

**A Digital Flame:
Successful Social Media Strategies for Memorials
and Memorial Museums**

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Abstract

Memorials occupy a unique space in the museum landscape. These sites of memory serve as a place for reflection, commemoration, and in the current climate, conversation. This thesis argues that, by acknowledging and responding to current digital trends, memorials and museums associated with memorials can successfully cultivate and engage their audiences through the use of social media platforms. These new forms of networked connectivity compliment the roles and needs of memorials and if utilized correctly can lead to increased participation and valuable meaning-making. By studying the social media strategies of three institutions: The National Law Enforcement Memorial, the National September 11th Memorial and Museum, and the Oklahoma City National Memorial and Museum. This thesis showcases how the proper strategies can create community, facilitate dialogue and move meaning beyond a physical space. With the increased use of social media platforms, memorials and their museums will be poised to take advantage of new opportunities in the years to come for virtual collections, accessible education, and digital-born initiatives.

Dedication

*To all of those who have earned a place among the remembered,
may we never forget your sacrifice and the legacies you have left behind.*

*“The living owe it to those who no longer can speak to tell their story for them.”
Czesław Miłosz*

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Nomenclature

Social Media/Social Technology(ies) are a group of diverse Internet-based services that facilitate users' shaping and sharing of content and participation. This is in no way limited to blogs (Blogger, WordPress), microblogs (Twitter, Tumblr), media-sharing sites (YouTube, Flickr), social bookmarking sites (Reddit), virtual world sites (Second Life), wikis (Wikipedia), and social networking sites (Facebook, LinkedIn).

Collective Memory is the shared pool of information between a group of individuals.

A Memorial/Site of Memory can be defined as the physical designation of an event, often of traumatic significance. These are spaces that allow for healing, learning and understanding.

The Multi-Platform Network Model is a communication model where the information is authored by a single source and then sourced through multiple communication channels.

A Distributed Network Model differs in the fact that the content can be contributed and responded by a multitude of authors simultaneously.

Born-Digital/Digital-Born Information is content that has no physical predecessor.

Networked Connectivity describes the ways in which organizations utilize communication models in order to create connections with their communities.

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Introduction

Memorials occupy a unique space in the museum landscape. These sites of memory serve as a place for reflection, commemoration, and in the current climate, conversation. They act as the building blocks for how society structures and annotates its history. With this said, these actions are shifting. Memorials are no longer stagnant places for the silent and solemn remembrance of specific members of society, but now have begun to also function as sites of active dialogue around the events, collections, and people related to the memorial. According to Dr. Dacia Viejo-Rose, a researcher on the CRIC research project at the University of Cambridge, "...memorials are far more complicated than any granite monument might suggest. They are processes involving a constellation of meanings, symbols, emotions, memories and narratives."¹ As the memorial's role shifts from that of a passive observer to an active participant, a growing phenomenon in the museum field as a whole, it is imperative that it be able to connect with an increasingly networked public; more specifically with a public that is actively choosing to be connected through social media.

While other forms of technology, like exhibition interactives, have started to make their way into memorial spaces and the museums that sometimes accompany them, social media is still a contested and understudied medium. While many within the museum field view social media as a necessity for event promotion, increased physical visitation and member acquisition, fewer see social media as tool that can be used to as a way to grow and engage with an audience, and

¹Dacia Viejo-Rose. "Do Memorials Matter?" University of Cambridge. N.p., 21 Oct. 2011. Web. 9 Apr. 2015.
<http://www.cam.ac.uk/research/discussion/do-memorials-matter>

eventually as a tool for creating digital collections. This thesis has chosen to focus primarily on the engagement function of social media. This cautionary viewpoint is coming at a time when over 75% of adults with regular access to the internet participate in social media, with over 71% of them utilizing Facebook as of September 2013.² With so many people crafting online lives through social media, memorials have an opportunity to serve an incoming generation like never before. **This thesis argues that, by acknowledging and responding to current digital trends, memorials and museums associated with memorials can successfully cultivate and engage their audiences through the use of social media platforms. These new forms of networked connectivity compliment the roles and needs of memorials and if utilized correctly can lead to increased participation and valuable meaning-making. With the increased use of social media platforms, memorials and their museums will be poised to take advantage of new opportunities in the years to come for virtual collections, accessible education, and digital-born initiatives.** Support for this argument will be seen in the analysis of the social media strategies of three memorials and/or associated museums: The National Law Enforcement Memorial, The 9/11 Memorial and Museum, and the Oklahoma City National Memorial and Museum. These case studies will primarily focus on the sites' use of Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, with secondary platforms discussed in lesser detail. The research for this argument was formed in part by interviews, analysis of social media footprints, and the following research questions:

²PEW Research Center. "Social Networking Fact Sheet." Pew Research Centers Internet American Life Project RSS. N.p., 27 Dec. 2013. Web. 7 Apr. 2015. <http://www.pewinternet.org/fact-sheets/social-networking-fact-sheet/>

- How do memorials entice visitors to utilize social media?
- How do memorials use social media to capture personal experiences?
- How can memorials use social media as a tool for public dialogue AND as a tool for remembrance?

This thesis will be structured as a guide to showcase how memorials and memorial museums can properly construct social media strategies and the opportunities that arise when they are employed correctly. It will investigate the types of social media platforms that function best for memorials and their audiences, as well as the ethical questions that exist for memorials and their digital initiatives.

Chapter One will introduce, define, and discuss the role museums and memorials play in modern society, highlighting the uniqueness of the memorial museum. Following modern technology and online participatory trends, this chapter will end by introducing the rise of memorials for and authored by a highly connected online public that entertains, educates, and ultimately provides support for one another.

Chapter Two will discuss what this digital footprint introduced in **Chapter One** looks like. By analyzing how social media platforms are organized, built, and ultimately used, this chapter will connect these functions with a fundamental shift in authority within society. This shift in authority is mirrored by museology, and ultimately by memorials. The chapter will conclude with an analysis of institutional needs for memorials and their museums.

Chapter Three will primarily consist of interpreting and examining the current digital initiatives and social media footprint of the three case studies within this thesis: The National Law Enforcement Memorial, the 9/11 Memorial and Museum, and the Oklahoma City National Memorial and Museum. This chapter will focus on the successes and opportunities social media has brought to these organizations, both inside and outside of their physical spaces.

Chapter Four will focus on social media issues specific to memorials. Not only will this chapter discuss the ethical implications of creating these digital footprints for memorial institutions, but it will also dive into the difficulties surrounding the creation of effective social media campaigns. When dealing with social media, there is no special button, nor are institutions going to be able to cater to every audience. This chapter will serve as a discussion of current issues and opportunities moving forward using examples from the previously mentioned case studies and analysis of similar sites.

Lastly, **Chapter Five** will conclude this thesis by discussing the future of social media and the changing face of the memorial. By noting the continued rise and use of social media, the longevity of this medium is not questioned, neither is its current applicability to the culture and arts field. Effective social media strategies will provide memorials with an opportunity to utilize these tools for digital-born collection initiatives. It is not a question of how, but rather when initiatives like this will be commonplace, and the cultural community should prepare for that inevitability. In utilizing the tools presented by social media, memorials, and their associated institutions will be more prepared to engage with emerging technology and be able to serve an

audience that is constantly finding new ways to express themselves. In addition to this thesis, there is a printed companion piece that will serve as a guide for memorials navigating social media.

Chapter One.....The Function of Memorials and Memorial Museums

Sites of Memory

In order to understand the implications and declarations of this thesis, it is first necessary to understand the institutions that they are based upon. Sites of memory serve a multitude of roles with our society. First and foremost, they serve as a physical representation of an event as remembered by a group of people or an individual. They perform a critical function in society as not only a physical designation of an event, often of *traumatic significance*, but also as an extension of society's need for storytelling. Memorials and monuments are both forms of functional sites of memory. While some would use these terms interchangeably, distinct differences can be drawn between the two. When discussing the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Arthur C. Danto, American art critic and philosopher, argues that memorials and monuments tell different parts of the social story.

“We erect monuments so that we shall always remember and build memorials so that we shall never forget. Thus, we have the Washington Monument but the Lincoln Memorial. Monuments commemorate the memorable and embody the myths of beginnings. Memorials ritualize remembrance and mark the reality of ends.”³

Some believe the distinction goes even farther than that. Author of *The Museum of the Mind*, John Mack makes the argument that memorials are “designed to embrace the healing possibilities of remembrance and reconciliation,”⁴ while monuments “have a more celebratory,

³ Arthur C. Danto. “Art: The Vietnam Veterans Memorial.” *Nation*. 31 August 1986: 152. Print.

⁴ John Mack. *The Museum of the Mind*. London: The British Museum Press, 2003. 103. Print

even triumphalist role.”⁵ It is this definition of a memorial that led to the creation of memorial museums and curated forms of remembrance.

Memorials can take a multitude of physical forms that all serve similar functions. For the purposes of this thesis, these forms have been broken down into three separate categories based on their purposes and functions. These include **personal**, **communal**, and **curated** memorial sites. Personal memorial sites include shrines, roadside crosses, and individual creations that don’t extend past the life or knowledge of an individual. Communal sites are larger in scope and use collective memory as the main form of sustainability. An example of a communal site would be a community created memorial like the Greenville, SC Wall of Remembrance.⁶ This medium-sized memorial, located outside the local veterans’ affairs office, performs its function, but requires a personal connection to truly be meaningful. Lastly, curated memorial sites are the museums, exhibitions, and galleries associated with a site of memory. Their purpose is to not only remember, but to create meaning regardless of direct personal connection. While the roadside cross for a teenage drunk driving victim does not serve the same purpose as a large-scale sculpture memorializing fallen service members in a local park, they both function as sites of memory. The ways in which the public interacts with the site creates the differences seen between these two examples. The large-scale sculpture utilizes collective memory to serve its purpose for generations to come, while the roadside memorial is a more ephemeral, individual experience.

⁵ Mack, 103.

⁶ Greenville County, SC. "Veterans Affairs." County of Greenville, SC. N.p., n.d. Web. 10 Apr. 2015.
https://www.greenvillecounty.org/Veteran_Affairs/

Society as a whole requires memory and sites of memory to function. It is a way to psychologically deal with traumatic experiences, ranging from a singular death to mass loss from conflict or ill will. In addition, we as a society function with a collective memory. Collective memory can be defined loosely as the shared pool of information among multiple individuals.⁷ This collective memory is the force behind communal or curated memorialization versus the more singularly minded personal memorial. This meaning making through collective memory allows sites of memory to function past an individual or a single generation and continually “reinforce established frameworks of social cohesiveness.”⁸ While they rely on history in order to create meaning, memorials differ from historical sites due to their commemorative nature. Memorials are often historical sites, and vice versa, however this role is not explicitly shared. For example, the USS Arizona Memorial serves as both a historical site and a memorial, commemorating the historic attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7th, 1941 and memorializing the 1,177 men that perished during the attacks.⁹ This differs from the Vietnam Veterans Memorial located on the National Mall in Washington, DC. This site solely functions as a memorial, not as a historical site with a memorial.¹⁰ However, the historical emphasis remains a shared aspect of the memorialized item, whether it is a person, an event, or an era.

⁷ Thomas J. Anastasio. *Individual And Collective Memory Consolidation: Analogous Processes On Different Levels*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2012. eBook Academic Collection (EBSCOhost). Web.

⁸ The Journal of Museum Education, Vol. 31, No. 2, Expanding Conversations: How Curriculum Theory Can Inform Museum Education Practice. Summer, 2006, pp. 116. Print.

