Archives and Heritage Service
Digital Engagement Strategy

'Engaging, Sharing and Reporting'

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1. Background to the Service

Staffordshire Archives and Heritage is made up of the Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Archive Service and the County Museum Service. It also manages the William Salt Library on behalf of the charitable trust that administers the Library.

The aim of the Service is to locate, collect and preserve irreplaceable archive and museum collections relating to the past and present life and work of people of the County of Staffordshire and the City of Stoke on Trent and to preserve the archives of the Diocese of Lichfield, thereby contributing to the national network of archive and museum care.

2. Aim of this Strategy

The Service is seeking news ways of engaging with audiences to promote the collections in its care; awareness of activities and events to encourage people to use of material; a way of reaching new audiences to ensure the Service is relevant to residents and visitors to the County and City.

This strategy aims to provide an integrated and cohesive web and social media strategy for Staffordshire Archives and Heritage that supports the services wider aims as set out above.

Staffordshire Archives and Heritage does not currently have a Social Media Strategy or a Web Content Development Strategy. A draft *Web Content Development Strategy* was developed for the Archive Service but not adopted and a *Social media strategy for Museum on The Move* was commissioned in March 2013. This strategy draws on both of these documents and will work within the County Council Social Media Strategy once it is published.

3. Changing Market

By 2012, Ofcom's annual Market Survey reported that
• UK Tablet ownership had jumped from 2% to 11% in 12 months [2011-2012]
• 20% of UK adults now had an e-reader
• 40% of UK adults now own a smartphone, with the same proportion saying their phone is their most important device for accessing the internet
• UK households now own on average three different types of internet-enabled device such as a laptop, smartphone or internet-enabled games console with 15% of households owning six or more devices

The rapid rise in ownership and availability of mobile internet-connected devices, such as tablets and smartphones, has brought about a radical shift in the ways in which

internet users, young people in particular, expect to engage with learning, working and socialising.

How do the public use social media, the internet and digital technology?
The following graph issued as a result of the Pew Research Centre's Internet & American Life Project tracking surveys, 2002-2012, show that, whilst US users have fairly consistently used the internet for information searches, news updates and shopping, social networking has shot up by 55% since 2007.

% of internet users who do each activity
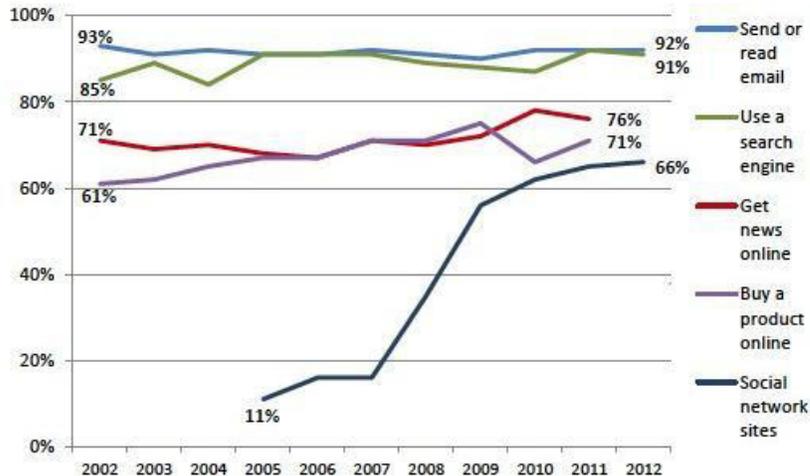
- In fact, phones are increasingly less likely to be used for direct speech at all.
- The average UK consumer now sends 50 texts per week which has more doubled in four years with over 150 billion text messages sent in 2011.
- 58% of UK adults text friends and family at least once a day
- Around 90% of 16-24 year olds send texts to communicate with friends and family on a daily basis

How does this affect behaviour?

