

Feature This:

Understanding Instagram Story's Role in Museum Marketing

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Abstract

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Studies show that social media is an effective way to reach potential audiences to cultural organizations, and while museums understand the value of social media, there is still a lack of understanding of which platforms to use and how to use them effectively. The purpose of this study was to understand the unique value new social media engagement features, such as the Instagram Story feature, add to a museum's overall marketing strategy to engage audiences. Through document analysis of over three hundred Story Slides and interviews with five museum professionals this study creates a holistic understanding of museums' use of Instagram Stories in social media marketing. The findings of this study suggest that museums use Instagram Stories in alignment with the feature's intended purposes, but they are not utilizing the additional overlays and interactive elements to the full extent of their capabilities to engage audiences. Engagement requires that museums make an effort to not only use the feature but to use it with more intentionality. Additionally, the museums in this study are in the initial, experimental phases of using the Instagram Story feature with plans around layering other strategies in the coming years.

Keywords: *Instagram story, Instagram stories, museum marketing, nonprofit marketing*

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Chapter One: Introduction

Today's world is overwhelmingly virtual, instantaneous, and handheld. The concept of distance and time has been converted to bits and manipulated to fit user preference. With this onset of technology, humans are finding increasingly new ways to connect. The introduction of social media in the 2010s has not just influenced, but overturned the way American's socialize, communicate, and connect. For-profit organizations have capitalized on this trend by positioning themselves to engage with audiences without forsaking their brand values. Non-profit organizations, such as museums, that are defined as entities that benefit the public are not only well-positioned to use Social Media in similar traditional marketing techniques but to lead the way in using social media to change engagement with the public radically.

Colleen Dilenschneider (2017c), author of the nonprofit marketing blog 'Know your Bone,' summarizes the relationship between potential visitors and internet access as found by a National Awareness, Attitudes and Usage Study as follows: (add citation):

High-propensity visitors – both those who have actually attended and those who profile as likely to attend but have not yet done so – qualify as being “super-connected” to the web. “Super-connected” means that these folks have access to the web at home, at work, and on a mobile device. (para 7)

The statistics on ownership are impressive with a large proportion of Americans owning multiple devices: about half of the American adult population owns a tablet and three-quarters own a computer, while 77% of Americans own a smartphone (95% own at least a standard cellphone) (“Mobile Fact Sheet”, 2018). More than three-quarters of Americans use the internet daily, and those with mobile capability are more likely to be online frequently. The number of adults ages 30 to 49 who self-define as using the internet ‘almost constantly’ has grown 12% over the past three years. They now are just as likely as younger adults to use the internet with this frequency (Perrin & Jiang, 2018).

Fueling much of this activity is the growing influence of social media on how people discover and socialize with each other, access and distribute information, validate and propagate their opinions, and impact and influence others. The current estimate of social media users worldwide is 2.34 billion and growing; by 2020 it is expected that nearly 3 billion people will be social media users. (“Share of the U.S. Population with a Social Media Profile 2008-2019”, 2019).

The personalization and customization inherent to social media can be a powerful tool that museums use to forge connections with known and unknown audiences. Studies show that although museums are successful in using traditional marketing techniques to retain their historical visitor base, they are less effective in reaching new audiences. (Dilenschneider, 2017b). Ignoring this reality will lead to these institutions becoming irrelevant for several reasons. The first is the phenomenon of negative substitution, defined as “the phenomenon occurring globally wherein the number of people who profile as historic visitors *leaving* the market outpaces the number of people who profile as historic visitors *entering* the market.” (Dilenschneider, 2017b). Said differently, as the current traditional museum-goer has aged out, that demographic is not being replaced at the same rate. As Dilenschneider (2017b) reports:

Negative substitution is taking place because the market is growing more diverse, while perceptions of cultural organizations as being places for a *certain kind of person* have remained largely static. Simply, when there are fewer people in the market who profile as historic visitors year-over-year, and also growth in the number people who profile as “nontraditional audiences” year-over-year, the market potential risks fewer-and-fewer visitors over time. (para. 2)

In the face of this trend, museums need to re-evaluate engagement strategies, including non-traditional ones, or risk becoming obsolete.

The second factor relates to a change in the habits of the traditional audience. For example, of the 32% of the US population who profiled as a high-propensity visitor (someone highly-likely to visit cultural organizations), only half (16%) have visited in the last two years (Dilenschneider, 2017). There are any number of reasons, including other leisure activities and negative attitude affinities, these likely visitors have not attended a cultural organization in the last two years (Dilenschneider, 2017). Recent studies show that the most effective way to reach high propensity or potential visitors is through social media because, regardless of demographics, these visitors are also ‘super-connected’. (“Mobile Fact Sheet”, 2018; Dilenschneider, 2017c; Dilenschneider, 2016) Given this, social media can be a potential driver in visitation and a proponent in sustainability for museums and related visitor-serving nonprofits. Therefore, understanding the role of social media use and its relationship in shaping visitor perceptions is essential for museums to remain relevant among their current and potential communities.

While social media can be a driver for visitation to cultural institutions, it is vital to contextualize this prediction. Colleen Dilenschneider (2015) and IMPACTS identify reputation as one of the significant roles in motivating visitation. It is among the top five influences in the decision-making process to go to a cultural organization for the U.S composite market, and number two as an influence for high-propensity visitors (Dilenschneider, 2012; Dilenschneider, 2015). It is vital to create a positive experience associated with your brand to stand out in the digital landscape, where 76% of brand mentions online and on social media are neutral (Stein, 2014; Whatman, n.d.). Positive associations have a positive impact on reputation.

Social media presence does more for reputation than any other output for most visitors who do not already have an existing relationship with an organization (Dodge, 2017). According to a discretionary decision-making utility model developed by IMPACTS, what people say about

an organization is a more significant influence in reputation than what an organization can say about itself (Dilenschneider, 2015). Positive experiences shared by your audience on social media increase organizational credibility (Stein, 2014). Museum staff and leadership focused more on vanity metrics do not fully understand the potential of effective social media and the impacts it can have on an organization (Dodge, 2017). Vanity metrics are the flashy analytics that hold much less value than they appear. These metrics include, but are not limited to the number of followers, page views, and likes. These social metrics become useless when the organization does not connect this activity to real business objectives (Dawley, 2017). While these metrics may seem impactful, it is not clear if they genuinely help meet organizational goals. (Aronica, 2018; Dawley, 2017). Dilenschneider (2016c) points out that while vanity metrics are “good to have at high levels, but have variable impacts on our bottom lines of financial solvency”. If applied correctly, vanity metrics can help measure if greater business goals and objectives are being met; but without additional context they have little value to staff outside the social media team (Aronica, 2018; Dawley, 2017).

According to a study done by Pew Research Institute on social media use, the most widely used platforms are YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, and Snapchat (Smith & Anderson, 2018). Museums are unsure of which social media platforms to prioritize and how to use them to achieve their intended impacts when faced with a range of platforms (Dilenschneider, 2018d). While research suggests that social media offers the potential to build relationships, nonprofits continue to use social media as one-way communication. (Lovejoy, Walters, & Saxton, 2012). The introduction of the Story format helps ease communication and allows organizations to express their values. Leah Forsyth, the Director of Harrimansteel, an independent creative agency that works with brands like Nike and TOMS, states “Sharing a story

is starting a dialogue. You're letting people in, and there's an invitation to respond. With the layer of gifs and filters, you also get to create a personalized, animated layer, and this allows for rich expression" (Joseph, 2018). Museums that merely repurpose traditional marketing strategies on social media miss out on the benefits it offers and are therefore not effectively using it to reach new audiences. The Movember Foundation is an example of an organization leveraging social media for great impact. An Austrian nonprofit started by two people who had a fun idea to raise awareness about men's health issues by inviting men to grow moustaches during the month of November (Walgrove, n.d.; "Our Story, n.d.). Travis Garone, co-founder of the Movember Foundation, stated that the acceptance of social media amplified Movember messaging (Drell, 2012). Mo's, as those participating in Movember are referred to, could grow their moustache and share it with their networks. Growing from 30 participants in their first year, Movember is now celebrated by 5.5 million people across the world funding 1,200 men's health projects. ("Our Story", n.d.; Walgrove, n.d.)

Institutions should leverage social media to initiate and sustain content-based dialogues with audiences that help bolster and fuel their reputation (Dodge, 2017). Social media offers a unique place for museums to show their relevance and engage with their community. Unlike websites and galleries where museums can display their collections and supply information, social media offers a Web 2.0 interaction. Dictionary.com defines Web 2.0 as "a second generation in the development of the World Wide Web, conceived as a combination of concepts, trends, and technologies that focus on user collaboration, sharing of user-generated content, and social networking." As Ryan Dodge pointed out during a speech at the Museum Computer Network 2017 annual conference, "Social media is not a game, museums must realize that it is strategic, a revenue driver, and a reputation builder."

An overwhelming number of nonprofit organizations, museums included, utilize social media as a valuable marketing tool. According to a Nonprofit Social Media Benchmark Survey conducted in 2017, only 1% of nonprofit organizations polled consider social media to be not at all valuable concerning their marketing efforts (Shattuck, 2017). But while there is recognition of its value as a marketing tool, most organizations do not have the human resources or strategies in place to fully maximize social media's full potential as a marketing tool (Dodge, 2017; Shattuck, 2017). Most notably, 67% of organizations did not have documented social media goals (Shattuck, 2017). This is in contrast with the private sector where it is common practice to employ a large social media team headed by an experienced senior level social media manager (Dodge, 2017).

One barrier for museums is that while these organizations understand the value of social media, there is still a lack of understanding of which platforms to use and how to use them effectively. For example, social media is upheld as a successful way to connect and engage with audiences, but there is little evidence into why audiences choose specific platforms over others. The average internet using American uses multiple social media platforms, ranging from three to eight different platforms. (Smith & Anderson, 2018). The most current data also show that the ways people use social media platforms are continually shifting. For example, while Facebook remains the most actively used social media platform, people spend about the same amount of time on Facebook and Instagram (Molla & Wagner, 2018; "95 Instagram Statistics for Social Media Marketing Gurus", 2018). 81% of young adults in America visit Instagram daily, with 55% visiting the site multiple times throughout the day. Encompassing adults of all ages these figures remain high, 60% and 38%, respectively (Smith & Anderson, 2018; 95 Instagram Statistics for Social Media Marketing Gurus", 2018). According to a study on social media use in

2018, Instagram the only popular platform to show consistent growth in terms of total users since 2012 (Smith & Anderson, 2018) Additionally, according to a study done by Statista on the number of monthly active Instagram users from 2013-2018, Instagram has 1 billion monthly active users worldwide, an estimated 105 million in the United States alone (2019).

Snapchat introduced the Story feature in 2013. On their support website, Snapchat defines the Story as “a collection of Snaps that play in the order they were taken, you and your friends’ Stories cover the last 24 hours, so you can see the day unfold.” Instagram describes their iteration of Stories as “a feature that lets you share all the moments of your day, not just the ones you want to keep on your profile. As you share multiple photos and videos, they appear together in a slideshow format: your story.” (“Introducing Instagram Stories”, 2016). The new format became widely popular in the social media landscape, and Instagram's adaption of the function has surpassed Snapchats daily usage with 400 million daily users (Price, 2018; Salinas, 2018; Wagner, 2018; Yurieff, 2018). Based on user popularity and adaptability, Stories seem to be here to stay. When Facebook acquired Instagram, Instagram’s Story feature became Facebook’s answer to the Snapchat craze. Instagram helped pull Facebook back after two previous apps, Poke and Slingshot, similar to Snapchat failed (Feiner, 2019). Within the first year of launching, half of Instagram business profiles began using Stories to get people to spend more time engaging with their content (“Celebrating One Year of Instagram Stories”, 2017). Instagram Stories are low-pressure way to generate conversation and make connections authentically. Additionally, the novelty of a 24-hour lifespan, the frequency of fresh content, ease of use and built-in network make the Instagram Story attractive to audiences, specifically millennial audiences. Today, about 63 % of millennials on Instagram watch stories (Joseph, 2018). Building the Story feature into Instagram attracted adults who were currently using the platform and

interested in the format but disliked the idea of growing a new network of followers (Constine, 2016). According to Instagram internal data pulled from 2017, a third of the most viewed stories are from business profiles (“Why Instagram” n.d.). Marketers can take advantage of the story format by leveraging its time-sensitive nature and creative autonomy.