⁹ United States. National Park Service. "History & Culture." National Parks Service. U.S. Department of the Interior, 02 Apr. 2015. Web. 7 Apr. 2015. <http://www.nps.gov/valr/learn/historyculture/index.htm>

¹⁰ United States. National Park Service. "Plan Your Visit." National Parks Service. U.S. Department of the Interior, 11 Apr. 2015. Web. 11 Apr. 2015. <http://www.nps.gov/vive/planyourvisit/index.htm>

Over time, this historical emphasis on memorialized items has led to the creation of curated institutions that function alongside of, or in rare cases in lieu of, physical memorials.

“Museums inevitably intertwine politics and pedagogy, mobilizing various practices of remembrance so as to provoke and inform competing visions of our present and future civic life. This is why museums matter in democratic societies. Neither adequately rendered as ‘mausoleums’ that monumentalize previous civilizations nor ‘secular palaces’ that enshrine a hegemonic set of collective values, museums are vital to democracy understood as an interminably unfinished project.”¹¹

Memorial museums are not designed to function as the above-mentioned “mausoleum,” but rather to function at the intersection of memorial and museum; to remember the past, inform the present, and continue to question the future. “Many institutions of social memory have attempted to move away from a singular emphasis on affirming presentations of patriotism, triumph, and great deeds toward a greater appreciation of the complexities, competing motivations, and potential for aggression inherent in human relationships.”¹² In most cases, memorial museums pedagogically function as a form of public history. For example, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington DC, functions within this intersection of memorial and museum. It actively memorializes victims of the Holocaust of World War II, but also educates on modern-day genocide and creates dialogues around anti-Semitism.¹³

However, some would disagree that a memorial and a museum are uniquely suited for

¹¹ The Journal of Museum Education, Vol. 31, No. 2, pp. 114.

¹² Roger I. Simon. "Afterword: The Turn to Pedagogy: A Needed Conversation on the Practice of Curating Difficult Knowledge." *Curating Difficult Knowledge: Violent Pasts in Public Places*. Houndmills, Basingstoke Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. 198-22. Print.

¹³ United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. "About the Museum." United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. United States Holocaust Memorial Council, 2014. Web. 7 Apr. 2015. <http://www.ushmm.org/information/about-the-museum>

collaboration. James Gardner, executive for the National Legislative Archives, Presidential Libraries, and Museums, believes that “museums are about understanding, about making meaning of the past. A memorial fulfills a different need; it’s about remembering and evoking feelings in the viewer, and that function is antithetical to what museums do.”¹⁴ It is the belief of the author that monuments are solely tasked with evoking feeling and remembrance, while memorials allow for healing and understanding. Memorials are not stagnant artistic representations but rather bring with them opportunities for learning and understanding. This healing and understanding can be positively affected by the meaning making and pedagogy inherent to museums. Therefore, museums and memorials can be collaborative, especially as we move forward into the digital age.

Memorials in the Digital Age

The societal need for storytelling has not changed as technology has evolved, however the form in which that need is expressed has. With the widespread use of the Internet and personal computing, those who have access to these technologies have a multitude of opportunities to tell their stories to the connected public. In addition, it has allowed for the widespread dissemination of information. Technology has presented society with a multitude of options that include sharable audio, video, and visuals. In addition to an increase in content production, the opportunity to actively share these personal expressions has also increased.

¹⁴ Patricia Cohen. "At Museum on 9/11, Talking Through an Identity Crisis." The New York Times. The New York Times, 02 June 2012. Web. 11 Jan. 2015. http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/03/arts/design/sept-11-memorial-museums-fraught-task-to-tell-the-truth.html?_r=0

The advent of the Internet effectively opened transatlantic borders to content sharing and global meaning making.

The concept of social media is not necessarily a centralized item or action, but rather a range of “diverse Internet-based and mobile services that facilitate users’ shaping and sharing of content and participation in online [c]ommunities.”¹⁵ These social technologies facilitate user interactions, helping people collaborate, edit, create, share, comment, and network. Social media does not consist of new technology but rather functions as a social technology that assists the user in fully utilizing the connective collaboration function of the Internet. Furthermore, the term “social media” is constantly growing to include a variety of online experiences and tools, and with that the opportunities for creative expression have multiplied. Forms of social media include, but are in no way limited to blogs (Blogger, WordPress), microblogs (Twitter, Tumblr), media-sharing sites (YouTube, Flickr), social bookmarking sites (Reddit), virtual world sites (Second Life), wikis (Wikipedia), and social networking sites (Facebook, LinkedIn).¹⁶ While the boundaries of these platforms are increasingly blurred, these definitions will be used throughout this thesis.

With online content sharing in the form of social media came the opportunity for shared online memorialization. While participation in social media is relatively young, beginning as early as

¹⁵ Kirsten Drotner and Kim Schrøder. *Museum Communication and Social Media: The Connected Museum*. New York: Taylor & Francis, 2013. 2. Print.

¹⁶ Drotner, 4.

1990, with mass participation flourishing by 2007¹⁷, it has evolved into a form of communication utilized for public history purposes, including that of memorialization. This online memorialization mimics the physical memorials of years past by creating a commemorative space that others can utilize. This space is not physical, but rather digital in nature. It invites an increasingly participatory digital culture to collectively memorialize a variety of events without ever having to move beyond a screen. Specifically speaking, digital memorials have created an alternate environment for culture to grieve, to tell their stories, and ultimately memorialize. For those that participate, digital memorials and social technologies allow for the sharing of personal experiences and feelings to a larger audience than is normally physically available. This is even more so for the first generations of digital natives, ranging from the early 1980s to the early 2000s. Perhaps more than any generation before, they have begun to create a wealth of content related to the rituals and discussions surrounding death and memorialization. "They are starting blogs, YouTube series, and Instagram feeds about grief, loss, and even the macabre, bringing the conversation about bereavement and the deceased into a very public" and social forum.¹⁸

These users represent a shift from the authoritative pedagogy of the public history of the past to a new shared authority of a digital collective memory. Rather than one singular source noting what, how and why a specific subject is important, with the shared of authority of a digital collective memory, those who are connected decide through their participation within

¹⁷ Drotner, 5.

¹⁸ Hannah Seligson. "An Online Generation Redefines Mourning." The New York Times. The New York Times, 22 Mar. 2014. Web. 5 Nov. 2014. http://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/23/fashion/an-online-generation-redefines-mourning.html?_r=0

social technologies. “With the rise of an online participatory culture, collective memory can be shaped by a plurality of voices, rather than by those with powerful positions in government and other large organizations,”¹⁹ says Sarah Herbert in her Masters’ thesis, *Digital Memorialization: Collective Memory, Tragedy, and Participatory Spaces*. Herbert explores the nuances behind the creation of “non-sanctioned memorials” through social media outlets and how they contribute and/or challenge the public memory of American public history. As mentioned previously, collective memory has been seen as the authoritative figure by which communal and curated memorials are governed. By studying video memorials, mourning within social media outlets, and virtual world memorials, Herbert is able to showcase how this “retelling” of the individual human story shapes the collective memory of society. While her analysis of video-based mourning and virtual memorial representation is not viewed within the boundaries of a memorial or a memorial museum, the impact of her findings is no less important. The loss of physical boundaries and the interconnectivity of these subjects are yet another indication of the impact of shared authority. In the end, Herbert argues that social media platforms and applications provide an organized community in which individuals can find support, understanding, and eventually closure through their own terms.²⁰ By studying how people utilize this communicative media, one can begin to understand how these platforms could be very useful for the future of memorials, their museums, and the collections they hold in trust.

¹⁹ Sarah Herbert. “Digital Memorialization: Collective Memory, Tragedy, and Participatory Spaces”. University of Denver. Thesis. June 2008. http://tastyshebert.com/thesis_final.pdf.

²⁰ Sarah Herbert, 23.

Chapter Two.....Immergence of a Digital Footprint

Distributed Network and the Museum

For decades, the modes and functions of museums remained focused on a united authoritarian museology. They served their communities' need for memory; physically through collections, and emotionally through curator driven story telling. However, the roles of museums and institutions of memory have shifted. It is no longer acceptable for museums to simply exist as storage facilities for collections with very little relatable interpretation for the common man. Instead, the public has required for cultural institutions like museums to change and challenge their antiquated functions. This shift in roles has been marked by the authorship of a "new museology" emerging in the late 1980s, which defines the museum as a tool, rather than a repository. According to Marc Maure, one of the authors of this new museology, "a museum is a means, a tool available to a society to find, give form to, mark, demarcate its identity, i.e. its territory and its frontiers in time and space..."²¹ With the emergence of digital technologies, this shift in authority has occurred faster than ever before. According to Bill Adair, Director of Exhibitions and Public Interpretation at The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage:

"No forces of change are impacting cultural practice, including public history, faster, deeper, and wider than technological innovation. Virtually overnight it seems, the cultural power center has shifted from the wizened and experienced practitioner to a younger, more nimble collection of experts and non-experts, all communicating with

²¹ Dr. Andrea Hauenschild. "Claims and Reality of New Museology: Case Studies in Canada, the United States, and Mexico." Smithsonian Center for Education and Museum Studies, 11 Jan. 1988. Web. 8 Apr. 2015. <http://museumstudies.si.edu/claims2000.htm#2>. Elements

each other constantly and sharing their individual/ collective productions with lightning speed. “²²

While many within the cultural realm have struggled with this idea of “letting go,” Adair also provides comfort in a time of uncertainty. He states that institutions aren’t losing access to the information, but rather shedding the perception that the museum is the ultimate authority and end of the information pipeline. This concept “involves letting go of the notion (usually illusory in any case) that one can or should control all outcomes in the museum.”²³ This lack of (perceived) control and authority has made the shift difficult for some, even as communities, both physical and digital, look for ways to contribute to the story that is being told, whether that be through education, history, or cultural institutions like museums and memorials. In order to answer this call museums have begun to change and adopt a new museology. This new museology mirrors how we, as a culture, author, digest, and respond to information.

With the increased use of technology and social media networks, museums and other cultural institutions are now responsible for a growing amount of digital content that has not been sanctioned by the organization itself. This outside content, in combination with social media usage has created a whole new realm for the museum experience. While the museum may not be the author or origin of this digital content, it is ultimately responsible for content in relation to the institution or information available therein. This experience extends past the physical spaces of the institution, and can even be used in lieu of an actual visit. Now, more than ever,

²² Bill Adair, Laura Koloski, and Benjamin Filene. *Letting Go? : Sharing Historical Authority In A User-Generated World*. Philadelphia, PA: Pew Center for Arts & Heritage, 2011. eBook Academic Collection (EBSCOhost). 17.

²³ Bill Adair, 13.

cultural institutions need digital media strategies that address institutional and visitor needs across a spectrum of digital spaces. These strategies can and will ultimately utilize different models of communication. The most commonly used of these is the multi-platform model of communication, however the ideal rests with the distributed network model of communication. Most institutions fall somewhere in the middle of this spectrum of communication models, adopting new tools as situations present themselves. By utilizing a combination of these communication models, the institution can track and curate content while also allowing the public the ability to do the same. Nancy Proctor, Deputy Director for Digital Experience and Communications at the Baltimore Museum of Art, explains the differences in communication models in her unpublished manuscript, *Mobile for Museum Media*.

