and for non-profits organizations. Commercial users needed

⁵⁵ Abbate, Janet. Inventing the Internet. Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Cambridge, MA. 1999. 214.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid. 215.

⁵⁸ Ibid. 216.

⁵⁹ Ibid. 217.

⁶⁰ Segaller, Stephen. Nerds 2.0.1: A Brief History of the Internet. TV Books, LLC. Oregon Public Broadcasting. New York, NY. 1998. 302

⁶¹ Abbate, Janet. Inventing the Internet. Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Cambridge, MA. 1999. 217.

⁶² Segaller, Stephen. Nerds 2.0.1: A Brief History of the Internet. TV Books, LLC. Oregon Public Broadcasting. New York, NY. 1998. 302.

a license.⁶³ To establish competition for this new application, Microsoft developed Internet Explorer. This browser was bundled with Windows 95 software as a way to increase user numbers.⁶⁴ Online services, made available through internet providers, increased the Web's popularity. Abbate states: "Today, online services provide their own proprietary content, and also provide access to everything else via the Internet."⁶⁵ By 1998, 10 million people used America Online.⁶⁶

The privatization of the Internet and the development of the Web allowed for global access to information. However, it also allowed users to participate in a new way of communicating: "Slowly, the global array of inter-networked computers, both professional and institutional, was becoming a medium of communications, rather than just data transfer."⁶⁷ People could communicate person-to-person, one-to-many and many-to-many. Steven Segaller, in *Nerds 2.0.1: A Brief History of the Internet*, quotes Howard Rheingold's philosophy of these types of connections: "Every desktop, every computer that's connected to the Internet...is potentially a printing press and a broadcasting station and a place of assembly."⁶⁸

This assembly developed into online communities. An example from this early period was called the WELL. Here, users could connect and discuss shared interests. A group of fans of the rock band, The Grateful Dead gathered on the WELL to talk about

⁶³ Ibid. 304.

⁶⁴ Ibid. 315.

⁶⁵ Ibid. 279.

⁶⁶ Ibid. 278.

⁶⁷ Ibid. 269.

⁶⁸ Ibid. 270.

the band. They went on to create their own sub-community in the WELL and went as far as to formulate a Grateful Dead conference composed of the sub-community members.⁶⁹ Online communities sparked common interest, made professional connections, and even created romances. One WELL participant explained her experiences: “I have made friends through the WELL. I have had a romance...through the WELL. I have gotten work through the WELL... you know, it literally has touched every aspect of my life personally and professionally.”⁷⁰

The privatization of the Web allowed for a more “open” policy for information access and usage: “No body owns the Internet; it’s decentralized and democratic. Above all, no one can turn off the Internet.”⁷¹ Before, the Internet was limited to military usage. The main element in the evolution of the Internet was accessibility: “The networking of our computers with that generic entity “the Internet has made possible something that was science fiction barely a generation ago: the universal gathering together of any and all information accessible to any and all users...”⁷² As stated previously, the Internet and the World Wide Web exemplifies democratic participation: “The Internet is largely free of political, racial, and gender boundaries; and...is beyond the control of any political movement, nation-state, organized labor or religious movement. It is, in its flawed and diverse fashion, a ubiquitous expression of human...individuality.”⁷³ This “ubiquitous”

⁶⁹ Ibid, 271.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid. 294.

⁷² Ibid. 362.

⁷³ Ibid.

human expression and a democratized participation would be the underlying element of the current Web 2.0 and social networking sites.

c. Web 2.0

Web 2.0 marks a more recent development or evolution of the Internet. Before, it was a mere collection of data pages. The World Wide Web enhanced the internet by providing it with a visual interface and included more multimedia.⁷⁴ Web 2.0 is characterized by faster speed of data transmission and a greater degree of interactivity than the first type of internet for it has more media content, increased bandwidth, and additional digital content including: video, music, multiplayer online gaming, and virtual worlds.⁷⁵

Although no individual person can claim to have invented Web 2.0, Tim O'Reilly, CEO of O'Reilly Media and John Battelle Founder of Federated Media and editor of *Wired* magazine, are associated with acknowledging this new form of the Web and creating the term Web 2.0.⁷⁶ O'Reilly Media and MediaLive International held the first conference about Web, in 2004, to discuss this new development.⁷⁷

Tom O'Reilly described Web 2.0 as: "...the Business revolution in the computer industry caused by the move to the Internet as a platform, and an attempt to understand

⁷⁴ Funk, Tom. Web 2.0 and Beyond: Understanding the New Online Business Models, Trends and Technologies. Praeger Publishers. Westport, CT. 2009, xiv.

⁷⁵ Ibid. xv.

⁷⁶ O'Reilly, Tim. "What is Web 2.0: Design Patterns and Business Models for the Next Generation of Software." O'Reilly. 20 Sept. 2005. <<http://oreilly.com/lpt/s/6228>>.13.

⁷⁷ Funk, Tom. Web 2.0 and Beyond: Understanding the New Online Business Models, Trends and Technologies. Praeger Publishers. Westport, CT. 2009, xvi-xvii.

the rules for success on that new platform.”⁷⁸ O’Reilly describes seven points that characterize this new web: the web as a platform for data sharing, a web that uses collective intelligence, database management, lightweight programming, more than one device can be used to access it, and rich user experiences.⁷⁹

Web 2.0 is a foundation to which applications are attached. On this platform, users control their own data.⁸⁰ The platform contains various technologies and a space that is utilized by social networking sites, among myriad other applications.⁸¹ Before, Netscape was offered as a software package that contained a web browser. The browser is considered to be a web application. In Web 2.0, however, the Google search engine is an application that is not a software package. It is a “delivered service” that contains a browser, a search engine, and a content server. Google and its applications are delivered free of charge through an internet provider.⁸² Google utilizes Web 2.0 as a platform. However, there are several other applications besides from Google that are enabled by Web 2.0.

As a space of “collective intelligence,” users will create new content and this content becomes “bound” to the Web’s structure. Other users can find this content and

⁷⁸ Cook, Naill. Enterprise 2.0: How Social Software will Change the Future of Work. Gower Publishing Company. Burlington, VT. 2008.

⁷⁹ O’Reilly, Tim. “What is Web 2.0: Design Patterns and Business Models for the Next Generation of Software.” O’Reilly. 20 Sept. 2005. <<http://oreilly.com/lpt/s/6228>>, 1-14.

⁸⁰ Ibid. 3.

⁸¹ Cormode, Graham and Krishmaurthy, Balachander. “Key Differences between Web 1.0 and Web 2.0.” AT&T Labs- research. Florham Park, NJ. 13 Feb. 2008. <<http://www.2.research.att.com/~bala/papers/web1v2.pdf>>, 3.

⁸² O’Reilly, Tim. “What is Web 2.0: Design Patterns and Business Models for the Next Generation of Software.” O’Reilly. 20 Sept. 2005. <<http://oreilly.com/lpt/s/6228>>, 4.

can link to it.⁸³ Another important feature of Web 2.0 is its ability to retain data. Unlike before, databases now provide the main structure for Web 2.0.⁸⁴ Content and applications are no longer just accessible from the personal computer. It can be retrieved via cell phones, mp3 players, and many other devices unlike those applications only to be utilized by Web 1.0. Finally, the most important features on Web 2.0 are the rich user experiences that allow for manipulation, data retrieval, and more dynamic displays of content.⁸⁵ In Web 2.0 users take advantage of these experiences by creating their own content. In Chapter Two, I will explain what social media is, its function, and its relationship with user-generated content.

3. Social Media and User-Generated Content

a. Social Media and Web 2.0

Social Media...is the way that we are organizing ourselves to communicate, to learn, and to understand the world and our place in it.... We won't put up with large organizations telling us what is right, or true, or necessary. We will now have those conversations among ourselves, here, at the edge...Social Media has released us, freed us: and we won't go back"- Social media expert, Stowe Boyd, 2007.⁸⁶

Social media expert Stowe Boyd defines social media as being a pathway of learning, organizing information, and communicating. It is also a medium that expands authority and allows for individuals to have a voice over those normally in charge whether it is the media, politicians, or executives. In this chapter, I will explain how

⁸³ Ibid. 5.

⁸⁴ Ibid. 9.

⁸⁵ Ibid. 13-14.

⁸⁶ Cook, Naill. Enterprise 2.0: How Social Software will Change the Future of Work. Gower Publishing Company. Burlington, VT. 2008, 8.

social media sites work. I will explore the functionality of social media as democratic platforms allowing access to information and less restricted speech. Additionally, I will discuss how they act as tools for cultural preservation as part of their overall function. Additionally, I will establish that social media sites are commercial by nature.

Naill Cook, author of *Enterprise 2.0: How Social Software will Change the Future of Work*, states that there have been several conversations trying to define social media philosophically and practically. Social-media sites are categories of different software tools that people can use to create and share data such as: photos, messages, video, and text. Social media also connects individuals via an online platform.⁸⁷ Cook says the philosophical definition is like that of Boyd's. Social media allows for democratization of the internet marked by user-generated content:

Social media... has become democratized by the Internet and the role people now play not only in consuming information and conveying it to others, but also in creating and sharing content with them, be it textual, aural or visual. For this reason, it is interchangeably referred to as consumer or user-generated content.⁸⁸

Graham Cormode and Balachander Krishnamurthy, researchers at AT&T Labs, agree that this user-generated content is the significant difference between Web 1.0 and Web 2.0. In Web 1.0, users acted mainly as consumers. However, in Web 2.0, they are consumers as well as active participants and creators. The technical applications available on social media sites allow for increased content creation. They state: "The democratic nature of Web 2.0 is exemplified by creations of a large number of niche

⁸⁷ Ibid. 7.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

groups (collections of friends) who can exchange content of any kind (text, audio, video) and tag, comment, and link to both intra-group and extra-group “pages.”⁸⁹

Cook discusses the “Four Cs” of social media that exemplify how people connect and share data with each other on these sites. The “Four Cs” are: communication, cooperation, collaboration, and connection.⁹⁰ For communication, social media platforms allow for conversation using text, images, voice, and video. Examples are: blogs, online messaging, and virtual worlds. On cooperation platforms, users share content. This sharing can be structured or unstructured, and it can be done with the sharing of video and images, as well as performing social cataloging (e.g. tagging content). In collaboration, users work together to create new content. A good example of this action would be a wiki where more than one user can post text and images, as well as edit others’ content on the wiki page. Finally, on a connection platform, individuals connect to each other by choosing whom to create a link with in order to share their information.⁹¹ Some examples of social media sites that exemplify this user-generated content, sharing, and networking are: Facebook, Flickr, Twitter, MySpace, YouTube, blogs, and wikis.

Blogs were the first form of current day social media platforms. Blogs allowed for individuals to keep an online diary. These diaries could include anything from entries about the user’s day, short stories, or commenting on politics and social events. Blogs

⁸⁹ Cormode, Graham and Krishmaurthy, Balachander. “Key Differences between Web 1.0 and Web 2.0.” AT&T Labs- research. Florham Park, NJ. 13 Feb. 2008. <<http://www.2.research.att.com/~bala/papers/web1v2.pdf>>, 3.

⁹⁰ Cook, Naill. Enterprise 2.0: How Social Software will Change the Future of Work. Gower Publishing Company. Burlington, VT. 2008,13.

