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Social Media Technology Assignment
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Link to Cooper Hewitt Smithsonian Design Museum's Instagram Page:

https://www.instagram.com/cooperhewitt/

After visiting the Cooper Hewitt's Instagram page on both my computer and my phone I established that the differences in capability between the two are minimal although navigation on a mobile device is easier because Instagram was designed as a mobile app. On both the desktop site and the mobile site I viewed the Cooper Hewitt's daily story, highlights (found above the photo grid and represented as circles with a single image inside), and a large number of their recent posts. Although I was unable to create original content in Instagram using Cooper Hewitt's Instagram page, I was able to save specific posts into a "Collection" on Instagram for later viewing.

Social Media Implementation

The Cooper Hewitt makes good use of each of the prominent social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter) but I believe that Instagram is particularly powerful at this point in time due to its overwhelming popularity. In a 2017 article Forbes broke down the functionality of Instagram into four key roles: Mobile functionality, Visual nature, Novelty, and Function. In this regard mobile functionality refers to the apps intended use as a mobile device. This makes it portable and easily accessible, a feature highly coveted by museum professionals seeking to increase engagement. The application also provides novelty because of the rapidly changing landscape. An individual's home feed will show them the latest posts of the account they show the most attention to. The explore page will categorize the users interests and show users new content based off of these interests. Meanwhile basic functions such as searching, and notification systems allow for a more "classic" social media experience. The visual nature of Instagram is easily the most straightforward aspect. In an era where information is consumed at a higher rate than before the ability to share information without necessarily requiring your audience to read is vital. Finally, the app has high functionality allowing for a range of creative uses while maintaining controls that are simple to learn and use.

In regard to museums specifically two of Instagram's newest additions encourage a deeper level of involvement. First, the highlights section allows the Cooper Hewitt to put together an array of materials in 15 second blocks that can be viewed by interested audience members at any time. These highlights can be subject or genre specific and can have content added or removed without much difficulty. Second, Instagram's ability to allow users to save content they are interested in is vital. Users can either save content to a general folder or curate entire collections for view later without ever leaving the app. Each of these aspects is unique to Instagram and cannot be found on Facebook or Twitter. Furthermore, they encourage a curatorial relationship between audience member and institution.

Interactivity for my Collection

I believe that this exhibit would serve as a good example of interactivity because of the sheer amount of agency placed in the user's hands. It us up to the user to choose what they

interact with, how long they interact with it, and if they will interact with it in the future. The Cooper Hewitt's audience is always in control when they are using this platform. When using a comparative platform such as Twitter or Facebook the user is constrained to a vertical and linear path of interaction. While header menus can break up this interaction, the header menu within social media and mobile apps in general is rather stale and outdated. Instagram avoids this almost archaic format and replaces it with one that offers layered interactivity. Once users are on the Cooper Hewitt page, they have a wide range of possibilities for interaction. For example, an individual may click a photo within their photo grid, read the caption, and then follow a Cooper Hewitt tag to another item on the same page without actually backtracking to the original Cooper Hewitt home page. Furthermore, the comment section encourages interaction amongst audience members and the collection save feature is always hovering waiting to turn the general audience member into the interested curator.

Potential Audience

The first potential audience I would pursue would be millennial students. Although the age range is rather wide when stating "millennial" the key factor is that nearly every millennial is proficient in social media technology. In addition, most of the people within this target audience will already have Instagram accounts. Therefore, the Cooper Hewitt is not asking them to download additional applications or follow a series of URL links, instead they are asking them to use an app they use almost daily. From my own personal experience (and iPhone's new feature which tracks screen time in particular apps) I know that I spend an exceptional amount of time exploring Instagram. On a daily basis I am exploring new content from familiar sources. A fine example of this is how TV shows are now posting the most popular segments of their shows on Instagram TV. This feature has become widely used by syndicated shows as well as new content creators, and this feature has gained in popularity due to the intrinsic connection between the base account of the content creator, the ability to comment on content and interact with other interested individuals, and the ability to save content for later interaction. Ultimately, it is Instagram's ability to provide new content daily, yet maintain engagement in the present, and offer opportunity for engagement in the future that makes it such a riveting digital platform for a museum such as the Cooper Hewitt.

The second potential audience I would pursue is the academic crowd. I would pursue the academic crowd because of Instagram's ability to make the academic a gatherer of empirical knowledge. Many museum, public history, and information professionals are often tasked with accruing observations and using said observations to develop new, engaging, and interactive content. Instagram would allow academics to be a fly on the wall for some of the most engaging content the internet has to offer. Although engagement statistics regarding an Instagram page are relegated to the actual owner (or owners in the case of an institution) of the account academics can still gain valuable knowledge about user reaction because of the few public statistics that remain. These statistics include the number of followers the account has, the number of photos the account posts, the number of likes a photo or video gets, and the ratio of likes to overall follower count. In addition to the quantitative aspect of information gathering in this scenario academics can also acquire qualitative feedback through the

comment section which often features the individuals most interested in what such an institution has to offer.

References

DeMers, Jayson. (2017, March) Why Instagram is the Top Social Platform for Engagement (And How to Use It). Forbes. Retrieved from https://www.forbes.com/sites/jaysondemers/2017/03/28/why-instagram-is-the-top-social-platform-for-engagement-and-how-to-use-it/#471efa9c36bd