MEDIA GUIDE

A Guide for Utilizing the media tools being used currently by Makerspace

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Target Audiences

TRU students

TRU Students are a diverse group of people coming from a variety of backgrounds. During the 2021 – 2022 school year TRU has 27,701 enrolled students, with 13,638 of those students enrolled in on-campus learning. Of the overall student population 74% fall within the age range 18 or under to 29, with the average age being 25 years old. People within these age ranges are considered digital natives and are the highest users of social media, world-wide consuming content via phone more than computer. Worldwide the most popular social media apps are Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, Instagram, WeChat and TikTok. Both millennials and gen Z are largely on Instagram and YouTube, with gen Z social media use trending towards TikTok and Snapchat, verses millennials who use Facebook.

Faculty and Staff

Little external information is available about faculty and staff however they cross varied demographics and sociographic lines. In terms of the media communications makerspace is using, blog and Instagram, a smaller section of faculty and staff are likely to be engaged on these platforms. Due to TRU being their workplace, the channels for their relevant information are more likely to be the traditional organizational channels. To broaden the reach of both the blog and Instagram using these traditional organizational channels could be used to promote.

Takeaways

Understanding the broad demographics at play for students, faculty and staff at TRU is important when it comes to overall reach when posting, and effective language communication.

Somethings to keep in mind:
- Keep writing simple and straightforward
- Use active voice
- Delete unnecessary words

- Minimize jargon
- Use icons when needed
- Use white space to make information digestible
- Ensure design works on mobile and desktop

Instagram

For users on Instagram 90% follow a brand, business, or organization, with two in three also saying that Instagram enables interactions with brands. Key aspects to success on Instagram are hashtags, sharing, relationships, and calls to action. However, an important factor is also staying relevant. For those users that fall into gen Z or millennial the top 5 things that make them consider brands culturally relevant on social is creating content that reflects current events, posting memes and other internet jokes, on top of timely trends, represent inclusivity, and embrace social issues.

Gen Z is a large, and will continue to be an even larger, makeup of TRU's audience, and according to Sprout Social fifty percent of Gen Z consumers say they're more likely to buy from a brand over a competitor when that brand demonstrates an understanding of what they want and need. What this means for all brands, even those that don't sell things, is that users are looking for more than just content meant to sell to them.

Further resources include:
- [14 Brilliant Ways to Use Instagram Stories for Business](#) (Short Article)
- [How to Reach Digital Natives on social media](#) (report)
- [Instagram Business Tips Blog Posts by Instagram](#)

Stories or Posts

Stories are best used for timely and casual information but can also link people to posts or blog posts, even as a day or two later reminders. They are generally more casual and designed for engagement with your current followers as it shows up at the top of the app.

Between the two Posts are more likely to reach new audiences than Stories due to their hashtags and Instagram's discovery page. Posts are best used for more permanent information

that you want the audience to be aware of, or posts that they find entertaining or inspiring.

Posts like this could include:
- Larger projects done over time, using the multi picture upload
- Images linking to blog posts
- Important notices
- Collaboration efforts
- A multi-image post featuring projects
  (with a prom to check out the stories for more projects)
- Groups, classes, and events using the space
- Highlighting making though images or videos of people in the space

Hashtags

Hashtags should always be used when posting. Generally, set of hashtags that applies to every post such as TRU or TRULibrary and so on, that represent the Makerspace. Other hashtags used should be relevant to the post. For example, a post talking about a blog post about two colour 3D printing would also have tags related to 3D printing, two colour 3D printing, as well as the other makerspace ones.

The location of where you put your hashtags is also debated. They can be put right after the caption, four lines with periods can be put before the line starting with hashtags, or hashtags can be put as a comment. Ultimately where they are is a preference, however you do want to ensure that your caption or writing isn't overwhelmed by the tags.

Hashtags to Use Every Post

#thompsonriversuniversity

#tru

#trulibrary

#trumakerspace

#makersmovement

#makersofinstagram

#education

#innovation

#librariesofinstagram

When to post

For TRU Makerspace purposes a minimum one story per day, and one to three posts per week would maintain momentum and navigate Instagram's audience usage of both tools. However, having more posts allows people more chances to interact and in general more media to engage with. Posts linking to other media, like a blog post, should be done the same day the other media is published.

Ideas

General ideas

- Large project space user videos, track over time if they are comfortable
- Makerspace Ambassador takeover
- Ambassador Current or past projects
- Images/posts featuring engagement with space users (someone helping someone – used to discuss information to make people feel more welcome less intimidated)
- Current Staff projects
- Updates within the space
- Use posts to provide facts about the space (Can be framed in different ways like "top 5 misconceptions about TRU Makerspace")

Dos and Don'ts

Do

- Make sure your image looks nice and is framed well. Cameras on phones are super powerful now so test out distinctive features.

- Use portrait mode! It's a great tool.
- Make sure to edit your photo to look it's best. Often even using the auto edit function on most phones makes images pop a bit more.
- Use Canva or other online resources for templates and designs
- Use hashtags
- Tag other departments, and share other account's stories
- Think about the audience's perspective

Don't

- Post without hashtags
- Use too much jargon
- Post without checking how the image looks
- Become formulaic about posting
- Ignore comments or other engagement
- Only take from or sell to your audience, also give your audience something.

Blog Posts

Posts

Currently blog posts fall into the categories of Reports, Projects, News & Updates, Featured, Events. Tags are also being used to highlight specific technologies and are tied to each technology page. Posts have largely been a way for Makerspace to put out information, or tutorials.