⁹¹ Ibid, 13

were launched in 1998 and 1999 with The Open Diary and Blogger.⁹² Participants would create their own blog site and could instantly publish their written works to the masses. This method is popular because publishing this way is cheap and easy. It is also a way of connecting to others by gaining fans and subscribers. If you can maneuver your way online and can type on a keyboard, then you can publish your thoughts to the Internet.⁹³

Similar to the ways in which blogs created a platform to voice opinions and create a personalized profile of a blogger's work, online social profiles like Facebook and MySpace also created a platform for the individual. Founded in 1999, MySpace allows users to connect to each others' personal online profiles by accepting friends and thereby, linking up.⁹⁴ A MySpace profile can consist of personal photos, links, and information about the user.⁹⁵ MySpace also incorporates video and streaming audio. Users leave comments and updates using an RSS feed that gives a "status" update in real time. This technology enables users to type a message text and post it to their profile page. It is instantly uploaded and viewable to others in the network.⁹⁶

Another site similar to MySpace is Facebook. This web platform connects users while allowing them to share content, converse, and create content. The site states:

The company develops technologies that facilitate the sharing of information through the social graph, the digital mapping of people's real-world social

⁹² Funk, Tom. Web 2.0 and Beyond: Understanding the New Online Business Models, Trends and Technologies. Praeger Publishers. Westport, CT. 2009, 3.

⁹³ Ibid. 5.

⁹⁴ Bosworth, Martin H. "What's Inside MySpace.com?" 8 Apr. 2005. ConsumerAffairs.com. 2010. <http://www.ConsumerAffairs.com/news04/2006/03/myspace_inside.html>.

⁹⁵ Cormode, Graham. and Krishmaurthy, Balachander. "Key Differences between Web 1.0 and Web 2.0." AT&T Labs- research. Florham Park, NJ. 13 Feb 2008. <<http://www.2.research.att.com/~bala/papers/web1v2.pdf>>, 5.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

connections. Anyone can sign up for Facebook and interact with the people they know in a trusted environment.⁹⁷

Facebook was founded in 2004.⁹⁸ The site started out as a networking platform for students at Harvard, then it expanded to other schools in 2004. In May 2005, there were 800 college networks. Eventually, the site incorporated users outside of college networks. In 2010, 500 million individuals use Facebook.⁹⁹ This platform connects individuals on a world-wide scale creating a multitude of information on the Web.

Facebook contains several features allowing users to connect and post content. The main feature is a personal profile. Here, the user can control what information he or she would like others to see. This information can include: a personal photo, interests, education history, and work history. They can also post digital photos and videos. Users can post a status update, onto their profile where they can tell others what they are doing or anything else they would like others to know. This status will then go to the “news feed” along with any other actions that the users allow others to see. Along with the personal profile on Facebook, users have a “home page” where this news feed is located. Users can comment on each others’ status updates by “liking” it or by writing a comment. Individuals can also post messages to individuals’ “walls” or they can send private messages to the users’ “inbox.” Users can also connect to each other through chat where they can have a real-time conversation.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ “Press Room: About Facebook, Facebook.com.” 2010.
<<http://www.facebook.com/press/info.php?factsheet>>.

⁹⁸ “Press Room: Timeline, Facebook.com.” 2010.
<<http://www.facebook.com/press/info.php?factsheet#!/press/info.php?timeline>>.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ “Press Room: About Facebook.” Facebook.com. 2010.
<<http://www.facebook.com/press/info.php?factsheet>>.

Users can also: post invitations to events, play online games and connect to various groups and topics through designated pages. Like MySpace, users connect to each other by accepting “friend requests.” These friends can be found through a friend search engine or by finding friends through others’ list of friends.¹⁰¹ Overall users create content on the site by: posting media, updating their status, commenting on posts, communicating, and developing applications for the site. According to the site, 90 pieces of user-generated content are produced per month by the average user, and 30 billion pieces of content are shared between users.¹⁰² Overall, Facebook is a platform for users to connect in various ways of communicating while also creating and sharing digital content.

YouTube and Flickr are sites that mainly concentrate on digital media creation and posts. They still have an element of connecting people. YouTube focuses on video uploads, and Flickr is a site where people post digital photos.

YouTube was founded in 2005. It is an “extensive video library” in which anyone can post “originally created” video content that can be shared with the world.¹⁰³ Users can watch amateur videos, videos from artists and filmmakers, news broadcasts, old television shows, and current television programs. Individuals can comment on these videos as well.¹⁰⁴ In addition, users can incorporate these YouTube videos into their Facebook and MySpace pages. Users can subscribe to certain video uploads so they can

¹⁰¹ Facebook.com

¹⁰² “Press Room: Statistics.” Facebook.com. 2010. <<http://www.facebook.com/press.php#!/press/info.php?statistics>>.

¹⁰³ “Fact Sheet.” YouTube.com. 2010. http://www.youtube.com/fact_sheet>.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

watch their favorites on a continued basis. As with the other sites discussed, YouTube can be accessed through any mobile device that can connect to the internet. Two billion videos are watched daily, and hundreds of thousands are also uploaded daily. Per minute, 24 hours of video footage is loaded. YouTube also offers a feature where users can express their ideas about how to make the site better.¹⁰⁵

Flicker is similar to YouTube in that users connect by sharing their personal and professional digital photos. Flicker states that its platform allows users to share their photographs with others. This process is a collaborative effort where individuals can help each other organize, add notes, comment, and tag photos. These actions make user profiles and photos searchable on the site.¹⁰⁶

Overall, these sites are great examples showing the overall functionality of social media sites. Each contains mechanisms for individuals to communicate with each other, share information and content, be entertained, to create content, and mainly to connect with people from all over the world. Aside from connecting people, social media also has broader functions such as: commercial advertizing, digital cultural preservation, and acting as a democratic platform.

b. Commercial and Social-Media

Some social-media sites are commercial in nature. Some are owned by other companies. For example, Flickr is an entity of Yahoo!¹⁰⁷ and YouTube is an entity of

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ "About Flickr." Flickr.com. 2010. <<http://www.flickr.com/about>>.

¹⁰⁷ Hu, Jim. "Yahoo buys photo-sharing site Flickr." 20 Mar. 2005. CNET News. 2011. <http://news.cnet.com/Yahoo-buys-photo-sharing-site-Flickr/2100-1038_3-5627640.html>.

Google.¹⁰⁸ These companies generate revenue, even though the mission of the site maybe for “free” or “open” access. For example, Yahoo! expresses a mission of community while also serving the consumer:

Yahoo! is the main destination on the Web for consumers and marketers, providing a wide range of products and services that fall within the following four core pillars. These pillars are the foundation for the next generation of the Web, providing our users the power to connect, communicate, and create, gather and share information online.

These sites not only serve the user, they also serve other commercial entities by selling advertising space and offering various ways of using the information on the site for those placing ads.

Facebook has an extensive advertising component as well as informing others about how to use Facebook to increase interest in its organization or products. Facebook says that its advertising plans are “simple and cost-effective.”¹⁰⁹ Users participating in the advertising program can control the type of advertising scheme and the frequency with which their ads are displayed. You can use the information on the site to target a certain audience.¹¹⁰ MySpace gives these mechanisms as well. Ads can be targeted towards site users of certain demographics including: age, race, gender, education, location, and interests.¹¹¹ YouTube boasts to advertisers: “With over 300 million users

¹⁰⁸ “Timeline.” YouTube. 2011. <http://www.youtube.com/t/press_timeline>.

¹⁰⁹ “Facebook Ads: Cost and Budgeting.” Facebook.com. 2011. <<http://www.facebook.com/adsmarketing/index.php?sk=gettingstarted#!/adsmarketing/index.php?sk=cost>>

¹¹⁰ “Facebook Ads,” Facebook.com, 2011. <<http://www.facebook.com/adsmarketing/index.php?sk=gettingstarted#!/adsmarketing/index.php?sk=home>>.

¹¹¹ “MyAds: How it works.” MyAds.com. <<https://www.myads.com/myspace/howitworks.html>>.

worldwide, your audience is on YouTube.”¹¹² Along with advertising functions, these sites also give information about how to use the site as a user to create an audience for a product or brand and promote a communal environment. For example, Facebook explains:

The Facebook Platform is the set of APIs and tools which enable you to enhance your website, application, or device with the social graph. Integrating with the Facebook Platform will help you drive growth and deeper engagement by personalizing the experience for your users and letting them share activity with the people who matter in their lives...¹¹³

c. A Platform for Democracy

Many of the most popular social media sites have a commercial component. However, many of them display democratic ideals. Many social media sites are free of charge to users, or at least have a free version. Anyone can be a participant. “Free” usage, access, and the community set-up facilitate these democratic platforms.

YouTube, for example, states how its site acts as a democratic platform: “YouTube will always be an open community.”¹¹⁴ Google, which acquired YouTube in 2006, describes how its mission to increase information access online corresponds with YouTube’s:

Google and YouTube share the vision of enabling anyone to find, upload, watch and share original videos worldwide...The exciting and powerful platform YouTube has built complements Google’s mission to organize the world’s information and make it universally accessible and useful.¹¹⁵

¹¹² Audience & Targeting on YouTube.” YouTube.com. 2001. <http://www.youtube.com/t/advertising_audience_targeting>.

¹¹³ “Facebook Developers: Documentation.” Facebook.com. 2011. <<http://developers.facebook.com/docs>>.

¹¹⁴ “Fact Sheet.” YouTube.com. 2010. <http://www.youtube/t/fact_sheet>.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

Social media's democratic nature has been discussed in the academic arena. Greg Lastowka, an associate professor of law at Rutgers School of Law, discusses the democratic function of social media sites. Lastowka explains how the internet has increased participation: "The Web has given amateur content creators...[the] ability to produce work more cheaply, connect across great distances, and entertain one another by sharing their work."¹¹⁶ He describes a breakdown in authority and a shift from the traditional voice of the "writer" or "artist" to the common "user":

Why would we today use the term "user," rather than the traditional terms "artist" or "writer"? There are at least two answers. The first has to do with professionalism. The title of "artist" might be restricted to those who are in the professional business of selling their work. If that is so, not everyone can be an "artist," but everyone can be a "user."¹¹⁷

Lastowka says some legal authorities praise this shift. He notes that Harvard Law professor, Yochai Benkler is one of these legal authorities. He discusses Benkler's view:

Benkler is enthusiastic about the democratic and transformative potential of user-generated content. He argues that when the broader public possesses the tools to create and share information, they have the capacity to free themselves, in their patterns of consumption and production, from traditional corporate domination of the media. So, from the standpoint of liberal democracy, user-generated (or "peer produced") content offers an improvement over the past hierarchical models of information production and distribution.¹¹⁸

This shift from traditional authorities governing content is also seen through social media's ability to be a cultural preservation platform.

¹¹⁶ Lastowka, Greg. "User-Generated Content and Virtual Worlds." *Vanderbilt Journal of Entertainment and Technology Law*. 10 Vand. J. Ent. & Tech. L. 893. *Vanderbilt Journal of Entertainment and Technology Law 10th Anniversary Symposium: "User-Generated Confusion: The Legal and Business Implications of Web 2.0."* 2008. 3

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid. 4.

d. Cultural Preservation

Social-media platforms also function as memory platforms. These platforms are essentially databases of information that is retained indefinitely. Guy Pessach, Assistant Professor of Law, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, believes that social media sites and related platforms act as networked memory institutions that promote access by collecting and categorizing content.