'Our research reveals that in just a few short years, new technology has fundamentally changed the way that we communicate. Talking face to face or on the phone are no longer the most common ways for us to interact with each other.
... newer forms of communications are emerging which don't require us to talk to each other especially among younger age groups. This trend is set to continue as technology advances and we move further into the digital age.'

James Thickett, Ofcom's Director of Research

In the past, if someone wanted to share a thought or experience they would phone or talk to an individual, their family, a class or a group of friends. Mass communication was the realm of marketers and journalists. With the advent of social media and easy access to the internet, what were once private, one-to-one interactions, or personal observations can now be recorded and shared very quickly and easily via social media – society has become one of Self-documenters or Sharers and with these growing expectations. The purpose of this strategy is to address these changes and expectations in a manageable way.

4. Archives and Heritage Current Digital Services

Currently Staffordshire Archives and Heritage provides (digital) information about the service and its holdings via a variety of means which have evolved and been subject to changes over many years. The following channels of access are currently provided:

4.1 County Council Web sites
The County Council's main website is centrally controlled in terms of format and style through its content management system, and strict quality control procedures. The Archive Service website purpose is to provide service information for customer transactions rather than provide deeper engagement.

The Museum Service pages are used to provide basic information about the service, including the collections, exhibitions and events, Museum on the Move, Staffordshire Past Track, and contact details.

The primary function of the County Council website is to provide service information and it complies with national standards. As such it is less suitable for marketing, promotion, and visually exciting presentation of collections to attract users.

4.2 Staffordshire Past Track

Staffordshire Past Track was developed in 2002-4 by the County Council's Education Department and Arts & Museum Service, and funded by the New Opportunities Fund. It now has over 26,800 resources, and at least 500 resources are being added each year. There were 240,628 visitor sessions to the site for the 12 month period April 2012 to March 2013, an average of over 20,000 sessions per month.

The original target audiences for the website were schools and further education establishments. Since 2003 this audience has extended and reaches an international audience of family historians, academics, the media, and indeed anyone interested in the history and heritage of Staffordshire.

Content comes from the County Council's archive, museum and art collections, and from collections held by museums, libraries, universities, schools, local history groups and private individuals across Staffordshire. These community groups are now regular contributors, and Past Track is their chief means of giving access to their important collections. It is now the major on-line local history resource for the County. It also provides an important means of income generation for the Museum Service, Archive Service and William Salt Library by sale of images and reproduction fees.

Staffordshire Past Track is also the home to a wide range of 'featured content' websites – on-line exhibitions relating to aspects of Staffordshire history. There is now an imperative need to redevelop the website. There are technical issues which are chiefly around the impending obsolescence of the Content Management Software and hosting platform. These will no longer be supported by Staffordshire County Council after 2015.

There is also a need to update the website from a user's point of view; the style of the website is very much that of a decade ago, with little opportunity for user interaction. Today, users expect much more of a 'conversation' when using the internet, and likewise

the Service would like to make it easier for users to upload their own images, have discussions about the resources on Staffordshire Past Track, and to be able to purchase images in a more intuitive fashion.

4.3 Online Catalogue
'Gateway to the Past', established in 2002 with Heritage Lottery Fund support, is the online catalogue for the Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Archive Service, the William Salt Library and Staffordshire County Museum. The catalogue database currently holds a little in excess of half a million records. During the intervening period three various archive holding bodies have indicated a willingness to have their catalogues hosted on 'Gateway to the Past', but without a concrete result.

4.4 Staffordshire Name Indexes
This currently has a series of archive based indexes, some of which provide information for free, while others bring in some income. It is a popular site and has featured in a national publication. In 2013-14 the Staffordshire Name Indexes site (www.staffsnameindexes.org.uk) received 23,068 visitors and 288,060 page views. In total it generated around £5,500 in income for the Archive Service. The content is created through volunteer work which engages them in opening up access to our collections. The site currently only offers access to indexes rather than images with orders fulfilled by staff.