“Technically speaking, ‘multi-platform’ implies publishing to many outlets or ‘platforms’ from a single content source. In other words, the aim is to create an accurate copy of the same original (content, message) on each platform, or at least control the content and experience from a central publishing source.”²⁴

Ultimately this singular communication model fails to adequately respond to new museology and continually changing visitor needs, and does not provide the support for any kind of feedback loop. The multi-platform communication model cannot be used by social technologies as it only provides for a singular author and no opportunity for feedback loops. Feedback loops are way in which the public can respond or connect original content with that of the

²⁴ Nancy Proctor. *Mobile for Museum Media*. N.d. TS. Collection of Nancy Proctor, Baltimore Maryland. 10

institutions. The multi-platform network model does not allow the institution to move beyond the role of the origin of information. An example of a multi-platform network model can be as simple as a traditionally curated exhibition, where the museum supplies the sole informational authority in the role of the curator. No other authority is allowed to enter the network model and the information is disseminated downward through a variety of communication channels until it reaches the intended audience. Once it reaches this endpoint, there are no opportunities for additional informative feedback; no system for community response. The motivations behind the use of this model are not inherently bad. Rather, they attempt to control the message for the sake of accuracy and consistency. They are just not well suited for the new dynamics of Internet communications.

Instead of relying solely on this traditional model of communication, many museums and cultural institutions are increasingly attempting to adopt flexible models, which allow for a multitude of information origins, as well as adequate and engaging feedback loops. The distributed network model is very akin to an information web and thus an ideal solution.

Proctor explains:

“Knowledge, rather than being disseminated outwards from a center point, is discovered in its intersections and interstices, through the (sometimes surprising) juxtapositions that can happen when experiences are assembled collaboratively.”²⁵

²⁵ Ibid.

This type of network builds upon itself and its intersections. The Internet is currently the best example of a functioning distributed network. Pages contain original content, which can then be shared or modified without corrupting the original authority of the information. Unlike the multi-platform model, the distributed network is strengthened by multiple voices and viewpoints. As institutions move forward, the distributed network model can serve as an ideal inspiration for creating conversational, engaging, and relevant content for audiences specific to the platform the content is being accessed from. Distributed approaches to the museum experience, using social media as the primary toolbox, can increase the quality of the experience, online and off.²⁶ With this being said, neither communication model is inherently better than the other; rather they both serve separate functions. It is the responsibility of the institution to understand how these models function and create a hybrid that works best for them. Many achieve this through the creation of curated feedback loops attached to the multi-platform model, allowing the institution more control over the information origins than a true distributed network model allows.

Distributed Network Model



Multi-platform Model



Figure 1

²⁶ Nancy Proctor, 13.

Museums and other cultural institutions are finding that adaptable communication strategies can increase engagement and meaning-making for audiences that would not normally interact with museums and similar cultural institutions. Along with new communication models, the creation of a new field, digital cultural communications, is gaining support from across the globe. Digital cultural communications is defined as “a new field which examines co-creative relationships between cultural institutions, communities and audiences.” Institutions like museums can apply the practices of this field to gain new insight into the needs of their communities, both physically and digitally present. Angelina Russo and Jerry Watkins, the forces behind the Digital Cultural Communication movement, argue that through the strategic application and cultural understanding of new media, institutions can build upon the existing program/outreach structure to become an epicenter for cultural communities. One of the most important elements of this research is the idea that experience can be used to construct a triad of relationships between community, institution, and audience. Within this triad, the audience is defined as the non-participatory group that seeks to solely observe. By highlighting these relationships and understanding where the institution fits within these parameters, it is easier to understand how the institution might fulfill a digital leadership role. While much of the literature associated with digital cultural communication concerns the use and involvement in completely virtual environmental communities like *Second Life*, the base of knowledge concerning how cultural communities function are useful in providing inspiration when applied to other social media formats. This strategic base could be applied to a physical space in

transition to a digital realm or vice versa and therefore be useful for a site of interpretation such a memorial or a museum with the same credo.²⁷

Technology Shift...

As we move farther into the digital age, we as a society have created new forms of interaction and communication, which have influenced the roles museums play within society. According to Russo, Watkins, and Chan, the influence of social media has impacted how museums, “act as trusted cultural online networks; distribute community knowledge, and view their role as custodians of cultural content.”²⁸ While social media provides a wealth of new opportunities for growth and learning, Russo also acknowledges that social media is structurally ambiguous, which has the potential to cause issues for institutions that thrive on structure. The lack of controllable authority is chief among those issues. The questions of public trust and authority are constantly called into question via the input of social media, thus creating a dialogue built around an unconventional trust model for a majority of museums.²⁹ The traditional model focuses on authorship solely by the museum, or educated curators within its employ.³⁰ By exploring how the communication channels have shifted through the use of social media towards that of a distributed network instead of the multi-platform model, it becomes clearer how the traditional museum model and methods are entering into a transitional period

²⁷ Angelina Russo and Jerry Watkins. “Establishing and Maintaining Cultural e-Communities.” WSEAS Transactions on Advances in Engineering Education 3(1):pp. 2006. 27-33.

²⁸ Angelina Russo, J. Watkins, L. Kelly, and S. Chan. 2006. . “How will social media affect museum communication?” Conference Proceedings from Nordic Digital Excellence in Museums (NODEM 06). . 2006. Oslo, Norway. Accessed at http://www.tii.se/v4m/nodem/nw_06/papers/papers.htm

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ross Parry. “The Trusted Artifact”. Museum Communication and Social Media: The Connected Museum. Ed. Kirsten Drotner and Kim Schrøder. New York: Taylor & Francis, 2013. 18-19. Print.

especially when applied to a digital platform. This exploration and understanding of shifting communication channels will help in the creation of a successful participatory dialogue within Social Media. According to Nina Simon, executive director of the Santa Cruz Museum of Art & History and author of *The Participatory Museum*, “all of these participatory activities are only meaningful when combined with a system that will respond to users’ actions.”³¹ It is the belief of this thesis that by modifying the forms of communication, cultural institutions can continue to connect and create meaning making experience for an evolving participatory audience and eventually participate in evolving digital opportunities. .

According to *Culture Track: 2014*, a cultural study completed by La Placa Cohen, cultural audiences are driven to participate by three separate factors: content, value, and the opportunity to be social.³² In addition, audiences find social media to be a valid communication tool, with Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter at the top of the participation ladder for all generations.³³ This study also highlights the fact that audiences aren’t participating in social media solely from home. In fact, four of the seven defined on-site mobile activities for cultural audiences include some form of social media.³⁴ The most important take-away from this study comes from the conclusion. It says that in order to continue to engage audiences, cultural organizations need to “meet audiences where they live and understand how they feel.”³⁵ Audiences are hungry for an experience that connect with their needs and wants and enlarges their world. Memorials with social media strategies are poised to do just that.

³¹ Nina Simon. *The Participatory Museum*. Santa Cruz, CA: Museum 2.0, 2010. 22. Print.

³² La Placa Cohen. “Culture Track 2014.” *La Placa Cohen*. 2014. 1-114. PDF, 44.

³³ La Placa Cohen, 60.

³⁴ La Placa Cohen, 74.

³⁵ La Placa Cohen, 99

However, success will not come overnight, as the current trends for social media and cultural institutions require evolving and responsive strategies. According to Colleen Dilenschneider, a non-profit social media guru, “many [institutions] view social media as a tech skillset and not a strategy for building relationships with living and breathing human beings.”³⁶

Counterproductively, many recognize the need to be connected but are at a loss as to how to actually use social media beyond that of a simple marketing tool. In an interview with Paul DePrey, World War II Valor in the Pacific National Monument Superintendent, he said, “We don’t need social media to gain visitors...however we’d really like to find different ways to engage with our audiences. Social media sounds like a good idea, but we don’t really know how to use it beyond [the current initiatives].”³⁷ The same can be said for a multitude of organizations. Laura Cohen, Director for Interpretation for the National Mall and Memorial Park, echoed DePrey’s statement. “We know we should be [using social media], but we don’t know how use it to our advantage yet”.³⁸

Simon has been at the forefront of the movement toward making cultural institutions more participatory in nature. As far as social media is concerned, Simon views the technology as “not simply a requirement for cultural institutions as time moves forward, but rather a set of strategies that can greatly influence how the public interacts with and views a particular

³⁶ Colleen Dilenschneider. "Why Using Social Media for the Sake of Using Social Media Hurts Organizations." Know Your Bone: A Resource for Creative Engagement for Museums and Cultural Centers. IMPACTS, 5 Nov. 2014. Web. 15 Jan. 2015.

³⁷ Paul DePrey. "Pacific Historic Park." Telephone interview. 2 Oct. 2014.

³⁸ Laura Cohen. "National Park Service Interpretation." Telephone interview. 2 Oct. 2014.

institution.”³⁹ Being active on social media networks can greatly help an institution; however, if mismanaged, being on social media can have negative effects. These can include a lack of participation and a negative perception of institutional authority. However, if built and sustained correctly, social media can make it easier for the public to consume and engage the content they want AND institutions can continue to learn and grow.⁴⁰ As long as the feedback loops are sustained and the system continues to learn then it, being the posts on social media, can grow and extend past the life of the author. This is especially important for memorials and other cultural institutions. If memorials can build sustainable and responsive models of communication, then over time new audiences can connect to the message and mission, regardless of a personal affiliation to the physical site, or the memorialized action.

In her article, *Participatory Design and the Future of Museums*, Simon lists five commonly expressed forms of dissatisfaction with cultural institutions:

1. *Cultural institutions are irrelevant to my life.*
2. *The institution never changes—I’ve visited once and I have no reason to return.*
3. *The authoritative voice of the institution doesn’t include my view or give me context for understanding what’s presented.*
4. *The institution is not a creative place where I can express myself and contribute to history, science, and art.*

³⁹ Nina Simon. “Participatory Design and the Future of Museums”. *Letting Go? : Sharing Historical Authority In A User-Generated World*. Ed. Bill Adair, Laura Koloski, and Benjamin Filene. Philadelphia, PA: Pew Center for Arts & Heritage, 2011. eBook Academic Collection (EBSCOhost). 18.

⁴⁰ Nina Simon. “Participatory Design and the Future of Museums”. 19.

*5. The institution is not a comfortable social place for me to talk about ideas with friends and strangers.*⁴¹

These forms of dissatisfaction directly relate to most cultural institutions, including memorials. While Simon goes on to describe how participatory design can directly respond to these dissatisfactions, it is not the intention of this thesis to respond to these theoretically at this time. However, in the following chapters, this thesis will analyze how three different memorial institutions, the National Law Enforcement Memorial Fund, the Oklahoma City National Memorial, and the National September 11th Memorial and Museum use social media and how well they respond to the aforementioned points. These points will be used as part of the analysis to determine the effectiveness of current strategies. The goal of social media, and arguably all participatory techniques, “is both to meet visitors’ expectations for active engagement and to do so in a way that furthers the mission and core values of the institution.”⁴² The following chapters will showcase how these three different memorial institutions are finding both success and struggle in the ever-evolving world of cultural technologies.

⁴¹ Nina Simon. “Participatory Design and the Future of Museums”. 21-22.

⁴² Nina Simon. “Participatory Design and the Future of Museums”. 20.