Pessach argues that digital preservation's main function is the dissemination and distribution of information. He says: "...in a networked environment, cultural production becomes a form of cultural preservation and social remembering."¹¹⁹ He continues by arguing that digital preservation allows content to be merged into everyday activities. Pessach says like traditional memory institutions that organize, index and contextualize cultural materials for future generations, social media sites act similarly, but also increase participation: "Networked memory institutions carry decentralized, participatory, and dynamic attributes. The power to take part in cultural retrieval and cultural preservation ... distributed among individuals and organizations of different types."¹²⁰ These types include: commercial, user-generated, public, individual-based, civic-oriented, and non-profit. Examples of a commercial program would be digital image entities that are for profit. A public program would be like a government organization digital heritage project. User-generated programs are social media sites, and non-profit would be those

¹¹⁹ Pessach, Guy. "[Networked] Memory Institutions: Social Remembering, Privatization and Its Discontents." Yeshiva University. Cardozo Arts & Entertainment Law Journal. 2008, 4.

¹²⁰ Ibid. 5.

that are instituted by a non-profit organization and therefore, the platform is non-profit as well.¹²¹

These various types show that cultural preservation has shifted from the tangible to the digital: “The preservation of digital artifacts cover now much more than the scope of tangible preservation by traditional memory institutions (museums, archives, libraries, and private collectors.”¹²² Pessach notes that more individuals outside of these traditional entities are using online methods to collect and download copies of works that are transferred through other mediums.

[C]ontent sharing platforms, social networks and other Web 2.0 applications enable individuals to add-one’s personal imprint through organization, selection, reference, adaptation and re-contextualization of cultural materials when an individual selects and classifies cultural materials (e.g. music, pictures, and video clips), which she the uploads to her social network’s personal web-page (e.g. Facebook), she is engaged in an activity that enables her to take part in the landscaping of history and the formation of cultural memories.¹²³

Social media and other online platforms act as cultural tools of preservation through digital means. Traditional cultural institutions, such as museums, preserve tangible objects. However, Pessach discusses in his paper, museums as memory institutions align themselves with these new digital preservation entities. It would make sense that traditional entities would want to utilize these new digital means of categorizing content. In the next chapter, I will discuss how museums are utilizing these methods for various reasons.

4. The Role of Social Media in Museums

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid.

Museums are institutions that preserve culture for future generations to experience and appreciate. They have missions to serve their audiences and to act in the public trust. Traditionally, museums have been physical places where objects are kept to be studied, organized, and shown to visitors. However, with the advancement of online technologies, museums have had to start adapting to these technologies to be able to reach new audiences and current ones that use these online tools. In this chapter, I will discuss how museums are currently using social media. I will also chart the current discussion among museum professionals concerning questions that have risen with the use of these social media sites.

a. Museums Origins: The Physical Space

There are many variations of the definition of what a museum is. One definition states that a museum is a:

“non-profit,” “permanent establishment” that is “administered in the public interest, for the purpose of conserving and presenting, studying, interpreting, assembling, and exhibiting to the public for its instruction and enjoyment objects and specimens of educational and cultural value, including artistic, scientific...historical, and technological material.”¹²⁴

The definition above contains several different components describing the purpose and function of the museum. However, museums, at their core, are organizations that collect and interpret objects. People have a natural desire to collect things and to show them off. The origins of the museum started out with private collecting. Nobility in Ancient Rome would collect art and other objects in their homes. In Greece, in 290 B.C., a learning center was formed to be devoted to the muses. It held collections of objects along with

¹²⁴ Burcaw, G. Ellis. Introduction to Museum Work. Third Edition. AltaMira Press. Sage Publications, Inc. Walnut Creek, CA. 1997. 18-19.

written works. It was a center for teaching through these objects.¹²⁵ In the 17th and 18th centuries in Europe, people would have private collections called “Kunst-und Wunderkammern.” These are more commonly known as curiosity cabinets.¹²⁶ These collections would hold various objects that were deemed interesting and worthy of viewing by the collector, mostly the wealthy. These cabinets would spark “curiosity” by the rare and strange objects that they would contain.

Eventually these collections grew and required larger spaces to hold them. The traditional “museum” started with royal collections. Many royal collections made museums that were “publicly available” though the public may have been restricted to audiences consisting mostly, if not exclusively, of wealthy, white males.¹²⁷ For example, the royal French government, in 1750, started to make its collections “public.” However, only certain groups of people could go and view the collections. The Louvre only opened to the wider public after the French Revolution.¹²⁸ Eventually, museums became spaces that invited all types of people to come and view art, historical objects, and natural science objects. However, even in this constellation, museums first and foremost remained physical spaces dedicated to house objects. Visitors still had to be physically present to view the objects and participate in educational programs.

b. Expanding Museum Communication

¹²⁵ Ibid. 26.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid. 26-27.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

This physical requirement is a component of the type of traditional communication within museum institutions. Museums have traditionally communicated in the one-to-one and one-to-many formats:

Historically, the one-to-one and one-to-many communication models have provided the framework for authoritative cultural knowledge as provided by museum programs. This authority is historically derived from the primacy of object collections and the patrimony of the museum in their storage, display and interpretation. The recognized authority which museums have within the community provides audiences with the means to interpret history and science, which in turn justifies the use of mediated representations of artifact and culture...The outcome of this cultural transaction had traditionally placed museums as provider of both authoritative and authentic knowledge.¹²⁹

Therefore, the traditional one-to-many communication scheme has been transformed into a many-to-many communication scheme facilitated by social media and Web 2.0. Dr. Angelina Russo and her colleagues argue that this new level of communication is highly critical to the further development of museums as an authority and facilitator of authenticity. They argue that social media can increase this authenticity because it has the ability to enrich educational dialogue with the masses in real time.¹³⁰

They give an example in which a curator from the Sydney Observatory wrote on a blog that there was an email with incorrect information concerning the movement of Mars in relation to the earth. Readers commented on the post and stated that they appreciated the curator's expertise and their ability to be able to have access to the correct information.¹³¹ In this example, the curator's comment started a conversation about this

¹²⁹ Russo, Dr. Angekuba, Watkins, Jerry, Kelly, Lynda and Chan, Sebastian. "How will social media effect museum communication?" *Proceedings Nordic Digital Excellence in Museums*. Oslo, Norway. 2006. <<http://eprints.qut.edu.au>>, 1.

¹³⁰ Ibid. 2.

¹³¹ Ibid.

discrepancy in information and at the same time allowed the observatory to act as the main authority on the subject.

Previously, it had been argued that if museums did not participate in using websites as a way to increase visibility and authority, then people might seek cultural information from a less reliable source.¹³² The above example shows how the observatory tries to remain a reliable source while, at the same time, it gives its audience a chance to participate. There is a tendency for audiences to seek information elsewhere if the traditional authority is not strong. Questions arise as to how to maintain this authority while allowing access to information and participation from the masses. Some questions asked by Dr. Russo and her colleagues include:

How much does the museum invest in revealing knowledge held in the community? How far is the museum willing to relax its own authority in the areas of knowledge? To what extent is the museum willing to promote community knowledge over its own?¹³³

These questions need to be considered when museums and other cultural institutions are trying to participate in this new online world that provides information to the masses instantly. Museums have a mission to provide information to the public, but also have to make sure that they are giving accurate and high quality information.

Museums are using social media sites and the web to accomplish various things such as increasing participation, promoting access to collections and exhibits, and also using it as a marketing tool. However, many of these institutions are dealing with issues of authority. As a result, they wonder how far they will go to be included in this many-to-many communication. For example, the Collections Australia Network (CAN) uses

¹³² Ibid. 5.

¹³³ Ibid. 3.

online tools to promote access to digital collections. CAN is a network of cataloged objects from collections and museums around Australia.¹³⁴ Small galleries and museums can use this low cost program to catalog their objects. However, before, these organizations may have not been able to afford similar programs. CAN is essentially an access portal to museum collections within the network making it a one-stop location to reach multiple organizations. The technical mechanisms that the program provides allow for easy application so that non-experienced museum professionals can use and learn from it.

While other online collections may allow access to everyone, CAN still maintains control over the collection records cataloged in its network.¹³⁵ This control and participation at the same time can strengthen the museum's ability to maintain its authority as a vehicle for knowledge: "[T]he product of the interaction does not change the purity of the 'record' or the museum knowledge; rather it adds community knowledge in different formats to that record."¹³⁶ Here it seems that social media just allows for different formats while the museum stays in control. On the other hand, people have an impression that social media platforms are for amateurs. As seen above, museums are trying to find a balance.

c. Embracing the Amateur: The Brooklyn Museum Extends the Exhibition Experience to the Online Arena

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid. 3-4.

¹³⁶ Ibid. 4.

Even though social media platforms maybe a vessel for amateur use, many museums have been embracing these amateurs as a contributing authority to complement their own. The Brooklyn Museum is highly active in using social media to engage visitors to participate in the museum's mission. The Brooklyn Museum's mission includes: acting as a "bridge between the rich artistic heritage of world cultures... the unique experience in each visitor" and is "[C]ommitted to excellence in every aspect of its collections and programs, and drawing on both new and traditional tools of communication, interpretation, and presentation."¹³⁷ These tools include online platforms.

The Brooklyn Museum desired to expand its exhibitions from the physical space to the digital in 2006. Its goal was to provide online access to exhibition content and programming. The museum aimed to extend the visitor experience.¹³⁸ Through the development process, the museum always considered how to transfer their mission online. They had other concerns as well, including questions such as: What type of audience were they trying to reach? How would they use these platforms to link to their main website? Would they have enough staff to continue the project? How can they make it successful with limited funding?¹³⁹ The museum initially benefited from using social media platforms: "We realized that Web 2.0 communities allowed us to provide

¹³⁷ "About: Mission Statement." The Brooklyn Museum. <<http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/about/mission.php>>.

¹³⁸ Caruth, Nicole J. and Bernstein, Shekky. "Building an On-line Community at the Brooklyn Museum: A Timeline." *Archives & Museum Informatics: Museums and the Web 2007.*, 11-14 Apr. 2008. San Francisco, California. <<http://www.archimuse.com/mw2007/papers/caruth/caruth.html>>.

¹³⁹ Ibid. 1-2.

interesting content and interpretation on-line -- letting us operate within the constraints...while nonetheless reaching for the institution's overarching goals."¹⁴⁰

The Brooklyn Museum first attempted to incorporate Web 2.0 technologies for the exhibition *William Wegman: Funny/Strange* (March 10-May 28, 2006). The artist included a video installation within the physical space of the gallery. The museum wanted to provide the exhibition content to the online audience. The main reason was the simple desire to share. The museum uploaded the video to a sharing site called Blip.tv, and posted a link to the museum's site along with it. Not only did frequent visitors of the museum's main site go to Blip.tv to view the video, but also frequent visitors of Blip.tv viewed it as well. All viewers, both the general Blip.tv audience and the museum's audience, commented on the work.¹⁴¹

Another positive online exhibition project was a show called *Graffiti*. The exhibit allowed individuals to "tag" designated walls by drawing on them. Since these murals would change during the course of the exhibition, the museum decided to create a specific area on the website to track the progress. They used Flickr as the mechanism to accomplish this task. At the time, the Flickr program cost about \$24 for a pro-account with which the museum could upload photos daily: "Through the use of Flickr, we realized that we could provide this content/activity quickly and efficiently, and without the arduous in-house development of our own program."¹⁴² From this experiment, the Brooklyn Museum noticed the benefits of using Flickr. They extend *Graffiti* further by using a paint tool where visitors could "tag" a virtual version of the murals. "Museum

¹⁴⁰ Ibid. 2-3.

