Exploiting The Internet

This session is a workshop, not a lecture. These slides are intended to promote discussion and provide grist for further thought and action back home.

~ Rich Olcott
Denver Mensa
Exploiting The Internet

Strategic considerations

- Is broadband widely available in your space?
  - No – consider audio-only options
  - Yes – keep looking at Internet options

- Check your roster
  - What % of non-YMs has an email address?
  - Generational demographics
    - but don’t make too many assumptions <g>

- Internet participation is better then none
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Security/Privacy concerns

- Everything is hackable
  - Some facilities are more leakproof than others
    - Read – Personally Sensitive Information
    - Write – fake news
- Encrypted data is safer
- General Data Protection Regulation
  - Devised for Europe, will affect us in the US
  - AML-managed data will be GDPR-compliant
  - On other platforms, YMMV
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Social Media / Comms Coordinator

Testimony from Lana Lee, SFRM’s Communications Coordinator

It's good to have a communications coordinator to streamline content and the most important thing is to have a communications strategy. For SFRM, we have Meetup, Facebook, Yahoo! groups, our website, website calendar, and Mensa connect. I use each platform differently since, with 1500+ members, people have different communication preferences. Have your Communications Coordinator perform an audit to see where the most eyeballs are - e.g. if you're getting little engagement from Twitter, reconsider if that's a platform that's worth your time and effort.

One way to do this is to make use of Google Analytics and Bitly links where you can track who is clicking on which links or seeing what content. Facebook groups and pages also have insights where you can see engagement, comments, the best times to post on certain days, etc.

I started getting involved with our platforms in March by just posting here and there...I.e. throwing all of my cards up in the air to see where they fall and who sees what from all of the metrics (Google Analytics, FB Insights, etc.). Right now, my communications strategy is as follows:

- **Website Calendar:** regularly schedule events
- **Website:** Write blogs to promote on other channels (FB, Mensa Connect) and drive people to the website so that they see the events calendar.
- **Facebook:** start conversations like weekly polls, ask questions, etc. I also plan on creating impromptu events using the group events feature. We also have a Facebook page to promote SFRM and create awareness with non-members (testing, monthly gatherings, etc.)
- **Meetup:** Impromptu events that require limited attendance since they have an RSVP limit feature. You can also download the membership list as a CSV and see where the bulk of your meetup members are located. That will give you insight into where you should plan events.
- **Mensa Connect:** as @Roger Schulz mentioned in his post, this is your most valuable asset because you can reach all of your members at once. I use this sparingly (~every other week) and try to drive up membership to our Facebook and Meetup groups.
- **Yahoo! Groups:** I only make use of our Announcement board.
- **Local Group Resources** (https://www.us.mensa.org/lead/localgroupresources/) is also a helpful tool. As my local group’s GenX co-coordinator, I sent out an email to GenXers to make them aware of the SFRM FB group which a lot of them didn’t know about. We also have a SFRM GenX SIG FB group that I plan on promoting as well. In the next week, I’ll send an email to the GenY crowd in a similar fashion.

I avoid posting announcements on all channels at the same time because people will tune it out. Instead, I stagger the announcements by posting one announcement in one platform each week (e.g. FB one week, Yahoo Groups News another week, etc.)
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Group-related facilities…

- Facebook
- Mensa Connect
- Local Group Web site
- Blogs
- Other platforms
- Internet-enabled meetings
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Taxonomy

Who are you addressing?
How much control do you need?
Facebook in general

- **Pros**
  - Nearly everyone with Internet access is using it, or has
  - Organizations are expected to have a FB presence
  - Low bar to entry – Free, no skillz required
    - For events, images and shallow conversations
    - For creating new Groups and Pages

- **Cons**
  - Widely publicized privacy and security concerns
  - Can soak up a *lot* of time
  - Not good for extended discussions
  - No search facility
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Your LG’s Facebook Page