With so many social media platforms to choose and no idea how to effectively manage these sites, this study seeks to understand the unique value of the Story feature as a new social media engagement tool and its impact on a museum's overall marketing strategy. Specifically, this study aims to provide context on effective engagement with the Instagram Story feature. The study is aimed to answer the following questions:

1. How are museums using new social media engagement features?
2. To what extent is the use of the Story accomplishing intended goals?

By better understanding the value new social media engagement features offer to a museum's overall marketing strategy, this study aims to inform current social media marketing strategies for institutions that do not currently use the Story format or understand its potential for success. Additionally, this research will help improve the current understanding of marketing outreach field wide.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of this study is to understand the unique value the Story feature adds to museums' overall marketing strategies and its potential to reach new and more diverse audiences. Exploring the rise of social media use amongst Americans can offer insight into the opportunities of social media use for museums and allows for an increase in understanding why engaging visitors via social media might be advantageous for museums and similar institutions. This literature review seeks to establish the context for understanding the importance of new social media marketing strategies in museums to remain relevant and sustainable by examining sources within related bodies of literature. First, the review examines what drives people to use social media sites. Second, the review looks at trends and best practices for nonprofit marketing third, the review details the history of and impact Instagram story, and finally, the review describes the opportunities the Story format offers nonprofit organizations. Using these areas of literature as a framework, my study will contribute to the understanding of the Story feature as an emerging social media marketing tool and its role in a museums marketing strategy.

The concept and terminology associated with social media and social network are often used interchangeably, as they work together (Boyd & Ellison, 2007; Paquette, 2013). Merriam-Webster defines social media as the overarching forms of electronic communication through which users create and share content. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) define social media as “a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content” while social networking refers solely to the creation and upkeep of online relationships. For the purpose of this thesis, social media also applies to the environment in which social networking takes place.

Examples of social media sites pertinent to this research study are Instagram, Facebook, and Snapchat because of the adaption of the Story feature.

The Psychology of Social Media Use

Social media continues to offer people new ways to connect and learn. Today, approximately seven in ten U.S. adults use at least one social media site to “connect with one another, engage with news content, share information and entertain themselves.” (“Social Media Fact Sheet”, 2018). With 69% of Americans using, on average, three social media sites a day (“Social Media Fact Sheet”, 2018) marketing professionals are eager to understand why people interact with these sites daily and how it can be used to their advantage. To truly succeed in reaching a target audience, organizations need to understand the audience mindset with regard to choosing the right mechanism to reach them. (“Social Media And Psychology – Why Do People Share?”, 2015)

The New York Times Consumer Insight Group conducted a study to identify why people share what they do on social media sites and identified five major themes: *self-fulfillment*, *supporting a cause*, *relationships*, *self-expression*, and *entertainment* (Social Media And Psychology – Why Do People Share?”, 2015). These themes tie in closely with major concepts McMahon (2015) identifies as drivers in social media popularity. Ciaran McMahon’s “*Why do we ‘like’ social media?*” explores in-depth cognitive science side of social media popularity focusing on the stimulation it provides the user.

The themes *self-fulfillment* and *supporting a cause* are closely related and therefore share a description (“Social Media and Psychology – Why Do People Share?”, 2015). 84% of survey respondents described *supporting a cause* as the most compelling reason to share. The ALS ‘Ice Bucket Challenge’ is a perfect example of an organization that understood social media

dynamics. The challenge allowed people to feel empowered with ease by offering different levels of engagement and showing participants they were making a difference in whichever way they engaged.

This concept of *self-fulfillment* also ties into *self-expression*. 68% of respondents said that sharing is about showing people who they are and what they care about. (“Social Media and Psychology – Why Do People Share?”, 2015). Self-presentation is a critical aspect of social media’s overall popularity. American sociologist, Erving Goffman describes the presentation of self as a series of ‘fronts.’ He states the best way to understand our actions is to view the world as a ‘social stage’ full of actors creating whatever version of themselves that benefits the audience. (Thompson, 2016). Bernie Hogan interprets Goffman’s idea of the presentation of self in two parts in consideration to social media: performances and exhibitions (McMahon, 2015). While Goffman's dramaturgical approach focuses on situations, Hogan (2010) states social media employs exhibition features like updating a status coupled with situational activities, such as chatting.

However, while an individual has control over their digital self, a social media site’s specific algorithm has control of content visibility. McMahon (2015) states that this lack of control reinforces reward conditioning. The novelty social media offers combined with a variable interval reinforcement conditioning play into the attractiveness and continued use of social media. (McMahon, 2015). A variable schedule of reinforcement is a form of operant conditioning where a reward is offered at random; this encourages the user to continue the behavior at the chance of receiving a reward. The idea of ‘fresh content’ drives web designers to update sites every couple of months to additionally drive visitation to those sites. Design updates

complement updates posted by connected users because people prefer new stimulating information (McMahon, 2015).

Return site visitation can be understood as a form of operant conditioning based on a variable schedule reinforcement (Ferster & Skinner, 1957). A user can be rewarded in several ways; the first reward for requesting a connection is access to another's content. Social media sites have concentrated this paradigm into a single notification badge. This badge encourages users to check in because they are not fixed and are unpredictable in context, reinforcing behavior as effectively as a Skinner box (McMahon, 2015). A Skinner Box is a chamber used in conducting operant conditioning research with animals to understand behavior; animals are placed in the box and receive a reward when they interact with a certain tool ("Skinner Box", n.d.; Cheery, 2019). While some animals get continuous reinforcement every time they perform the task, others get partial reinforcement (Cherry, 2019). The Skinner Box is important for studying learned behaviors and greatly contributed understanding the effects of punishment and reinforcement. Media multitasking plays into user activity as well. Opposed to spending extended periods on any given social media site, we check periodically throughout the day. This phenomenon can produce a decline in first-time user activity (McMahon, 2015). The Story feature is designed to be a short-lived disappearing post. Its 24-hour lifespan leverages a variable reinforcement schedule by encouraging frequent check-ins be rewarded with new content. Additionally, it combats issues with media multitasking by appearing at the top of Instagram's home page increasing the likelihood of visibility for that content.

Following *self-fulfillment/supporting a cause* is the social idea of maintaining *relationships* with people they would otherwise lose track of. In fact, 78% of respondents indicated they shared information for these types of connections ("Social Media and Psychology

– Why Do People Share?”, 2015). A peek into an individual’s Facebook friends list reveals a number of people who would be considered casual acquaintances, maintaining a virtual relationship long after they can see each other on a regular basis (“Social Media and Psychology – Why Do People Share?”, 2015).

Additionally, we remain members because of social capital. Social capital is the benefits one receives from being a member of a group (McMahon, 2015). Early studies show that Facebook was successful in bridging social capital and users who take advantage of ‘Facebook Relationship Maintenance Behaviors’ benefit in strengthening weak relationships (McMahon, 2015). These relationship maintenance behaviors include actions such as responding to a friend's requests for recommendations or advice, offering congratulations when they post about good news, and wishing them well on a holiday (McMahon, 2015). Sharing on social media helps foster these relationships by allowing friends to engage with each other with ease. This aspect of social media should remind marketers of customers’ extended reach.

Ultimately understanding the psychology of social media is understanding people’s motivations in any given social situation. Additionally, the novelty of social media offers constantly updates with mutual connections, design elements, additional features. The notification badge creates a variable schedule of reinforcement that can be used to manipulate user behaviors. This underlying reward system has benefits that is valuable to nonprofit organizations. Organizations use social media more efficiently when they understand what motivates people to use social media and how to tap into those motivations.

Best Practices for Nonprofit Marketing

The Marketing Funnel

Marketing in the most basic sense is about engaging stakeholders and moving them to action. A marketing funnel can understand marketing efforts (Kanter & Paine, 2012). Most marketing funnels are based on the concept promoted by E. St. Elmos Lewis, known as AIDA (awareness, interest, desire, action) (Kanter & Paine, 2012). The AIDA marketing funnel has four stages:

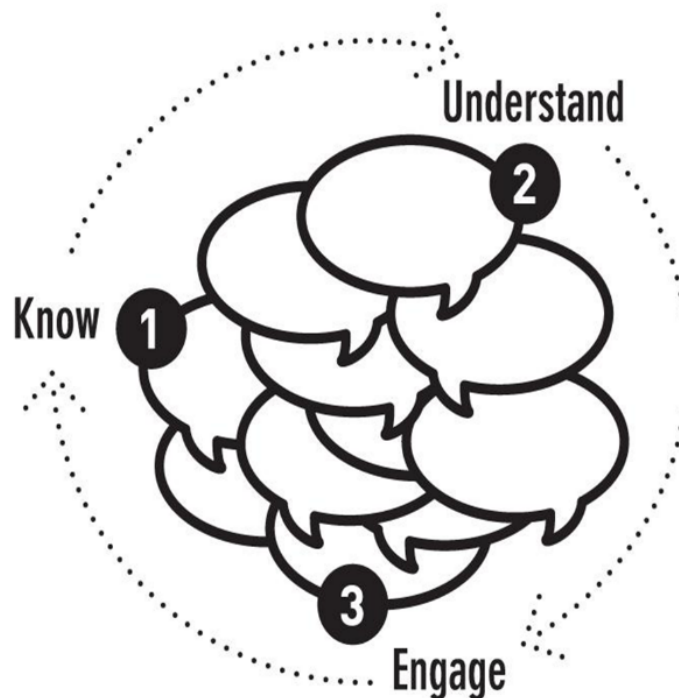
- Awareness: When someone becomes aware of your product or service
- Interest: When someone becomes interested in learning more about your product or service
- Desire: When someone wants to buy from you
- Action: When someone buys something from you

Typically, the nonprofit marketing funnel is referred to as the ladder or pyramid of engagement, refining the form of engagement as the consumer moves up the ladder. Beth Kanter (2014), author of *The Networked Nonprofit*, explains the engagement phenomenon as:

looking at the degree of relationship between your organization and its supporters, the strategies you need to use to move them closer to your organization, and how to measure that progression. And, more importantly, engagement has a purpose or larger goal. There is a continuum of engagement or a progression of the relationship from stranger to becoming a life-long champion and supporter for your organization (para 10).

Erica Barnhart, the CEO of Claxon Marketing and senior lecturer at the University of Washington, conceptualized the engagement cycle (know, understand, engage) as a nonprofit counterpart to the marketing funnel. This iteration of the marketing funnel is easy to understand due to its visual simplicity.

Figure 1: The Engagement Cycle



Therefore, successful marketing involves getting a specific form of engagement from a particular audience. Additionally, it is essential that marketing efforts and messaging are on brand and convey an organization's brand personality. This consistency helps reinforce brand awareness and authenticity.

Strategy

Mission-based organizations often have difficulty being specific in terms of audience because staff members feel strongly aligned with the cause or mission of the organization. Moreover, it is hard for staff to step back and understand that not everyone cares equally about their cause and they do not need to nor cannot be all things for all people. This vagueness can impact the effectiveness of messaging (Mills, 2016). Vague messaging is un compelling and as Gene Simmons once said, "You have to understand that nothing appeals to everyone."

It is also vital to consider behavioral economics when thinking about audiences. Behavioral economics challenges rational choice theory – the idea that people choose through a cost-benefit analysis (Andersen, Mcknee, Rovner, n.d). "Rather behavioral economics supports the idea humans are irrational beings influenced by social, cognitive, and emotional factors." (Andersen, Mcknee, Rovner, n.d). Nonprofit organizations are not asking people to buy toothpaste; they are asking people to make a change in the world. Irrational decisions have a significant impact on nonprofit organizations who have high asks of their audiences, so they must ensure they are asking with this concept in mind. (Andersen, Mcknee, Rovner, n.d)

The Claxton Method outlines marketing best practices in three easy steps:

1. What does success look like?
2. Who do you need to reach to be successful?
3. How are you going to reach your target audience? (Mills, 2016)

Marketers should answer these questions to identify what success looks like and where the target audience is on the engagement cycle (or marketing funnel). Without this information, organizations will not know how to measure if they reached their goals or if they resonate their intended audiences. Following this method helps organizations can save organizations from costly mistakes.