Chapter Three.....Social Media at the Memorial

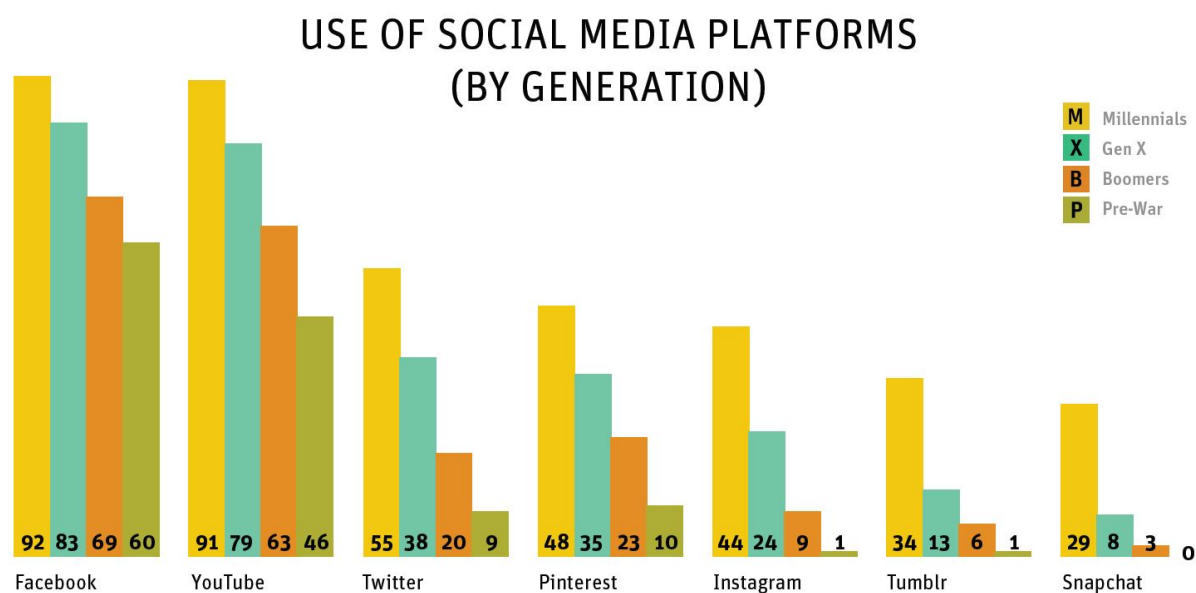


Figure 2

As future chapters will show, the use of social media within memorials and memorial institutions is actively shaping how the public interacts with, engages with, and remembers the past. The public's participation in this network of social media platforms is steadily growing with each passing year. According to La Placa Cohen's *Culture Track '14*, more than 50% of cultural consumers are active on Facebook, with millennials being the most active at 92%.⁴³ Other active platforms include YouTube, Twitter, Pinterest, and even mobile-only applications like Snapchat (see figure 2).

This chapter will showcase how initiatives at the National 911 Memorial and Museum, the Oklahoma City National Memorial and Museum, and the National Law Enforcement Museum

⁴³ La Placa Cohen, 60.

create community, facilitate dialogue and reach audiences beyond their physical spaces with their social media strategies. For the purposes of this social media analysis, the focus will predominantly stay on the three platforms most widely utilized by these institutions: Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

- **Facebook:** Undoubtedly the most ubiquitous social media platform. The Pew Research Center estimates that there are over 500 million Facebook users worldwide, or 1 in every 13 people on this planet, with over half of them logging in daily. The fastest growing user segment contains adults over 55 and that number is only expected to grow.⁴⁴ The Horniman Museum, a free museum and gardens in south London, has a particular engaging Facebook profile. Nominated for the 2014 Museum Shorty Award, an award for the best and most engaging social media presence, the Horniman uses their Facebook for fundraiser and behind-the-scene showcases.⁴⁵
- **Twitter:** Museums across the world have been active on Twitter for years, using it for a variety of purposes including but not limited to facilitating dialogue, sharing collections, marketing, promotions, and professional development within a 140 character limit.⁴⁶ This character limit creates an environment that thrives on sharing and creativity. In a recent study by LaMagnética, the Spanish digital agency, found the Met to be the most influential museum in the world via Twitter. Their distributed network model allows for

⁴⁴ Lynda Kelly. "The Connected Museum in the World of Social Media." *Museum Communication and Social Media: The Connected Museum*. Ed. Kirsten Drotner and Kim Schrøder. New York: Taylor & Francis, 2013. 55-56. Print.

⁴⁵ The Seventh Annual Shorty Awards. "Horniman Museum's Shorty Award Profile." Horniman Museum. Sawhorse Media, n.d. Web. 10 Apr. 2015. <http://shortyawards.com/HornimanMuseum>

⁴⁶ Lynda Kelly, 55.

a multitude of authors with hashtags like #museummemories and events like #askacurator create viable and fruitful feedback loops.⁴⁷

Instagram: This photo-sharing social media platform was the second fastest growing platform in 2014, according to Global Web Index. Originally a mobile-only platform, Instagram has a very active user-base with over 25% of its global users visiting more than once a day.⁴⁸ Museums like the Philadelphia Museum of Art are especially popular on this platform, due to large amounts of sharable content and a quirky commentary voice.⁴⁹

In addition to a platform focus, this research has focused on social media initiatives that have community engagement as a core purpose, versus an increase in visitorship or fundraising. While these can be additional benefits, the focus is consistently on online engagement and participation. This is not to say that social media initiatives cannot have this as primary functions, in fact many institutions use social media as a way to help crowdsource funds or market physical events. However, the guidelines suggested within this thesis focus on engagement and participation, which is closely aligned to the missions and values of memorials and memorial museums.

⁴⁷ Lucy Redoglia. "Consistent Engagement Is the Key to Twitter Success for Museums." Digital Underground. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1 Dec. 2014. Web. 10 Apr. 2015. <http://www.metmuseum.org/about-the-museum/museum-departments/office-of-the-director/digital-media-department/digital-underground/2014/lamagnetica-twitter-study>

⁴⁸ Ingrid Lunden. "Tumblr Overtakes Instagram As Fastest-Growing Social Platform, Snapchat Is The Fastest-Growing App." TechCrunch. N.p., 25 Nov. 2014. Web. 10 Apr. 2015.

⁴⁹ Philadelphia Museum of Art. *philamuseum*. Instagram Profile. 10 Apr. 2015.

Creating Community

One of the functions of social media is the creation of online communities. These online communities can take many forms within the digital realm, but most seem to share a set of common motivators that guide activity. According to Waterson, there are ten common motivations for participating in online communities. These common motivators include:

- Seeking information for personal benefit
- Opportunities to exchange ideas and find solutions to problems
- Fun
- Opportunity for dialogue
- Opportunity to help others
- Change to gain respect and visibility within a community
- Seeking to build social cohesion within a group
- Shared sense of identity and belonging
- Raise profile with peers
- Commitment to shared values and norms⁵⁰

A strong social media strategy that responds to these common motivators can assist a memorial in creating and sustaining the activity of an online community.

In addition to these motivators, it is important to also acknowledge that, “utilizing social media to strategically engage audiences is...increasingly critical. Lest the signal be lost amidst the noise: the important word in the preceding sentence was **strategically** not social media... The ‘if you build it’ mentality is categorically false. Just because [a memorial] launch[es] an initiative does not mean that people will take part in it.”⁵¹ With this particular strategy, the memorial is not the sole author; the community itself is given multiple opportunities to provide insight and

⁵⁰ P Waterson. ‘Motivation and Successful Online Communities’. In S. Dasgupta (ed.) Encyclopedia of Virtual Communities, Hershey, PA Idea group. 2006. 334 – 337.

⁵¹ Colleen Dilenschneider.

feedback, directly affecting the outcome of the future of the community and its projects.⁵² This shared responsibility helps the memorial focus its efforts and utilize its resources appropriately.

The National 911 Memorial and Museum (911 Memorial) has focused on building an online community via social media since the Memorial opened for visitors in Sept of 2011. (The Museum opened in May of 2014.) The 911 Memorial is currently active on eight separate social media channels, specifically Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Google+, YouTube, Pinterest, and their own blog embedded in the structure of the main website.⁵³ Creating a unified look and feel to all of their channels, as well as creating two specific hashtags (#Honor911 & #911Memorial) has helped the community utilize and interact with their platforms.

As of March 2015, the 911 Memorial boasts a total of 307,821 likes on Facebook⁵⁴, 57.8 thousand followers on Twitter⁵⁵ and 8,592 followers on Instagram.⁵⁶ With such a large follower base, it is important that the Memorial have a strong social media policy to be able to provide guidance effectively across multiple channels. This policy allows for community engagement and commentary, under the condition that it is not inflammatory or damaging to others. Profanity is also expressly forbidden.⁵⁷ In creating a policy that protects and creates a safe place for reflection and discussion, the Memorial has laid the framework for sustained

⁵² Angelina Russo and Jerry Watkins. Establishing and Maintaining Cultural e-Communities. 27-33.

⁵³ National September 11 Memorial & Museum. "A Guide to Commemorate in Your Online Community". *National September 11 Memorial & Museum*. PDF.

http://www.911memorial.org/sites/all/files/2012_Commemorate_Online_0.pdf

⁵⁴ National September 11th Memorial & Museum. Facebook Profile. 2015.

⁵⁵ National September 11th Memorial & Museum. @Sept11Memorial. Twitter Profile. 2015.

⁵⁶ National September 11th Memorial & Museum. 911 Memorial. Instagram Profile. 2015.

⁵⁷ Christina Melendez. Personal Interview. 6 March 2015.

A Guide to Commemorate in Your Online Community

Use this guide to connect with your online community as you honor and remember those who were killed on 9/11.

Step 1: Join the 9/11 Memorial's online community

The 9/11 Memorial's official social media channels feature information about the Memorial, the history of 9/11, tributes worldwide, and ways we remember. Join the conversation, share our content, and tell us what you are doing to mark the 9/11 anniversary.

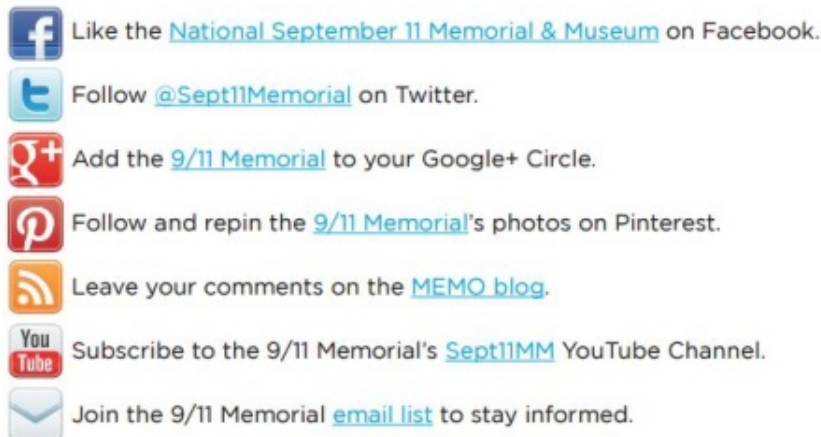


Figure 3

community interaction. In addition to a strong posting policy, they have also created documents that detail how the public can interact with the Memorial in the form of an easy-to-use pdf.⁵⁹ This pdf, figure 3, highlights all social media networks, branded hashtags, and how to use all of the posted information. While this might seem elementary to those who are frequent users of social media networks, it is in the best interest of the 911 Memorial to provide this type of instruction, so as to not exclude anyone from the conversation.

These guidelines allow for the sharing of traumatic experiences, which has been shown to build community, especially within the millennial generation (1980-2000). According to the *New York*

⁵⁹ National September 11 Memorial & Museum. "A Guide to Commemorate in Your Online Community".

Times, these connected generations are eager for a digital connection that isn't necessarily always pretty, but also focuses on the difficult, on the painful.⁶⁰ By providing a framework that is easily understood and accessed by the public and allows for the discussion of traumatic experiences the 911 Memorial is creating community within their social media footprint.