¹⁴¹ Ibid. 3.

¹⁴² Ibid. 6.

Mural” was viewed 12, 488 times and 1, 338 graffiti drawings through the paint application were submitted.¹⁴³

The Brooklyn Museum also uses social-media platforms for other areas of the museum besides exhibitions. One in particular that covers a wide range of departments and practice areas is its blog. Individuals can subscribe to the blog to get frequent updates. The blog might feature information about a special object or collection. It may talk about a research project that Brooklyn museum staff are working on such as a conservation project or archaeological dig. For example, one series of blog entries is about the museum performing conservation techniques on the *Book of the Dead* of the Goldworker of Amun, Sobekmose. Parts of the *Book of Dead* are being conserved. As each part is worked on and finished, it will be included in an exhibit so that the public can view the *Book of the Dead* in its entirety. The entries include photographs of the object, the conservators and their tools. The blog explains what the purpose of the project is and explains the science behind what the conservators are doing. Additionally, the blog includes analysis of their findings, and how the project is funded. This conservation initiative is funded by a grant.¹⁴⁴

The museum also created a page called “Community” that puts all of its social media applications in one section. Museum officials say: “The move allowed for more visible web participation and permitted the unification of our two on-line audiences: The

¹⁴³ Ibid. 10.

¹⁴⁴ “Looking for Adhesives and Identifying Binders in the Book of the Dead Using FTIR.” Posted: 27 Jan 2011 06:43 AM PST. bloggers@brooklynmuseum.

Web 2.0 communities and our general Brooklyn Museum website visitors.”¹⁴⁵

Participants can post exhibit-related photos and artwork on the community page. Visitors also provide their email address so that the museum can contact them directly for input.

The Brooklyn Museum example seems to show that museums can extend the visit beyond its four walls to the online spectrum.

However, the museum also learned from this process. Using social media in museums cannot be as simple as allowing individuals to post online. The museum has to also act as a participant by reading the comments made by visitors and make responses.¹⁴⁶ You need to know your audience, and it is also wise to do a pilot run of the social media project to find out what works and what doesn't. Brooklyn Museum officials say: “Community first and foremost, market second.” The main objective when using social-media tools, for programming or exhibitions, is to connect individuals to that agenda. A museum has an audience to reach out to and keep as a following. Whatever the museum is working on or whichever kind of information the museum tries to present on a social-media platform should be the first focus. Advertising will naturally follow from this. If its primary goal is just to advertise, its mission will not be very prominent. So, the museum's mission in its physical space should also translate to its online space: “If you are there just to advertise, you are not being a good community member.”¹⁴⁷ A good community member is one who believes in the museum's mission and finds respectable ways to express that mission to the public. Additionally, the museum found

¹⁴⁵ Caruth, Nicole J. and Bernstein, Shekky. “Building an On-line Community at the Brooklyn Museum: A Timeline.” *Archives & Museum Informatics: Museums and the Web 2007*. 11-14 Apr. 2008. San Francisco, California. <<http://www.archimuse.com/mw2007/papers/caruth/caruth.html>>, 15.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid. 18.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

that social media is fairly cheap and allows for expanding the experience. The museum believes the mass voice can be a positive thing:

The community's voice can be louder than the museum's and that can be a good thing. Be prepared for both, good comments and bad, and be open to constructive criticism. Listen to your audience. It's worth the effort- and the comments (good or bad) are more valuable than you can imagine.¹⁴⁸

The Brooklyn Museum is an insightful real example about how social media can be used within the museum setting.

d. Digital Marketing

Some museum officials believe that social media platforms can be used as a marketing tool and are trying to find ways to best utilize these platforms for that specific reason. Natalie Clair Stetson, a graduate student who works at a small museum, posted a thread on the MUSEUM-L listserv to find guidance regarding advertising on Facebook. She asked listserv participants if they thought it was worth the money and if by doing so, community awareness about the museum's programs would increase.¹⁴⁹ One commenter told her to create a Facebook Fan base first, and emphasized that the process should not have a single focus. Basically, not for the sole purpose of advertising, but it should be integrated with a broader online strategy.¹⁵⁰

Mariela Rossel, of the Historical Museum of Southern Florida (also known as HistoryMiami), stated that Facebook advertising was not effective for the educational

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Stetson, Natalie Clair. "Facebook Advertising." E-mail In [MUSEUM-L@HOME.EASE.L.SOFT.COM]. 27 December 2010; Internet.

¹⁵⁰ Roger, "Facebook Advertising- the pros and cons." E-mail In [MUSEUM-L@HOME.EASE.L.SOFT.COM]. 27 December 2010; Internet.

program that she works on. She said that her program did not look into advertising. The teen audience were more interested in what was popular among their peers.”¹⁵¹

Additionally, Joe Krulder, a marketing professional, gave specific requirement that museums need to follow in regards to using social media platforms for marketing purposes. He emphasized the importance of using these platforms correctly. He believes that a planned approach is the most effective. Museums’ websites should include links to their social media sites and make these platforms interactive calling the community to some action: “In short, show interest in the surrounding community and how you can best serve them.”¹⁵² Lydia Johnson contributed a response in opposition to this statement. She had the same feeling as the Brooklyn Museum that the first duty the museum has when using social media is continuing its mission, and marketing should be second. She believes that social media does not work to call people to action and to use it as an advertising tool for museums can be harmful. She feels that traditional marketing strategies can have a tendency to cover up the mission. Instead of using suggestions from participants concerning trivial problems at your museum, input should only concern the mission. If the museum strays from its mission, it could potentially harm its reputation.¹⁵³

For Ms. Johnson, using social media only as a marketing tool, is not within the museum’s interests. Advertising strategies focus on retrieving information to promote a product and gain consumers. Though museums want to create their brand and gain an audience, museums focus on serving the community by providing information, not taking

¹⁵¹ Rossel, Mariela. “Facebook Advertising.” E-mail In [MUSEUM-L@HOME.EASE.L.SOFT.COM]. 27 December 2010; Internet.

¹⁵² Krulder, Joe. “Facebook Advertising” E-mail In [MUSEUM-L@HOME.EASE.L.SOFT.COM]. 27 December 2010; Internet.

¹⁵³ Johnson, Lydia. “Facebook Advertising.” E-mail In [MUSEUM-L@HOME.EASE.L.SOFT.COM]. 27 December 2010; Internet.

it. They are not selling a product for financial gain. Social media sites can be used to convey the museum's mission and spark interest in educational programs and exhibitions. This method can easily expand attention without having to use the same means that for-profit companies use to gain consumers. If audiences believe that their information is being used unethically or not in non-profit ways, these entities can lose the public trust.

However, apart from these concerns, some organizations have found that using social media platforms for marketing purposes can work. For example, the Canada Science and Technology Museum Corporation (CSTMC) conducted a project regarding the use of social media platforms to market specific audiences in order to increase membership and financial donation. The program has 21,800 members, but a staff of only three that run the membership programs. It considered social media as a more efficient way to market, engage and serve its members.¹⁵⁴

Museum officials started to incorporate groups on Flickr and Facebook, as well as starting a channel on YouTube. Their goal was to market without spending too much through using several marketing channels. Additional motivations included the desire to get feedback from participants and to give information about the content of the museum and its activities.¹⁵⁵ Initially, the efforts were successful with some anxiety:

There were some concerns about internal backlash or disapproval, but the membership program has been able to demonstrate early success with the response of members of the group, with indications that this may revolutionize the way information is shared with their membership base.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁴ Dawsom, Brian, McDonald, Fraser, Trépanier, Gabrielle. 'Social Presence: New Value for Museums and Networked Audiences.' *Archives & Museum Informatics, Museum and the Web 2008*. 9-12 Apr. 2008. Montréal, Québec, Canada. 2.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid. 3.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

After reporting about the Facebook group on the museum's existing newsletter, 37 people joined the group, and after a year, 79 additional persons joined. Individuals also started to post comments on the group page. The museum believed that this Facebook page would enhance the onsite visit or even lead those to it who normally would not go.¹⁵⁷

CSTMC has seen a positive development by using social media including an increased enthusiasm among members and staff.¹⁵⁸ One may question whether or not these methods will be sustainable if funding or staff are not available.

e. Online Collections

In addition to marketing and exhibition purposes, museums are also posting their collections online with social-media platforms and other online sites. The Brooklyn Museum put its collection online in 2008. The Museum has more than 94,000 records online. It only wanted those records displayed online that had gone through an evaluation process by the proper staff so as to confirm accuracy and in order to reflect the collections appropriately: "The vetting process would start in curatorial [department], allowing them to vet certain parts or an entire record, then the final release would come from our collections staff after an additional once over."¹⁵⁹ However, this red tape caused the process to be very slow. In 2008, staff was able to get 5,168 objects online, but only added 7,430 more in the following 18 months. Staff found that: "While that represents a substantial amount of good data going online, behind the scenes we were

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 12

¹⁵⁹ "Collection Online: Opening the Floodgates." posted: 11 Mar 2010 06:36 AM PST. bloggers@brooklynmuseum.

seeing long queues of objects ready to release, but hung up somewhere along the way for little bits of final approvals.”¹⁶⁰ After the museum noticed that the process was taking too long, museum staff decided to alter its method of posting object records online.

The museum decided to post records by default and the information in the records is correct and updated when possible. Each record will have a “completeness meter.” This reflects the museum’s efforts of being transparent and truthful to those viewing the records. The museum also includes photos with the records when possible. They also take account of information regarding the quality of the photo to make sure their audience is aware. Initially, users could comment on the record entries, giving insightful information regarding the objects or other asking questions. However, the museum found that this method was inefficient. It decided to include an FAQ to speed up the process of sifting out comments. Users can also sort and search object records by relevancy or completeness.¹⁶¹

The Brooklyn Museum is not the only one that has looked to post collection records online. Dan Bartlett, Curator of Exhibits and Education, at the Logan Museum of Anthropology, asked the museum community how it could put 300 objects and 3,000 images online via a social media platform or other online mechanism. The museum wants to index and unify the collection online by giving users the ability to contribute to this process:

We would post the materials on line, create a portal and forms for linking key words and specific objects to notebook pages, and manage the online indexing by engaging with affinity groups and interested individuals in an environment that

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

allows participants and museum staff to work together in a social and collaborative online environment.¹⁶²

Response to this post was positive and encouraging. Other museum professionals give examples of successful online collections projects or tools that might be helpful. David Lewis, Curator of the Aurora Regional Fire Museum, wants to put its collection of photographs online and let viewers (firefighters) tag themselves. Though the museum has concerns over access:

One- we're wrestling with how much access do we give? Do we upload full-sized photos? Do we allow for download? Do we give public access or only to firefighters?...How do we ensure quality control (IE: how do we make sure folks are tagged with their full name, "John Doe"- as opposed to "Johnny" or "James"...)"¹⁶³

As seen with the examples above, museums seem to want to use social media platforms in various ways to reach their audiences. However, many museum officials have voiced concerns regarding social media or have already experienced it. In the next chapter I will analyze the potential pitfalls of social media platforms in the museum setting.

5. Speech, Copyright, Access, and Quality

As discussed in the previous chapter, museums are starting to change their view about authority. They are allowing online users to participate in the museum's mission in various ways. The increase in online participation has almost forced traditional cultural

¹⁶² Bartlett, Dan "Collection Indexing via Social Media?" E-mail in [MUSEUM-L@HOME.EASEL.SOFT.COM]. 15 Feb 2011; Internet.