It is counterproductive to allocate resources to mechanisms, such as email newsletters and annual reports, for an audience that does not (or no longer) use(s) them. Successful engagement looks different for nonprofit organizations as traditional media buys are cost prohibitive. Instead, common nonprofit marketing engagement goals are raising awareness, volunteer recruitment, advocacy, supporting programs, and fundraising (Branhart, 2018; Miller, 2017).

Brand

The role of brand in nonprofits is shifting from a fundraising tool to a dynamic strategic role serving mission, driving social goals and strengthening internal cohesion and holistic identity (Kylander & Stone, 2012; Banhart, 2018). The Stanford Social Innovation Review developed a framework called the Nonprofit Brand IDEA to support this shift away from the traditional for-profit framework that uses the brand for name recognition and raise revenue. IDEA stands for brand integrity, brand democracy, brand ethics, and brand affinity. The Stanford Social Innovation review defines these terms as follows

- Brand integrity means that the organization's internal identity is aligned with its external image and that both are aligned with the mission.
- Brand democracy means that the organization trusts its members, staff, participants, and volunteers to communicate their own understanding of the organization's core identity.
- Brand ethics means that the brand itself and the way it is deployed reflect the core values of the organization.
- Brand affinity means that the brand is a good team player, working well alongside other brands, sharing space and credit generously, and promoting collective over individual interests (Kylander & Stone, 2012).

These concepts work together to move brand past a revenue builder to an organization's identity – its lived mission. Brands with high integrity connect the mission with the identity of the organization and its members and instill a shared understanding of the why behind organizational actions and their importance. Brand ethics align internal organizational values to its external image and brand affinity is important because it builds authentic partnerships. The rise of social media has been a considerable influence on nonprofits leaders' desire for brand

democracy and trust in employees. This framework has not yet been tested for smaller organizations (Kylander & Stone, 2012; Barnhart, 2018).

Consumers are looking for brands that are authentic, trustworthy and friendly: People do not want to be sold anything, they want to be educated about a product or service that will be personally relevant. (“Trends: Customer Experience and Marketing Trends Ahead,” 2018) Additionally, reputation is highly influential, and people feel more confident when they confide in their peers. The idea is to build a lifetime customer which increases the probability of selling a product to 60%-70%. (“Trends: Customer Experience and Marketing Trends Ahead,” 2018) This concept is not static; rather organizations must remain dynamic with their personalized interactions with audiences (“Trends: Customer Experience and Marketing Trends Ahead,” 2018; Barnhart, 2018)

Marketing Trends

How people communicate and consume information have shifted with the onset of personal technology and marketing trends are adapting as such. Overall marketing has become customized, mobile, and in video format. (Barnhart, 2018) Additionally, intuitive and conversational experiences are on the rise online; helping ensure customer ease in engagement (“Trends: Customer Experience and Marketing Trends Ahead,” 2018). Online user experience and consistent branding are becoming a critical part of marketing as marketers begin to question the parameters of return on investment (ROI) as a measure for success. (“Trends: Customer Experience and Marketing Trends Ahead,” 2018) Marketing is trending toward building and maintaining authentic relationships with stakeholders. (“Trends: Customer Experience and Marketing Trends Ahead.” 2018; “Consumer Content Report,” 2017; Barnhart 2018)

Social Media Marketing

The mechanisms used to reach audiences drastically changed with the onset of the internet and web 2.0. Businesses had to find ways to adapt traditional strategies to encompass the new and ever-changing digital landscape. Social Media Marketing is now a free and paid platform employed by most major organizations as a marketing mechanism. Social media must be appropriately utilized based on overall marketing best practices to be effective: choose social platforms with a specific audience and goal in mind. The combination of evolving technologies at little to no cost is highly attractive to organizations, but having a few influential accounts is advantageous for organizations with limited resources.

Organizations should keep six general guidelines in mind when marketing in the social media landscape.

1. Build visibility and be a top persuader. Influencers and algorithm play a significant role in social media in terms of reach (Helmick, 2015).
2. Use a variety of distribution channels. Focusing singularly on social media would be counterproductive because it only does half of the job; it is imperative to drive audiences back to an organization's primary website. Lack of those additional links is a missed opportunity to engage an audience fully. (Hemlick, 2015; Koontz & Mon, 2015)
3. Reinvent social media strategy to reflect and emphasize value. Understanding organizational and audience values to underline social media marketing strategy assists in solidifying a bond with a 'buyer.' (Hemlick, 2015)
4. Market to inspire. Social media marketing encourages awareness of shared connection; the internet has given us a window into the lives of countless others, making it harder to

hide the bad and more manageable to make an impact for good (Hemlick, 2015; Singh & Diamond, 2015).

5. Engagement is an integral part of the social media landscape, produce authentic content. Honest, transparent organizations instill trust in audiences. Being a trusted source of information is a crucial aspect of relationship building (“Consumer Content Report,” 2017; Cassidy, 2017; Ibrisevic, 2018).
6. Know when to resist the next “shiny object.” Avoid falling into the “everyone is doing it” trap, choose mechanisms that make sense for target audiences. (Singh & Diamond, 2015; Mills, 2016)

Introducing Instagram Stories

Snapchat introduced the story feature in 2013, and since then the format has been adapted to various social media platforms. Instagram launched its story feature in late 2016. CEO Kevin Systrom credits the success of Snapchat Stories in part of the decision to adopt the story feature for his platform (Constine, 2016). “This is about a format, and how you take it to a network and put your own spin on it” Systrom stated (2016). Instagram stories permitted users to share in a familiar format without having to rebuild a network. (Constine, 2016). Instagram stories grew exponentially, reaching 150 million daily users within the first five months of its launch. It took Snapchat 6 years to reach the same usage. (McCracken, 2017). Now, the feature trumps Snapchat’s 191 million daily users with 400 million daily active users. (Price, 2018)

Systrom explains a lack of posts leading up to an interview with TechCrunch journalist Josh Constine as part of why he introduced Stories; he had not done anything in the past six days he thought was share-worthy, on a place where you “only get to see the highlights”(Constine, 2016). Instagram-worthy had escalated to overproduced snapshots of life; it put pressure on users

in terms of what was a quality post (Wagner, 2017). The Story feature added a real-life touch to Instagram's perfectly curated feeds. (Constine, 2016)(Wagner, 2017). It allowed users to share goofy, authentic content at higher frequencies without the guilt of clogging up their feed. There is a lot less pressure because there are no public comments or likes and other users cannot see how many people have viewed your stories (Constine, 2016). Instagram defines Stories as a tool that allows one to “share all the moments” of their day, “not just the ones you want to keep on your profile.”(Tillman, 2018; “Instagram Introduces Stories,” 2016).

Stories appear at the top of a user’s feed, in a slideshow format and only last 24 hours (unless the creator saves them as a ‘highlight’ on their main profile). Users can add effects (doodles, stickers, GIFS, text, geo-tags,etc.), music, and hashtags. Additionally, users can reply to friends’ stories while incorporating all the same features. Public Stories also post in the Search & Explore tabs if the user attached a location or hashtag, the content appears in Instagrams corresponding pages(Tillman, 2018). According to research done by Instagram, Stories also increase the amount of time people spend on the platform.

The Story’s Impact and Opportunity

The Story feature offers organizations the opportunity to share their perpetual story - their mission. By using the Story feature users do not have to worry about oversharing, in fact, Instagram promotes sharing as much as you want throughout the day stating “now you can share your highlights and everything in between (2016).” According to a 2018 Social Media Marketing Industry Report Instagram is now the 2nd most commonly used platform for marketers. Recently, a study showed that brands were getting three times more engagement (interacting with content rather than passively looking) on Instagram when compared directly to Facebook (Heine, 2017; Holmes, 2018). Currently, 2 million brands are telling their story with the Stories

feature, and more brands are spending on the vertical video format that fit the platform (Joseph, 2018; Clarke, 2019). Businesses created a third of Instagram's most viewed Stories.

Within a year of launching Stories, over 50% of business profiles produced an Instagram Story and one in five Stories has gotten a direct message from a user (“Binging Business Insights and Ads to stories,” 2017). Instagram Stories made it easy for organizations to share real-time stories with followers and measure performance with analytics within Business Tools offered on verified business profiles (“Binging Business Insights and Ads to stories,” 2017). This information can be beneficial for marketers to tailor content to target audiences.

Sponsored ads made their debut onto the Story in 2017. Statistics show 15-25% of Story Viewers swipe-up to follow a link to engage directly with a brands website (Slichnyi, 2018). Organizations that adopted the format early on were impressed with its success. Head of Digital Marketing at Mulberry UK said:

"We've been early adopters of Instagram Stories and were impressed by the reach and engagement. Our recent campaigns which included a stories link received 5X more clicks to site and engagement when compared to the average seen across our other social channels." (“Binging Business Insights and Ads to stories,” 2017).

ASOS Content and Engagement Director Leila Thabet and Airbnb Global Head of Social Marketing and Content Eric Toda have similar sentiments. Thabet stating “We’re eager to be able to showcase how Instagram Stories will help drive brand awareness and engagement amongst new audiences and continued international growth in 2017,” and Toda “Instagram provides us the perfect tools to build awareness around our recently launched product Airbnb Experiences.” (Binging Business Insights and Ads to stories”, 2017). Engagement is already high for Stories; therefore, organizations already having success with Stories are likely to have success with Instagram Story ads. To be successful, ads should appear like other content posted

to Stories; authentic and not overly produced to mitigate a user's reaction to move away from advertisements without engaging (Canning, 2018)

Before the addition of linkable pages for verified users, Instagram confined global reach to users in their network. At the time, the company only allowed a single link-out from the main page so using mechanisms to encourage full engagement (donations) with stories was difficult. In November 2017 Instagram added a feature to allow link-outs within stories. Organizations can now use this feature to prompt immediate actions. After Instagram incorporated the "Swipe-up" feature, nonprofits could drive audiences directly to their main website. In that same vein, Facebook announced in March (2019) it would be rolling out a sticker on Instagram Stories that will allow users to make direct donations later this year (Garun, 2019; Strub, 2019; Archibong, 2019). All funds raised go directly to the nonprofit as the company eliminated processing fees for Facebook Fundraisers in 2017 following the second annual Social Good forum ("Instagram Launches Donation Sticker for Stories," 2019). This move comes from Facebook's success with charitable giving tools which raised over \$1 billion for nonprofits. (Strub, 2019; Archibong, 2019).

Opportunities for Nonprofits

Stories were created to be more casual than the main feed, content does not have to be perfect to be shared. They are perfect for sharing; you had to be there moments in real time, and experimental content may not fit with the rest of your feed (Campbell, 2019). Nonprofits are positioned to leverage this feature with the wealth of content supporting their ongoing story: mission. Nonprofit organizations can use this tool to create higher visibility and humanity within their brand. For example, Instagram Stories can be used to tell in-depth stories and showcase

events as they unfold, show ‘behind the scenes’ content such as an exhibition installation process, give updates, and much more.

Instagram Stories create additional visibility for organizations. They are prioritized above the main feed at the top of followers’ home screen, signaling that a brand has posted something new (Haydon, n.d.; Glazer, n.d.; Ibrisevic, 2018). That is beneficial to help combat part of Instagram's algorithm, which filters feeds based on posts users will be most likely interested. If the target audience is a casual observer, there is no way to predict where the algorithm will sort one brand over another (Glazer, n.d).

In addition to tapping into the psychological benefits of Instagram Stories 24-hour life span, it also helps build audience trust through authenticity. Photos and Videos that have a limited time-span are known as ephemeral content, a significant component of experience in the social media ecosystem considering the tension surrounding permanent content (Chen & Cheung, 2019; Bayer, Ellison, Schoneneback & Falk, 2016). Instagram designed an outlet for this content launching stories. Ephemeral content is communication objects, including text, pictures, and videos are erased after being displayed for a limited period (Bayer et al., 2016). Although asynchronous, ephemeral social media shares properties with other traditional ephemeral communication such as face-to-face and phone conversations; messages are delivered to engaged audiences, interactions are private, and there are no stored records of these interactions (Bayer et al., 2016). The interactive overlays enable users to engage with the organizations content creators by responding to polling stickers and emoji rating scales. Ephemeral content has been tied to authenticity as social media users have become over stimulated with the overtly perfect material. Stackla’s 2017 Consumer Content Report found that

globally, 86% of people say that authenticity was one of the critical factors in deciding which brands to support (“Consumer Content Report,” 2017; Cassidy, 2017; Ibrisevic, 2018).