Similarly, the Oklahoma City National Memorial and Museum (OKC Memorial) has created social media safe spaces for users to share experiences. Within their specific social media footprint, the OKC Memorial has a similar social media policy regarding commentary, and frequently showcases active members of their community via Instagram. By highlighting visitors and their interactions on Instagram (figure 4), the Memorial is highlighting its inclusion of a multitude of opinions and viewpoints, which creates a strong digital community.⁶¹



Figure 4

While the OKC Memorial lacks a general standardized hashtag, they do present a clear brand throughout all social media networks, which is necessary in establishing authority and continuity. Each platform shares the same profile picture highlighting their current initiative, #okstandard, delivering a clear visual identity, while textually communicating their mission within the platform profiles.

⁶⁰ Hannah Seligson.

⁶¹ Nina Simon, "Participatory Design and the Future of Museums". 21-22.

Alternatively, the National Law Enforcement Memorial (NLEM), does not rely on institution-authored posts to create community, but rather create environments that respond to community action. They create individual calls to action, and rely more heavily on community posts than the other two memorials. For example, for every individual officer fatality, the Memorial creates a specific space for the remembrance of said officer (figure 5). Within each space, visitors are invited to participate through commentary or shared content.



Figure 5

This could be attributed to two factors. First, the NLEM does not have a connected interpretive institution. The National Law Enforcement *Museum*, which is governed by the same non-profit organization The National Law Enforcement Memorial Fund, has not been designed as a memorial museum and does not seek to serve that function.⁶²

Secondly, NLEM focuses on individual experiences, rather than one large collective experience. NLEM creates community from the shared traumatic experiences that occur at different points in time, rather than one static point, and builds upon the fraternity that already exists between law enforcement personnel. Both the OKC Memorial and the 911 Memorial do so in separate spaces within their interpretive

⁶² Steve Groeninger and Jeni Ashton. "National Law Enforcement Museum and Memorial Fund." Telephone interview. 24 Sept. 2014.

institutions, focusing on law enforcement and first responder communities. These separate spaces acknowledge these specific communities within the bigger scope of the event. This focus is important, as these communities are major stakeholders within the memorial story for all of these institutions.

Facilitating Dialogue

Networked information spaces, like Facebook and Twitter, are a place of discourse for a multitude of generations, ranging from baby boomers (circa 1940s) to Millennials (circa 180). To continue to develop a trust in cultural information resources, [memorials] must encourage users to expect challenging, interesting and enjoyable experiences, and enable them to make critical judgments about the meaning of the world around them...⁶³ By facilitating these conversations, these memorial sites are not only fulfilling their separate missions, but allowing the created communities to continue to engage and add to the collective memorial experience.

Museum Nerd, a blogger and social evangelist who shares musings on museum visits, arts advocacy, and education believes that the pursuit of active dialogue is the most important reason for museums to use social media.⁶⁴ For many, the hope is that the facilitation of dialogue online will result in physical action offline, as is the case with the OKC Memorial and the #OKStandard.

⁶³ Jennifer Trant. "Museums and Authenticity in the Networked World". Museums in the Digital Age. Ed. Ross Parry. 311.

⁶⁴ Zoe Fox. "5 Ways Museums Are Reaching Digital Audiences." Mashable. N.p., 11 Aug. 2011. Web. 2 Apr. 2015.

The OKC Memorial and Museum has been in the interesting position of growing with the increase use of technology. The Memorial and Museum were opened in 2000 and 2001, with the Museum undergoing significant technological improvements in 2014. The Memorial and Museum, though separate physical spaces, have one singular social media footprint. Specifically, the OKC Memorial and Museum is active on four social media platforms: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram. While this is half the amount of the platforms that the 911 Memorial is active on, OKC has been very strategic in their selections based on institutional resources and audience participation.⁶⁵ As of March 2015, The OKC Memorial and Museum has acquired over 30,135 likes on Facebook⁶⁶, 3,822 followers on Twitter⁶⁷, and 417 followers on Instagram.⁶⁸

Within their specific social media footprint the OKC Memorial has created a very successful campaign called the Oklahoma Standard, complete with sharable hashtag (#OKStandard).⁶⁹ The generosity exhibited by Oklahomans during the events of April 19, 1995, was later labeled the Oklahoma Standard; The OKC Memorial has asked its community to recommit to that standard. The campaign asks for the participant to complete three acts: one of service, honor, and kindness. The Memorial has defined each of these acts simply.

“Service means giving your time to someone in need. This could mean volunteering at a soup kitchen, or tutoring a student. **Honor** the victims and survivors of the 1995

⁶⁵ Dustin Potter. Personal Interview. 21 Nov 2014.

⁶⁶ Oklahoma City National Memorial & Museum. Facebook Profile. 2015.

⁶⁷ Oklahoma City National Memorial & Museum. @OKCNM. Twitter Profile. 2015.

⁶⁸ Oklahoma City National Memorial & Museum. okcnm. Instagram Profile. 2015.

⁶⁹ Oklahoma City National Memorial & Museum. "The Oklahoma Standard." Oklahoma City National Memorial and Museum. N.p., 2014. Web. 02 Apr. 2015.

bombing, by visiting the Memorial Museum, cheering at the Memorial Marathon or leaving a token of appreciation on a chair in the Memorial. **Kindness** involves everything from holding a door for a stranger to cleaning up your neighbor's leaves. "⁷⁰

Those who wish to commit, whether it be individually, with a group, or within a corporation, are given the opportunity to provide the OKC Memorial with their information in order to be recognized for their commitments. The OKC Memorial then leads the participant toward resources to help facilitate conversations within their own communities. One resource that stands out in relation to this thesis is the social media guide for the #OKStandard. Among the normal social media calls to actions and sharing tips, the Memorial provides the public with a series of questions that they can answer and then share. This puts the authorship in the hands of the participant even though the original question originated from the Memorial. Along with text examples, the guide also offers graphic examples that have been shown to be helpful in getting the public to participate in social media campaigns and initiatives (figure 6).⁷¹

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Melanie Mathos and Chad Norman. 101 Social Media Tactics for Nonprofits: A Field Guide. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2012. 71. Print. 71.

Figure 6



The 911 Memorial created a similar social media campaign framework utilizing the hashtags #Honor911 and #911Memorial. This campaign is described within a sharable guide to commemoration that bares a great resemblance to the pdf created by the OKC Memorial. Along with providing multiple examples across a selection of platforms, the 911 Memorial repeatedly references the variety of feedback loops that the public can utilize throughout their experience. This campaign differs from the OKC campaign as there is no foreseeable end to the #Honor911 campaign, and the institution plans on continuing to utilize these frameworks to facilitate additional programming opportunities in the future.

The Law Enforcement Memorial facilitates dialogue more traditionally, with less opportunity for feedback, than the other two memorials and has yet to create a dialogue specific campaign. However, this does not negate the importance of their physical experiences. The Law Enforcement Memorial relies on the National Law Enforcement Museum to be the interpretive institution and create physical conversations. The Museum's staff hopes that with the creation of the physical museum, currently under construction, that these conversations will extend past town hall events and link with the Memorial and social media.⁷² This is especially true considering the current political climate between law enforcement professionals and the public.

All of these institutions seek to create dialogue within their physical spaces, however it is the above campaigns and hashtags that allow for these experiences to impact others and to continue past the site visit. It is this continuation of the conversation that makes social media such an impactful tool. It is also important to note that none of these campaigns or initiatives would be considered successful if the institution was not actively responding and interacting with the public and their own personal social media footprints. While this is taxing on an Institution's resources, it is absolutely necessary for the public to the institution respond.⁷³ "The [current] challenge is creating an overall experience that works both online and off and one that consistently allows visitors to participate in meaningful ways."⁷⁴

⁷² Steve Groeninger and Jeni Ashton.

⁷³ Nina Simon. "Participatory Design and the Future of Museum". 19.

⁷⁴ Shelley Bernstein. Comment. "Please chime in: the challenges and opportunities of participatory culture". n.p. *Indianapolis Museum of Art blog*. <http://www.imamuseum.org/blog/2011/10/11/please-chime-in-the-challenges-and-opportunities-of-participatory-culture>.

Beyond the Physical Space

Part of the boon of social media and technology is the lack of an interpretive physical space. The interactions, relationships, conversations, and impacts created by social media are done so without the express use of physical space. While some functions can be utilized in conjunction with a physical space (tagging, geocaching, etc.), the physical space isn't necessary for the interaction to take place. This makes social media a great tool for memorials and their interpretive institutions for two reasons. The first being access to information regardless of socioeconomic status or physical location. Those that do not have the means to visit the physical location, now have the opportunity to do so digitally. The second centers on the creation of meaning- making for an audience that might never actually visit the memorial site. This is especially true for national or international memorialized events, like in all of the selected case study institutions. Social media also grants these institutions the opportunity to move beyond simple physical replication. While it is good function of social media, the opportunities for meaning making and influence extend beyond a virtual tour of the physical space. Many institutions are attempting to re-invent themselves on social media, moving beyond the need to only have "graphic representations of existing spaces."⁷⁵ These institutions are attempting to "give access to a myriad of otherwise unavailable information – that [then] become tools [that] visitors can actively use."⁷⁶

For the National Law Enforcement Memorial, this is imperative. As a smaller memorial outside of the national mall, consisting of two 304-foot curved walls around a centered fountain and

⁷⁵ Andrea Bandelli. "Virtual Spaces and Museums". *Museums In A Digital Age*. Ed. Ross Parry. New York: Routledge, 2010. 152. Print.

⁷⁶ Ibid

seal, and with no distinct interpretive institution, social media activities provide the opportunity for the Memorial to extend beyond its physical space to achieve its mission. As of March 2015, the National Law Enforcement Memorial Fund, which is the governing non-profit institution for the Memorial, was active on five social media platforms: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Blogger, and Flickr.⁷⁷ Presently, the Memorial Fund has over 250,763 likes on Facebook⁷⁸ and 13.3 thousand followers on Twitter.⁷⁹

This social media footprint is different from the National Law Enforcement Museum, which hosts a separate Facebook page and is not considered a memorial institution.⁸⁰ The Memorial does offer a tour of the physical space via their website and linked through most of their social media platforms.⁸¹ While this does count as an off-site piece of programming, it is important for memorials to move beyond the digital reproduction of what

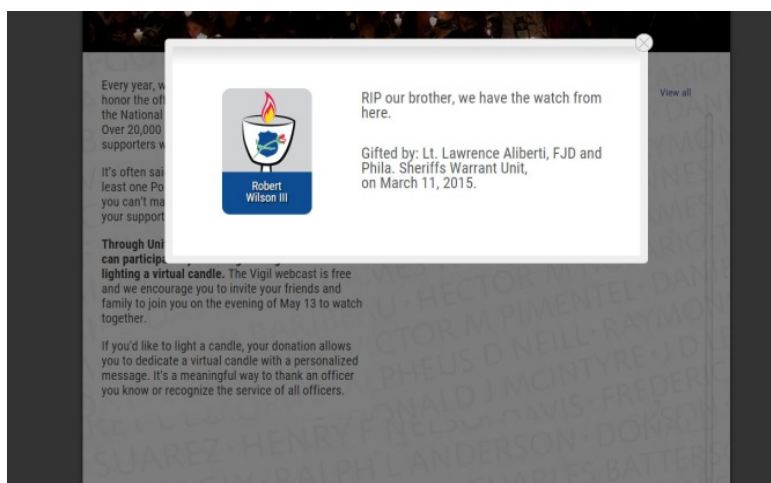
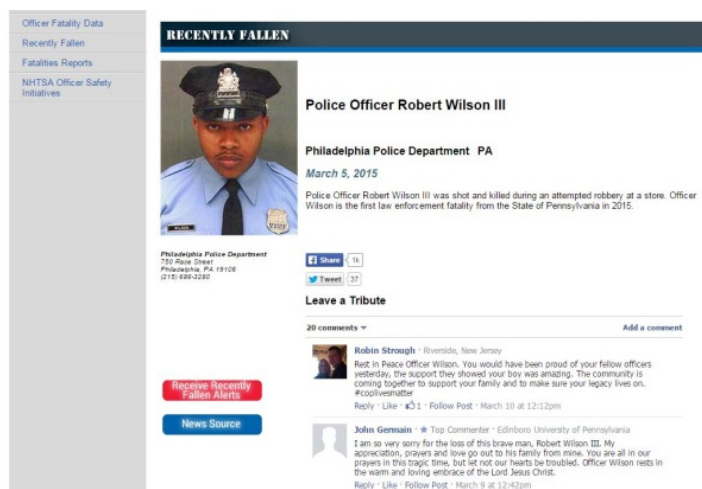


Figure 6

Figure 7



⁷⁷ National Law Enforcement Memorial Fund. "About Us." National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial. N.p., 2015. Web. 5 Apr. 2015.