4.5 Find my Past
Findmypast is one of the leading commercial online family history providers. They currently offer more than 1.7 billion international family history records from the U.K., U.S., Canada, Australia, New Zealand and beyond, with records going back to 1200. The Staffordshire Collection (phase 1) was launched on this website in July 2014. The first quarter statistics have shown 19,437 users viewing 340,680 records. The site offers access to images and indexes and is marketed and promoted worldwide. It will generate significant income for the Service.

4.6 Facebook
Facebook is the 2nd most popular website in the UK. 51.2% of UK population have signed up to Facebook. The Staffordshire Archives and Heritage Facebook page has 422 likes (Oct 2014). This has developed organically and anecdotal evidence seems to suggest that people want information about the service along with attractive postings of items from our collections. We have achieved this mix with moderate success. Staffordshire Past Track also has a Facebook site, launched in June 2013, with 355 likes. It features content and images from the website.

4.7 Twitter
The Service introduced Twitter in July 2014 to coincide with the launch of the Staffordshire Collection on Find My Past and has 337 followers (Oct 2014).
A new approach has been tested with ownership given to team champions within the Service. This team have been given guidelines to work within ensuring the County and City Council's reputations are preserved and promoted. It has been moderately successful and reaches a slightly different audience to Facebook. However statistics below show the potential to reach a much larger group of followers:

Twitter followers of other archive services, March 2014

Manchester Archives	7850	Tyne and Wear Archives	3698

The Hive	3436	Ironbridge Gorge Museums	5261
Wolverhampton Archives	1788	Heritage, Warwickshire	2968
Birmingham Archives	1345	Museum of East Anglian Life	3716
Walsall LHC	936	Birmingham Museums Trust	20,000
		Wedgwood Museum	5382
		Shugborough	3178
		Staffs Newsletter	6361
		Lichfield Bower	926
Others		Shire Hall Gallery	700

4.8 Mailing Lists

The Archive Service has an electronic mailing list, which is used for events promotion and sending out PDF versions of the service newsletter 'From History to Today. Currently the service prints 1,500 copies. The archive service has 145 people on its postal events mailing list and 181 people on our e-mail events mailing list. Work is underway to develop a database of registered users of the Service to market more effectively to users.

4.9 Current web statistics

Site / Visits	2012-13	2013-14
SCC main website		
Archive Service	76,029	69,614
William Salt Library	7,608	6,233
Museum Service	22,840	18,428
Online catalogue	134,641	132,230
Staffordshire Pasttrack		
Museum resources	240,628	197,860
Archive Service & WSL resources	34,654	26,840
Staffordshire Name Indexes	20,403	23,068
Facebook (Likes)		
Archive and Heritage Service	-	306
Staffordshire Pasttrack	-	252
Facebook (Reach)		
Archive and Heritage Service	-	13,208
Staffordshire Pasttrack	-	21,212

5. Opportunities

Used creatively and responsibly, social media applications provide a valuable toolkit for addressing parts of the audience that archives and museums have not traditionally engaged with.

The most damning charge, that they are 'a waste of time' is given the lie by the sheer depth of the market penetration. Even if people are not on Twitter, they know what it's for and experience its effects every day. By its very democratic nature, social media enables audiences to engage more fully with each other and with services, prompting conversations and debates about the content of exhibitions and activities and encouraging existing supporters to deepen their relationship with the services they love.

By exploiting different social media tools and the content they already provide, services can address the following areas of development:
• Marketing & profile building
• Engaging and consulting
• Enhancing the learning experience
• Reporting/recording and sharing
• Evaluating the service impact

Social media has become strongly associated with marketing and profile building. Despite being perceived as 'only for young people', the audience profiles of popular networking sites given above demonstrate that is not necessarily the case. The biggest growth area on Facebook currently is the 45-64yr age bracket.

As a service we are quite poor at telling people what we do and often appear inward looking. Social media is about sharing rather than simply telling people in an authoritative way about our collections. People want to feel engaged, to have a conversation with us about our collections and what we do. The answer to this is not a technological one; if we are to do this then it requires a cultural shift to 'sharing' rather than one of 'telling'.