Chapter 3: Methods

Research Purpose

The purpose of this study is to understand the unique value of the Story as new social media engagement feature and its impact museum's overall marketing strategy. To understand the role of the Story feature and its potential impacts two research questions guided this study:

1. How are museums using new social media engagement features?
2. To what extent is the use of these features accomplishing intended marketing goals?

Research Approach

This study was a qualitative descriptive case study that looked at highlighted Instagram Stories from four museums and interviewed five museum professionals across four sites. Research sites were identified because of their current use of Instagram Stories. The study's purpose was to understand better how museums are using the Story and its additional features as well as its success in engaging online audiences. Therefore, highlighted Stories had to be analyzed not only for characteristics, but also intent, media type, and interactive overlays. This type of analysis was necessary to collect detailed information from each museum's Story accurately.

Methods

Instagram is a content-driven platform and therefore the content needed to be deconstructed to be understood. The most appropriate process to do this was by document analysis. Document analysis allowed for a detailed examination of each Story and a deeper understanding of what kind of content, media style and overlays museum professionals are using.

Semi-structured interviews with museum professionals complemented the data analytics and were conducted to explore further the thought process behind posting to Instagram Stories compared to the main feed and consider the perceived value of this feature and its impact from

the museum professionals' points of view. The interviews provided additional insight into posted content and the motivation to choose this format and additional overlays. The interview questions were focused around how these institutions use the Story feature on Instagram and its role in the institutions' marketing strategies, as well as the perceived opportunities of using the features to promote audience engagement (See Appendix A for the interview guide).

Site Selection

The four sites for this research study were selected based on five criteria. To be considered, organizations had to (1) have a verified Instagram account, (2) be actively using the Instagram Story feature, and (3) have a strong overall social media presence. (4) Organizations were chosen to ensure a variety of disciplines were represented, for a more holistic understanding of the use of the Story in the field. (5) Additionally, the museums chosen are considered large as defined by AAM's Museum Financial Report 2009. The institutional size was a secondary consideration as most museums actively using the Instagram Story feature at the time this study was conducted were larger organizations.

The Museum Financial Information (MFI) 2009 defines institution size in various ways, including (but not limited to) operating budget, staffing, and physical size (Merritt & Katz, 2009). For this study, operating budget and full-time equivalent staffing or FTE define museum size. MFI categorizes institution by operating budget size into four segments: under \$250,000, \$250,000 - \$1,000,000, \$1,000,000-\$4,000,000, and \$4,000,000+. Small museums (under \$250K) have between 1 and 3 FTE, mid-size museums (\$250,000-\$1,000,000) have between 5 and 11 FTE, large mid-size museums (\$1,000,000-\$4,000,000) have between 17 and 32 FTE (Merritt& Katz, 2009). A large museum would encompass the organizations with an operating budget larger than \$4,000,0000 and a staff between 62 and 156 FTE (Merritt & Katz, 2009).

Museum I

Museum I is a large zoological garden based in a large urban setting in the Northwest of the United States. At the time of this research study, this zoo had approximately 51.3K followers on Instagram and was considered a verified *Nonprofit Organization*. In addition to Instagram, this zoo currently has a blog attached to their main website and an active online presence, Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter accounts, and encourages users to connect with a hashtag.

Museum II

Museum II is a large art museum based in a large urban city in the Northeast United States. At the time of this research study, this art museum had approximately 290K Instagram followers and was considered a verified *Art Museum*. In addition to Instagram, Museum II is currently on Twitter, Facebook, and Tumblr. It encourages users from its webpage to ‘Stay Connected’ with a link that signs the user up for an e-newsletter.

Museum III

Museum III is a large natural history museum based in a large urban city in the Midwest United States. At the time of this research, this natural history museum had approximately 73K Instagram followers and was considered a verified *Nonprofit Organization*. In addition to Instagram, Museum III has two active Twitter accounts, Facebook, and YouTube.

Museum IV

Museum IV is a large botanical garden and National Historic Landmark site based in a mid-size urban city in the Northeast United States. At the time of this research study, this botanical garden had approximately 137K Instagram followers and was considered a verified *Landmark & Historical Place*. In addition to Instagram, this botanical garden has a Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Tumblr, and a blog attached to their main website.

Interview Participants

Interview participants were identified and recruited from the above sites chosen. To participate, museum professionals had to have decision-making authority in the marketing/social marketing department of the institution. A higher position in management was required so that the interviewee could answer questions around the institution's overall marketing strategy.

Data Collection

Interviews

Four interviews with museum professionals who worked in upper-level management were conducted. Participants were sent the questions before the interview upon request. Three phone interviews and a single in-person interview were conducted, and audio recorded by the researcher. Interviews averaged a length of 45 minutes to an hour and took place between February 15th through March 7, 2019. (See Appendix A for interview guide)

Document Analysis

No more than ten highlighted Stories or approximately 80 Story slides per organization were collected to obtain a consistent set of data across all the sites. A ten Story limit was chosen to avoid skewing data because while some museums highlighted many Stories (42), others only highlighted very few (7). Museums that did not highlight more than ten Stories had all of their content analyzed. For organizations that highlighted more than ten Stories, Stories were chosen at random from the organization's highlights reel and only disregarded in they had fewer than 5 or more 20 slides within a singular Story. This was the most appropriate method to ensure no one museums content made up the bulk of the data.

Data Analysis

Document Analysis

Story data from the sites was analyzed based on both platform and format capabilities at the time of this study.

<i>Table 1: Coding rubric used for the document analysis of Instagram Stories</i>		
Level		Description
Level 1		Story Characteristics
1	Stand-alone - One-off	Content is posted can stand alone, could be understood without additional context
2	Multi-slide	Story slides cannot stand alone and deliver full content, representative of a dialogue, Series of static images, including a combination of modified video and static images
3	Story	Video content that requires more than a single slide to achieve the intended outcome can be a combination of video and static images
Level 2		Slide Type (multiple)
1	Pop Culture/ Meme (Funny)	Content that shows includes references to pop culture, memes, etc. Includes content with the intention of humor
2	Behind the Scenes	Content that invites audiences into the unseen parts/jobs in the institution
3	Promotional	Content that promotes the museum, including events and programming. Promotional Stories can be posted prior to, or during the event. <i>Content is considered promotional if it is an Instagram Live Story posted after the event for recurring events and programs only.</i>
4	Educational	Content that has an educational purpose
5	Engaging	Content that provided to invite audience participation without additional context (asking a general question of your audience)

88	General	A general post as support to a longer story series, coded following the slide it supported.
Level 2.1		Media type
1	Plain Text	Content that is text only
2	Static Image	Content that includes a static photo
3	Video	Content that includes a video
4	Modified Video	Video content that involves a modified format, such as boomerang or superzoom
5	Live	Content that was initially been live recorded - Saved to the highlights reel
Level 2.2		Overlays and Interactive features
1	Text	Content that includes text overlays <i>Excludes Plain Text Stories</i>
2	Location	Content includes location mention sticker
3	@Mention	Content @mentions another Instagram profile
4	#hashtag	Content includes a hashtag
5	GIF	Content includes a GIF
6	Poll	Content includes interactive polling feature. This is a real-time interactive; highlighted Stories show the result of the poll
7	Countdown	Content includes the countdown feature
8	Swipe-Scale	Content includes an interactive scale that allows audiences to swipe and rate how much they agree with something. The user will find out the average response after engaging with the feature. This is a real-time interactive; highlighted Stories only show the result of the scale.
9	Swipe-Up Link	Content includes a link-out source to the organization's main webpage or blog. Links are active on highlighted Stories
10	Stickers/Emoji	Content includes non-animated sticker overlays

Semi-Structured Interviews

Interviews were analyzed in context with one another to understand how different museums approach Instagram Stories and utilize it as an audience engagement marketing tool. The interviews allowed for insight into the process that institutions go through when posting stories on Instagram and the perceived value of the feature.

Limitations

Although a group of research sites was carefully selected to represent many types of museums, the findings cannot be applied to the field at large. Instead, the conclusions drawn from this research can provide examples to inspire other museums. A detailed and specific coding rubric was created for coding Story slides; however, there is a margin of error to be considered especially when coding promotional material. The researcher was limited in her knowledge of museum practices, marketing practices, events, exhibits and programs and therefore made educated assumptions about Story intention regarding promotional material. If there were additional time, it would be ideal to have another researcher code the Story Slides to ensure the reliability of the results.

Additionally, due to the nature of funding for nonprofits, there is little field wide standardization in terms of organizational spending. Organizations that met the criteria for this research study were not using the same companies to analyze data if they paid companies to analyze that data at all. Additionally, some analytics companies employed by these organizations did not measure Story data. Any documentation on data supporting reach and impressions, taps forward, backward, exits, next story, swipe-ups, and replies, was requested from each site. Three sites responded to the request and supplied supporting documents; Museum III did not. The documents supplied by organizations had little useful data for cross-analysis in this study. With

no additional information, the analytics appeared as vanity metrics and could not be deconstructed further.

Finally, the Story format has only been around for six years. The format was launched by Snapchat in 2013. While there is some research done around Snapchat as a social media marketing tool, the researcher found little empirical data around the use of the Story specifically. Most of the information was supported by blogs, Press releases, and the like. Instagram adopted the Story feature in 2016; this study is meant to address the gap in the literature around the potential of using Instagram Stories as a marketing mechanism for nonprofit organizations. With no other studies use for cross-analysis there is little data to suggest success or failure. There is only data to support the continued use of the format and suggest further studies to discover its true potential in marketing for nonprofit organizations.

Chapter 4: Results and Discussion

This study was framed as a qualitative descriptive study that answered two research questions through document analysis of highlighted Instagram Stories and semi-structured interviews with museum professionals from four museums. In total, 33 highlighted Stories (303 total Story slides) were coded and analyzed for this study. Each Museum highlighted a different range of Stories (6 - 42). Due to the variety in range, no more than ten highlighted stories (per museum) were analyzed to avoid skewing data. For Museums III and IV that had larger highlight reels, ten stories were selected at random to mitigate researcher bias. The data, collected from four museums, was analyzed first by individual institution type and then as a whole data set. In exploring analysis by institution type, it was evident museums were highlighting similar types of stories. By looking across all of the data a more holistic view of the stories is achieved. The following chapter summarizes the results of this research study, organized by research question, followed by themes and sub-themes that arose from data analysis.

RQ1: How are museums using new social media engagement features?