- Your **outward-facing image**
- Don’t use it to
  - Advertise Members-only events
  - Show photos of Ms who “fly under the radar”
- Do use it to…
  - Introduce the LG’s special good points
  - Advertise *public* events the LG supports
    - Pay for additional targeted exposure?
  - Advertise upcoming testing sessions
- *Your ideas?*
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Your LG’s Facebook Group

- Your inward-facing image
- Access management
  - Manual process, both ways
  - Annual purge?
- Use it to
  - Advertise Members-only events
  - Show photos of Ms who “fly under the radar”?
  - Your ideas?
Mensa Connect

- connect.us.mensa.org
  - Open to any >18yo with “Member” status
  - Requires standard AML email+password
  - Wrapped in Mensa’s security blanket
  - Organized as a set of “Communities”
    - Each supports any number of “Discussions”
    - Several for AML officers (the guinea pigs)
    - Several for LG officers (current and past)
    - Several for all AML members
    - Each LG can request its own Community and up to 6 Sub-Communities for ExComm, SIGs, Areas, etc.
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ALL THINGS AMERICAN MENSA

LATEST DISCUSSION POSTS

ALL THINGS AMERICAN MENSA DIGEST FOR FRIDAY MAY 11, ...
BY: NANCY FARRAR, 5 DAYS AGO
In addition to reviewing SIG activity metrics (such as how many emails, FB posts, etc.), we reached out to all SIG Coordinators/Co-
Coordinators. ?? During this last review, we had updates of SIG coordinators/contact info so what’s published ...

RE: SIG O’ THE MONTH: ACTIVE_M SIG
BY: PHOENIX NOELLE, 5 DAYS AGO
Nancy, no worries here. As mentioned, I’m not at the stage of ‘raising
the issue’ to your level. If anything does come to the point where I feel
I need to reach out to you, then I’ll do so at your e-mail. ^.^ Edward,

CAREER SEARCH AND OFFER TO ASSIST OTHER JOB SEEKER ...
BY: SUZANNE ANDREWS ONE MONTH AGO

RE: POTENTIAL MEMBER SURVEY QUESTIONS
BY: ROGER SCHULZ 3 MONTHS AGO

POTENTIAL MEMBER SURVEY QUESTIONS
BY: JOHNNIE VAUGHN 3 MONTHS AGO
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ALL THINGS AMERICAN MENSA

COMMUNITY HOME  DISCUSSION 1K  LIBRARY 5  MEMBERS 395

BACK TO DISCUSSIONS

TOPIC: VIRTUAL REALITY SIG PROPOSAL

Steven Sutlief
Original Post
01-01-2018 00:47  I would like to create a Virtual Reality special interest group (SIG). The goals of the group would...

Alison Brown
01-01-2018 06:56  Good Luck, Steven. "Living well is the best revenge." -Julia Prud...
Mensa Connect in operation

- It’s text-mostly
  - Images and documents can be posted, but…

- It’s a hybrid system
  - Posts are visible (and searchable) online
  - They’re also distributed by email
    - Several distribution options, including “None”
    - So… no take-backs, no FB-style blocking
    - Can include images and documents

- It’s moderated, sort of
  - Online content, repeat offenders can be sequestered
  - No FB-style automatic filtering; depends on reporting
Mensa Connect and the LG

- LG opts-in when LocSec submits a form
  - us.mensa.org/forms-library/mensa-connect-local-group-spec-sheet/
  - Names the LG Moderator(s)
  - Specifies Sub-communities, other options
- Every LG member older than 18
  - Is automatically enrolled at opt-in time
    - Is automatically dropped if membership lapses
  - Receives an introductory email
  - Decides whether or not to participate
I decided that the problem our local group had with communications was too many platforms. We had Meetup, Wiggio (now defunct), email list, text, calls... It was a major pain keeping track of all the changes with people, emails, and phone numbers, and trying to keep announcements up to date and the same on all those different places. I also found myself doing tech support for these different systems. So I pushed to get a local group community set up here, and when it was operational, cut the cord on everything else.