¹⁶³ Lewias, David. "Collection Indexing via Social Media?" E-mail in [MUSEUM-L@HOME.EASEL.SOFT.COM]. 15 Feb 2011; Internet.

institutions to adapt and modify the way they promote their missions: “Museums face a number of challenges in trying to make their collections relevant and accessible to people, and a big one is the physical barrier...If you can take the work out of its physical context and put it in a place where people can manipulate it, that helps the museum’s mission.”¹⁶⁴

However, museum professionals have legitimate concerns about retaining authority while trying to adapt to this new online trend: “Throughout history, memory institutions have been replicating a social contradiction between an acknowledgement in the value of public access to the remains of the past and a de-facto institutional bias toward practices of enclosure, gate-keeping and manipulations in social remembering practices.”¹⁶⁵ While at the same time, “Networked memory practices are more reflective and transparent of personal materials and narratives that are not filtered through institutional gate-keeping processes.”¹⁶⁶ Therefore, museums are trying to give access to information and at the same time, need to find a way to control it. In this chapter, I will focus on some of the main issues concerning access and control. I will talk about access and participation vs. quality, copyright issues regarding online media platforms, speech censorship, sustaining a safe, online environment, and how the privatization of for-profit online platforms impacts non-profit institutions.

a. Users as Curators: Quality Control

¹⁶⁴ Fost, Dan. “Killer Statute---Psyched About the Site!” The New York Times. 12 Mar. 2008. <<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/12/arts/artsspecial/12social.html>>.

¹⁶⁵ Pessach, Guy. “[Networked] Memory Institutions: Social Remembering, Privatization and Its Discontents.” Yeshiva University. Cardozo Arts & Entertainment Law Journal. 2008, 3.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.* 5.

In Chapter Three, I discussed how the Sydney Observatory allows visitors to comment on topics and how the observatory will interject the correct information. This method of distributing knowledge and authority allows for meaningful discussion while keeping the observatory as the prominent authority and purveyor of meaning. However, this issue of access v. quality still remains a concern:

“Distribution knowledge creation” can be a tricky business. While social media platforms may open up possibilities for user participation, they also carry the trick of promoting bad information and questionable judgments and of eroding the authority of institutional curators. In this sense museums are grappling with the same technological conundrum as other cultural institutions, like universities, publishers and newspapers: how to reconcile institutional principle of order with the liberating impulses of electronic networks.¹⁶⁷

The Sydney Observatory seems to have found a way to strike a balance by giving visitors the opportunity to comment while the observatory still makes sure it receives the correct information. In an article concerning this issue, Alex Wright reports that although museums believe social media can enhance curatorial judgment, they still believe in constraints such as not giving participants free reign on the platform. Jake Barton, a lead designer for the “Make History” website for the September 11 Memorial and Museum says: “We are asking for people’s experiences, but that doesn’t relieve us of the responsibility to share a narrative with the visitor.”¹⁶⁸ The museum wants participation and contributions from its visitors but still needs to carry out its mission to present the correct information.

¹⁶⁷ Wright, Alex. “Online, It’s the Mouse That Runs the Museum.” *The New York Times*. 20 Jan. 2010. <<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/20/arts/design/20museum.html>>.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

Some museum professionals feel that “radical trust” is needed in the online museum community in order to keep a balance between the two authorities. Radical trust is trust between contributors from outside of an organization and the institution itself. If a museum allows outside individuals to contribute to their mission and process, a level of trust is needed in order to make it functional. Collaborative systems built without a lot of “top-down” authority control, are successful only if established organizations believe that users are not only consumers, but also “participants and co-creators.”¹⁶⁹ If too much access and participation is given, then it may be harder to maintain and the quality of information may not be as accurate and consistent. The American Association of Museums (AAM) believes that, when talking about any Web 2.0 initiative, authority will always come into play. The AAM conducted a survey in 2001 regarding how the public sees the museum as an authority. In the survey, it was concluded that: “museums are the most trusted source of information, ahead of books and television news.” Respondents particularly valued museums as providers of “independent and objective information.”¹⁷⁰ One can wonder how the public trust may be influenced when museums give its audience more power to contribute, when traditionally curators have been the “stewards of cultural heritage.”¹⁷¹ Museums feel uneasy about letting outside authorities participate:

The reaction of museums to the freewheeling Web 2.0 atmosphere is no different than that of most other content providers. On its face it appears to be an unprecedented opportunity to show that museums are serious about community involvement and ensure that we remain relevant to our audiences; yet the idea of deliberately diluting our intellectual content with substantive input from users—

¹⁶⁹ MacArthur, Mathew. “Can Museums Allow Online Users to Participate.” American Association of Museums. Sep. 2007. <<http://www.aam-us.org/pubs/webexclusive/digitalmuseum.cfm>>.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

allowing their material to appear in connection with our trusted “brand”—makes us extremely uncomfortable.¹⁷²

This is where radical trust comes in. Radical trust can form a “more intimate, equal relationship between museums and constituents.”¹⁷³ However, by accepting this radical trust, one also must accept a level of abuse that may occur:

Radical trust is about trusting the community. We know that abuse can happen, but we trust (radically) that the community and participation will work. In the real world we know that vandalism happens but we still put art and sculpture up in our parks. As an online community we come up with safeguards or mechanisms that help keep open contribution and participation working.¹⁷⁴

One of these abuses may include the postage of inappropriate comments on these sites.

b. You Can’t Say That on Social-Media Platforms!

Social media has been recognized as a democratic platform on which users can express themselves in a way that was once restricted:

Search engines and digital content aggregators have inherent First Amendment value simply in helping audiences find and sort through information and expression that would otherwise be beyond their reach. In doing so, moreover, these new media also help to loosen media conglomerates’ hold and provide opportunities for a more diverse range of speakers to reach an audience.¹⁷⁵

The U.S Supreme Court declared that the First Amendment covers speech on the internet. The American Civil Liberties Union states:

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Fichter, Darlene. “Web 2.0, Library 2.0 and Radical Trust: A First Take.” <http://library.usask.ca:9003/~fichter/blog_on_the_side/2006/04/web-2.html>.

¹⁷⁵ Weinstock Netanel, Neil. *The George Washington University Law School Access to the Media - 1967 to 2007 and Beyond: A Symposium Honoring Jerome A. Barron's Path-Breaking Article: “New Media in Old Bottles? Barron's Contextual First Amendment and Copyright in the Digital Age.”* The George Washington Law Review. June 2008, 7.

The ACLU's vision of an uncensored Internet was clearly shared by the U.S. Supreme Court when it declared, in *Reno v. ACLU*, the Internet to be a free speech zone, deserving at least as much First Amendment protection as that afforded to books, newspapers and magazines. The government, the court said, can no more restrict a person's access to words or images on the Internet than it could be allowed to snatch a book out of a reader's hands in the library, or cover over a statue of a nude in a museum.¹⁷⁶

So, from a constitutional standpoint, free speech can be applied to the Internet, and therefore, also to a museum's online presence. Social Media sites are seen as democratic and free speech platforms. Museums are institutions that promote speech. They engage audiences in meaningful discussion about social issues, the arts, science, and politics to name a few. Museums would want to utilize these new Internet speech platforms to carry out their mission as free-speech institutions.

The Brooklyn Museum's online exhibit initiatives have shown that museums may experience positive responses and participation. However, what happens when comments are inappropriate or offensive? The online world may be a free-speech platform. However, that does not mean that it should be abused by its participants. There have been several instances of abuse of speech on these platforms. For example, Greg Lastowka, associate professor of law at Rutgers University School of Law, says that the uploading of offensive material online can be common:

When users have the freedom to upload content, they sometimes upload material that offends community sensibilities (such as pornography) or that violates the copyrights of other parties. Offensive material can alienate users and lead to loss of subscription, while infringing material can pose risks of legal liability. All user-generated content sites, including virtual worlds, must set policies and adopt strategies to deal with these inevitable situations.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁶ "Internet Censorship." American Civil Liberties Union. <<http://www.aclu.org/free-speech/internet-censorship>>.

¹⁷⁷ Lastowka, Greg. "User-Generated Content and Virtual Worlds." *User-Generated Confusion: The Legal and Business Implications of Web 2.0: Vanderbilt Journal of Entertainment and Technology Law 10th Anniversary Symposium*. 2008. Vanderbilt Journal of Entertainment and Technology Law, 8.

Since offensive comments can be posted, Lastowka suggests some sort of policy to control these comments.

Sometimes, offensive comments and material can lead to illegal activity. There have been a few cases in the United States. Recently was an instance where a student, at Rutgers University, posted video footage of a male, dorm-mate's sexual encounter on a social networking site. The video was taken without the other student's knowledge. As a result of the anguish he felt from his privacy being invaded and his private life being posted for the whole world to see, the dorm-mate committed suicide. The student, who filmed the occurrence, has now been indicted on 15 counts including a hate crime and invasion of privacy.¹⁷⁸ Some museums have dealt with offensive comments on their social media sites. One example, in which inappropriate comments were being posted to a museum site, was in the case of an exhibition organized by the Brooklyn Museum.

The Black List Project: Timothy Greenfield-Sanders and Elvis Mitchell,

November 21, 2008-March 29, 2009, included twenty-five portraits by Timothy Greenfield-Sanders and video interviews. The exhibition focused on being black in America. The portraits and interviews featured inspiring and famous African Americans.¹⁷⁹ The portraits also included commentary regarding each subjects' various life encounters and hardships:

On the surface, the interviews feature African-Americans talking about their respective fields and how they overcame hardship to explain what it means to be black in America. The stories are provocative and relatable to African-American culture and are successful in helping heal the wounds that young African-

¹⁷⁸ Serrano, Ken. "Roommate Charged with Hate Crime in Rutgers Suicide." USA Today. Updated 20 Apr. 2011. <<http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2011-04-20-rutgers-suicide-hate-crime.htm>>.

¹⁷⁹ "Black List Project." *The Black List Project: Timothy Greenfield-Sanders and Elvis Mitchell*. 21 Nov. 2008- 29 Mar. 2009. <http://www.blacklistproject.com/Museum_Brooklyn.htm>.

Americans may feel. However, the majority of what the subjects in “The Black List Project” say is a universal lesson of life... Discussing these themes with students of any race can inspire discussions relating to writing, the individual voice, history, identity, mentoring, education, race and achievement, eventually redefining the significance of the “blacklist”.¹⁸⁰

The project emphasized the themes of overcoming individual obstacles as well as overcoming pre-conceived notions of the African American community. However, along with meaningful discussion, also came opposition and racist commentary.

The Brooklyn Museum’s education department wanted visitors to share their personal stories related to the content of the exhibition. The department wanted to find a more efficient way to retrieve these stories. They decided that video would be the best way and decided to use YouTube as a platform for sharing video testimonials by museum visitors. Individuals could use the site’s Quick Capture feature. This feature allows anyone with a webcam to instantly upload video to the Brooklyn Museum’s YouTube channel.¹⁸¹ Four hundred eighty-two videos were recorded, but only 236 were shown. The reasons included submission of videos that were either incomplete or otherwise inappropriate or banal. A still different video was removed due to violation of comment guidelines. Despite the overall success of this approach, YouTube visitors would leave offensive comments:

While the videos were generally within the comment guidelines set out by the Brooklyn Museum, one problem that using YouTube as a platform presented was the website’s user base have a reputation for posting offensive comments. Sadly this allowed people to post racist comments under the films and staff from Brooklyn Museum needed to delete these comments and ban a number of users from being able to make further comments.¹⁸²

¹⁸⁰ Brooks, Ellise. “Black List Project” inspiring, evocative documentation of strength.” 3 Feb. 2011. The Black List Project. 2009. <<http://www.blacklistproject.com/Press/Index.htm>>.