Types of Stories

Before diving into the details of how museum professionals are currently using Instagram Stories for marketing, it is necessary to understand the Stories posted by museums in their own context. This study found that across the four sites the museums are primarily posting multi-slide content (78%) in any combination of media: static images and/or video. Stand-alone content was the least common type of story posted, and only represented 7 of the 33 total highlighted Story reels. These museums are mostly sharing content on Stories that requires a series of slides to deliver full content. (Fig. 1) Additionally, Stories are made up of primarily (73%) static images compared to video and modified videos (boomerang, superzoom, etc.) combined. (Fig. 3)

Figure 2

Less than 25% of Story Slides can stand alone and deliver full content (n=33)

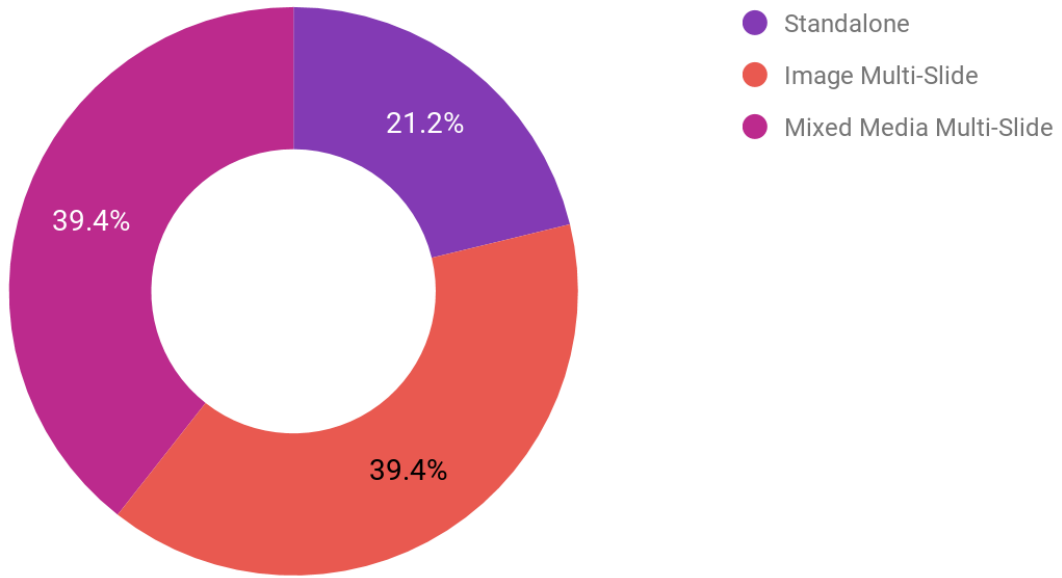
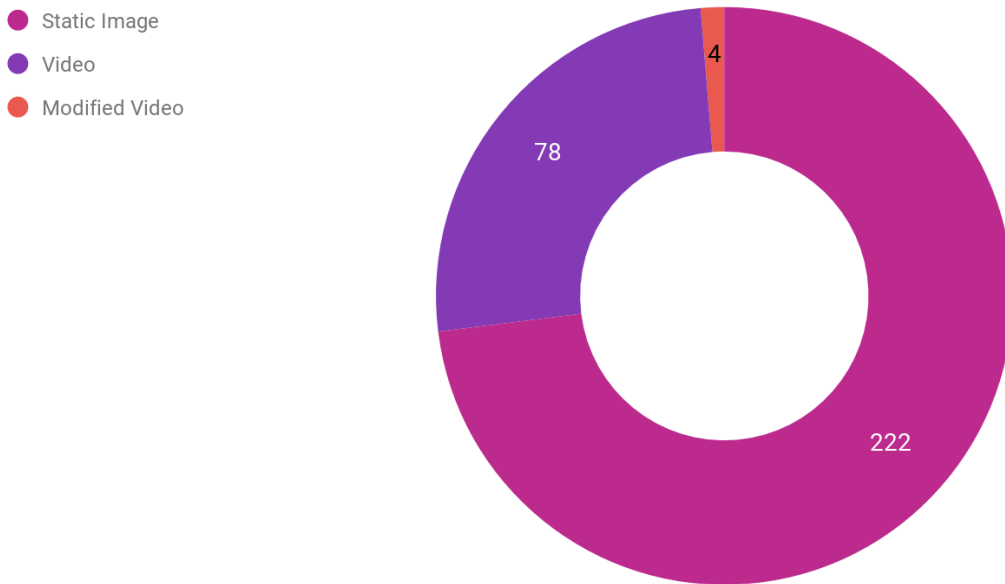


Figure 3

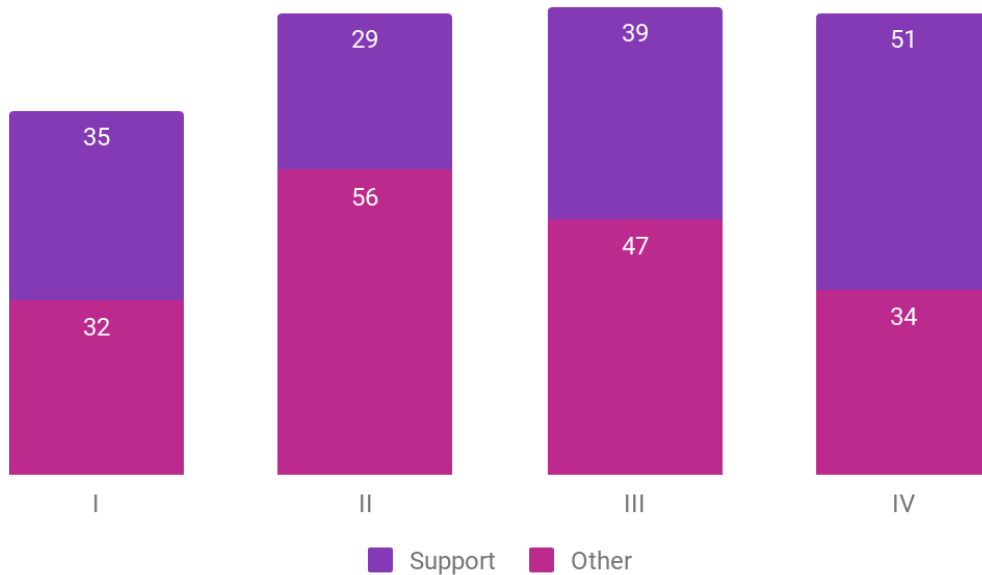
There was an overwhelming use of static image slides (73%) within Instagram Stories across all four sites (n=303)



The Stories from across all four museums were analyzed for type according to six categories: General Supportive Content, Memes, Educational, Engaging, Promotional, and Behind the Scenes. Please see appendix for coding rubric reference.

Figure 4

About half of the story slides posted by museums are used for supporting content (n=303)



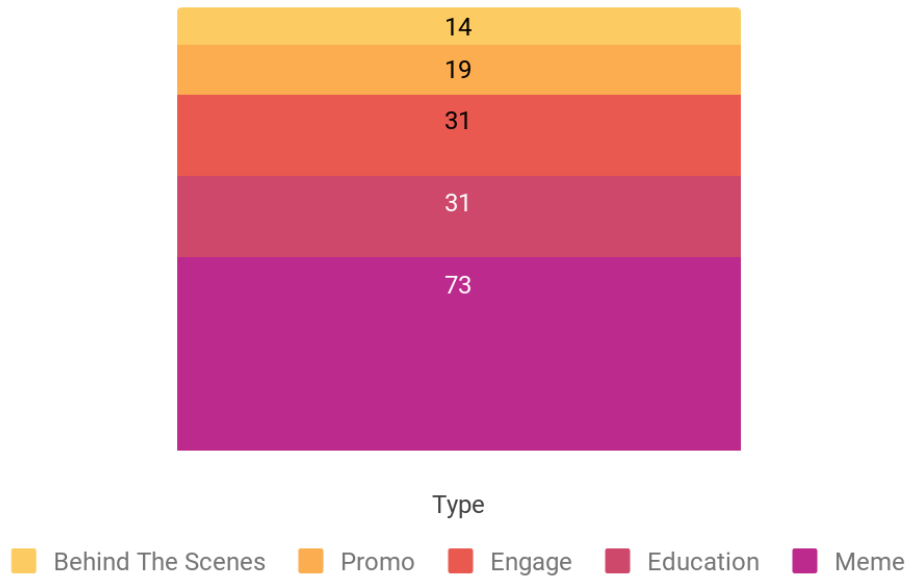
Almost half of Story slides consisted of supportive content needed to create multi-slide stories.

(Fig. 4)

Outside of supporting content, the four museums in this study posted mostly memes, pop culture, or something that had humorous intentions (i.e. a pun). (Fig. 5)

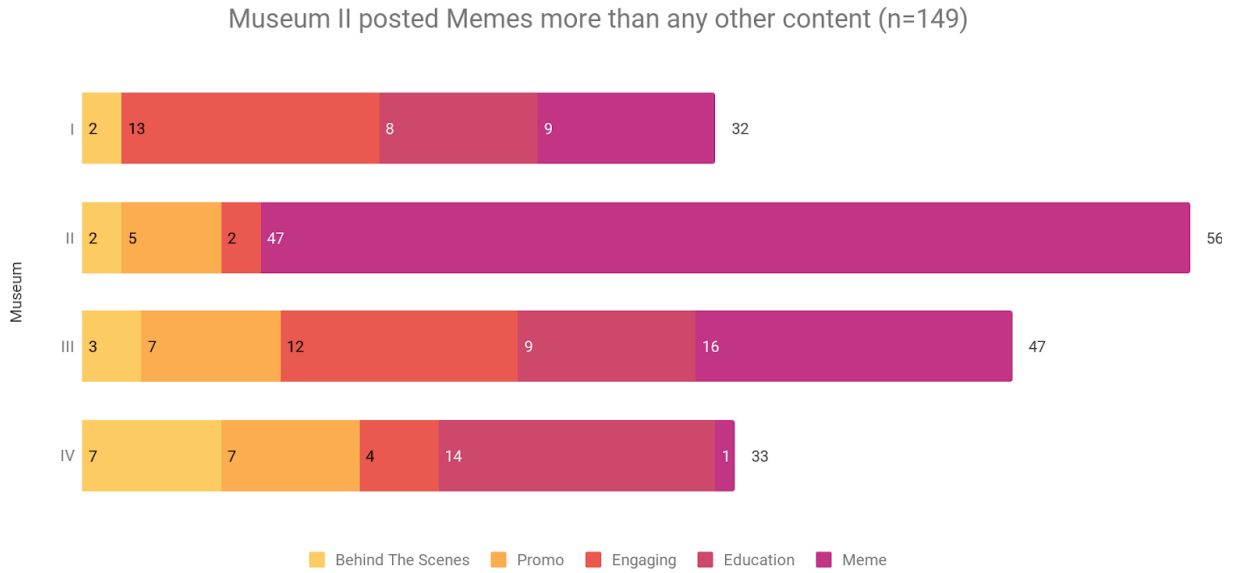
Figure 4

After memes, content was mostly split between educational and generally engaging. (n=149)



Museum II was the only organization that did not have any Story Slides with educational content. Additionally, Museum II posted memes more often than any other museum in this study, using them in more than half (58%) of all Story Slides they posted. Adversely, Museum IV posted almost no Memes and focused more heavily on posting educational content compared to other museums in this study. (Fig. 6)

Figure 6



Text (84%) and was most commonly used overlay across all sites. Text often (35%) appeared on slides with additional overlays. However, it was the sole overlay used in 49% of Story Slides across sites. Additionally, Text appeared in a similar frequency across individual sites Stories. Location, the swipe-scale, the countdown, and the polling feature were used least, combined they only appeared in 7% of all Story Slides. (Fig. 7)

Figure 7

Nearly 85% of all Story Slides had text overlays, but used other overlays in similar frequencies (n=303)

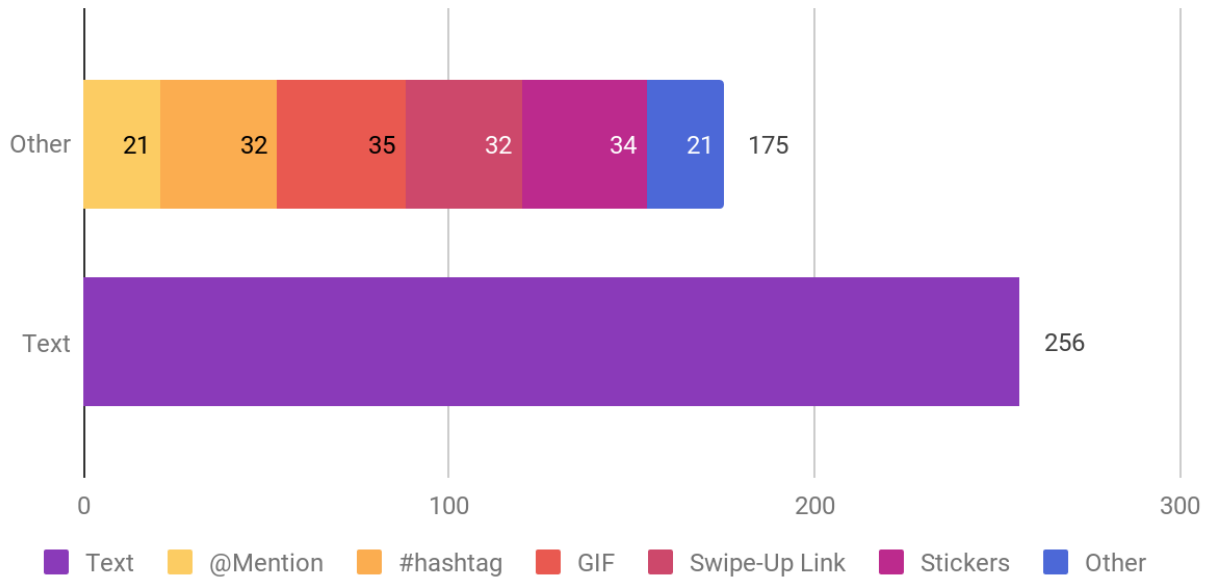
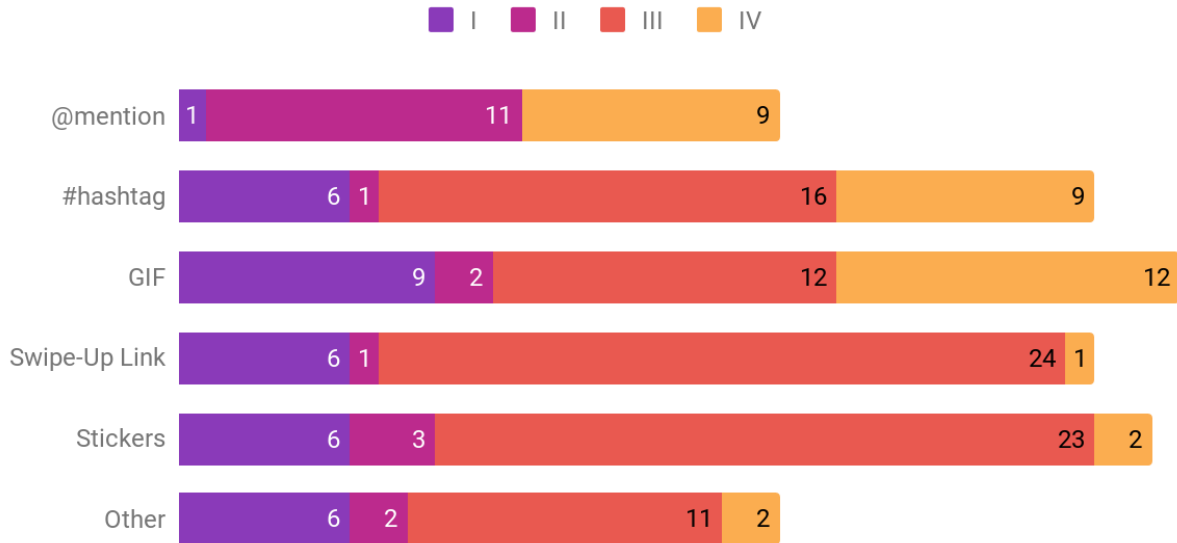