⁷⁸ National Law Enforcement Memorial Fund. Facebook Profile. 2015.

⁷⁹ National Law Enforcement Memorial Fund. *NLEOMF*. Twitter Profile. 2015.

⁸⁰ Steve Groeninger and Jeni Ashton.

already exists. Additionally the Memorial as worked diligently to move beyond the reproduction of candlelight vigils and memorial plaques. As part of their campaign for Police Week 2015, the Memorial has created a completely online version of the candlelight vigil (figure 7).⁸² However, this online version differs from the physical, by allowing the viewing of commentary and the feedback loops to the personal memorial profiles (figure 8).⁸³

The 911 Memorial goes beyond the physical interpretive space in a multitude of ways. First, being the accessibility of the various registries available for survivors, witnesses, and additional memorial sites. These registries, which share names, stories, and physical locations, are available within the institution on digital kiosks, but also available outside of the Memorial online.⁸⁴ By providing access to these tools, the Memorial is helping to create a fulfilling experience for those that haven't had the opportunity or will never have the opportunity to physically visit New York City. The OKC Memorial shares a similar function with their virtual tour and educational materials.⁸⁵

All of these social media initiatives, campaigns and cross-shared materials seek to create a digital footprint of information and accessible content for the public to view and ultimately

⁸¹ National Law Enforcement Memorial Fund. "Memorial Virtual Tour." National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial. N.p., 2015. Web. 5 Apr. 2015.

⁸² National Law Enforcement Memorial Fund. "Candlelight Vigil Wall." National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial. N.p., 2015. Web. 5 Apr. 2015.

⁸³ National Law Enforcement Memorial Fund. "Recently Fallen: Police Officer Robert Wilson III." National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial. N.p., 2015. Web. 5 Apr. 2015.

⁸⁴ National September 11 Memorial and Museum. "911 Registries." National September 11 Memorial and Museum. N.p., 2015. Web. 7 Apr. 2015.

⁸⁵ Oklahoma City National Memorial & Museum. "The Memorial Museum." Oklahoma City National Memorial & Museum. N.p., 2015. Web. 7 Apr. 2015.

interact with. Through the use of facilitated dialogue these memorials have started to create meaning for a whole new generation, creating relevance in their lives. Through the use of new tools and evolving digital campaigns like the 911 registries, showcase how these Memorials have created new experiences for returning visitors. By presenting their stories on social media platforms and providing a forum for conversation and meaningful dialogue as well as the creation of multiple feedback loops, these Memorials have created spaces where the public is given an authoritative voice and creative outlet for self and collective expression. Lastly, all of these initiatives have attempted to create safe spaces, in which the public can discuss hot button topics and remember with a like-minded group of individuals. In doing all of the above, the National 911 Memorial and Museum, the Oklahoma City National Memorial and Museum, and the National Law Enforcement Memorial have attempted to respond to the criticisms highlighted by Nina Simon in the previous chapters.⁸⁶ By actively responding and re-evaluating current strategies, these Memorials and others can continue to create meaningful experiences on and off the web.

⁸⁶ Nina Simon, "Participatory Design and the Future of Museums". 21-22.

Chapter Four.....Understanding the Nature of Social Media

Ethical Implications of the Digital Age

As mentioned previously, memorials serve a variety of functions within our society. The struggle for many organizations is balancing the function as a site of memory with the function as a site of education and social change. By actively participating in social media, some memorials find themselves questioning the ethics of active digital participation for these types of memorial organizations. This dichotomy of active vs. passive memorialization and socially normative behavior is one that differs greatly based on the generation of the intended audience. According to *New York Times* writer Hannah Seligson:

“The social norms for loss and the Internet are clearly still evolving. But Gen Y-ers and millennials have begun projecting their own sensibilities onto rituals and discussions surrounding death. As befits the first generation of digital natives, they are starting blogs, YouTube series and Instagram feeds about grief, loss and even the macabre, bringing the conversation about bereavement and the deceased into a very public forum...”⁸⁷

However, this evolution is not something that is easily understood by everyone who comes into contact with social media, nor is it simply a young person’s evolution. The use of social media is cross-generational, Digital-natives tend to participate with more frequency, while older individual tend to actually engage with the material, bringing their own content into the conversation. When tasked with the interpreting difficult knowledge, in the form of memorials,

⁸⁷ Hanna Seligson.

“it is crucial to be mindful of the various contextually specific expectations, emotional needs, epistemological assumptions, and degrees of knowledge of [the public].”⁸⁸

In a majority of cases, those who work at and in partnership with these sites of memory are hyper-aware “of the virtual impossibility of viewing [and interacting with] particular images and artifacts without experiencing their imbrication within one’s psychic network of knowledge, identifications, and desires.”⁸⁹ With this sensitive inlay, memorials must use caution during the creation and continuation of social media initiatives.

These initiatives work in both tension and synergy with the memorial institutions. The loss of control over content and context is a major cause of anxiety within the field as digital information has the potential to be constantly dispersed and “remixed.”⁹⁰ In addition, “social media is simply challenging because museum staff and audience members alike are still learning to navigate in digital networks marked by an odd mix of anonymity and heightened visibility before an ambiguous audience.”⁹¹ Even with the ethical sensitivities that are present while using social media, more institutions are finding it necessary to participate as a way to fulfill their ethical obligations to a growing digitally native audience. For many, it is not that they mean to be disrespectful within a space, but rather the societal norms for participation within public spaces is currently in flux.

⁸⁸ Roger I. Simon, 1921.

⁸⁹ Ibid

⁹⁰ Amelia S. Wong. "Ethical Issues of Social Media in Museums: A Case Study." *Museum Management and Curatorship* 2.26 (2011): 97-112. Taylor & Francis Online. Taylor & Francis, 3 May 2011. Web. 4 Sept. 2014.

⁹¹ Ibid.

For the United States National Park Service (NPS), which is the governing body of over 125 sensitive sites (memorials, monuments, and historic battlefields), this question of what is socially acceptable within a sensitive interpretative site is at the forefront of emerging technological initiatives.⁹² According to Laura Cohen, Director of Interpretation of the National Mall and Memorial Parks, the rising use of social media in and around the National Mall is both an exciting opportunity and a difficult experience.⁹³ Currently, the NPS is in the process of creating digital technologies that will aid in interpreting the memorial and other historic sites with the boundaries of the National Mall. The technologies will rely heavily on mobile and social media usage. Cohen acknowledges that some visitors are less than enthusiastic about the current amount of technology usage around the physical sites, but believes that these tools will be positively received. "We've made sure to keep the technology on the outskirts, so as not to disturb the sanctity of the physical site."⁹⁴ This physical barrier is the NPS response to a public that is struggling with balancing the use of technology and the memorialization of difficult knowledge.

Similarly, the National 911 Memorial and Museum has already had to deal with negative responses to some of its social media initiatives, as well as the creation of the Memorial and Museum itself. Christina Melendez, Social Media Manager for the 911 Museum, has encountered negative responses, especially when dealing with how VIP visits are presented on social media. "We know that we have to watch those posts those comments closely...making

⁹² United States. National Park System. "Type of Designation". 25 Feb 2015. PDF. <http://www.nps.gov/news/upload/CLASSLST-407-updated-02-25-2015.pdf>

⁹³ Laura Cohen. "National Park Service Interpretation." Telephone interview. 2 Oct. 2014.

⁹⁴ Laura Cohen.

sure they follow our guidelines.”⁹⁵ One specific instance followed the Liverpool Football club and a Victim’s family member who came to speak to the team. To show appreciation to the family member, the team signed a jersey and presented it to them in front of the survivor tree.

“We took a posed photo and that created some backlash. Because of the way it was cropped it looked like they were promoting the team rather than donating it to the family, and that supposed promotion angered quite a few people. We now focus more on action shots to try and avoid that. It’s just important to be super aware of the photo you actually select.”⁹⁶

This kind of responsiveness is one of the best ways for a Memorial to continually deal with the ethical questions that are posed based on technologies. While there will always be those that do not agree with the use of social media, most have come to the realization that social media is a valuable tool for cultural organizations and one that will continue to be used in the years to come. Using new networked information tools, cultural heritage institutions have the opportunity to weave a web of new realities and interpretations that communicates the magic of the material past to a generation comfortable in the immaterial world.⁹⁷

Unique Challenges for Memorials

As mentioned previously, memorials have to deal with their own set of challenges due to their uniqueness among the cultural landscape. Among these challenges, the representation of

⁹⁵ Christina Melendez. “National 911 Memorial and Museum.” Personal Interview. 6 March 2015.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Jennifer Trant. “Museums and Authenticity in the Networked World”. *Museums in the Digital Age*. Ed. Ross Parry. 311.

memorials by their governing non-profit organizations is becoming very important in the discussion of memorials and social media. A chief example of this is the National Law Enforcement Memorial. The National Law Enforcement Memorial is governed by the National Law Enforcement Memorial Fund, a non-profit which is also responsible for the under construction National Law Enforcement Museum.⁹⁸ This shared responsibility has led some to believe that the Museum is a memorial museum, when in fact it is not. The Museum and the Memorial Fund are currently working on creating distinct branding differences to be able to tell different stories and not confuse the general public.⁹⁹ While this will become less important when the Museum is physically open and creating its own social media footprint, currently clear distinction between memorial and non-memorial interpretive institution have muddled the social media footprint.

Unfortunately, this muddy social media footprint is not distinct to just this memorial. The shared social media footprint between non-profit organization and governing body is a challenge for a multitude of sites, including the Pacific National Monument Park at Pearl Harbor. According to Park Superintendent Paul DePrey, it is common for the physical site to have one social media presence while the governing or fundraising body has another.¹⁰⁰ While this is not disastrous, it does create a separation and duplication that can negatively impact the public's ability to actively participate with the organization and create meaning. For example,

⁹⁸ National Law Enforcement Memorial Fund. "About Us." National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund:. N.p., 2015. Web. 5 Apr. 2015.

⁹⁹ Steve Groeninger and Jeni Ashton.

