



Audience engagement through social media for European Union funded projects communication and dissemination activities

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Type of best practice

Audience and Local Community Engagement

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Drawing from examples from the Horizon project ReInHerit, this Best Practice aims to present ways and practical examples to drive audience engagement through social media. Social media can contribute towards the communication of the project's news and activities and at the same time the dissemination of key results targeted at a specialized audience. The Museum of Cycladic Art project partner of the ReInHerit project as leader of the social media activity of the ReInHerit project created six social media accounts for the project. More specifically, the project has active social media presence on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter (X), YouTube & TikTok.

Organisation in charge of best practice

Museum of Cycladic Art

Location

Athens

Dates

Throughout the duration of an EU-funded project

Description

The ReInHerit project has active social media presence on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter (X), YouTube & TikTok. The main aim of these channels is to inform ReInHerit's audiences on all project activities and events and engage so various audiences can be more involved in the project activities. At the same time, it aims at sharing knowledge and results which specifically target cultural heritage professionals and direct them to seek knowledge in the digital hub of the project or learn from the useful resources included in our YouTube channel.





Before drafting the social media strategy, the social media leader defined the audience engagement needs of the project which would determine the social media strategy to be followed. Social media engagement can be considered as a measure of all interactions with our social media content. Higher audience engagement can be a measure of good quality content which leads to greater reach for our social media channels. The most popular types of engagement are likes, comments and shares.

Other important social media metrics are the following:

- Shares or retweets
- Followers and audience growth
- Mentions
- Use of our pages' dedicated hashtags
- Click-throughs

Following that and taking into account the target audiences, key messages and mission of the project, the social media strategy was drafted and shared with all partners of the project. As the social media pages of an EU-funded project need to equally reflect the activities of all participating partners, the social media strategy needs to be communicated to all partners and be clear to all of them. Each partner is expected to equally contribute with content regarding their activities.

By using customized content specially created for the needs of each platform, ReInHerit's audience has a digital experience that:

- Showcases the programme's work and activities.
- Offers easy access to information and updates (webinars, digital exhibition, press conferences, hackathon etc.)
- Generates awareness about the efforts of ReInHerit.
- Develops the interest of the audience about the project's key – messages: sustainability, innovation, co-creation and relevance
- Entices younger audiences who are interested in cultural heritage to explore deeper info about the programme and its goals.
- Inspires.

To achieve this, the approach adopted is:

- audience-centered and insight-driven
 - constantly evaluated and enhanced
 - distributed across multiple platforms
 - open and sharable
- The target audience of the social media of the project was in line with the project proposal and in line with the objectives of the project. ReInHerit's communication and dissemination strategy aimed at helping the audience engage with European cultural heritage from different access points. Social media was considered as key for the consortium to reach the desired audiences through the social media platforms.





To make the social media strategy more effective, a common tone of voice was established which could make the project distinguishable. At the same, content was updated constantly with extensive promotion taking place before, during and after an important activity or event took place in close collaboration with the partners leading each activity.

The social media accounts of the partner organisations or partner organisations' representatives also acted as multipliers of the project. All partners were involved in content creation as they informed the social media manager of their activities which were newsworthy and sent texts and visual content. This content was edited by the social media manager for different social media platforms and published.

The three axes of the social media strategy

More specifically,

1. Create a particular strategy about posts. To achieve that, we need to create a prototype, an example, about the structure of each post. This structure will be helpful for all partners in order to prepare their posts to have uniformity.
2. Minimize the corrections of the posts before they be posted.
It's significant not to interfere in the content but in the structure of each post. We need to make a quality control and not a content control.
3. Create content for all tasks and news in order to achieve a higher audience engagement.

The tone of voice is crucial in engaging the audience and is the big-picture view of how ReInHerit's image and vision is communicated to the public.

ReInHerit's social media tone of voice can be characterized as:

- Consistent, in respect of each platform's goal
 - Professional
 - Friendly and approachable
 - Inviting
 - Informative but at the same time conversational
- Our purpose has always been to achieve interaction between the community and involve it in ReInHerit's activities.

With posts including images, videos, reels, IG stories or links, polls or quizzes ReInHerit's social media channels followed all important ReInHerit activities.

Synergies with other EU-projects and exchange of knowledge was also pursued as well as collaboration and communication between ReInHerit's social media channels and social media channels of partner organisations.

What's your #hashtag?

Using a **hashtag** makes the keyword or phrase in the post searchable. It is like a label that clusters and links similar content, the same way keywords do when scientific papers are published.





#Hashtags are valuable as they:

- increase outreach — enabling you to join bigger, topic-specific conversations
- capitalise on existing trends
- consolidate and group content
- help those who took part in an event search for related coverage using the event's hashtag
- encourage interaction with the audience and therefore foster audience engagement— bringing new opinions and views into a discussion about a specific topic

The development of an analysis of our digital strategy is critical to ensure success and the audience's engagement through social media platforms.

Thus, data are checked and analyzed through the insights and analytics tools of each platform to tailor the strategy in terms of time and type of posts (when and what is better to post) as well as the audiences' preferences.

Sponsored social media ads

The main goal of the advertising is to highlight selected events and activities in order to engage as wider audience as possible or to reach a very specific audience when necessary. This is frequently accomplished by the boost of the activity's – event's post.

ReInHerit's digital strategy aims also to reach new audiences by making targeted ad campaigns.

Acknowledgement of EU-funding

Following European Commission's guidelines on acknowledgement of EU funding, all social media channels featured the project and EU emblem along with the logos of all partners.

The following disclaimer was also added: Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or [name of the granting authority]. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

Links

<https://www.facebook.com/ReInHerit/>
<https://www.instagram.com/reinherit/>

Resources needed

- Budget for the creation of the visual identity as high-quality content is crucial
- Budget for sponsored social media ads in order to reach a wider and more targeted audience
- A Dedicated team, preferably specialized in the area of digital communications, so content is updated frequently – preferably this person needs to be generally involved in the project





Challenges encountered

The main challenge encountered was that at the beginning of the project, and especially during the time of Covid-19, the project had mainly research results to show. This did not allow the social media managers to create engaging content that would be also attractive for younger audiences which love visuals, images and videos and do not wish to spend much time reading long texts and research results. That is why the social media managers tried to extract interesting results in the form of quotes or even used visuals and graphs to present research results. This challenge was also overcome when all other activities of the project began which were engaging and interesting for the target audience.

Evidence of success

In order to be able to measure the success of the social media strategy, there is need to set Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) at the beginning of the project. Moreover, increased visibility can lead to other means of communication such as website and digital hub having more traffic. The KPI's for the ReInHerit social media accounts was 3000 followers and 50,000 page visitors which were reached and exceeded by the end of the project.

Potential for transfer

This best practice has great potential for transfer as it can easily apply to the communication and dissemination strategy of a European Union- funded project, from Erasmus+ to Horizon projects.

Further Information

n/a