

# Principle 3

## *Reward Engagement*

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The social media optimization (SMO) principle *reward engagement* builds library connections with community by interacting with users who are active on social networks. Engagement comes in many forms: shares of library resources, library mentions, use of hashtags, references to information needs, interactions with community members about the things they post to social networks, and following back users who follow you. By rewarding engagement, the library has the opportunity to interact proactively with users and build community. Through these efforts, we can alert users to library resources and services, we can let the community know the library is listening, and we can provide a personality-rich human element to the voice of the library. In this discussion, we will also explore the role of privacy and user engagement. In sum, this chapter explores listening to your community and engaging with users based on their activity on social networks to strengthen your library/user community relationships.

### **Rewarding Shared Content**

An approach to rewarding engagement is interacting with those users who have shared library content. One way to discover this type of interaction is through various tools, including Twitter Analytics and Facebook Developer. The chapter on Principle 5 explores analytics in greater depth; here, we explore how Twitter Analytics, specifically, can help you discover and connect with users who share library content.

#### **Twitter Analytics—Overview**

Twitter Analytics provides a variety of data points for

*Reward engagement* represents the third of five SMO principles:

1. Create Shareable Content
2. Make Sharing Easy
3. **Reward Engagement**
4. Proactively Share
5. Measure Use and Encourage Reuse

tweets with Twitter Cards, which are detailed in table 3.1. Your library could use this information to identify top influencers and reward them for their interaction with library content by resharing the post through library social network accounts, replying to the user, favoriting or liking the post, or following the user. There is also opportunity to alert the user to related content from the library (or elsewhere) that may be of interest but possibly unknown to the user. Likewise, a user may have shared your content through a blog post, which may offer the opportunity for the library to comment on the post or to reshare what was put on the blog.

#### **Twitter Analytics—Examples in Practice**

To illustrate the concept of interacting with a user who has shared library content, our library discovered a post from a new brewery near the university. The brewery shared a photo from our digital historical photographs collection that shows vacant land from one hundred years ago where the brewery is located today. The brewery used our photograph to connect with potential customers highlighting “then and now” changes to the landscape.

**Table 3.1.** Twitter Analytics types (Source: "Analytics," Twitter website, accessed June 10, 2016, <http://analytics.twitter.com>)

Twitter Analytics Type	Purpose
Changes over time	How tweets with your Twitter Cards affected your impressions and clicks for self-selected date range
Card types	The top performing Twitter Cards that drove clicks to pages on your website
Links	A list of links in tweets with your Twitter Cards that got the most clicks
Influencers	The top users that tweeted links to your content
Tweets	A list of tweets with your Twitter Cards that drove the most clicks
Sources	A breakdown of the apps, websites, and widgets from which your content was tweeted



**Figure 3.1**  
Interaction with brewery that shared an MSU historical photograph on Twitter

We discovered this share through Twitter Analytics.<sup>1</sup> Subsequently, we gave the brewery extra exposure to our community by retweeting its post and adding a comment welcoming it to the neighborhood. Our retweet resulted in two community-building outcomes. First, we shared the brewery's original post, which introduced that business to more community attention and interaction. Second, we generated goodwill and a feeling of connectedness with this member of our community (figure 3.1).

In another example, we found a user through Twitter Analytics who was not following the library's Twitter account and who had shared an MSU Library photograph (figure 3.2). We followed the user back because he tweets engaging content, and we shared

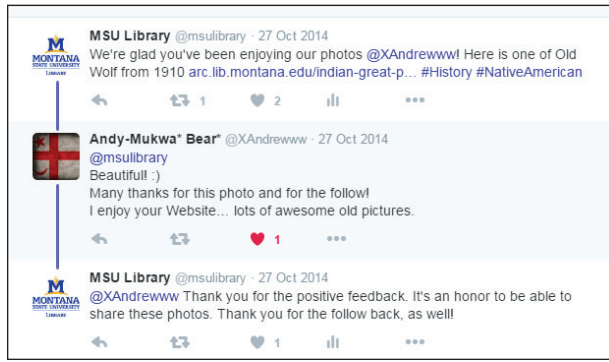


**Figure 3.2**  
Share on Twitter of MSU Native American Peoples Database photograph

with him another photograph from the same collection that we thought he would find interesting. Figure 3.3 shows the subsequent conversation with this user, which also resulted in him following us back.

## Monitoring Mentions

Another means to reward engagement on social networks is to monitor mentions of the library and to



**Figure 3.3**  
Subsequent interaction with Twitter user who shared MSU photograph

follow up with those users through direct interaction. Some social networks will notify you of direct mentions, but other references may be more subtle, requiring that you regularly read the posts from the library community and search social networks for mentions.

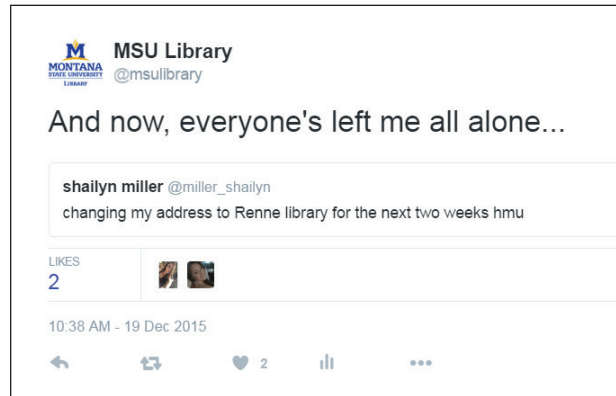
### Indirect Library References

Users may mention the library, but not necessarily directly by name. Sites like Yik Yak are location-specific and can surface user opinions, such as attitudes about the library. If there is a popular post about the conditions in the building, for example, you might consider remedying those conditions to address the problem. The library can even reply to active Yaks (i.e., posts) to update the community on the situation. Another possibility for discovering indirect mentions is through Instagram, which allows for searching for images by geolocation. If you search your library's location, then you can find anyone who has taken a photograph and tagged it with the library's location, thus offering the opportunity to like the post and make a comment.