¹⁰⁰ Paul DePrey.

the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, located in Washington, DC has a Facebook page devoted to the memorial fund¹⁰¹ and the Memorial itself.¹⁰²

Other challenges that affect a memorial's ability to actively and accurately participate in social media include resources and site specific needs. As with all cultural institutions, resources including time, energy, and personnel are limited. Newcomers to social media assume that it is a relatively timeless process, when in reality it is anything but. "The 'if you build it' mentality is categorically false. Just because you launch an initiative does not mean that people will take part in it."¹⁰³ It takes time and pre-determined strategies to create successful social media outcomes that are responsive to the needs and desires to their specific community. Christina Melendez comments, "It can be very difficult at times...managing different platforms and messages, all while actively responding and looking forward to the next sharable opportunity"¹⁰⁴ This sentiment was one echoed through a majority of the discussions cited within this thesis, ranging from the National Park Service to the Oklahoma City National Memorial and Museum.

Lastly, it is important to note that some of the challenges that memorials face when it comes to social media initiatives and strategies are because of their specific place in the cultural landscape. Many of the how-to guides do not apply and it is difficult for someone unacquainted with the alternative uses of social media to understand how memorials can use them in the

¹⁰¹ Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund. Facebook Profile. 2015.

¹⁰² Vietnam Veterans Memorial DC. Facebook Profile. 2015

¹⁰³ Colleen Dilenschneider.

¹⁰⁴ Christina Melendez.

modern landscape. This thesis has been written in response to that need; however it is important to mention some of the traditional uses of social media that are not often used by memorials. Social media platforms have been used by other cultural institutions to garner new audiences, however with memorials that enticement is not the same. Paul DePrey cites a specific example within the National Park Service to highlight this difference:

“The USS Arizona Memorial is located in Hawaii and visited by thousands each year.

However, we neglect to use social media to try and get people to visit because it’s

Hawaii. People are either going to come or they aren’t. The intent is already there.

You’re not going to post a cool photo and make someone hop on a plane to come visit

for the afternoon.”¹⁰⁵

While Hawaii may seem to some to be a far-reaching example, the same can be true of the National Mall and all it entails. Laura Cohen states, “We don’t lack visitors. We don’t want to use social media to gain visitors. We want to use it to educate and create an impact. It just takes time to figure out how to do that [using social media].”¹⁰⁶

As with all initiatives that bring challenges and opportunities for improvement, analysis and evaluation are incredibly important. Given the changing nature institutions need to be prepared to be flexible in planning, implementation, and evaluation. Social media strategies should be routinely evaluated and analyzed for their effectiveness. This evaluation process can often allow for institutions to locate and respond to specific challenges or opportunities within their physical or digital communities. Additionally, this evaluation process innately requires a strong

¹⁰⁵ Paul DePrey.

¹⁰⁶ Laura Cohen.

social media policy, complete with objectives, goals, and kpi's or key performance indicators. Strong policies are imperative for the success and continuation of these initiatives. The objective of this thesis is not to analyze the process in which memorial and memorial museums evaluate, but to call attention to the fact that it is a necessary piece of the process.

The Tate Modern, one of the four influential Tate art galleries located in the United Kingdom, has been the location for many social media experiments and analysis opportunities. Over the years, these opportunities have given way to multiple resources for museums and cultural institutions to utilize in creating their own strategies and campaigns. One form of evaluation that has been popular with the corporate sector and is gaining support in the cultural nonprofit realm is the concept of the Balanced Scorecard. This concept walks an organization through creating objectives, goals, key performance indicators, and other necessary informatics. For more information and resources on social media evaluation using this concept and others used by the Tate Modern, interested organizations should see "An evaluation framework for success: Capture and measure your social-media strategy using the Balanced Scorecard"¹⁰⁷ and "Making Sense of Numbers: A Journey of Spreading the Analytics Culture at Tate".¹⁰⁸ Both papers can serve as valuable resources as institutions begin to utilize analytics for evaluation. The Culture24 framework which is mentioned in "Making Sense of Numbers: A Journey of Spreading

¹⁰⁷ Finnis, J. et al., "How to Evaluate Online Success? A New Piece of Action Research." Museums and the Web 2011: Proceedings. Toronto: Archives & Museum Informatics. March 31, 2011. April 2015. http://conference.archimuse.com/mw2011/papers/how_to_evaluate_online_success

¹⁰⁸ Elena Villaespesa and Tijana Tasich "Making Sense of Numbers: A Journey of Spreading the Analytics Culture at Tate". Museums and the Web 2012: Proceedings. San Diego: Archives & Museum Informatics. April 7, 2012. April 2015.

the Analytics Culture at Tate” is also available as its own separate resource.¹⁰⁹ It is important to remember that as the ways in which organizations use social media shift and change, evaluation and analysis will need to shift as well.

Overall, it is the hope of this thesis that memorials and their interpretative institutions can utilize the lessons enclosed therein to overcome challenges. With the increased use of social media, specific resources are becoming more and more necessary as the social media web grows to include more and more. As technology involves and new media is created, the uses for social media multiply and with it so do opportunities for growth and involvement. While memorials may not currently have all the answers, a few select institutions are leading the way to a more engaged, networked, collective future.

¹⁰⁹ Elena Villaespesa and Culture24. “Making sense of your social media strategies using the Culture24 Social Media Evaluation Framework”. Sept 2013. April 2015. Pdf.

Chapter Five..... What's Next? The Evolution of Social Media

This thesis has demonstrated several ways memorials can utilize social media in order to create communities, facilitate continuing dialogues, and move beyond the boundaries of a physical space. Through the adoption of the distributed network model which mirrors the adoption of new museology memorials can actively utilize social media platforms and form connections with active users. While this is an investment in resources, the return is the fulfillment of the institution's mission and social role that will extend past spatial and continuity barriers. As US-based museum consultant Leslie Bedford states "stories inspire wonder and awe; they allow a listener to imagine another time and place, to find the universal in the particular, and to feel empathy for others. They preserve individual and collective memory and speak to both the adult and the child."¹¹⁰ The essence of memorials and memorial institutions is the continued preservation of these stories regardless of form.

As we move forward and more institutions adopt these basic strategies, the opportunity for more in-depth social media usage arises. The creation of virtual collections, accessible education, and digital-born initiatives require a clear and secure understanding of principal social media strategies and what the expectations of each specific institution's audiences are. Currently, the question of access in relation to collections is a hot-button topic. More and more institutions are creating online repositories for digital representations of some of their most

¹¹⁰ Leslie Bedford. "Storytelling: The Real Work of Museums." *Curator*, 44(1), 2001. 27-34.

asked about objects. Singularly museums like the Metropolitan Museum of Art¹¹¹, the J. Paul Getty Museum¹¹² in conjunction with its research institute, and the Winterthur Museum and Gardens¹¹³ have allowed for online visitors to have access to a portion of their collections. Similarly, projects like the Google Art Project, are attempting to create repository spaces for a wealth of objects from a variety of institutions.¹¹⁴ The sharing of these collections through digital means is moving toward the social media realm, where participants have begun assist in the building of digital-born collections. Additionally, these digital collections are becoming part of the take-home experience through social-media. With projects, like *ArtLens* in the Cleveland Museum of Art, visitors can now curate groups of objects for engagement within the gallery and at home.¹¹⁵ Social media platforms now have the potential to assist in the public curation of digital-born and physical objects to assist in the engagement and education of visitors regardless of physical location. With an increase social media stewardship among memorial professionals, it is possible that memorials can join this movement, allowing visitors the opportunity to directly curate their own experiences.

In addition to curating, their own experiences, visitors could soon use social media to assist institutions in the gather of digital-born objects. Currently, institutions can use social media platforms to gather physical objects using the distributed network to reach a larger group of

¹¹¹ "The Collection Online." The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2015. Web. 10 Apr. 2015.

<http://www.metmuseum.org/collection/the-collection-online>

¹¹² "Digital Collections" The J. Paul Getty Museum, 2015. Web. 10 Apr. 2015.

http://www.getty.edu/research/tools/digital_collections/

¹¹³ "Digital Collections" Winterthur, 2015. Web. 10 Apr. 2015.

<http://www.winterthur.org/?p=1019>

¹¹⁴ Google. "Art-Project". Google Cultural Institute, 2015. Web. 10 Apr. 2015.

<https://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/project/art-project>

¹¹⁵ "Artlens". Cleveland Museum of Art, 2015. 10 Apr. 2015. <http://www.clevelandart.org/gallery-one/artlens>

people, faster. In the case of the 911 Memorial, social media was used to request specific newspaper covers from across the world that have been utilized within the exhibition spaces.¹¹⁶ Memorials could soon use social media to collect born-digital objects as well. Born-digital objects are defined as objects, which originate digitally and have no physical predecessor. These can include photographs, videos, art, and even data sets.¹¹⁷ The opportunities for memorial driven born-digital collection initiatives utilizing social media platforms are possible with an actively engaged public and ample feedback loops, which this thesis has actively stressed.

This thesis and study of memorials would benefit from further study of mobile technologies and the increased use of stand-alone applications. Their implications for cultural technologies have not yet been accurately accessed by the digital cultural communications community. Stand-alone applications are being created by cultural institutions, yet their impact on memorial institutions has yet to be. In addition, studying the impact of personal memorialization on social media platforms would greater inform institutions how the public uses social media without any guided action, and thus be able to model new strategy after already used behavior. As a whole, further study could be completed on the memorial niche within the museum field. During the research for this thesis, the research completed on the impact of memorial in terms of museology was limited in size and scope. These memorials are an important part of the museum family and more research should be done to see how they impact the cultural

¹¹⁶ Christina Melendez.

¹¹⁷ Ricky Erway. "Defining "Born Digital"" OCLC Research. N.p., Nov. 2010. Web. 8 Sept. 2015.<http://www.oclc.org/content/dam/research/activities/hiddencollections/borndigital.pdf?urlm=168879>

community. Only through continued study and responsive action of both the field and the tools, will memorials be able to function as key repositories for collective memory as the digital age continues.

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A Digital Flame: Successful Social Media Strategies for Memorials and Memorial Museums

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Museum Communication

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Social Media/Social Technology(ies)

are a group of diverse Internet-based services that facilitate users' shaping and sharing of content and participation. This is in no way limited to blogs (Blogger, WordPress), microblogs (Twitter, Tumblr), media-sharing sites (YouTube, Flickr), social bookmarking sites (Reddit), virtual world sites (Second Life), wikis (Wikipedia), and social networking sites (Facebook, LinkedIn).

Collective Memory is the shared pool of information between a group of individuals.

A Memorial/Site of Memory can be defined as the physical designation of an event, often of traumatic significance. These are spaces that allow for healing, learning and understanding.

The Multi-Platform Network Model

is a communication model where the information is authored by a single source and then sourced through multiple communication channels.

A Distributed Network Model differs in the fact that the content can be contributed and responded by a multitude of authors simultaneously.

Born-Digital/Digital-Born

Information is content that has no physical predecessor.

Overview

Memorials occupy a unique space in the museum landscape. These sites of memory serve as a place for reflection, commemoration, and in the current climate, conversation. While other forms of technology, like exhibition interactives, have started to make their way into memorial spaces, social media is still a contested and understudied medium. This study seeks to change that.

By acknowledging and responding to current digital trends, memorials and museums associated with memorials can successfully **cultivate and engage** their audiences through the use of social media platforms. New communication models and museology compliment the roles and needs of memorials and if used correctly can lead to **increased** participation and valuable meaning-making.

Memorials can take a multitude of physical forms that all serve similar functions. For the purposes of this thesis, they have been broken down these forms into three separate categories based on the purposes and functions of different sites of memory.

These include **personal, communal,** and **curated** memorial sites.

