

Remi Castonguay

Say it loud

Spreading the word with Facebook and Twitter

Say it loud, say it louder, scream if you will, repeat it many times, repeat it again, and then repeat it...again! All of us in academic libraries are generally well-intended, at least all the colleagues that I have ever had had good intentions. They want to spread a message, a message that 20 years ago was unnecessary: "We are here, we have great stuff, we'll save you some time, there is a world beyond Google, etc." Add your own variation here.

At times, if not most of the time, however, we feel like an army of one. An army whose weapon is a wooden stick against the giant metallic/silicon-based/special-alloy Transformer that is Google. For ten years I've been

it up it works on its own.

Here are the ingredients for that recipe:

- 1) a Twitter account,
- 2) a Facebook account,
- 3) a Facebook Fan Page,
- 4) a Twitter Feed account,
- 5) a Selective Tweets app, and
- 6) time on your hands.

Making the soup

First, be aware that your Facebook account is linked to Facebook Fan Pages you create. Despite the fact that fans of your library page don't have access to your personal profile, and page administration activity shows up under the page name and not your own, this

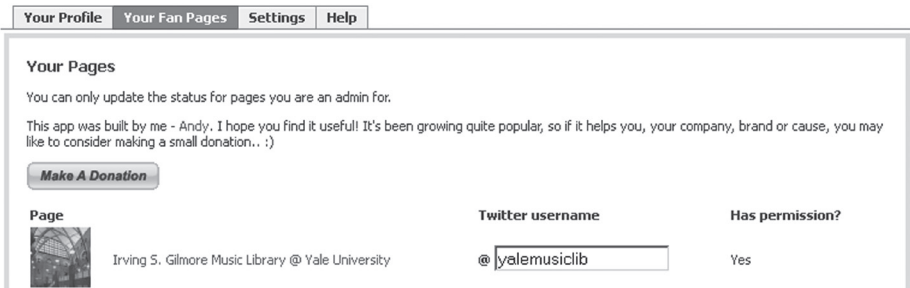


Figure 1: Selective Tweets setup.

thinking, can I ever beat Google? Well, maybe not, but I have wondered what makes my library special, what do I have to offer but, most importantly, how can I be heard? I dare not to present a grand solution but rather a simple token, a shot at some visibility if you will. At the same time this little project brings together some Web 2.0 technology and gets them to work for you without much effort; when I mean work that means, once you set

can cause privacy concerns. One option is to have a non-Facebook user set up a business account for your library and administer your page. Keep in mind that it is technically a violation of the Facebook terms of service to

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maintain multiple accounts. Once you have a Facebook and a Twitter account setup, go to www.facebook.com/pages/create.php to create a fan page. There are many settings and customizations available to fan pages but very few are mandatory. I would recommend, however, taking the time to customize your fan page. Your next step is to add the “Selective Tweets” application to your Fan Page. Go to www.facebook.com/selectivetwitter and click on the “Add to my Page” link located in the left navigation. Once the application is connected to your fan page go back to the above URL and click on “Go to the application” to customize it. Under the “Your Fan Pages” tab, write in your

Twitter account name and be sure to “Grant permission” to Selective Tweets. Press “Save changes” when you’re all done.

I would like to delve a bit on a background process that takes place when you add Selective Tweets; this is the main reason why it is better to use a non-personal Facebook account to do all of this. By adding Selective Tweets to your fan page you also grant it access to your personal account, a step needed to make everything work. You might actually get a message from Selective Tweets asking you to give permission for the app to update your status on Facebook, a permission that you must give,

unfortunately. As long, however, as you do not populate the “Your profile” tab (see Figure 1) with the name of your Twitter account, the tweets will only reach your fan page wall. I realized, after the fact, that Selective Tweets requires access to a lot of your personal profile. I am not one to be nervous about privacy, but you might be more nervous than I about that.

At this point, you are able to use Twitter and add the hashtag #fb to send your tweets to your Facebook Wall (e.g., Yale purchases Noah’s Ark at Sotheby’s auction #fb). The next step, however, is the most interesting because it will allow you to connect an RSS feed to your Twitter account which, in return, will

Figure 2: Setting up Twitter Feed

push the feed items to your Facebook Fan Page Wall; any RSS feed should work. For example, the Yale Library OPAC, Orbis, has an RSS tool that runs a search for newly cataloged items and that can be limited to certain parameters (e.g., only music items). That way, newly catalog books, CDs, and DVDs will be pushed to that RSS feed, then to Twitter, and ultimately to Facebook. All of this while you are sitting back and enjoying.

The same could be done with your library blog or whichever feed you are using to promote your library. The connection is made via an online service called Twitter Feed.⁴ Twitter

Feed lets you login with OpenID (e.g., Yahoo ID or Gmail ID), but you can create an account directly with them if you wish. Once you are logged in, you will be asked to create a new feed and configure it. There are three easy steps, the first of which is shown in Figure 2. First give your new feed a name and paste the feed URL in the appropriate field. In the advanced settings make sure to enter the “Post Suffix” #fb so that your RSS items traveling to Twitter also make their way to Facebook.

Your last step will be to setup a service to push your RSS feed to; *service* is the term that Twitter Feed uses to describe social platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Ping, etc. In this case we want to choose Twitter. Twitter Feed will, of course, ask you to authenticate to your Twitter account before it connects.