https://connect.us.mensa.org/communities/local-groups

Now the National Office manages who is in our local group community and keeps the list up to date - this is the best part by far. No more managing email lists or notifying so-and-so's friend, or that other person that didn't make their Mensa payment. No more tech support. People also stopped whining about how they didn't like this platform or that or how I should be using something different. Now we have the official Mensa solution (such as it is), and a whole bunch of administrative hassles have gone away. Even better, participation doubled at our local gatherings - that's because no one has to opt in again, unlike every other platform. All the local Mensans just started getting announcements for local gatherings in their inbox that I posted to our community and they started responding and showing up at gatherings. Some are new members that didn't really know how to get involved, others are old members that never bothered before or who fell away, but their interest was piqued when they saw events and posts by other local Mensans.

Get a local group community set up here, announce on all those other platforms that there is a wonderful new official Mensa local group community now available that will be the one place to go in the future, relax, and watch participation jump.

Roger
Area Coordinator
Southern Oregon Mensa
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What could you use MC for?

- Event notifications, announcements
- Document repository, esp Bylaws
- A quick-and-dirty local-SIG builder
- Discussion after a speaker meeting
- Your ideas?
Your LG Web site

- Organizations are expected to have a Web site
- Think of it as text-and-links (with pictures)
  - To other pages within your site
  - To other sites
- Higher barrier to entry than FB
  - but more customizable
- Free if hosted at NO or on a member’s server
  - Can link to NO’s database for sign-ons to secured area
- Generally for static content
  - unless you’ve got a high-skill Webmaster
Typical LG Web site pages

- **Home** (“index”) – your front door
- **About us** – LG locale, history, purposes, etc.
- **Contact us** – Officer names, photos, info
- **Calendar** – for events that the public could attend
- **Links** – to AML, AG, neighboring LGs, etc
- **Members only** – behind a sign-in “wall”
  - More complete calendar
  - Event photos
  - Newsletter archive
  - YM section
  - Welcome New Members
  - Volunteer recognitions
  - **Your ideas?**
Other pages you could add...

- **Join us**
  - Testing procedure and TC contact info
  - Upcoming testing calendar (or link to AML’s)
  - Link to AML’s voucher-purchase page

- **Documents**

- **Puzzle page**

- **Link to a blog (closed or open)**

- **Your ideas?**
“Web+log” \( \rightarrow \) Blog

- Fastest, easiest way to add dynamic content
- Series of text+image posts, can include links
  - Sign on, type it up, you’re done
  - Only official author(s) can post
- Displayed chronologically, most-recent on top
- Stand-alone, or linked-to from your Web site
- Major hosting vendors (free, $$ for add-ons)
  - WordPress.com (they host), Wordpress.org (you host)
  - BlogSpot.com (owned by Google, was Blogger.com)
  - Tumblr.com (owned by Yahoo!)
How could you use a blog?

- Supplemental updates for your Newsletter
- Boulder/Front Range Mensa uses it on their home page for a running report of goings-on

- Your ideas?
Other platforms

- Listservers
  - Email-based round-robins
  - Example – Mailman from list.org
  - Open-source software, runs on your server

- Bulletin-board systems
  - Structured messaging
  - Example – SMF from simplemachines.org
  - Open-source software, runs on your server

- Yahoo! Groups

If you’re already satisfied, why change?
Online Conferencing

- Meeting considerations
  - Size (ExComm versus general meeting)
  - Format (discussion versus presentation)
  - Frequency (one-off versus ongoing)

- Audio-only options
  - Skype
  - AppleTalk
  - hangouts.google.com
  - *Your experience?*
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Video Conferencing

- Features to look for
  - Distinct functions for Presenter / Moderator / Attendee
  - Display desktop, or show only one window
  - Side-chat (good for out-of-line questions)
  - Raise-hand function
  - Option to dial-in by phone

- A plethora of vendors, market still in flux
  - AML recommends ooVoo, but it’s gone
  - meet.google.com
  - zoom.us
  - Your experience?