¹⁸¹ Richardson, Jim. “What Can Social Media Do For Oral History?” MuseumNext. <<http://www.museumnext.org/2010/blog/what-can-social-media-do-for-oral-history>>.

¹⁸² Ibid.

The channel was a success in spite of this issue. The videos received 43,386 views.¹⁸³ However, since the channel was on a public platform, this setup enabled some outside YouTube viewers to leave racist and offensive comments. In addition to managing the video submissions, Museum staff controlled and deleted these unwanted comments, creating additional work for staff. In other projects taken on by the Brooklyn Museum, it has had to work with limited staff and resources. In summary, those initial projects were learning experiences that included the process of distributing work and finding cheaper ways to get online.¹⁸⁴ As far as time with managing comments posted, would vary depending on the size of the project and staff availability. One could argue that monitoring submissions would defeat the purpose of user participation to essentially do the work for you. However, inappropriate comments that would make for an uncomfortable online space cannot just erase themselves. At least in the instance of using a platform like YouTube, staff would be able to measure which videos are being watched and which are not based on the number of comments posted, and the “views” feature counting the number of views per video.

However, some museum professionals argue that this monitoring is necessary to maintain a safe, online environment for its audience. Jennifer Trant, partner of Archives and Museum Informatics, believes that these social media sites can accomplish things that museums can't, but also needs to be regulated:

Flickr's Commons project harnesses an important aspect of social networking, Ms. Trant said, which is the 'power of the crowd.' 'Everybody tags a couple of

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Caruth, Nicole J. and Bernstein, Shekky. "Building an On-line Community at the Brooklyn Museum: A Timeline." *Archives & Museum Informatics: Museums and the Web 2007*. 11-14 Apr. 2008. San Francisco, California. <<http://www.archimuse.com/mw2007/papers/caruth/caruth.html>>.

photos, and they can accomplish something you could never do curatorially,' she said. When it works well, the amateurs complement the professionals. When Web dialogue gets out of hand, Ms. Trant Said, 'Museums have to have policy and procedures in place, so that they can act appropriately.' She added: 'Debate is good, derision is not. Behavior in a museum Web space should be no different than in a museum's other public spaces.'¹⁸⁵

As seen above, speech issues can cause problems. According to Trant, museums will need some form of policy to make sure that they are maintaining a safe, online environment for visitors. However, with regulation also comes time. Professionals working on these online projects will need to take the time to make sure their sites are not being abused by offensive comments or obscene material by users. For some museums, this may be a challenge depending on staff availability and budget. Some museums have started to explore drafting written policies to cover this issue. I will give some examples in Chapter Five. As museums start to explore drafting and implementing these policies, we will have a better understanding of the amount of time and money that would be needed to do so. At this time, there does not seem to be enough data to formulate a solid argument as to whether or not all museums have or will have the resources and time to create these policies.

c. Copyright and Privatization

In addition to speech issues, copyright issues arise with museums using social media to display their collections. Though the issue appears less obvious than censorship of speech, copyright law can interfere with artistic expression through its application and structure. Article 1, Section 8 of the United States Constitution states that copyright laws are used: "to promote the progress of science and useful arts, by securing for limited

¹⁸⁵ Fost, Dan. "Killer Statute---Psyched About the Site!" The New York Times. 12 Mar. 2008. <<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/12/arts/artsspecial/12social.html>>.

times to authors and inventors the exclusive right to their respective writings and discoveries.”¹⁸⁶ These laws are supposed to provide protection to the authors of “original works of authorship” which include the right to: reproduce a work, make derivative works, distribute copies, perform, and display the work. Any violation of these rights is illegal.¹⁸⁷ However, under section 107 through 108 of the copyright code, one can use copyrighted works for the purposes of: education, criticism, comment, news reporting, scholarship, and research.¹⁸⁸

There are many grey areas with copyright which create confusion and can put limitations on creativity as a means to protect rights. Copyright law is a control within the structure of social media. Greg Lastowka argues that not all social media sites are truly “free.” He notes James Boyle’s observation of control within the Internet: “Though information is free, this ‘freedom’ entails an intensification of the mechanisms of surveillance, public and private, to which we are currently subjected. The surveillance can be understood as content... which is in turn appropriated and monetized by those who own technologies that capture the data.”¹⁸⁹ Therefore, content may not be completely controlled by the creator.

He also notes that fellow legal authorities believe that Web 2.0’s user-generated content is an improvement to past practices of information control and distribution.

¹⁸⁶ U.S. Const. art. 1, § 8.

¹⁸⁷ “Copyright Basics.” United States Copyright Office. <<http://www.copyright.gov/circs/circ1.pdf>>.

¹⁸⁸ “Fact Sheet- Fair Use.” United States Copyright Office. <<http://www.copyright.gov/fls/fl102.html>>.

¹⁸⁹ Lastowka, Greg. “User-Generated Content and Virtual Worlds.” *User-Generated Confusion: The Legal and Business Implications of Web 2.0: Vanderbilt Journal of Entertainment and Technology Law 10th Anniversary Symposium*. Vanderbilt Journal of Entertainment and Technology Law. 2008, 10 Vand. J. Ent. & Tech. L. 893. 2.

However, Lastowka argues that social-media sites owned by private corporations require license term agreements, in which users can create content, but the site also remains in control of it. These sites use this phenomenon to their benefit, but also actually hinders development. He says:

Web 2.0's economic system has turned out to be, ineffective... a system of exploitation rather than a system of emancipation. By putting the means of production into the hands of the masses, but withholding from these same masses... any ownership over the product of their work, Web 2.0 provides an incredibly efficient mechanism to harvest the economic value of free labor provided by the very, very many and concentrate it into the hands of the very, very few.¹⁹⁰

Here, his concern is ownership and content. He seems to argue that even though the masses have been given the opportunity to create and post works online, these creations are still controlled by another party, and therefore, not entirely controlled by the artist. In a sense, the web becomes a commercial entity by profiting off of these works by having them posted to their sites.

He says that some platforms will have a contract that users agree to that they may not take the time to read:

Many Web 2.0 companies are designed to allow tool generators to monetize user-generated value... In order to use most online services, users generally must indicate that they assent to multi-page terms of service. If one reads those terms, they often require that the user provide that platform owner with a license to use all content generated during the use of the service. If these licensing terms are enforceable, they essentially set up these online services and walled gardens, where users are invited in to create content for the benefit of the owners. The users, however, can be evicted from the garden at anytime, though their content remains in the hands of the company.¹⁹¹

¹⁹⁰ Ibid. 5.

¹⁹¹ Ibid. 4.

Another concept to take into account is “true sharing” sites and “fake sharing” sites. “True sharing” sites do not have ultimate control over content. While, “fake sharing” sites make it seem like they encourage sharing, but they also still have ultimate control over content. For example, Wikipedia and the Free Software Foundation encourage peer participation and a communitarian goal. These examples are non-profit entities. However, Flickr, Facebook, and YouTube have control over content and are owned by for-profit corporations.¹⁹² Museums, as non-profit entities, are using sites that are for-profit to spread their mission. It could possibly be problematic for museums if these for-profit entities have too much control over content. Museums will want to monitor content being posted to their social-media pages. What should happen if these free-of-charge sites actually start charging entities other than individuals to use their sites? Or what if these companies start to control content through means which make it harder for museums to spread their missions and to keep with the public trust? However, these platforms do have control over content by the museum as a user and its audience.

Privatization of social media sites (ownership of sites by for-profit organizations) causes restrictions on creativity and user content and also has effects upon non-profits that utilize these sites.¹⁹³ Historically, memory institutions have acted as “gatekeepers” from a de-facto institutional bias. As “Gatekeepers,” museums have naturally been the authority giving access to cultural information and property. However, they have tried to balance it with public access.¹⁹⁴ These social media sites that exhibit “memory practices”

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ Pessach, Guy. “Memory Institutions: Social Remembering, Privatization and Its Discontents.” Yeshiva University. Cardozo Arts & Entertainment Law Journal. 2008. 26 Cardozo Arts & Ent. L.J. 71.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid. 3.

would seem to be a perfect tool for museums to use. However, sites like Yahoo's Flickr, Google's YouTube, Corbis, and Getty Images, allow access, but also restrict it for commercial and copyright reasons.¹⁹⁵ These corporate social-media sites use advertisements for revenue, have private censorship, and agreements between owners of content and sharing platforms that establish technological measures to protect content.¹⁹⁶ Conflict is created because memory institutions with digital memory platforms require more free movement, and at the same time, corporate ownership of these sites demands proprietary control over content.¹⁹⁷

Guy Pessach says copyright law plays a large role in the privatization of social media platforms and that copyright law application has increased in the digital world. He says digital, intangible goods are controlled by copyright through commoditization of digital artifacts and the pressure that copyright law places onto tradition memory institutions such as museums changing and adopting policies towards third parties that wish to access and use cultural works.¹⁹⁸ When copyright protection becomes broader in scope, digital memory institutions such as social-media sites increase selling, licensing and providing access to digital copies of cultural works, but also increased restrictions.¹⁹⁹ He gives the example of Google's Library Project. Access to public-domain works is "free" for users, but also users are prohibited from making scans of the copies in the project. They cannot browse content in Google's databases, and they cannot apply their

¹⁹⁵ Ibid. 8.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

own search methods to find works. Also, searches are limited to only “personal, non-commercial use.”

YouTube, owned by Google, is another example. The YouTube site, however, does not claim copyright for works published by users. The site “claims copyright to all the content on the site except user submissions.” However, users cannot receive copies of uploaded content, they can only view it. They cannot use the material on other sites. There is a video filtering system that gives the owners of copyrighted works the ability to block their content on the site or promote it. This new tool helps give the copyright owners control, but will also restrict secondary uses and uploading certain content.²⁰⁰ It can sometimes be difficult to determine if a work is copyrighted. Before, one had to register with the United States Copyright Office. However, it is not necessary to put a copyright symbol on works, to even publish it, or to register it with the copyright.²⁰¹ Additionally, some works may fall within the Public Domain. Works that fall within this status, no longer are copyright protected and can be used freely. For it to be in the Public Domain, the copyright has expired, it is a work of the U.S. Government, or there are statutory imperfections that the copyright owner did not establish.²⁰² Also, there have been several acts established under the copyright clause with different copyright terms. When determining if a copyright is still in effect, one must look to the image or object in question and try to figure out if it falls within the time frame and conditions specified in

²⁰⁰ Ibid.10.

²⁰¹ “I: Introduction to Copyright.” RARIN Wiki.
<http://www.rarin.org/index.php/I:_Introduction_to_Copyright>.