Figure 8

Museums III used a variety of overlays more frequently than other museums in this study. (n=303)



Social Media Content

To understand Instagram Stories role in consideration to broader social media landscape for organizations, participants were asked to describe the general guidelines for posting content on social media and who had jurisdiction over these platforms. All museums interviewed mentioned that their social media efforts had to be on brand and platform-appropriate with Museum III explicitly stating, “I mean I think most generally we just always want to make sure that what we're putting out there is truly representative of our brand.” Museum IV mentioned having strict guidelines for posting content to Instagram’s main feed due to its visual nature; that not only did individual content have to be visually appealing; but they wanted to maintain a well-developed overall feed as well.

Interviews with five museum professionals revealed that four of the five participants had most of the organic control over social channels. Museums I, II, and IV mentioned having a rather small social media team. Museum I had a team of four, the participant from Museum II is currently the only staff member on the social team, and Museum III mentioned

I am the only person with social media in my title at this institution which sometimes feels a little crazy, but I work very closely with my colleague X who is our digital content and engagement manager and X has handle of the blog and then works on a lot of content for the website.

Overall, participants identified social media as a valuable tool for their organizations. The free platform allows organizations to more dynamic and authentic with the content they share.

Additionally, participants felt supported by senior leadership in their social media use, and this support has reinforced the value they see in using these platforms. Furthermore, participants mentioned that to be in alignment with other marketing efforts (discussed later), social media efforts had to be on brand and platform specific. Platform specificity important because it has ties to user demographics and target audience.

Instagram Story Content

When asked to describe the criteria used to select content to post to Instagram Stories museum professionals did not identify anything specific. Most participants mentioned the timeliness of the material in relation to the Story. For example, Museum II said more significant programs got live posting treatment, while Museums I and IV mentioned timeliness in terms of spontaneity. Those participants both used the terminology “fun little thing/event happening” with discussing criteria. Museum III outlined posting timely content in relation to what was currently with their organization. For example, during a significant exhibition renovation, staff posted many stories previewing the new suite as well as guiding visitors along the routes to get to this new exhibition highlighting ‘fun things’ along the way. Museum II and III also mentioned

posting content around holidays, both official and unofficial, in relation to timeliness and relevance. Participants from Museum I and II mentioned utilizing the logistics of the story feature while discussing criteria, namely when content needed multiple slides to achieve its desired outcome.

Additionally, compared to other social media posts Instagram Stories are getting used with less frequency. All museum professionals stated that Stories were getting posted an average range of one to three times a week. Museum IV said “probably at most twice a week. It’s really depends what kind of events are going on.” Participants from Museum II and III identified a link between small staff size and human resources and scope of duties.

RQ2: To what extent are emerging social media engagement features reaching their intended marketing goals?

Social Media Marketing

To better understand how and why museums are using Instagram Stories in conjunction with other social media marketing efforts, participants from all museums were asked to describe the value they saw social media add to their institutions’ marketing traditional strategies. Participants from all museums mentioned that social media was extremely valuable as an additional communication tool but differed slightly in identifying what the nature of the value. However, the value of social media was intertwined with the support of senior leadership for all organizations interviewed.

Museum I stated that social media was the crux of communication for their organization at this point, that most of their traditional media have made the transition into the online form. “We would not be able to function as we do without it.” Museum III emphasized that autonomy over social media channels has allowed their organization to foster relationships between their online audience and natural history. Additionally, Museum III stated that social media has also

helped shift their communication style to better align with the brand repositioning that their organization underwent last year. Museum II and Museum IV mentioned the flexibility social media allotted them to share more about their organizations. Traditional marketing's ties to ROI restrict what and how organizations promote and budget for. Because social media platforms offer free real estate in terms of a business profile, organic social was identified as a way to share interests with audiences, instead of pushing audiences, as Museum IV stated, into "buy, buy, buy" buying a product. For example, Museum II stated:

...because only the big exhibition or only the bigger programs get budget. So, we kind of have to use that budget wisely and then we have to use human resources wisely. Social media has been a way to kind of get the word out on all the other amazing things that we do. So yeah in that way it's been invaluable for all of that.

Additionally, Museum IV emphasized that social media has helped with cross-departmental communication internally and externally. Opening these lines of communication was essential to the success of Museum IV's current platforms. Just recently the organization had to revamp their strategy to incorporate stricter guidelines around posting content to ensure all departments were using the same messaging. All social content is now filtered through the marketing department and supported with social media best practices. This shift allowed for departments to display their content on feeds that have higher viewership effectively, and therefore grow their audiences.

All participants expressed they felt support by senior leadership when it came to their roles and using social media and mentioned that they either had or are currently witnessing a shift in perspectives as social media use has become more ingrained in society. Museum I, which has already experienced this shift, expressed that current leadership was "fairly savvy" with their social platforms and strategy. Museums II, III, and IV are currently undergoing this shift of perspectives and mentioned that although senior leadership may not fully understand social

media, they understood enough to support the efforts being made. For example, staff from Museum IV said,

And that has taken a little time to get our you know older blue-blooded executives to come over on but they've seen the value in it, and because our passions are being shared with others the authenticity that we're putting out there now, that has gone far beyond what we would be able to do with traditional marketing.

Museum III explained further that this support and trust allowed for freedom in cultivating engagement strategies, saying “I am kind of amazed with how little I have to get approved and how much trust there is for what I am doing.” Staff said this trust and autonomy was true of the whole marketing department; they were “really given the freedom to run with ideas and see where they go.” The participant went on to explain how this freedom with social media helped cultivate relationships between audiences and natural history by positioning themselves to peak people's' interest. The social media team works closely with the museum's scientists and curators to ensure that content is not only engaging but scientifically accurate. Staff from the museum mentioned that it was imperative for information to be verified not only for their brand identity and the more significant field-wide trend of trust in museums.

Organizational Marketing Strategies

To better understand if Instagram Stories were an effective marketing mechanism, participants were asked to share more about their organization's chief marketing strategies including the use of social media. Therefore, the purpose of this question was to gain a deeper understanding of Instagram Stories' alignment with larger nonprofit marketing goals and its role within the organizational strategy.

Organizations interviewed encompassed the aspects of best practices in marketing for nonprofit organizations. When asked to describe their organization's overall marketing strategies to engage audiences, participants answered that their efforts had to be on brand and campaign or

audience specific. For example, staff from Museum IV frankly noted, “I mean we have different tactics for different channels obviously.” Additionally, Museum III mentioned the diversity of mechanisms in their arsenal:

So, we've got things from billboards and outdoor advertising to digital ads as well as social email marketing, paid and organic social with that team. So, we kind of hit the gamut of all different types of marketing so we kind of see what works best for each individual campaign.

Three organizations identified social media as one of the most successful tools for driving engagement. They mentioned at least one, or a combination of the following three social media platforms as the most successful: Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. When identifying these platforms, each organization explained the relationship to the audience. That relationship affected the messaging that went on platforms. For example, the participant from Museum IV broke down their platforms as follows:

Facebook tends to be more core audience. You know throughout history tends to be an older audience who aren't as engaged. Our younger audiences to engage with us on Twitter and to some extent Instagram. I like to call Instagram a bread and circuses kind of network for us. We don't do a lot of heavy communication there, although with Instagram Stories we started engaging a little bit more with that.

Museum I took a different approach to this question and discussed strategy. Two essential strategies outlined were audience first perspective and peer to peer communication. The participant highlighted the value of audience first perspective in comparison to their discipline, “We love animals; we're talking about animals, they are sort of the stars of the content we provide. But it's really about; it's about the visitor, or the audience member themselves.” A peer to peer communication style was important, crucial for relationship building or ‘customer service’ being educational institutions. The participant emphasized they never want to lecture at their audience, instead share information and knowledge. Additionally, the participant mentioned

they felt it was important to open up various opportunities for audiences to engage, with the baseline for engagement “just reminding folks animals exist every day.”

Museum III is the only organization that outright stated larger marketing goals in consideration to social media when talking about strategy. Participants mentioned it was more about raising awareness and getting engagement than a hard sell to audiences, stating “we’re really trying to get people hooked on the story or the themes and bring them in and get them interested.” Staff explained further that if they considered their marketing goals into two broad categories, growing attendance [raising awareness and getting engagement] and growing revenue [hard sells to audiences], social media is used to leverage interests in the former.

It is hard to determine whether Instagram Stories are reaching their intended goals because there was little anecdotal evidence of what each organizations’ marketing goals were. Additionally, this study did not call for museums’ strategic plans for document analysis. It is clear each organization had a variety of campaigns with aligning goals going on at almost all times. This made it hard for participants to think specifically about individual goals while being asked to think holistically about their organizations marketing strategies within the time constraints of the interviews. However, there are connections to be made concerning marketing goals between the perceived value of posting stories, how organizations saw Stories as an engagement tool for marketing, and the types of Stories to which audiences were responding best.

Value

When asked to describe the value of using Instagram Stories, staff from museums had slightly different perspectives.

Museums II, III, and IV mentioned the perceived value concerning their growing guidelines around posting Stories. For example, Museum IV said “we’re still in the experimental status of using Instagram stories. I think some value for us [of Instagram stories] has not necessarily been pinned down to the degree that our [Instagram] main feed has been.” While they are still articulating the value of the Story format, staff indirectly mentioned it had been valuable in appeasing departmental needs while not jeopardizing the content on their main feed. The marketing department is still vetting content, but the participant mentioned they have been loose on guidelines around how departments use Stories. Additionally, staff from Museum IV made a connection between the use of Story overlays and perceived value saying “in terms of all these overlays we haven’t been using them near as much as we should.”

Museum III mentioned Stories were valuable in remaining relevant among their current social media audiences; they noted “...it’s obvious that the platforms are prioritizing that functionality. It’s obvious that people are using it. So, it’s important that we are there too.” Additionally, Museum III mentioned Instagram Stories allowed them to have more fun in comparison to content posted on their main feed, which were described as “a lot more fact-based and descriptive.” Staff stated there were more “outtakes” and increased opportunities for engagement with the use of interactive overlays.

