

Preparing for Social Media Use at the 2015 SAA Annual Meeting

Over the past few years, more professionals have begun using social media services such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to document their activities at conferences. On one hand this is an exciting way to learn about presentations we cannot make in person; on the other hand, some presenters would like to keep their ideas more private. In order to help the Annual Meeting meet everyone's needs we have compiled this brief primer on how to prepare for the conference with respect to social media.

Assume that people will share ideas they found compelling and plan accordingly

As a rule, people will assume that what you present at a conference is public information. Even if you ask people not to share at the beginning of your presentation, it isn't uncommon for people to arrive during your talk and miss that announcement. If you do not want information from your talk shared, you can add a graphic indicating "no social media sharing" at the bottom of your slides or remind people when you are coming up on a slide that is sensitive in nature. If you do want feedback from the online universe on your talk, tell the audience at the beginning!

Facebook

Typically conference information is shared on Facebook before or after, rather than shared live. In advance of the Annual Meeting, the pages of the SAA, Public Education Committee, Student Affairs Committee, and Public Archaeology Interest Group are good places to look for updates on activities planned for the week!

Twitter

Twitter is a good venue for following what's going on in real time, in short (140 character) bursts. You don't need to make a Twitter account to follow the action, just search for the Twitter name or hashtag (topic) that you want to follow! We humbly suggest following the SAA and the SAA Digital Data Interest Group. (For more on hashtags, see below.)

Live-tweeting is very popular at conferences across disciplines. It is so popular that you should assume there is a person in your session who is using it, and could find your ideas so compelling they make a (short) comment about it there. The fast, public nature of Twitter makes it a good venue for sharing ideas and getting attention for one's ideas.

For those who are live-tweeting, always attribute ideas to the presenter and include the conference and session hashtags, where applicable. (Later, a digital archaeologist is likely to create a webpage with all the tweets from the conference so you want it to be included!) Be careful when paraphrasing peoples' comments: always try to capture the intent of the author and listening carefully to what they have to say before sharing.

Here's a suggested format for conference tweets:

First tweet at a paper: [Author's last name]: [Paper Title] #SAA2015 #archaeology

Ongoing Tweets: [Author]: [text] #SAA2015

Instagram

Instagram is a photo sharing service that many archaeological organizations, archaeologists, and collectors use. Members of the public seem to be particularly excited by visual depictions of our work and the archaeological organizations who have profiles are good examples of the power of visuals for outreach. Its feature for sharing photos simultaneously across other social media venues makes it popular for people with multiple accounts.

Hashtags

Hashtags are a powerful tool for connecting themes across pages, groups, and individual accounts. If you make a public post on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram, adding a hashtag can make it easier to find for people who don't frequently check your page. Often, people use the number of the session (per the conference program, like #s27 for session #27) or create a unique hashtag for their session so people watching can follow some of the ideas coming out of the session. Here are some useful archaeology hashtags to follow and use:

- #SAA2015 -- conference-related tweets
- #archaeology -- anything archaeological!
- #pubarch -- public archaeology and outreach
- #scicomm -- science communication and outreach
- #digiarch -- digital archaeology
- #histarch -- historical archaeology
- #crmarch -- cultural resource management
- #indigenous -- for indigenous and native american topics

Sharing presentations after the Annual Meeting

Many people are not able to make the meeting or specific presentations because of scheduling conflicts, so increasingly scholars are setting up accounts on Academia.edu or Slideshare.net to share these after the conference. This is a great option for those who are more hesitant to share their presentations online; you can post whatever portion of slides and notes that you feel is appropriate, and still get the benefit of reaching scholars who could not attend your talk in-person.

We all look forward to seeing you at the Meeting!

SAA Public Archaeology Interest Group Social Media Task Group

This document does not represent the official views of the Society for American Archaeology. It is a document written by members for members' personal use. We encourage all members to familiarize themselves with the Society for American Archaeology Social Media Policy. Here is an excerpt:

"The Society for American Archaeology ("SAA") encourages all of its members to participate in public discussions through social networking including but not limited to social networking sites such as Facebook and Linked In, as well as blogs. At the same time, SAA expects that its members will make statements that are in the best interests of SAA and will not engage in any inappropriate statements or statements which would be detrimental to SAA as a whole. SAA retains the right, under its bylaws and policies, to take disciplinary actions against any member it determines is acting contrary to SAA's interests."