²⁰² “II: Tricky Issues, Public Domain, and Fair Use.”
<http://www.rarin.org/index.php/II:_Tricky_Issues%2C_Public_Domain_and_Fair_Use>.

the act if the artist cannot be found.²⁰³ When an original work is immediately created, copyright is established: “However, while legally correct, the right immediately created through original creation does not entitle you to bring legal action for infringement.” Registration helps to secure legal action if that copyright is violated.²⁰⁴

Copyright on privatized sites influence museums directly. Pessach argues that museums are affected through “coercion” and “evolution” of copyright applied to them. He says museums and traditional memory institutions are coerced into adopting third-party policies in networked domains. In the past museums had access policies that allowed objects to be loaned on a minimal charge and on an equal basis, and they were not subject to harsh copyright laws. However, according to Pessach:

This state of affairs no longer exists in a digital-networked environment. Here unless the copyrighted work has fallen into the public domain, memory institutions are increasingly subordinated to copyright owner’s strategies that alter memory institutions’ traditional policies toward their audiences.²⁰⁵

The copyright measures include contractual limitations with licensing. For example, scholarly journals may restrict access to certain users in the case of libraries, or limitations to prohibit preservation when a licensing term ends. To explain, the license gives a term limit to how long you can use the image in a certain capacity. Once the license term ends, you can no longer use the image or you have to buy another license term agreement. An example with limiting whom can use materials in iTunes Music Store. The store limits use to “personal, non-commercial.” Though libraries are non-

²⁰³ “I: Introduction to Copyright.” RARIN Wiki. <http://www.rarin.org/index.php/I:_Introduction_to_Copyright>.

²⁰⁴ “Copyright Guide.” Go Copyright. 2004-2009. <<http://www.gocopyright.com/guide.htm#2>>.

²⁰⁵ Pessach, Guy. “Memory Institutions: Social Remembering, Privatization and Its Discontents.” *Yeshiva University. Cardozo Arts & Entertainment Law Journal*. 2008. 26 *Cardozo Arts & Ent. L.J.*, 10.

commercial, it would not be considered personal uses since multiple people would have access to the works.²⁰⁶ So, not only are museums now subject to copyright provisions placed by the companies that host these social media sites, museums also have to consider the copyright owners of the works that they hold. Competition over licensing drives the costs up and creates a barrier that prevents museums from being able to financially obtain the licenses they want. He says that in such circumstances, public-oriented cultural institutions might be completely deprived of the ability to include cultural materials in their databases, regardless of the importance that these materials have for the comprehensives of their collections.²⁰⁷

He then argues that through the “evolution” of providing access, museums find themselves having to negotiate issues regarding the adoption of policies pertaining to copyright. Cultural institutions implement their own limitations on access. One example that he gives is the website ArtStor.org, a non-profit entity whose mission is to provide digital images for scholarly use. It includes 500,000 images from museums and non-profit organizations. The use of these images is exclusively restricted to these institutions. The general public needs a subscription and authorization (needs to be authorized) to use the database. Users are only allowed to download low-resolution images, and they are not permitted to use the images elsewhere online, not even for non-commercial purposes.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁶ “Site Terms of Use: Legal Information and Notices.” 20 Nov. 2009. <<http://www.apple.com/legal/terms/site.html>>.

²⁰⁷ Pessach, Guy. “Memory Institutions: Social Remembering, Privatization and Its Discontents.” *Yeshiva University. Cardozo Arts & Entertainment Law Journal*. 2008. 26 *Cardozo Arts & Ent. L. J.* 11.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.* 12.

There are restrictions to access placed on user-generated and artistic content by the owners of social-media/ content-sharing sites through technological means and through licensing contracts. Therefore, the sites may have “free” access to information in the sense that users may not have to pay for them. However, because they are restricted through the application of copyright and censorship, they are not truly democratized. Democracy usually implies that individuals have freedoms to do and say what they want within the limits of law set forth by their government. To be truly free, is to have no limitations or restrictions on those rights and freedoms. Therefore, even though these social-media sites are free-of-charge to users, they are not platforms where people are free to say anything they wish or free to post anything and everything they want. There are still policies and laws in place that limit what can be posted.

These sites are supposed to be promoting the free flow of ideas and expression. In addition, museums wish to become more democratized through giving more freedoms and control to participants involved with the museum online. This desire conflicts with the restrictions placed upon them by third parties through costs and pressure, so museums adopt stricter copyright policies. By using for-profit sites with strong copyright-enforcement policies and by adopting their own because of this, there seems to be a conflict of what is best for the public trust. Pessach explicitly mentions this problem with pressures being placed upon cultural entities:

As a result, networked activities of traditional public-oriented memory institutions may become closer to those of commercial enterprises, thus in part neglecting their long standing legacy as ‘public trusts’ with the unique social responsibilities toward the audiences that they are serving.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁹ Ibid. 10.

On the flipside, museums want to protect the rights of their artists who own the copyright. They also want to create a safe online environment. They adopt policies in accordance with these issues *in order to* give access to users. Pessach argues that museums, as memory institutions have “unique social responsibilities and fiduciary duties to the public.” He says that although museums may have their own biases, they have a history of promoting equal access to information and equal participation. He says that privatization causes for previously public goods to become commodities and warns that this new information overload for commercial purposes may crouch upon traditional historical representations in the social narrative.²¹⁰ He gives the example of Google. He argues that Google has become dominant in shaping the historical landscape. The historical landscape is documentation of the past as well as the present through different forms of communication. This backdrop includes the memories and information that we store online via social media platforms. Historical landscapes are also the narratives told by museums and cultural institutions. Google’s search engine helps people to start their journey through this historical landscape to access desired information. The company’s various initiatives such as the Library Project, YouTube video portal, and Art Project are becoming sites of cultural preservation and remembering. However, unlike museums, sites owned by third-parties are for-profit entities.²¹¹

d. Infringement

²¹⁰ Ibid. 17.

²¹¹ Ibid. 19.

Generally, online platforms promote easier access to copyrighted digital materials. These can easily be copied and used elsewhere, therefore, making it easier for people to infringe on copyright. For example, on YouTube, people can post videos of old television programs, and they do not own the copyright. Some do have licenses. It is problematic that people will argue “fair use” for educational purposes. The content creator may believe that they are not infringing on copyright since they are arguing that they are using the work for scholarship. However, he or she may not fully understand the law or have not taken the time to make sure that what they are doing is legal.²¹² Others though, may still try to argue copyright infringement if they believe that their rights have been breached. For example, a YouTube visitor uploaded an adaptation of different clips from the Harry Potter films and specified: “FAN-MADE VIDEO, NOT FOR PROFIT NO INFRINGEMENT INTENDED.” She additionally used the trailer for a version of *Pride and Prejudice* for the audio. Though, she states that her intent is not to infringe, this statement may not be enough: “While this particular fan has produced a number of different fan videos, her declaration of intent will not be sufficient to save her from a legal dispute if one were to be forthcoming.”²¹³ There have been many other lawsuits dealing with copyright violations on the Internet. The issue is that there needs to be a balance between providing access to creative, digital works on the Internet, on the one hand, while also protecting the copyright of the owners of these works.

Museums, by participating in the online space will have to take greater inventiveness to act in the public trust by making sure that they are not promoting

²¹² Halbert, Debora. “Mass Culture and the Culture of the Masses: A Manifesto for User-Generated Rights.” *Vanderbilt Journal of Entertainment and Technology Law*. Summer 2009. 11 *Vand. J. Ent. & Tech. L.* 921. 5-6.

²¹³ *Ibid.* 9.

copyright infringement, but also providing access to cultural works and promoting the creative process legally. Additionally, museums also need to make sure that they are not violating copyright when posting images of objects or photos online. A best practice is to determine whether or not the museum can legally post images that they may not own the rights to, to display it online. Copyright and ownership of an object is not the same thing. Copyright are the rights covering artistic intent. One may own the object, but not the copyright. The Rights and Reproduction Information Network Wiki, (RARIN), explains this different more concisely:

We want to clearly illustrate that while one may own the physical property of a work of art, physical ownership does not give the owner the ability to use that work in any way they see fit. For example, let us say John Smith owns a painting by a contemporary artist. The painting is clearly his property since he bought it directly from the artist. However, the owner of the piece did not ask the artist to include copyright of the work along with the sale, so the artist still retains control over the intellectual property. In a nutshell, this means that the work can not be duplicated, modified, or destroyed without permission from the intellectual property holder, in this case, the artist. In fact, the artist can even have the right to remove their name from the work should it be altered in a way that distorts their original intent.²¹⁴

Copyright includes the exclusive rights to: reproduce the work, to distribute, to perform or display the work, and in some cases the right of attribution.²¹⁵ Like rights associated with physical ownership, rights pertaining to artistic intent can also be sold and transferred. Copyright can only be applied to original works that are in a fixed, tangible form. Therefore, the museum may not be able to reproduce images without the copyright owner's consent if they do not own the copyright.²¹⁶ Since works and images could fall into fair use, in the public domain, or require a license, museums may have to

²¹⁴ "Introduction," RARIN Wiki. 2009. <<http://www.rarin.org/index.php?title=INTRODUCTION>>.

²¹⁵ "Copyright Basics." The United States Copyright Office. <<http://www.copyright.gov/circs/circ1.pdf>>.

²¹⁶ "Introduction," RARIN Wiki. 2009. <<http://www.rarin.org/index.php?title=INTRODUCTION>>.

take the time to try to determine these. At the very least, they will need to make sure that what they post is within legal limits. It may require more time to review content uploaded by their visitors. Though, many sites will not look at everyone's post, usually if someone has infringed on copyright, that person will be notified by the copyright owner.

Jennifer Trant argues that copyright implications on social media and online collections sites have not been a focus by museums because of their strong desire to connect it to online users.²¹⁷ A survey conducted in July-August 2009 by The Weber Shandwick Social Impact Team found that 63% of the 200 non-profit organizations surveyed believe the rewards of social media outweigh the risks, but also that 78% say the value of social media in their efforts still needs to be determined.²¹⁸ In the next and final chapter, I will propose some guidelines for museums to, hopefully, strike a balance between the issues discussed above.

6. Achieving the Balance

Museums have to consider multiple aspects of their online presence. On the one hand, museums want to spread their mission using new media platforms to reach as many people as possible. As seen with the Brooklyn Museum, museums can experience positive and negative outcomes when using these social tools. Museums and other cultural institutions run the risk of being overshadowed by for-profit entities with the guise of free access to cultural materials. I think museum professionals should consider social-media sites as a for-profit trend that may place restrictions on museums. These

²¹⁷ Fost, Dan. "Killer Statute---Psyched About the Site!" The New York Times. 12 Mar. 2008. <<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/12/arts/artsspecial/12social.html>>.

²¹⁸ "Five Fast Facts: Social Media in the Nonprofit Sector." Weber Shandwick and KRC Research. 2009. <<http://www.krcresearch.com/pdfs/WSSocialImpactSurveyFiveFacts.pdf>>.

obstacles can be policy rules or even financial burdens. If museums cannot act in the public trust and carry out their mission through the use of these platforms, museums may need to rethink the role of social-media in these efforts. However, by establishing how social-media fits into the mission and how the process will be carried out, museums can balance involvement with these online trends while still being faithful to their mission.