Museum II mentioned that the Story proved to be a valuable tool for keeping their main feed free of excessive content while still giving the viewer FOMO by telling a full story. Staff from Museum II said it was a useful feature for sharing content with different aspects of a program or event because the content disappears, stating “we don’t want to clog up our feed with a ton of people dancing or doing art making.” They explained further that this content would not do well on the main feed because it was not the most visually appealing, but it was ideal for

stories because it was showing people engaging with the museum in a different way. However, staff from Museum II mentioned the ability to share and save meme and pop culture content indirectly when discussing Story value. They mention that although sharing that kind of content is still controversial among some audiences because they “are not a meme account,” it has been successful with other audiences because of the relevance and the light-hearted nature. The museum created a Story highlight reel of art memes for these audiences, which allows them to appeal to another audience without disturbing their full Instagram following.

Museum I mentioned it was the link out feature that made Instagram Stories invaluable to their organization. Staff stated that when you are asking your audience to engage, especially in a more extensive campaign, it must be easy for them to do so, “...without those links, you’re asking way too much of your audience.” Additionally, the staff mentioned the other overlays available in Stories allowed for higher engagement, but qualified that engagement value as “shifty” stating it was better to get “nine people to visit the link” because they are more likely to follow through with action than the “500 people who do the little swipe thing.” Staff from Museum I also mentioned it was a valuable tool for connecting with audiences on a more intimate and authentic level. Much like participants from Museum III mentioned the Story as an outlet for more fun content in comparison to a more educational feed, Museum I said,

We’re still an educational organization. So, we try to not get too cheeky on the general feed, but the story, that can get away with murder. So, I do. And so, I use those GIFs kind of at the intimate level that I think you know fans sort of nod at, and you get tons of feedback on that.

After initially being asked to identify the value their organization saw in using the Story feature, Participants continued to make indirect statements about the perceived value of Instagram Stories throughout the remainder. Museum professionals indirectly identified using the Story feature to post content described as something that would otherwise fail on their main

feed was as the most valuable part of using Stories. Participants generally described ‘failing’ content as less produced or visually pleasing, but interesting in comparison to content that would be posted on the main feed. This value falls in line with the Story features intended purpose of creating a space for users to post content without the pressure of adding to their perfectly curated feeds. This ‘failing’ content was used to cultivate more authentic relationships with audiences with the comfort of knowing the content was not permanent.

Audience Engagement

When asked to describe how the Story feature was a useful tool for audience engagement, Organizations all had different ways in which they understood the Story as an engagement mechanism for marketing. Museum I mentioned two ways that Story is used as a marketing function. First, the staff indicated it was useful for promoting special events by creating a more intimate feeling invitation with an embedded link as opposed to opening a mass email, that the link-out feature was “key for pushing any events.” Additionally, the staff mentioned doing very little promotion of education programs with the Story feature, but it was a useful tool to gauge interest and “get people pumped” rather than to point to ticket sales.

Staff from Museum II said that it was useful for their organization to be more playful and open for audiences. The participant mentioned their museum was intimidating for several reasons, including its vast, comprehensive content, the physical building itself, and the location on the top of a hill. The museum used Stories to combat stereotypes that surround art museums and show “the museum is for everyone; art is for everyone.” The participant mentioned part of their strategy in using memes is to show,

You don’t need to have an art history degree to come in; you can literally walk through with your friends and create meme captions to the artwork you see. That’s fine. That’s a perfectly acceptable way to behave in a museum.

Like Museum II, participants from Museum III also mentioned the Story feature was useful for their organization to be more playful and less formal in the way they present information. Staff situated their use of the format in terms of how they believe audiences are using general social media in relation to the social climate,

I think people are just looking for a laugh and some relief sometimes and so stories are a way in which people can just sort of feel that human connection especially with a brand or an institution they can get a peek into sort of the less formal side of things.

Staff emphasized that though the content posted was more informal and fun, it was still on brand. The material was not “funny just to be funny” it was crafted intentionally to be something playful and entertaining, but also to be relevant to the mission of the museum.

Museum IV said that the Story feature is the best way to push their experts to the forefront and put a face to their organization. Similar to what participants from Museum III had said, Staff mentioned that this related to their higher social media goals of building their brand authority and gives the organization a chance to connect on a deeper human level with audiences. The museum mentioned it featured very few humans on their main feed because that content does not perform as well. Staff stated,

with Instagram Stories it’s a little bit more of a direct way to get our experts out there and humanize the garden and just kind of share with our reasonably large Instagram audience that we are more than just pretty pictures [of plants].

Audience Reactions

When asked what Stories got the best reaction from online audiences, participants mentioned that it was content that was funny and behind the scenes content. Museum III said “It’s definitely the things that are funnier honestly. I think people see stories about being more impromptu and less formal and less produced.” Museum I also mentioned their audiences’ capacity to entertain and support less produced, humorous content on the Story. The participant

mentioned “the hierarchy of beautiful imagery doesn’t seem to matter on Stories as much as it would in the feed” and goes on to explain this statement with comparison about posting a picture of a duck and the phenomenon of the internet’s reaction to birds. The offered only anecdotal evidence

...on Stories though people have the capacity to entertain ducks for some reason, so I don’t know if it’s because it’s this flip and cheeky thing where they’re like ‘Oh that’s funny that the zoo posted this little duck.’ I don’t know what that it, but it’s real.

Museum II mentioned that when they recently posted a stream of *Arrested Development* memes in conjunction with the shows return, the content did very well. The participant countered there are little ways to gauge success for each Story but supported this claim with anecdotal evidence “...I really see comments back is like the funny pop culture humor kind of ones.”

Museum II also mentioned posting content about other important pop culture ‘holidays,’ such as *Park’s and Recreations* “Galantines Day” and October 3. ‘Mean Girls Day.’

Staff from Museum IV mentioned behind the scenes content that was slightly more informative performed best among their audiences. Staff from different departments, namely the exhibitions team and the horticulture department, post updates from in the field. The staff mentioned it was an audience “who is more interested in what’s actually going on as opposed to just extras.” The exhibitions team posts “interesting little factoids” with each clip and the horticulture team will post updates on exciting things the average visitor doesn’t usually see: strange things happening with various plants or the first blooms of the season.

When comparing interviews to the actual Stories each organization was posting, it is evident organizations are highlighting, and therefore posting, content that is performing best with their current audiences. For example, Museum II posted more Memes than any other type of content. This is representative of their goals to fight art museum stereotypes; to be more playful

and open to audiences. In contrast, Museum IV posted almost no Memes, but more substantial educational content. This is in line with their brand personality and justifies the ‘behind the scenes’ content to the organization identified getting the best reaction from their audiences. When interviewed, Museums I and III outlined stricter strategy around stories than other museums in this study. These organizations had the most even spread of posted content and interactive overlays when analyzed. Based on the scope of this study, it is hard to further determine the relationship between the criteria for posting story content outlined by museum professionals and the physical Story Slides posted. It is safe to assume that because professionals opted to highlight the Stories analyzed by the researcher, the stories met greater organizational criteria and standards. Museum IV is the only organization that mentioned the highlighted almost all their Stories “even if the Story is terrible” to appease the needs of other departments who want to check off the ‘we are on Instagram’ box because they think it will bring them marketing success. Though that is the current climate of Stories for Museum IV, the staff mentioned that in the next year they plan on developing guidelines “around what [content] really works for us in terms of Stories” and then using a process similar to how they post other content for departments.

Additionally, Museums professionals mentioned seeing no real limitations in using the feature as of yet. Museum II stated the only limitation they seen with the format is lower visibility compared their main feed. Museum III said that the popularity of some of their posts had cause an influx of user messages and being able to manage an influx of messages on Instagram was not the simplest. The participant mentioned “It’s funny the Stories are great for engagement but they are not great for facilitating a back and forth conversation per say”

One major limitation this study discovered was the Story's ability to be directly shared on other platforms. Instagram allows direct shares to Facebook, Twitter, and Tumblr. When asked about institutional policies regarding sharing Stories simultaneously on multiple platforms, participants whose organizations had tried using this functionality (I, II, IV) expressed the formatting issues involved. For example, Museum IV said:

So direct sharing we don't really do currently. If I had to, I would do it. But I think it looks a little odd to share to feeds that don't really focus on that. Obviously, most people are watching on mobile, so it's fine.

Staff from Museum I also mentioned formatting issues, but highlighted functionality issues with direct sharing across sites as the most significant pitfall. Notably significant problems with direct sharing to Facebook, Instagram's parent site:

So, I have to do everything on its own, unless it's just an image like one thing says like 'this is a duck.' That would work, but none of the functions on my Instagram platform translates to Facebook. The links don't work on Facebook. The polling does not work on Facebook; the hashtags don't work on Facebook. So, there's no point that there's no reward for me to do that, there's no benefit. So, I don't do it.

Staff from all museums mentioned they would rather take the extra step and recreate content to ensure it was formatted correctly if they believed it was worth sharing across platforms. Museum I and IV stated that 'worthy' content would be adapted for Stories from the main feed or instead posted directly. For example, Museum I stated "usually at that point if it's that good of a video that I want to share it I'm just going to post it. Like that's the post". Museum II incorporated the idea of brand identity stating,

They don't format right. I'd rather just take the extra step and post it directly on the different channels. Again, it's an extra step but I think it looks nicer and as a brand I'd it rather looks a little more polished than say I would care if I was a person. So, we don't do any of the direct sharing, but sometimes I will recreate the content if it's performing well.

Museum I referred back to functionality issues while also mentioning that if they believed the content was good enough to share in multiple places, it would simply be the original post,

And again, just the fact that it actually doesn't function at all the same kind of negates its purpose. So usually what I'll do if there's something amazing I'll say the wolves are howling and I catch it I might post it to Facebook stories but usually at that point if it's that good of a video that I want to share it I'm just going to post it. Like that's the post. I have not seen the rewards yet for Facebook stories because those functions don't work.

Staff from Museum III had not yet tried these sharing capabilities. They mentioned that staff size and capacity had an impact on their social media strategy but saw the potential use of direct sharing stories:

I have been toying with the idea of experimenting with what stories how they do and how they work on Facebook. But honestly, because we have so few people on the social media team is just like the question of resources and capacity. So right now, we just share Instagram. But I do think that we'll probably see in general more and more brands and institutions using story functionality across all social platforms.

Museums are in the initial phases of using Instagram Stories. Therefore, it is difficult to precisely measure if Stories are accomplishing their intended goals for these museums; however, the data suggest a positive relationship between the Stories, museums intent, and the potential to engage audiences more deeply.

Overall participants found the Story feature to be a valuable addition to their social media marketing tools. It allowed them to be more human and authentic in engaging audiences, and audiences seem to be responding well to current efforts. The Story feature enabled organizations to post more content with less stress it will conflict with the main feed and other marketing efforts. While each organization's main feed has strict guidelines around content, Stories are ephemeral which allows for fun and spontaneity. Posting Stories enables museums to let go of perfection and make deeper human connections audiences with authentic content. Organizations using the Story feature understand its value and relevance not only among audiences but within the social media ecosystem.

Chapter 5: Conclusions

The purpose of this research study was to understand the unique value new social media engagement features add to a museum's overall marketing strategy. Data were collected using a case study design through semi-structured interviews and document analysis of four institutions. This chapter summarizes the conclusions from the study, situating the findings within the literature, and suggest further implications for practitioners and researchers.

Conclusions

The findings of this study suggest that museums are using Instagram Stories in alignment with the feature's intended purposes, but they are not utilizing the additional overlays and interactive elements to the full extent of their capabilities to engage audiences. Engagement requires that museums make an effort to not only use the feature but to use it with more intentionality. Merely using the format does not guarantee engagement or qualify as a success. However, the museums in this study are in the initial, experimental phases of using the Story feature with plans around layering other strategies in the coming years.

The museum professionals in the study all discussed the importance of using Stories as an outlet for content that would otherwise fail on the main feed, either because it was less polished or not of high visual quality. They mentioned being able to share more behind the scenes and updates from events, programs, and current field research. Participants also said it allowed them to show their organizations humanity, through posting content that contained more (1) human bodies, and (2) humorous material and relevant pop culture. The four museums sampled in this study demonstrated that (outside of supporting content necessary to create multi-slide Stories) they posted mostly memes, pop culture, or something that had humorous intentions to generate

authenticity and help build relationships. Memes occurring as the most common type of Story post explains text being the most frequently used overlay (85%).

