Transforming Digital Engagement at Historic Sites

APRIL 20, 2020
Carrie Villar
Acting Vice President of Historic Sites, National Trust for Historic Preservation
Agenda

• Introductions and overview of virtual strategies
• Discussion of good examples and best practices
• Question and Answer
Scott Mehaffey
Executive Director, Farnsworth House
Mission-driven
Vision-focused
Goals-oriented

It’s not business-as-usual but it’s still our usual business – we’re just moving it online
• Video Chats
• Watch & Read tabs
• Shop tab (coming soon)
• Robust programming
• Impacted financially by Covid-19
• Ready to reopen
Edith Farnsworth’s Country House

- VR Tour of exhibition
- Curator Notes (exhibition objects)
- New orientation film in VC

Chaise Lounge Chairs

Contemporary (originally designed 1933-35) • Bruno Mathsson, designer • birch wood frame, woven synthetic straps (donated by Bruno Mathsson SE)

Edith Farnsworth owned a Model 36 Chaise Lounge and a Vistol Easy Chair & Leg Rest (no longer manufactured). The chairs were designed, and are still made, in Sweden.

The original chairs were laminated beech wood with woven hemp straps, and provided a place to read, nap or listen to music. Dr. Farnsworth located them at the southwest corner of the house to move easily to the screened terrace during warm weather. (Farnsworth House had no air conditioning until 1997.)
Three Parallel Social Media Series (FB, IG, TWTR)

- Behind the Scenes
- Getting to Know Edith
- Farnsworth House: Architecture/Art/Pop Culture
Easy Interactive Campaign:
“Once you have 10k followers, Instagram will make it easier for you to get people to your website via Stories with the ‘swipe up to link’ feature. Swipe up is the only way to get a direct link from your Instagram to your other web properties”

Sticker Giveaway:
Mailed to first 10 per post: staff follows up to get mailing address (data capture)

Success factors:
• Wednesday noon
• Sunday afternoon
• Timely (Easter)
• Participatory/contributory
Surprise Success: The Power of Influencers

March 29 IG post by Virgil Abloh

- 141,694 likes
- 897 comments
- added 500 followers
- 1290 website viewers
- 88% new viewers
Elon Cook Lee
Director of Interpretation and Education, National Trust for Historic Preservation
Digital Storytelling Strategies:

• Understanding your online audience – what has changed in the last few months?

• Cultivating and expanding your audience
Telling Engaging Stories

• What audiences want to see

• What they are less interested in seeing
Turning Passive Viewers into Online Engagement and Future Visitors

#MuseumFromHome
Whilst we’re self isolating, some of us museum weirdos have decided to make quick videos about our favourite museum artefacts. So if you can’t go to a museum, let’s bring the museum to you!

14th up: The Pendle witch finder of @LancCastle in 60 seconds!

Living History Days at N Y H
Living History @ Home: Meet the She-Merchants

Join us online! | Wednesday, April 8 | 1-2 pm
Price: all ages

Who were the she-merchants? They were the pioneering women who worked in business and trade in 18-century New York. Join us via Zoom to explore their unique stories and discover the goods and artifacts they imported, exported, and sold in their shops. Then, participants can make their own currency to use in the program.

Register for Zoom here >

New York Historical and the DiMenna Children’s History Museum are temporarily closed in order to help protect the health and safety of our visitors, staff, and the wider community during this outbreak of COVID-19. Your support is vital for our ability to continue serving the public. Please consider making a contribution to help fund all facets of our mission.

DONATE HERE

Image Caption: Living History Coordinator Chesney McKnight
Lisett Chavarela
Director of Communications, Los Angeles Conservancy
Turning existing initiative into a timely and actionable campaign
Social media amplified our message

• 13 Posts
• Reached 108,711 people
  – Instagram: 53,866
  – Twitter: 30,386
  – Facebook, 24,459
Legacy businesses = Shared memories around places
Sarah Lann
Director of Education, Los Angeles Conservancy
People + Places: A Book List for Kids
People + Places: A Book List for Kids

Story Time with the LAC! Fridays at 12:00 pm on IGTV

Today for Storytime for Kids, we’re reading “Dream Something Big. The Story of the Watts Towers,” written by Diane Hoyt and illustrated by Susan L. Roth. It’s the amazing real-life story of Simon Rodia, the man who created L.A.’s iconic Watts Towers. 

STORYTIME ACTIVITY ** We’ll be making paper mosaics like the ones found at L.A.’s Watts Tower. To participate in today’s activity, make sure you have construction paper, recycled boxes, some glue, as well as markers/paint/crayons/pencils to draw with. Have fun!
People + Places: A Book List for Kids

Story Time with the LAC! Fridays at 12:00 pm on IGTV

- Instagram reach: 23,446
- Twitter: 21,873
- Facebook: 11,923
- Combined Reach: 57,292

- Total video views: 6,483 (includes 2,037 FB views)
People + Places: A Book List for Kids

Story Time with the LAC! Fridays at 12:00 pm on IGTV

Phase 2: Partner and expand our reach

- Have others take turns reading, who can share with other communities (i.e., Ms. Wood, a 4th grade teacher from South L.A.)

- Package Story Time posts with other partnering organizations: CAC and Center for Architecture NY
DISCUSSION

What is an example that you think works well?
QUESTION AND ANSWER

Use the chat box on the bottom right to ask questions of the speakers.
Keep Talking

• **Forum Connect** is Forum’s online community

• FREE and open to everyone

[Forum.SavingPlaces.org/Forum-Connect]
Keep Learning

UPCOMING WEBINARS

• Coronavirus Response: the Historic Tax Credit as An Economic Recovery Tool, April 24, 3:00 pm (eastern)

• Leveraging Insurance to Aid Your Organization During the Coronavirus, April 28, 3:00 pm (eastern)
Thank you!

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forum.savingplaces.org

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Contact Us:
forumonline@savingplaces.org