One way to maintain balance between providing access and protection online would be to create policies that focus directly on the museum's social-media presence. Collections policies, for example, usually cover copyright issues for rights and reproduction. This section could transfer to any online collections or online spaces where works are being presented, and it can be tweaked accordingly. The policy would also include how the museum will deal with any problems that might arise. Additionally, the policy would include a section on comment control. How will the museum control any posting of inappropriate or offensive comments? Will participants have to read this policy before they can post anything? The same would go for posting digital media. Users should be aware that they cannot post anything that they do not own the copyright to. The policy could even include or define the role of staff in the social-media process as well as what their obligations are.

a. Write a Policy

Many museums already have a social-media policy in place or are in the process of drafting one. The Getty, for example, has a social-media policy. Wiki sets out guidelines for social-media usage, information about social-media in general, and the goals that the organization is trying to achieve. Under the guidelines, the Getty covers

copyright and speech issues for copyright and attribution. It also sets rules for using images from the Getty and outside of the Getty. The policy states that when staff pulls images from the Getty to use on social-media sites, the staff member should contact the appropriate department to make sure the images have the correct license for use online.²¹⁹ It indicates that not all images have approval for online use, so that it is important to find out before it is posted. If staff members want to use images from outside of the Getty, it states that staff must get permission from the original copyright holder, get a receipt of this permission, or use images from the Creative Commons that are licensed, and to always include the proper citation and attribution.²²⁰

The policy also has a portion on comments. It first suggests that when staff departments are considering posting to social-media sites, the department should discuss whether or not staff will manage comments it states: “The Getty’s legal counsel should be involved in this discussion...Depending on the social media platform, where the site is hosted, and what its content is, you may need to draft guidelines specific to your project.”²²¹ It also suggests that this policy be posted so that the public can read it also. The policy then sets suggestions for if staff decides to monitor comments or not. If staff decides to monitor comments, one or more staff members need to be in charge of comments. Any offensive or questionable comments should be deleted. It also advises staff to use discretion with any non-spam posts that may contain objectionable content. It also says to use discretion when monitoring debate. It warns that debate is good, and staff

²¹⁹ “Content Guidelines.” Social Media Wiki, J. Paul Getty Trust. <http://museumsocialmedia.pbworks.com/f/getty_socialmedia_gettingstarted_guidelines.pdf>. 4.

²²⁰ Ibid. 5.

²²¹ Ibid.

should be respectful and patient with any comments that may be considered unreasonable even though they may not be offensive, defamatory, or obscene.²²²

Another museum that has a social-media policy in place is the Illinois State Museum. Its written policy is set up a little differently, but also seems to contain similar parts to that of the Getty's. It first includes a policy statement. It states:

Unless otherwise specified in this document... use of social media effort...is restricted to the purpose of the Museum's mission, as outlined in the ISM Strategic plan. The ISM/ISMS social media efforts cannot be used in a manner that violates the law, for political campaigning, personal private gain, or activities that are not approved by the Museum, or the State of Illinois.²²³

Right away, the museum makes it a point to confirm that its social-media efforts are and should only be used towards maintaining the organization's mission. It then defines social-media. The policy's scope is to produce quality online initiatives. It is intended to only focus on the museum's use of social-media as an organization, but not to cover staff personal online use. Again, the policy reiterates that the rationale and goal is to further the museum's mission. Like that of the Getty's social-media guidelines, the policy sets out more specific goals for using social media.

Unlike the Getty's policy, that states that departments should discuss on their own any program-specific guidelines, the Illinois State Museum sets out common procedures for any project. Each project needs permission from the director. When using social media, the first page should always include the museum's mission statement followed by

²²² Ibid.

²²³ "ISM/ISMS Social Media Guidelines." Illinois State Museum and Illinois State Museum Society. 3 Aug 2010. 1.

a program description.²²⁴ Staff should be assigned to maintain the site. There should be multiple administrators. Posted content should be on a schedule or plan.

The policy then has information regarding general recommendations and how to coordinate media efforts. The “General Guidelines” section, says to not post anything personal. It says to be as transparent as possible while being careful in regards to privacy, and “Have a plan to implement, if the need arises, ‘damage control’ via your social media effort.” If negative feedback occurs, staff should consider it and seek guidance from the director or site administrator. As for coordinating social-media efforts, it suggests to consult with other departments to make sure that these platforms are being integrated in a conformed way.²²⁵ Even though the policy states that it does not cover the issue of personal accounts, it briefly sets out its expectations of staff, with just reiterating that staff are representing the museum and should not mention the museum’s efforts in their personal accounts.

However, unlike the Getty’s guidelines for monitoring social-media content, this policy generally says to designate staff to oversee the social-media efforts for particular programs, but then says that the museum “does not actively monitor social-media content.” However, upon monitoring, it reserves the right to remove access, accounts, and content that violates any Museum policies and procedures, and U.S. law...”²²⁶ In regards to monitoring comments, it affirms that it reserves the right to remove any material that does not further its mission. Unlike in the Getty example, this policy does

²²⁴ Ibid. 2.

²²⁵ Ibid. 2-3.

²²⁶ Ibid. 2.

not include a specific section regarding speech, nor does it address copyright concerns. It mentions copyright, in various sections of the document. Under “General Guidelines,” it states that staff members are personally responsible for anything that they post, including copyright issues. It then refers to the ISM Website’s Privacy Policy that is attached to the document. This document covers the use or non-use of personal information obtained through email or contribution to the museum’s websites. Also, the museum is not allowed to collect any personal information of children that may participate on these sites.²²⁷ The social-media policy also refers to the Illinois Century Network Acceptable Use Policy that more specifically sets out copyright guidelines.²²⁸ The Getty’s Social Media Wiki and the Illinois State Museum’s social-media policy contain some differences and similarities. Each covers similar topics. However, the Getty’s Wiki confronts copyright and speech issues more specifically, while the Illinois State Museum’s policy, though a more formalized written policy, is very general when covering certain issues. Some reasons that may explain these differences may be due to time constraints, the size of staff, and size of the institutions. Additionally, different museums may have different concerns.

b. Devise a Plan

Museums and cultural institutions of different types and sizes have differing needs. Therefore, their social-media policies may be different in scope or focus. As seen

²²⁷ “Appendix B: ISM Websites Privacy Policy.” page 5 of the ISM/ISMS Social Media Guidelines. August 3 Aug. 2010. 1.

²²⁸ “Appendix C: Illinois Century Network Acceptable Use Policy.” ISM/ISMS Social Media Guidelines. 7.

with the two examples above, policies may consist of very specific procedures as well as comprise general guidelines, or may contain a combination of both. The Minnesota Historical Society is similar to the Getty in that it contains specific guidelines for copyright issues and controlling unwanted comments. However, it also contains specifics for each social-media platform that it uses.²²⁹ Therefore, it seems that museums are starting to create social-media policies. The examples above show, that right now, there may be no right way to create a policy. However, that may be adapted as social media usage evolves and museums get more involved with social-media platforms.

Social-media and Organizational Change gives general guidelines for museums on how they should begin to formulate their social-media efforts and collaborate to come up with a policy or plan. The paper first establishes that museums are institutions that function for the public. These organizations develop a trust with the public. In order to maintain their purpose, this trust cannot be violated. Not only does the museum need to be trustworthy to the public, it also needs to be trustworthy within the organization. Staff members need to have a full understanding of the goals that the museum is trying to achieve and how it is going to attain them. If staff can trust that each person has a role to play and a job to perform, these goals can be more easily achieved. Additionally, if staff members are passionate about their work and the museum's mission, this passion will be displayed to the public. This trust can be applied to all efforts of the museum including the use of social media.²³⁰ Trust is necessary to move forward with any social-media projects because of the initial level of uncertainty.

²²⁹ "Social Media Guidelines." Local History Services/Minnesota Historical Society. accessed from <<http://museumsocialmedia.pbworks.com/w/page/38318824/Example-Social-Media-Policies-and-Plans>>.

²³⁰ Allen-Greil, Dana, Edwards, Susan, Ludden, Jack, and Johnson, Eric. "Social Media and Organizational Change." *Museums and the Web 2011: Proceedings. Toronto: Archives & Museum Informatics*. Published

First, it needs to be established how social media fits into a given museum's mission and vision.²³¹ Will social media at the museum be used for providing online access to its collections? Will it be used by each department or only used for certain projects or exhibitions? What is the goal? Maybe the goal is to feature public programming or maybe to build and improve general relationships. These goals need to be established by the museum before anything else should be done with social-media.

Once museum staff has determined the amount of work involved, the involvement of personnel should be discussed. Since social-media platforms are numerous and involvement is increasingly demanding, this factor poses a variety of concerns about job responsibilities: "Social-media workloads are putting pressure on existing channels of communication inside institutions and impact the scope and nature of individual job responsibilities."²³² Therefore, social-media staff structure needs to be determined. If a policy is not set in place, there may be issues with how much time designated staff members need to contribute, who should contributing, and which platforms the museum should participate in. Also, museums need to remember that traditional authority such as a managers or curators may not be appropriate staff to work on social-media endeavors. Experience and expertise in social-media usage may actually be found in the lower tier of the staff hierarchy. The amount of staff required also needs to be determined.²³³

31 Mar. 20011. Consulted April 6, 2011.

<http://conference.archimuse.com/mw2011/papers/social_media_organizational_change>, 1.

²³¹ Ibid. 2.

²³² Ibid. 4.

²³³ Ibid.

Members of the institution need to have awareness of the type and function of available social-media platforms. Once again they need to know how social media furthers the museum's mission and what goals may be established early on in the process. However, once again, it is stressed that a policy should be written that is accessible to all museum staff. Additionally, this policy should be formulated as a collaborative effort.²³⁴ Once established, the entire organization should be aware of the standards and goals for any social-media efforts. Also, as discussed in previous chapters of this thesis, the policy also should consist of legal restrictions related to sharing content.²³⁵

Communication is the key to getting social-media efforts off the ground and to have an organization-wide or institution-wide understanding. Communication can decrease any concerns of threats towards "the institutional voice" that may arise with the attempts to increase participation and access.²³⁶ Once a policy is established and staff members are aware of the process, there should be an evaluation process.²³⁷ An evaluation will help to determine any changes to the policy that might need to be amended or to figure out if the museum is reaching any goals that have been set or to determine success.

c. Conclusion

²³⁴ Ibid. 5 and 7.

²³⁵ Ibid. 6.

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ Ibid 8.

This paper first discussed how the internet began as a tool to sustain military operations in the event of an emergency. The internet then became a home for academic communication and still later morphed into a tool for personal use. After being used exclusively by the government, information was now accessible via the World Wide Web for anyone who had a personal computer with internet access. The Web further developed to be a place for people to connect, communicate, and share ideas and interest. Web 1.0 turned into Web 2.0 giving people a more visually appealing interface and engaging internet space. People could now easily share personal information via online platforms and social networks. Users could now generate a broad range of digital content and share it with the world.

Since more people have gotten involved with social media, museums have had to rethink how they reach their audiences and how to tap into new ones. Social media seemed to be the next step to reach the widest audience at any time. However, as discussed before, this new interaction pressed upon the museum's traditional authority of being the knowledge holders and givers as well as the controllers of cultural content. Social-media platforms act as memory institutions in a digital space. Users post cultural content that they create and/or chose to share. These platforms have become sources for free speech and for the democratization of content. However, issues have risen because of this phenomenon such as providing access while trying to maintain quality, establishing a safe online museum space, controlling unwanted speech, copyright issues, and how these for-profit platforms effect cultural organizations.

As with any new project, museums should always consider how it will affect the institution and determine if it fits into its mission. It should be the same with using social

media. For the bigger picture, museums may want to consider if using these for-profit platforms endorse the museum's non-profit mission. I have shown that this issue should definitely be looked at as museums continue to utilize online spaces. However, I have also discussed how museums have found ways to use social media to further their missions. The initial goal when using social media seems to be to bring the museum's programs, collections, and discussions to the masses. In order to make sure the process runs smoothly, a social-media policy should be drafted and updated as museums continue to present on networking platforms.

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