6. Archives and Heritage Future Digital Services

6.1 County Council Web site
This website should remain the place to find out factual information about the service, how to make a visit, consultations, latest news. A place for key transactions such placing orders, requesting information about visiting and the point at which links can be made to other digital content.

6.2 Staffordshire Past Track
We see an increasing number of volunteers wishing to carry out research, a website that could provide an outlet for this would be a very positive step
• Staffordshire Places should be incorporated into the design of the project with an new project plan that will incorporate local community engagement
• The new website needs to include the opportunity for local groups to interact and engage with the content.
• Resources on Past Track need to be linked in with social media – e.g. 'share' buttons
• Purchase of copy prints / digital files needs to be much easier – considerable potential for income generation.

6.*3 Online Catalogue*
It is important that the content on the catalogue is created under the supervision of professional staff as the authorised presentation of information about collections which can be referred to by users. Volunteers currently support the creation of more detailed catalogues using templates and guidance provided by professional staff. This approach should continue but with better promotion of the collections that are catalogued on it.

6.4 Staffordshire Name Indexes
This site should continue in its current format as it opens up access to our collections, is responding to user demand, brings in some revenue and provides an important

resource/outlet for volunteer produced content. An appraisal of the further opportunities to make online ordering easier and better promotion to maximise income will be carried out. The current tithe map indexing project will be the next major resource to be added to this site within the next two years.

6.5 Find my Past
In 2013-14 The Archive Service signed a commercial contract licensing DC Thompson Family History to digitise key family history sources (parish registers, wills and marriage bonds and allegations), and publish them on the 'Find My Past' website, in exchange for royalties. The contract allows for the addition of further sources by mutual agreement. From the Archive Service perspective, bishops' transcripts and nonconformist registers electoral registers, and land tax records are potential candidates. These collections will be prioritised for addition to this website.

6.6 Facebook
Over 50% of UK population have Facebook. Posts need to be entertaining but the last year has shown that it is not enough to show interesting items, people also want access to information, it is variety that people seem to enjoy.
   • Facebook should become our own form of press release, all news items should go onto Facebook, as should new accessions, new catalogues, events news etc.

6.7 Twitter
Twitter is a more immediate form of communication which can be used in conjunction with Facebook. We should continue to develop this method of communication.
   • We can tweet links to Facebook postings but also combine to be more 'conversational''.
   • For Twitter to work we will continue the wider access to it across the service.

6.*8 Mailing Lists*
The service should prioritise this direct form of communication and look to increase numbers on the mailing list. It is possible to get more messages out through our emailing list and is more cost effective.
   • We should be working towards electronic mailing lists only.

6.*9 Flickr*
Flickr is an image hosting site although not one that is easily searchable. As a history resource it has very limited metadata attached which is necessary for searches to be effective. However this does not to preclude using it as an adjunct and additional promotional tool , e.g. encouraging users to use flickr to post their own images, or share images from Past Track.

6.10 Blogging websites
Wordpress is currently the most popular free open source content management system and blogging tool, with a 54.6% market share worldwide. There are 62.8m Wordpress sites worldwide and over 388m people view more than 3.6bn pages each month. Staffordshire Archives and Heritage does not have a blog, other services locally that do are:
Walsall Local History Centre
http://webwalsall.com/local-history-centre/?p=213
Birmingham Archives and Heritage

http://theironroom.wordpress.com/

The Service contributes to a wider County Council project website the Staffordshire Great War Trail, http://www.staffordshiregreatwar.com which does have blogging facilities.

- The Service will implement the blogging facility on the Great War and assess suitability for other projects.

7. Measuring performance
Having invested so much effort into preparing and using social media feeds, there are several tools available online to help measure its effect.
The simplest form of quantitative measurement is to count
- number of followers
- number of posts or items uploaded, tweets sent etc.
- number of shares and retweets

More sophisticated information concerning penetration, exposure and audience share is available. The most popular social media feeds incorporate a basic level of information; requesting deeper analysis does tend to cost money. The Service will assess free and charged for tools to measure the impact of digital engagement.