Instagram Stories were the perfect place for content that was not visually worthy of Instagram's main feed and would potentially impact the marketing performance of other content. This falls in line with what Instagram Co-founder Kevin Systrom said about introducing Stories to Instagram in the first place; he hadn't done anything interesting enough in the last few days to post to a permanent feed where you "only get to see the highlights." (Constine, 2016a) The literature suggests Stories are a place to add a real-life touch to Instagram's perfectly curated feeds (Constine, 2016a; Constine 2016b; Wagner, 2017). Instagram defines Stories as a place to "share all the moments" of one's day, "not just the ones you want to keep on your profile." ("Introducing Instagram Stories", 2016; Tillman, 2018).

The literature suggests that Instagram Stories short-lived nature and built-in interactive features make it ideal for engaging audiences on that platform by tapping into the psychological nature of the user. These features fall in line with what McMahon (2015) identifies as cognitive divers in social media popularity. Instagram Stories 24-hour lifespan increases their novelty and further encourages frequent profile check-ins by rewarding users with never before seen content they would potentially miss if they didn't check in daily. People prefer new stimulating information (McMahon, 2015); therefore, using the story to post 'subpar' content in higher frequency without overwhelming the main feed is beneficial for museums. Users can only access Story content after the initial post if it has been saved to the highlights reel by the organization. While they can see the highlighted Story content, the swipe-link is the only interactive overlay that functions. All other interactive features display the results of the

completed overlay. Therefore, while it is beneficial to highlight Story Slide's with link-outs, the other interactive overlays lose their psychological influence.

The interactive overlays allow a user to reflect their values in relation to a larger social group. This concept ties into the idea of *self-expression* as a motivation identified for sharing content onto one's feed ("Social Media And Psychology -- Why Do People Share?" 2015). Engaging with interactives that directly ask a user's opinion has the potential to reflect their reasons to share on social media: to show who they are and what they care about. The museums in this study only used all other overlays (outside of text) in 57% of total Story slides analyzed. These interactive overlays open up different avenues of communication between users and museums. Without utilizing more overlays, interactive overlays specifically, the museums in the study miss opportunities to (1) build repeat visitors and (2) make connections to audiences who share the organization's values.

The swipe-up link is currently the most useful overlay on Instagram to drive audiences to an organization's main page. As the literature around best practices for social media marketing suggests, "Lack of those additional links is a missed opportunity to engage an audience fully." (Helmick, 2015; Koontz & Mon, 2014). Verified Instagram accounts can only have one link in their bio and are unable to embed links into the content posted on the main feed. (Instagram press?) At the time of this study, only 10% of Story Slides analyzed for this study had direct link outs. Not using these links are a missed opportunity by these organizations to drive traffic.

Additionally, museums are in the initial phases of using the Story feature, and its evolving development has made it difficult to determine the capabilities and limitations of the format entirely. Therefore, staff from museums were not able to fully outline stories alignment with higher organizational goals. While Snapchat initially introduced the format in 2013, it was

not until Instagram adopted the format in late 2016, that Story usage grew exponentially. Stories reached 150 million daily users within the first five months of its launch on Instagram; it took Snapchat 6 years to accumulate the same usage (McCracken, 2017; Wagner, 2017). In the years since its launch, Stories have been ever-changing in capabilities in terms of overlays. Notably, 2018 saw tremendous growth, launching the new features almost monthly. The polling sticker was launched in October 2017. The year following the launch of the polling feature (2018) Instagram launched the mention sticker, GIFS enabled by Giphy, the Emoji slider scale, and the questions sticker (Carbone, 2018; “New Ways to Interact on Instagram”, 2018) (“Happy Birthday, Instagram Stories!” 2018). All of these additional overlays launched before the format celebrates its third birthday (August 2019) (“Happy Birthday”, 2018). There is no data to suggest museums in this study were using interactive overlays offered on the Story feature in less frequency than other museums.

The museums that participated in this study were part of a small pool of museums already using this feature, pioneering the way for future organizations interested in using Stories. All participants in this study noted that they felt senior leadership supported the use of social media and their roles at the museum. There are connections to be made between this support and Instagram Story usage. Museum I stated senior leadership was savvy with social media trends and understood the importance of social media’s role in communication; Instagram Stories is currently one of the newest features on the social media landscape and still evolving in terms of capabilities. Museum III expressed senior leadership had supported brand democracy and trust in their marketing department, this allowed for freedom in using social media including the use of Stories. Staff mentioned they were able to adapt and follow audiences to the Story feature. The general support from leadership in social media use allowed these professionals to be dynamic in

social media use; be early adapters in a feature that has unknown potential for engaging audiences.

Recommendations

As museums continue to use the Story format, there are a few key ideas to take away from this study - 1. Post more often, 2. Take advantage of the interactive overlays, and 3. Be authentic. Additionally, it is important to understand marketing with Instagram Stories is most successful for reaching millennial audiences based on current user demographics, when considering adults of ages use of the Story feature significantly drops.

Museums will always have something to market to audiences - events, programs, exhibits, etc.; the key is to immerse your online audiences in the process of creating those experiences. Posting content that is interesting, humorous, illuminates values and is relevant to your audience will ensure that they remain followers and further engage with content. Similarly, posting content that contains an interactive overlay will significantly increase the level of engagement on the story. Museums should be aware that content that is relevant to audiences and interactive will have a higher level of engagement.

There are many benefits to using social media - the Story format in particular – and not using it would be a lost opportunity to engage with your audience. Using Stories is a way to build more authentic relationships, share your organization's values, and interact with your audience on a more intimate level. If museums are willing to put forth an effort into understanding and using the feature to its full capabilities to engage audiences, they will find engagement in return.

Additionally, understanding this format, on Instagram particularly, could drastically change donor relations. Instagram announced in late March (2019) that a donation sticker would

be rolling out sometime next year. This sticker would allow profiles to link users directly to a donation site, making it easier than ever to take immediate action from Instagram. According to a New York Times Consumer Insight Survey, a majority of social media users identified *supporting a cause* as the most compelling reason to share, it is possible that *supporting a cause* would be just as compelling a reason to engage by mirroring the concept of empowerment with ease. “Social Media and Psychology – Why Do People Share?”, 2015) Further details of this overlay’s functionality have not yet been released.

Implications

Although this research aimed to represent a wide range of museums, it is not comprehensive of the museum field and cannot accurately reflect trends. This study serves only to provide clarity on how a handful of museums are using the Story feature to engage and attract audiences and to help the field have a better understanding of emerging social media engagement features for marketing. Due to the nature and scope of this study, only four museums and 30 highlighted Stories were studied. Additionally, this is one of the first studies around Story use for museums. A study that sought to understand trends within the field would need to look at many more museums and examine their stories in real time as well as highlighted stories over many months. A more comprehensive study might look at a diversity of museum types (botanical garden, aquarium, children, history, science, etc.) and examine their Stories over several years, analyzing real-time and highlighted stories for content and cross-examining data against interviews and story analytics. This approach would allow the museums to be examined separately by type of museum as well as a whole. This study could further be broken down by the size of the museum to understand if there are any differences in the way small and large

museums use the Story feature. A study of this scope would be able to show trends within specific types of museums as well as the field at large.

This study is one avenue of exploration. The Story format is still evolving in the social media realm; there are numerous other studies to be done and further conclusions to be drawn around how this feature is going to impact marketing outreach, both paid and organically.

Further research will be able to draw broader, field-wide conclusions, and look more deeply at the relationship between the Story and audience engagement.

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Appendix A: Interview Guide

Interview & Consent Script Museums Use of Instagram Stories Isabelle Dune Museology Graduate Program

Thank you for taking your time to talk with me today. I am asking you to participate in an interview that is part of a research study being conducted in partial fulfillment for the degree of Museology Master of Arts at University of Washington. The purpose of this study is to understand the unique value new social media engagement features add to a museums overall marketing strategy. The study is grounded in the following questions:

1. How are museums using new social media engagement features?
2. To what extent is the use of these features accomplishing intended marketing goals?

This interview will be approximately 45 minutes to an hour, with 11 major questions. Your participation voluntary and you can stop the interview at any time without penalty. I am digitally recording this interview, but I will be the only one to hear this recording. Interview will responses will be anonymous within my written report and any quotes I use will not be attributed to you. If you have any questions in the future, you may contact me via phone or email. Do you have any questions before we begin?

My questions will center around how your institution uses the ‘story’ feature on Instagram and its role in your institution’s marketing strategy. I also want to discuss the opportunities it provides as an audience engagement tool.

1. First, can you familiarize me with your organization's main marketing strategies to engage audiences?

a. *i.e Target audience? Actively trying to reach a broader audience? Social media?*

1. *Probe: What specific tools used in your marketing strategy prove to be most successful for engagement? Why do you think that is?*

2. What value does social media add to your institution's traditional marketing strategies?

a. *Do you feel senior leadership shares this same view?*

Let's talk more about social media marketing specifically.

1. What are the general guidelines for posting content on social media?

- a. *Who is involved? Does your institution have a position devoted solely to social media?*
- b. *How often are sites monitored?*
- c. *What is being measured?*

2. In what ways, if any, has social media increased your institutions potential to reach new audiences?

3. What does engagement mean in consideration to social media and marketing for your organization?

- a. *Probe: How important is engagement in this context?*

My study is focused around the story and its additional features as a social media engagement tool as it relates to marketing strategies.

6. Can you talk more about posting Stories specifically and the value your institution sees in using it?

- a. *Probe: What types of stories does your institution post and what are the criteria used to select content for the story feature?*

7. How often does your organization use the story feature?

- h. *Is there a type of story that your institution prefers to post? Why?*
- i. *What type of stories, if any, do you see getting the best response from your online audience?*

8. What is your institution's stance on sharing stories on additional social media platforms Instagram allows for (Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr)?

9. In what ways, if any, does your institution see the Story as an engagement tool for marketing?

- j. Why do you think it is successful for your organization? What are the limitations of this feature for your organization?*
- k. Probe: To what extent do you see the 'story' as a useful tool for audience engagement?*

Thank you again for your time.

Appendix B: Coding Rubric

<p><i>Table 1: Coding rubric used for the document analysis of Instagram Stories</i></p>		
Level		Description
Level 1		Story Characteristics
1	Stand-alone - One-off	Content is posted can stand alone, could be understood without additional context
2	Multi-slide	Story slides cannot stand alone and deliver full content, representative of a dialogue, Series of static images, including a combination of modified video and static images
3	Story	Video content that requires more than a single slide to achieve the intended outcome can be a combination of video and static images
Level 2		Slide Type (multiple)
1	Pop Culture/ Meme (Funny)	Content that shows includes references to pop culture, memes, etc. Includes content with the intention of humor
2	Behind the Scenes	Content that invites audiences into the unseen parts/jobs in the institution
3	Promotional	Content that promotes the museum, including events and programming. Promotional Stories can be posted prior to, or during the event. <i>Content is considered promotional if it is an Instagram Live Story posted after the event for recurring events and programs only.</i>
4	Educational	Content that has an educational purpose
5	Engaging	Content that provided to invite audience participation without additional context (asking a general question of your audience)
88	General	A general post as support to a longer story series, coded following the slide it supported.
Level 2.1		Media type
1	Plain Text	Content that is text only

2	Static Image	Content that includes a static photo
3	Video	Content that includes a video
4	Modified Video	Video content that involves a modified format, such as boomerang or superzoom
5	Live	Content that was initially been live recorded - Saved to the highlights reel
Level 2.2		Overlays and Interactive features
1	Text	Content that includes text overlays <i>Excludes Plain Text Stories</i>
2	Location	Content includes location mention sticker
3	@Mention	Content @mentions another Instagram profile
4	#hashtag	Content includes a hashtag
5	GIF	Content includes a GIF
6	Poll	Content includes interactive polling feature. This is a real-time interactive; highlighted Stories show the result of the poll
7	Countdown	Content includes the countdown feature
8	Swipe-Scale	Content includes an interactive scale that allows audiences to swipe and rate how much they agree with something. The user will find out the average response after engaging with the feature. This is a real-time interactive; highlighted Stories only show the result of the scale.
9	Swipe-Up Link	Content includes a link-out source to the organization's main webpage or blog. Links are active on highlighted Stories
10	Stickers/Emoji	Content includes non-animated sticker overlays

