Assessing an Academic Library’s Social Media Program

Doralyn Rossmann, Scott W. H. Young, Principal Investigators, Montana State University
Brian W. Rossmann, Assessment in Action Campus Coordinator, Montana State University

Objective
The MSU strategic plan identifies primary aspects of student success as increasing six-year graduation rates and increasing the full time freshmen retention rate. The Library can contribute to these goals in various ways, one of which is to engage students through Social Media, thus creating avenues for providing instruction and building community. The goals for participating in Assessment in Action are to assess the effectiveness of the Social Media program, in particular, through Twitter.

Methodology

Social Media Guide and Group – Established May 2012
Group 1
- Audience Focus: Followers
- Posting Frequency: Tweets
- Activity Focus: Duration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Followers</th>
<th>Tweets</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td>1,514</td>
<td>1,329</td>
<td>Nov. 2008 - May 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>515-937</td>
<td>330-998</td>
<td>May 2012 - Aug. 2013</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Group 1
- Automated Tweet content
- Low responsiveness
- No dedicated personnel
- No programmatic approach
- Twitter as a broadcast platform

Group 2
- Original and unique content
- High responsiveness
- Dedicated personnel
- Programmatic approach
- Twitter as an interactive platform

Results

Interaction Rates
- Group 1 Median Interaction Rate: 12.5%
- Group 2 Median Interaction Rate: 46.8%
- Group 1 → Group 2: 275%

"Be Interesting, Be Interested"
— Glazer, 2012

"[My ideal Library Twitter Account would be]...a Twitter account that was more than just updating you on events, but that was more inviting you in and creating that community."
— Student Focus Group

Future Considerations

What We Know about Social Media at the MSU Library

What Our Research Suggests About Social Media & Libraries
- Does community building suggest a new value for the library?
- How do libraries contribute to student success?

What We Know About Community

Social Media → Community
Community → Student Success

What Our Research Suggests About Social Media & Libraries
- Does community building suggest a new value for the library?
- How do libraries contribute to student success?

Social Media → Student Success

"Be Interesting, Be Interested"
— Glazer, 2012

"[My ideal Library Twitter Account would be]...a Twitter account that was more than just updating you on events, but that was more inviting you in and creating that community."
— Student Focus Group

This project is part of the program "Assessment in Action: Academic Libraries and Student Success" which is undertaken by the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) in partnership with the Association for Institutional Research and the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities. The program is supported by the Institute of Museum and Library Services.