THE SCHOOL LIBRARY GUIDE
TO SOCIAL MEDIA

In today's digital age, the role of school librarians extends far beyond the physical walls of their libraries. With the proliferation of social media platforms, librarians have a powerful tool at their disposal to engage with students, teachers, administrators, and the rest of the community. Harnessing the potential of social media can not only promote the resources and services offered by the library but also foster a vibrant online community centered around learning and literacy. This guide aims to equip school librarians with strategies and best practices for effectively utilizing social media to enhance their outreach efforts and amplify their impact.

Let's start with basic information about some of the various social media platforms that are currently available and how school librarians might be able to utilize them. *The SD State Library does not promote or endorse any of these specific platforms.*

Facebook: Facebook offers a wide reach and allows for creating dedicated pages where librarians can share updates, events, photos, and engage with the community through comments.

X (formerly Twitter): Twitter is a platform for sharing brief updates, news, and links to resources. Librarians can utilize hashtags to join conversations and reach a broader audience interested in topics related to reading, education, and literacy.

Instagram: Instagram is visually appealing and ideal for showcasing library events, new book arrivals, creative displays, and behind-the-scenes glimpses. Librarians can use stories, reels, and IGTV for dynamic content.

Pinterest: Pinterest is a platform where librarians can curate boards of recommended reading lists, educational resources, craft ideas, and more. It's a way to organize and share content visually.

YouTube: Librarians can create YouTube channels to share video content such as book talks, virtual tours of the library, instructional videos on research skills, and author interviews.

LinkedIn: While primarily a professional networking platform, LinkedIn can be useful for connecting with educators, administrators, and industry professionals to share updates about library programs, services, and achievements.

Goodreads: Goodreads is a social platform dedicated to readers and book recommendations. Librarians can create profiles for their libraries, share book reviews, curate reading lists, and engage with readers in discussions.

Snapchat: Snapchat can be used to share real-time updates, event highlights, and engaging content with students and younger audiences, leveraging its ephemeral nature to create a sense of urgency and excitement.

TikTok: TikTok provides an opportunity for librarians to showcase creativity and personality through short-form videos. Librarians can share book recommendations, library tours, and educational content in a fun and engaging way.

Blogs: While not traditional social media platforms, blogs allow librarians to create long-form content about library resources, services, programming, and educational topics. They can then share these blog posts across other social media channels for wider reach.

This may seem like an overwhelming list, especially if the school librarian is not familiar with some of the platforms. The recommendation is to start to explore the platforms and the school library (and even other library) content that is available on them. School librarians should find what resonates with them and what platform they think they can stay dedicated and committed to. Part of having an effective social media presence for a library is actually creating and posting content to it on a regular basis. It is also important for the school librarian to consider which platform would be best for their specific audience(s).This may involve selecting a couple different platforms to be able to reach both the students and their parents. ***Before selecting platforms, the school librarian should also be aware of their district's current stance on social media and approved platforms, etc.***

Once the school librarian has selected their preferred/approved platforms, they can start creating content. Here are some ways social media can be utilized to promote resources and services:

Content Sharing: Regularly post about new arrivals, featured books, and upcoming library events to keep followers informed and engaged.

Interactive Polls and Surveys: Use polls and surveys to gather feedback from students and teachers about their reading preferences, interests, and suggestions for library acquisitions.

Author Spotlights: Highlight authors whose works are available in the library's collection by sharing their bios, interviews, book trailers, and recommended reading lists.

Student Book Reviews: Encourage students to write and share reviews of books they've read from the library, fostering a sense of ownership and community within the library's social media presence.

Educational Resources: Share links to online databases, research guides, and educational websites relevant to the curriculum to support students' learning outside the classroom.

Virtual Book Clubs: Organize virtual book clubs through social media platforms, where students and teachers can discuss designated books, share insights, and connect with fellow readers.

Themed Campaigns: Launch themed campaigns such as "Library Trivia Tuesday" or "Friday Favorites" to keep followers engaged and excited about library offerings.

Collaborations with Teachers: Partner with teachers to promote class assignments, reading challenges, or interdisciplinary projects through the library's social media channels.

Behind-the-Scenes Content: Offer glimpses into the daily operations of the library, including book selection processes, library displays, and staff profiles, to humanize the library experience.

Community Engagement: Foster connections with parents, alumni, local authors, and community organizations by sharing relevant content and participating in online conversations related to literacy and education.

Virtual Storytime Sessions: Host live or recorded virtual storytime sessions of popular children's books, fostering a love for reading among younger students and families.

Interactive Quizzes and Challenges: Create fun and educational quizzes or challenges related to books, authors, literary genres, or library resources. Encourage participation and share results on social media to recognize winners and spark further engagement.

Live Q&A Sessions: Host live Q&A sessions with librarians, authors, or other guest speakers where students and community members can ask questions about books, library services, or literacy-related topics in real-time.

Parent Resources: Share resources, tips, and recommendations for parents to support their children's literacy development at home. This could include articles, book lists, and reading strategies tailored to different age groups.

Library Challenges: Create reading challenges, writing challenges, or STEM challenges and share them on social media platforms to encourage students to explore new genres, authors, or topics and celebrate their achievements.

Student Takeovers: Allow students to take over the library's social media accounts for a day to share their reading recommendations, book reviews, or insights into their library experiences, providing a student-centered perspective.

Virtual Library Tours: Offer virtual tours of the library's physical space, highlighting key areas, resources, and services. Librarians can use platforms like Facebook Live or Instagram Stories to guide viewers through the library virtually.

Collaborative Projects: Collaborate with other school libraries, libraries in the community, or educational organizations to create joint social media campaigns, challenges, or events that promote literacy and learning across multiple platforms.

By harnessing the power of social media, school librarians can transcend the physical confines of their libraries and create dynamic online spaces where learning, discovery, and collaboration thrive. Through strategic content creation, interactive engagement, and fostering meaningful connections, librarians can position their libraries as vibrant hubs of knowledge and creativity within the digital landscape. Embracing social media as a promotional tool not only enhances visibility and accessibility but also reinforces the invaluable role of the library as a cornerstone of educational excellence in the school community.