ask me anything!

The Reddit Revolution and other Unconventional Ways to Communicate Science GC23A-1047

Storify

http://bit.ly/iri_storify

Storify sits at the intersection of narrative and curation, both of which are crucial to science on the social web. For digital documentarians, from researchers to institutions, Storify can be a crucial tool to understand and categorize how people react and relate to events, research findings and more on social media.

Twitter, Facebook and other social media platforms can be noisy spaces. Storify lets organizations and individuals cut through that noise and share the messages that best convey a conversation or line of discussion. We created a Storify for the climate portion of the Earth Institute's biennial State of the Planet Conference. See some examples of how we built it in the keys to using Storify.

When scientists address the melting ice caps they often see it as data. To me it is an important part of my home disappearing #SOP2012



Katherine T. Tyson @katherinettyson

At least one #SOP2012 viewer saw data in personal terms.

Keys to Storify

Curate - First and foremost, Storify is about curation. That means you don't have to include every tweet, post or picture. Instead, share the best parts of the conversation whether they reinforce your message, are the most provocative, or drive conversation deeper. For #SOP2012, that meant grabbing 38 tweets out of hundreds that best told the story of climate and development.

Contextualize - Storify allows you to include links, text, audio, and more. Think beyond the confines of the social media conversation in front of you, and add deeper context. To supplement those 38 #SOP2012 tweets, we included links to resources that explain complex topics discussed, such as a carbon tax.

Cohesion - Stories are about narrative. Sometimes it's as simple as an event such as AGU or the demise of the Twinkie. Other times, its more complex such as the cost of cancer treatment. Regardless, find the tie that binds and be sure to curate and contextualize your content accordingly. Luckily, #SOP2012 came with a built-in narrative that climate change and variability are challenges sustainable development has to overcome in order to be successful.

Pros

Free and easy registration

Easily draws from multiple social media platforms

Powerful search capabilities makes it easy to find related Storifies

Cons

Interactive but not immersive

Requires social media account to login

Can be time-consuming if you don't have a plan to curate beforehand

Instagram. Pinterest. SoundCloud. Storify.

Almost every month there's a new platform through which institutions could potentially promote their work. If used creatively, these less-conventional means of communication can indeed be powerful devices to connect scientists and the general public, especially for small institutions with limited resources.

In very short time, an institution or individual can produce unique and compelling multimedia narrative of its research and activities, using both in-house and creative commons materials easily available on the web.

We share some of our recent experiences here.

Francesco Fiondella

Reddit

http://bit.ly/iri_reddit

Reddit has been referred to as "an Internet firehose" because of the massive amount of information that regularly moves through the site. Users generate all of that information, as they do on Facebook and Twitter, but there are some big differences. For one, most users are anonymous. For another, rather than following specific users though they can do that - most users manage that firehose of information through "subreddits," in effect communities where users post on specific topics.

Ask Me Anything (AMA) is one subreddit. An AMA is like an organized, online town-hall meeting, with people shouting out questions to the host. The crowd actively votes questions and answers "up" or "down", so that the most popular and interesting content fb ats to the top. With 2.3 million people subscribed to the Reddit's AMA section alone, there is potential for one huge, global town hall online.



"I would encourage other scientists to give it a try,"

Barnston said regarding a Reddit AMA.

Some Things to Do

DO provide proof of your qualifications. You can be anyone on Reddit, which is great if you want to be an anonymous commenter. But if you want to do an AMA, be ready to provide proof. That means a tweet or a press release saying you'll be on Reddit or verifying your identity with the moderators prior to the AMA.

DO be unique. IAmA moderators promote AMAs with different angles. If you want them to promote your AMA, show what's special about your line of research whether it be the topic, the places you travel to, or new findings that move the field forward.

DO make sure you have time. With over 200 questions to choose from, responding to even the best can be time-consuming. Barnston spent the better part of a workday answering questions. Be prepared to make a commitment.

And Some Things to Avoid

DON'T feel the need to answer everyone. While most questions were thoughtful during Barnston's AMA, some were frivolous. Don't feel the need to answer ones that are off-topic or seem out of bounds.

DON'T be nervous. Most Redditors are anonymous, but that doesn't mean they're hostile. Reading through Barnston's Reddit, many users said thanks when they asked their question, and 99 percent of the discourse was extremely civil. As Barnston noted, some users could even be colleagues!

DON'T be afraid to move on. If a commenter keeps asking off-topic or hostile questions, just skip over them. There were so many serious questions during Barnston's AMA, he couldn't get through all of them. Don't waste your time with dead-end questions.

Projeqt

Project is a creative visual storytelling platform that allows us to integrate activity from a host of social media such as Twitter, Facebook, Flickr, Instagram and YouTube. We recently used Projeqt to raise awareness about our trainings in drought-stricken West Africa to help scientists create more accurate forecasts ahead of the 2012 rainy season.

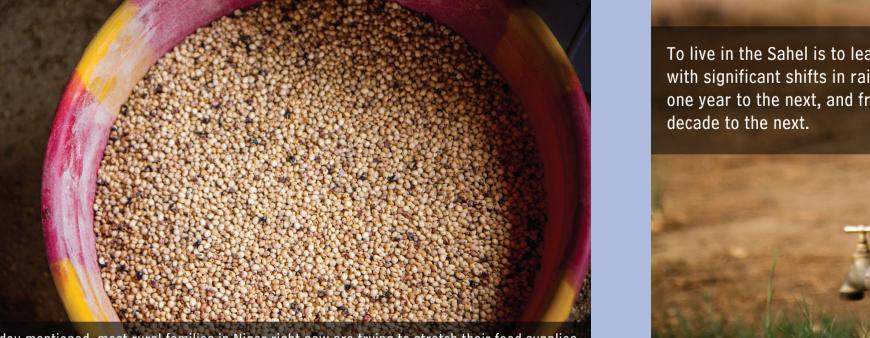
Free, easy to learn, use and update Easy to share on social media or embed anywhere Allows you to combine your content with creative commons content for richer user experience

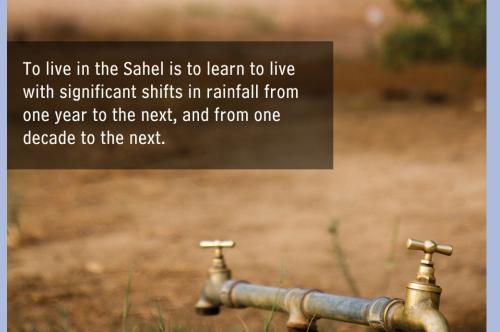
Cons

Must be online to view and edit Layout and design options limited (although company constantly adding new bells, whistles) Can't add underlying audio track Content stored and reliant on third-party servers















These are example slides from our full Project, which is here: http://bit.ly/iri_project

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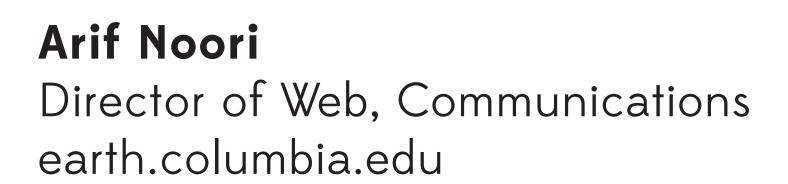
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