Personal memorial sites include shrines, roadside crosses, and individual creations that don't extend past the life or knowledge of an individual. **Communal** sites are larger in scope and use collective memory as the main form of sustainability. Lastly, **curated** memorial sites are the museums, exhibitions, and galleries associated with a site of memory. Their purpose is to not only remember, but to create meaning regardless of direct personal connection. The large-scale sculpture utilizes collective memory to serve its purpose for generations to come, while the roadside memorial is an ephemeral, individual experience.

Memorials are not stagnant artistic representations but rather bring with them opportunities for learning and understanding. This healing and understanding can be positively affected by the meaning-making and pedagogy inherent to museums. Therefore, museums and memorials can be collaborative, especially as the field moves forward into the digital age.

"[Memorials] are processes involving a constellation of meanings, symbols, emotions, memories and narratives."

- Dr. Dacia Viejo-Rose
University of Cambridge

The roles of museums and institutions of memory have shifted. The public has required for cultural institutions like museums to change and challenge their antiquated functions. This shift in roles has been marked by the authorship of a "new museology" emerging in the late 1980s, which defines the museum as a tool, rather than an authoritative repository. This new museology has even affected how institutions communicate with each other.

Now instead of a multi-platform communication model which sends out information linearly and with available feedback loops, the field has begun to embrace a distributed network model. This model resembles a web, with multiple authors and available feedback loops. Using this model creates a responsive, collaborative institution.

This study uses three case-studies:

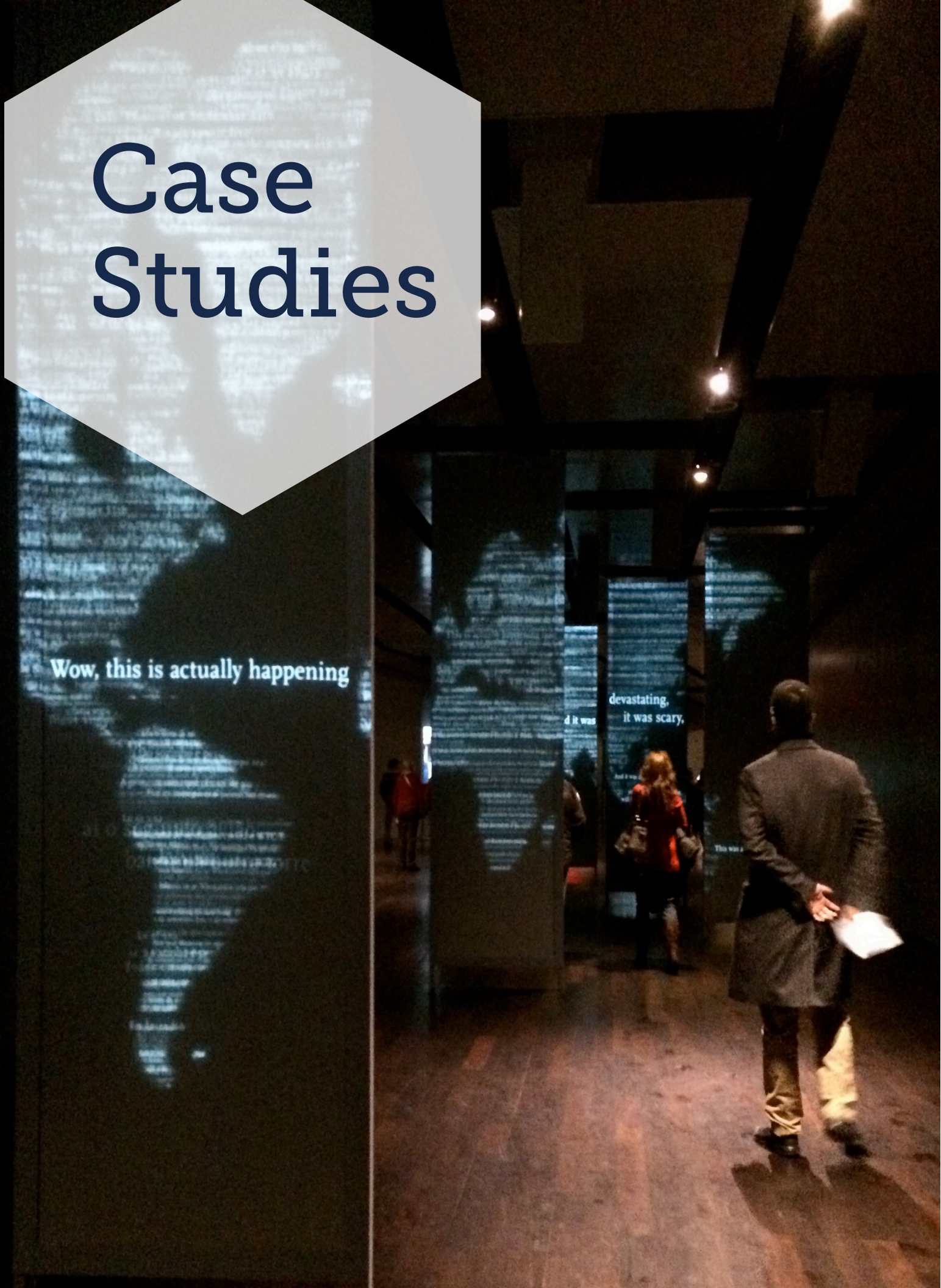
***The National Law
Enforcement Memorial
The Oklahoma City National
Memorial & Museum
The National September 11
Memorial & Museum***

This investigation explores their social media footprint, digital identity, and individual social network campaigns. While the importance of other platforms is understood, the in-depth focus is on Facebook, Twitter, & Instagram.

Through the creation, usage and responsive nature of these successful social media strategies these institutions have created communities, facilitated dialogues, and created meaning outside of their physical spaces. In doing so, they have fulfilled their own missions, as well as upheld their responsibilities to the public as sites of memory.

As we move forward, and more institutions adopt similar strategies, social media can provide additional opportunities. These include the creation and stewardship of virtual collections, accessible education, and digital-born initiatives. It is through these opportunities that memorials and their interpretive partners can usher in new generations of visitors and continue to matter in the digital realm.

Case Studies



The National Law Enforcement Memorial

Located in Washington, DC, the National Law Enforcement Memorial is the nation's monument to law enforcement officers who have died in the line of duty. The Memorial features two curving, 304-foot-long blue-gray marble walls. Carved on these walls are the names of more than 20,000 officers who have been killed in the line of duty throughout U.S. history, dating back to the first known death in 1791.

Facebook - 250,763

Twitter - 13,300



The memorial is overseen by the National Law Enforcement Memorial Fund whose mission is to tell the story of American Law Enforcement and make it safer for those serve. The Memorial Fund is also the governing body for the National Law Enforcement Museum.

The Memorial opened on October 15, 1991. Every spring new names are added to the Memorial during Police Week, normally held in May. Officers are considered for engraving if they were killed in the "line of duty". Correctional, railroad, military, state, federal and tribal officers are all eligible for review.

Their social media footprint includes:

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Youtube
- Flickr
- Blogger

Notable Social Media Tactic: *Individual Memorial Profiles for each Fallen Officer*

All Social Media Platforms connect to individual memorial profiles that encourage visitors to share.

The Oklahoma City National Memorial & Museum

The Oklahoma City National Memorial & Museum commemorates the April 19, 1995, bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in downtown Oklahoma City which resulted in the deaths of 168 people, some of whom were children.

The Memorial complex opened on April 19, 2001.

The mission states that the Memorial Complex should be a place of remembrance, peace, spirituality & hope, cherished children, comfort, recognition, and learning.

Their social media footprint includes:

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram
- Youtube

Notable Social Media Tactic:

The Oklahoma Standard #OKStandard

The campaign asks for the participant to complete three acts:

service, honor, and kindness.

Resources include a social media guide that facilitates conversations and provides the public with the opportunity to participate within their own communities.



The National September 11th Memorial & Museum

- Facebook - 307,821
- Twitter - 57,800
- Instagram - 8,592



Their social media footprint includes:

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram
- Google+
- YouTube
- Pinterest
- Micro-blogs

The mission of the 9/11 Memorial Museum, located at the World Trade Center site, is to bear solemn witness to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 and February 26, 1993. The Museum honors the nearly 3,000 victims of these attacks and all those who risked their lives to save others. It further recognizes the thousands who survived and all who demonstrated extraordinary compassion in the aftermath. Demonstrating the consequences of terrorism on individual lives and its impact on communities at the local, national, and international levels, the Museum attests to the triumph of human dignity over human depravity and affirms an unwavering commitment to the fundamental value of human life.

The Memorial opened on September 11, 2011 and the Museum opened on September 11, 2014.

Notable Social Media Tactic:

Memorable Hashtags

#Honor911

#911Memorial



Memorials with Social Media Can...



Create Community

There are ten common motivations for participating in online communities. If social media campaigns refer to these throughout their use, it is more likely that they will be successful.



A Guide to Commemorate in Your Online Community

Use this guide to connect with your online community as you honor and remember those who were killed on 9/11.

Step 1: Join the 9/11 Memorial's online community

The 9/11 Memorial's official social media channels feature information about the Memorial, the history of 9/11, tributes worldwide, and ways we remember. Join the conversation, share our content, and tell us what you are doing to mark the 9/11 anniversary.



Like the [National September 11 Memorial & Museum](#) on Facebook.



Follow [@Sept11Memorial](#) on Twitter.



Add the [9/11 Memorial](#) to your Google+ Circle.



Follow and repin the [9/11 Memorial's](#) photos on Pinterest.



Leave your comments on the [MEMO blog](#).



Subscribe to the 9/11 Memorial's [Sept11MM](#) YouTube Channel.



Join the 9/11 Memorial [email list](#) to stay informed.

Step 2: Identify your own online community

Are you on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Google+, or Instagram? Do you have a blog or your own YouTube channel? Any social platform can be used as a means of commemorating the 9/11 anniversary in your community.

Step 3: Create your call to action

Do you want others to attend an event, donate to a 9/11 cause or join you in honoring victims of the attacks? Decide on a call to action and share it with your online community.

The National September 11th Memorial and Museum has helped create community by creating documents that detail how the public can interact with the Memorial in the form of an easy-to-use pdf. This pdf highlights all social media networks, branded hashtags, and how to use all of the posted information. These suggested actions directly motivate to the previously highlighted motivations.

Facilitate Dialogue

Social media platforms, by design, are meant to be places of discourse. In order to continue to gain the public's trust, memorials must create challenging, interesting, and enjoyable experiences. The Oklahoma City National Memorial & Museum has done this through their Oklahoma Standard Campaign which challenges the public to complete three acts:

Service means giving your time to someone in need. This could mean volunteering at a soup kitchen, or tutoring a student.

Honor the victims and survivors of the 1995 bombing, by visiting the Memorial Museum, cheering at the Memorial Marathon or leaving a token of appreciation on a chair in the Memorial.

Kindness involves everything from holding a door for a stranger to cleaning up your neighbor's leaves.



Move Beyond the Physical

The lack of an interpretive physical space makes social media a great tool for memorials and their interpretive institutions for *two* reasons:

1. Provides access to the information

2. Creates meaning by allowing for participation

The National Law Enforcement Memorial organizes a digital vigil during the Spring for Police Week, where the public can come together to remember the fallen. The Memorial uses this as an opportunity to provide information concerning officer fatalities from the previous year.



Unique Challenges for Memorials

Memorials encounter unique challenges by being both commemorative and educational spaces. Keep these in mind when crafting content.

Respect the social norms of all users

Clear & Public Posting Policies

Create physical boundaries for sharable media

The Future of Social Media

Born-Digital
Collections

With the increased use
of social media among
memorials comes new
and exciting opportunities

Virtual
Collections

Mobile
Applications

Resources

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