Moving forward ideally at a minimum there would be one to two blog posts a month. This is to keep momentum when it comes to on-going content creation while also supplying new and interesting information. A timeline of once a month also has the benefit of providing inspiration on technology pages, have up to date and necessary how-to tutorials and creating a perception of development and making online as much as in space. This can be furthered with broader topics than reports and tutorials as well.

To reach further audiences than those already on our website posts should be supported by posting to Instagram as well as being sent out using organizational channels to reach staff and faculty. This would allow staff and faculty to not only have the information themselves, but also possibly share to classes or other faculty and staff.

Ideas

Staff and Research Assistants

During each semester each person could write on one of their current makerspace projects, supplying links to any tutorials and discussing the basics about projects such as materials

Makerspace Ambassadors and Other programs

As a part of the Ambassadors program, it would be beneficial if each ambassador could write a post during their program (per semester). It should be encouraged that the topics are varied and reflect their interests, or projects in the space. They should include images and/or videos to support their post and make it more engaging. For example, if one ambassador is really into the textile technologies, they should be encouraged to write about a project they made at makerspace. They should discuss things like:

- Why they made the project.
- What resources they used (informational and physical).
- What makerspace technologies they used.
- How the project turned out.
- Any lessons they learned/what they would do different next time.

It is not recommended that they each draft an article about how they like or use the space or what they do as an ambassador. This would likely lead to repetitive messages and not add meaningful content to the website.

Other programs such as grants should also be encouraged to write a blog post during their program. If they are working on a grant for example their post could summarize their grant idea, how the idea went, and finish with take aways and outcomes. However, an especially important aspect is that this, unlike their official grant writings, should be written in layman's terms for the accessibility of an average reader not in an academic writing style.

Space Users

Space users, from students to faculty should be encouraged to submit a post via the website page. Something that will help with this encouragement is having posters with a QR code in a few places around makerspace.

Make of the Month

This can also be encouraged with a program like "Project feature of the month/semester" where once a month we can feature on the blog (and Instagram) a project being made by a user. This person would be selected after staff have noticed and talked to someone working on a cool project that shows off what they and makerspace can do. We could ask them to just write a paragraph about what they are making and why, and we could even give them a small swag prize for being featured.

Other Ideas

- Monthly Update Post
  Announcements, events, workshops, and closures can be discussed in a once-a-month post. Having this post would provide a single place for users to see what is coming up in the next month, have a quick place to view the list of time closures in Makerspace, etc.

- Feedback and testimonials from professors who have integrated Makerspace.
  Over a semester gather a bit of feedback from any instructors that include a tour of Makerspace or integrate Makerspace. Compile this once or twice a year to inspire faculty.

- Feature technology of the month with links to someone's simple tutorial.
  This would allow for users to be encouraged to try out more technologies as well as supplying a space to feature any new technologies in the future.

- Team up with sustainability and have a post (or posts) about sustainable things you can do at makerspace (repairs)

Dos and Don'ts

Do

- Make sure you set a featured image.
- Ensure the image makes sense.
- Select the relevant category and tags
- Break up content with relevant images, diagrams, videos, or use spacers/the row layout to add padding in to create white space.
- Ensure writing is accessible with both appropriate, clear writing and layout.
- Choose an informative but interesting title.

Don't

- Have text walls that are hard to read or overwhelming to the eye.
- Use jargon, overly academic writing, or words that mean something different to the public.
- Make readers jump through hoops for information.
- Write without thinking of your audience
- Treat a blog like a journal or have personal greetings like addressing a friend.
- Tell everything that is in the post within the first 2 sentences
- Have run on sentences.

Information Protocols and Blog Best Practices

Important Notices

Important Notices such as closures or special events should be posted uniformly across Instagram stories, Instagram posts, and a blog post or special banner announcement on the home page. Uniformity in the message will ensure it's not miscommunicated.

It's recommended that a background image template for each is used, and that this template is used constantly for announcements. These backgrounds provide an easily recognizable structure that those who have seen one and will create a recognizable pattern for space users.

Use WordPress Blocks for Post Layouts

Rows – Row Layout block

Think of rows like containers. These containers can also have columns in them that divide the space in to 2 or more sections. Rows can also be nested, rows within rows, to get the desired spacing or just to keep things organized.

Images – Advanced Images block

- Images should be categorized. To do after an upload this go into the media library, click on the image(s), and select what category they go into.

- Images should be edited for shape/size outside of WordPress.
  A great free online editor is https://pixlr.com/x/

- Only upload an image once, even if you are using it in two separate places. If you want to use the same image twice instead of clicking upload, go to the media library and select the image.

Why can't images be edited in WordPress?

Any time you make an edit to a picture in WordPress it creates a new image. 5 changes = 5 images in the media library. It can be frustrating trying to get your image right this way, and it isn't great for keeping the back end tidy and managed for long term website use. Basically, you can do things to change how your image is presented (in terms of how big the image shows up as on the page), but it is not an editing platform.

Headers (and sometimes paragraphs)

Always use the one called "Advanced Header". It works best with our theme, will automatically use our theme colours, and has more flexibility when it comes to sizing and what it looks like. You can even add an advanced header and change its setting to be paragraph which can allow more flexibility on what that paragraph looks like.

Accordion

Use the accordion that's icon is blue. Accordions can be used like tabs, however unlike tabs the content will only ever be as large as the section you have open. There are settings you can change to have one section always open or start with all of them closed.

Tabs

Use the tabs that's icon is blue. Tabs can layer content behind one another; however, the size of the section will be as large as whatever content you have. There is no option to fully "close" a tab like there is with accordions. Tabs should be used sparingly as they do not work well on mobile.

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