

# Telling Your Library Story through Instagram

## On Posting

1. **How often do you post?** Our goal is 1x/day, with a minimum of 4x/week.
2. **Can you schedule posts?** You can do this by using Hootsuite or Later.com.
3. **Do you suggest an app to create colorful infographic posts/ads?** We recommend PicMonkey or Canva.
4. **Do you utilize Instagram (IG)'s story highlights feature?** Yes! Many of the examples shared in the webinar presentation utilized this feature.
5. **Are there any rules of thumb for image quality?** Snaps, videos, or boomerangs taken on smartphones are fine for uploading to IG. Using a digital or professional camera may provide higher-quality images, but it is not strictly necessary.
6. **Which video editing software do you use?** The native editor in the IG app is very useful, but you can also use VideoShop (free). This app allows you to orient videos in landscape, portrait, or square format, and you can also cut videos into shorter clips.
7. **There was noticeable lag in playback for some of the webinar's sample videos. Will that happen to video posts on IG?** The video lag from the presentation had to do with host bandwidth. Videos posted to IG will play smoothly.
8. **Do you link your library's IG account to your Facebook account? Have you had any issues with photos getting cropped?** Carnegie Library has their accounts linked but rarely uses the cross-platform "Share" functionality. To avoid the issue of image cropping, they post separately to each social media account.
9. **Do you have multiple staffers posting to IG? How many people contribute to ideas and content on IG?** At Carmel Clay, only one designated person posts to IG, but they



do have a Communications department that runs their other social media platforms.

10. **For those at the library posting on IG, is that your only job at the library?** This is not necessarily the case. For example, the presenter from Carmel Clay Library is a part-time library employee who spends at least half her work days at the library desk. Her IG role, meanwhile, only takes up about *an hour a day* - and less time when she plans ahead! While getting out into the community to document initiatives (such as her library's "Little Free Library" program) may take up more time, she generally optimizes her dedicated "IG time" by taking photos around the library in different departments.
11. **Have you ever posted a contest or giveaway? What type of planning went into it?** Yes! Giveaways by the presenters have included amusement park tickets and more. Incentivizing followers to like, comment, and tag a friend in your contest post helps to get your library content shared with a wider audience. Giveaways are especially effective in engaging your teen followers.
12. **How many days before a program do you suggest advertising it?** We recommend posting 1-3 days prior to the event. Since IG users tend to see posts only once as they scroll through their feed, you want it to be fresh. (Facebook provides a more comprehensive platform for event posting.)

## On Best Practices

1. **What is your policy on "following back" on IG, e.g., teens who want you to follow their personal accounts back to gain followers?** As a rule, we do not "follow back" our individual followers on social media. We do, however, follow the social media accounts of other libraries and professional organizations, including those of our partners.
2. **How should you respond if a post draws any kind of negative responses?** At Carnegie Library, they are currently developing a policy for dealing with certain types of responses on social media. For now, as long as conversations stay respectful, they are allowed to play out. Once a conversation becomes inflammatory, however, the library uses direct messaging to deal with the issue one-on-one with the respective parties, out of the public eye.
3. **Do you have any issues posting pictures of members of the public? Do you need photo waivers? If so, how do you deal with this?** This will differ at each library. Carmel Clay (one of the presenters), for example, does not need waivers. They post notices around the library stating that patrons may be photographed and their likenesses posted on social media. Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, alternatively, requests verbal permission from patrons in person, and allows teens to provide their own consent. They have had no issues or complaints with this policy since its launch one year ago.

4. **Have you done a live posting on social media, such as hosting a photobooth at a program, and had any concerns of the type of content being posted?** We have not had any issues with patrons (of any age) posting inappropriate images to our account. However, if this is a concern, one way to deal with it is to only allow for “Story” posts on the IG account, which will disappear after 24 hours.
5. **What was your library’s process for changing your photo permission policy?** Many libraries have strict rules on this that are established by their municipalities. Carnegie Library, for example, had a restrictive photo policy requiring a signed form for every image that was to be used on social media. To gain more flexibility, their marketing team sought to change this policy.

This was not easy: it took Carnegie Library two years to make the changes. They had many talks with lawyers and the library’s senior leadership. Changes were made based on the idea that the library is a public space and, so long as signage was posted throughout, notifying patrons that they may be photographed, there would be no legal concerns. Ethically, however, they felt it was important to ask patrons for verbal permission. Also, for any image to be used outside of social media, they do require a signed paper release. Overall, they encourage librarians to have the courage and tenacity to pursue this course for their libraries – the results are worth it.

## By the Numbers

1. **How do you measure the success of IG?** This is measured by Reach & Impressions, likes, comments, reposts and saves.
2. **Is IG best used for targeting a certain demographic?** Younger users, especially those in their teens and twenties, are the most active IG users. But it is used by audiences of all ages, and to-date, IG has 1 billion monthly users.
3. **What percentage of youth under 18 use IG?** Teens are at 72%, via Pew Research in May 2018 (<http://www.pewinternet.org/2018/05/31/teens-social-media-technology-2018/>). (For other age categories, see our webinar presentation.) Overall, teen IG users recently surpassed teen SnapChat users for the first time. It is definitely a growing audience.

## On Getting Started

**Do you have any final advice for getting an Instagram account started, specifically with promoting it to your community?**

Proactive engagement is critical. Follow all your partners and other organizations within your region, including other libraries. Jump in with comments, likes and questions to show that you have a presence on your channel. Within your physical library, make sure you are promoting your IG channel to patrons, and include what kind of content you are posting. If you have engaging, quality content and you place real emphasis on storytelling (as outlined in the webinar), your followers will come!