8. Conclusion
The findings of Ofcom's 2012 Market Survey clearly indicate that the UK public's relationship with information, communication and technology has changed rapidly and decisively. Societies continued reliance on and delight in the pattern of ENGAGING, REPORTING and SHARING means that our services cannot and should not exclude audiences engaging with our collections in new ways. In a time when public funders are scrutinising bids for evidence of the greatest return on their investment, social media enables the team to gather evidence and promote projects. This Strategy will enable the Service to focus its resource in the right areas in a co-ordinated and effective manner.

9. Action Plan
9.1 Website
- Timely updates to reflect current service offer (opening hours, events, fees and charges, etc) (ongoing)
- Development of the Local and Community History Guide (2014-15, part 2)
- News updates

9.2 Pasttrack website
- Move site to a new, flexible platform
- Improve purchase facility
- Develop user/volunteer content development
- Host other types of collections e.g. tithe maps
- Develop as hub for local history group content hosting

9.3 Online catalogue
- Continue to set cataloguing targets in the Service Plan that use both volunteer and professional skills to maximum effect.

9.4 Staffordshire Name Indexes
- Work should continue to grow the online catalogues with volunteer assistance. The next phase of indexes should be planned with careful consideration as to how the indexes will complement each other and attract interest. The targets can be found in the current Service Plan.
- The sites should be promoted in a more robust way, targeting the family history community

9.5 Find My Past
- The Service will continue to promote online access focusing on the family history market to drive users to the site.
- Training and familiarisation session will be offered for library staff to widen awareness of the resource.

9.6 Facebook
This channel will be used for:
- News updates
- News worthy, of the moment posts
- Engaging images

9.7 Twitter
- As with Facebook, but more 'of the moment'. In using both twitter and facebook we should try to be about conversations, not about information management.

9.8 Blogging
- This channel will be tested on the Great War website by staff and volunteers to talk about discoveries in the collections.

9.9 Resources and performance
- A Digital Engagement team will be formed with champions from across the Service.
- Training a guidelines will be provided to ensure staff work within the policies of its corporate bodies
- Best practice will be highlighted and use of support from the Communications Team to ensure the team are effective and engaging in their use of social media.
- Appropriate performance measures will be introduced to assess how well the Strategy is working.

9. Review
This strategy will be reviewed every three years.
The next review will be 2017.

Appendix 1: Measures for effectiveness of social media

There are currently no nationally-agreed best measures for social media. If there is progress on this we would expect to adapt what we count to take account of this. Our measures will be reviewed after a year.
The accounts that will be measured include:

Facebook
http://www.facebook.com/StaffordshireArchivesandHeritage
https://www.facebook.com/StaffsGreatWar

Twitter
http://www.twitter.com/@ArchandHeritage
https://twitter.com/staffsgreatwar

Measures

Type	Definition
Facebook Likes	Follows to your page. Your posts are seen and appear on their timeline.
Facebook Reach	The actual number of people who look at a post and share the post.
Facebook Engagement (number not percentage)	Actions taken on a post including: comments, sharing, liking a post or page.
Twitter Followers	Follows to your account. Your tweets appear in their feed.
Twitter Impressions	Number of times user saw the tweet on Twitter.
Twitter Engagements	Total number of times a user has interacted with a tweet. This includes all clicks anywhere on the tweet, retweets, replies, follows and favourites.
Twitter Engagement rate (%)	The number of engagements divided by the total number of impressions.

The Service is using Twitter Analytics and Facebook to measure its accounts. It is difficult to benchmark against other services as we do not have access to the most meaningful statistics, unless we get the prior agreement of those services to enter a social media benchmarking group. We will investigate the possibility of benchmarking against other services during the next year.

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