As you might have wondered, if Facebook is a service that Twitter Feed connects with, why not use that instead of going through all the complicated steps outlined previously? Using Selective Tweets steps allow you to post tweets manually and have them show up on Facebook (by using #fb on Twitter). This can give you more control over the content you share on Facebook and the ability to target messages. But the choice is yours.

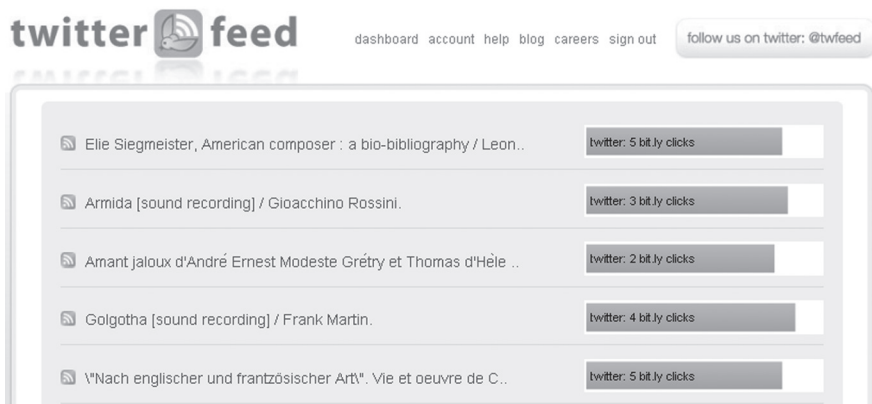
Why, warum, pourquoi, perché???

Once again, this demonstration does not claim to be a grand solution to your library marketing problem. Still, provided that you have an active RSS feed—the OPAC feed is ideal for

that—this system ensures a constant stream of information that is pushed to your users/followers/friends. The figure below shows evidence of modest but constant usage for a feed I setup at the Yale Gilmore Music Library where I work. The Twitter Feed app provides statistics based on the number of bit.ly clicks (i.e., click-through) for your posts.

Another measure of our success can be seen via Facebook Fan Page Stats. Since I’m essentially inactive on our Fan Page (I almost never post anything manually), I can safely say that all the visits recorded are due to the RSS feed setup.

Beyond the stats, I wanted to offer a few other observations as to why I find this project to be a success. For starters, Twitter and Facebook allow us to reach out to a population that we would not otherwise reach easily. This is mostly the case on Twitter, where most of our followers are people/accounts of other research music libraries/librarians, well-known orchestras, classical music radio stations, newspapers arts sections, etc. Most of our Twitter followers are, therefore, indirectly related to us (i.e., not affiliated to Yale) but are all important constituents that we would normally have a hard time to reach. Through the system I put in place, which highlights new additions to our collection, Twitter and Facebook give us a shot at a little bit of visibility. This goes without saying, but building an audience on those social platforms is key. That is probably the most difficult part of this



Twitter Feed statistics.

process and something I'm still working on.

Audience building is altogether a different topic, and I won't fully address it here. Briefly, however, I noticed that while using Twitter, the more you post the more people find you and follow you. The system I described above ensures that your account will be regularly active and that people will notice you. This is akin to talking louder and more often than other people in a meeting; more people listen to you. Additionally, your RSS items/tweets/Facebook posts might not get click-throughs right away, but these clicks can accumulate over time. Tweets, indeed, automatically become searchable as they are posted, hence forming a giant pool of information, a catalog of public consciousness, if you will—as if the things you had screamed at that meeting were somehow searchable. Looking at the Twitter Feed stats, for instance, I initially recorded very few click-throughs on these items, but I later discovered that they had subsequently been used. My only explanation is that people on Twitter somehow found them while

searching the platform. Twitter being used as a search engine was something new to me, but it makes sense. After all, lots of people share interesting resources on there.

Ultimately, I believe that this 2.0 marketing is beneficial to our library since it raises awareness of our collections outside the immediate Yale environment. It should be said, however, that many of our followers are Yale people and/or Yale institutional bodies. Hence, our setup also increases their awareness of local resources. Yale libraries have unique collections and raising awareness ultimately results into more “foot” traffic at our premises or electronic traffic (i.e., reference questions via e-mail).

In this social media world I once heard, “showing up is half the work,” but posting frequently is also key to building an audience and attracting people to your unique resources.

Note

1. twitterfeed.com. ❧

(*The copyright...*, cont. from page 407)
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9. OCLC, “Undue Diligence: Seeking Low-risk Strategies for Making Collections of Unpublished Materials More Accessible,” accessed May 10, 2011, www.oclc.org/research/events/2010-03-11.htm.

10. Ibid.

11. See Note 8.

12. OCLC, “Introduce Balance in Rights Management,” accessed May 10, 2011,

13. *The Triangle Research Libraries Network's Intellectual Property Rights Strategy for Digitization of Modern Manuscript Collections and Archival Record Groups*, accessed May 31, 2011, www.trln.org/IPRights.pdf

14. Society of American Archivists, “Session 204: Rights, Risk and Reality: Beyond “Undue Diligence in Rights Analysis for

Digitization,” accessed May 10, 2011, saa.archivists.org/Scripts/4Disapi.dll/4DCGI/events/231-Thu.html?Action=Conference_Detail&ConfID_W=231.

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