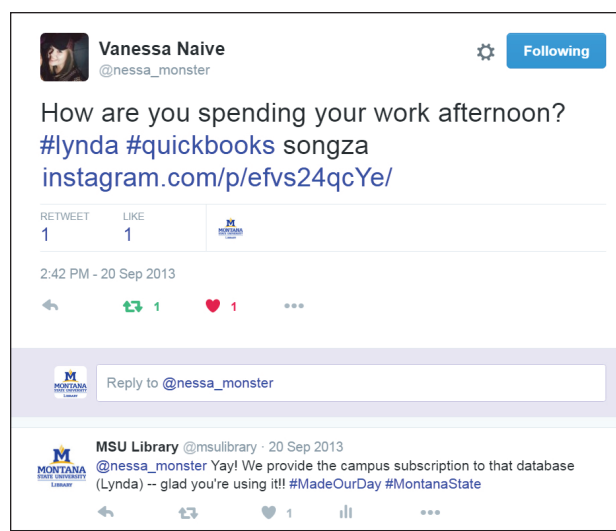
Twitter is another place where the library may get mentioned indirectly. Figure 3.4 shows a quoted tweet from a person who mentioned the Montana State University Library building name (Renne Library) during finals. The retweet from the MSU Library quotes the user and notes the current library conditions. The retweet was subsequently liked by the original poster and another community member.

In another instance, we noticed that one of our students mentioned using a database to which the library provides access. Our subsequent interaction with her gave us the opportunity to let her know that we are listening to our community and to share with others that a student found this library resource of value (figure 3.5).

In a third example, a student expressed his frustration with trying to find an electrical outlet in the library, but did not mention the library directly. We follow this student on Twitter, and he frequently posts



**Figure 3.4**  
Quoting an indirect reference to the library



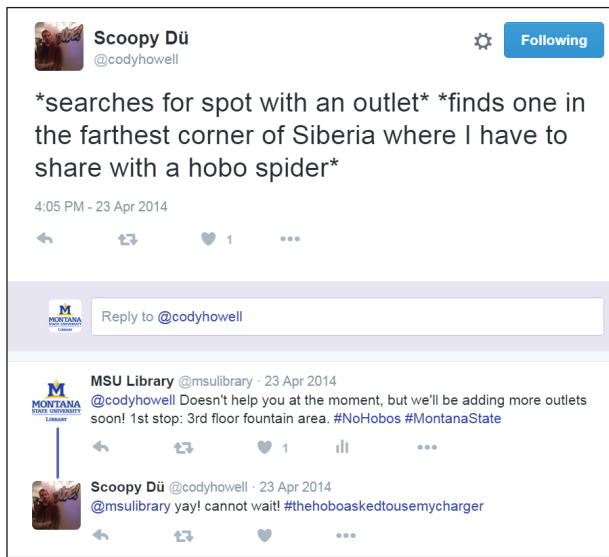
**Figure 3.5**  
Interaction with MSU student who mentioned an MSU-subscribed database on Twitter but did not tag the library

about being in the library. While we couldn't solve his dilemma immediately, we did reward his engagement with sympathy, and we let him know that help is on the way in the future with planned renovation projects (figure 3.6).

Sometimes you may spot the library in a photograph. In figure 3.7, we noticed an Instagram post from MSU's Alumni Foundation with "Flat Champ" along with a "Flat Stanley" book in the MSU Library. We proactively jumped into the conversation and added a comment to the post that mentioned another good flat read.

### Direct Library References

Sometimes the library may get mentioned in a post by direct reference. In our case, we may be mentioned by our account name, "@msulibrary," or by a commonly known name in a hashtag, such as #msulibrary



**Figure 3.6**  
Interaction with student talking about an experience in the library



**Figure 3.7**  
Instagram post in the library by MSU Alumni Foundation

or #rennelibrary. Your library can configure your social network accounts to generate e-mail or in-app notices when you are mentioned in a post.<sup>2</sup> Responding to the user demonstrates to that user and anyone observing the interaction that the library is listening and is interested in the voices of its community. Keep in mind that Instagram shows only your most recent seventy-five mentions, so you will want to check regularly so you do not miss anything.

In one example (figure 3.8), an MSU faculty member mentioned the library on Twitter as a part of a conversation regarding an article being behind a paywall. Because we have our Twitter account set up to notify us about mentions of the library, we were able to respond right away—on Christmas Eve, when the tweet was posted. In doing so, we pointed the user to the library's author fund. This situation provided an opportunity to learn about the conversation of which



**Figure 3.8**  
Library mention by faculty member in a tweet

the faculty member was a part and to share information about the library's author fund in a genuine way. Additionally, the faculty member was rewarded for engaging the library by getting a quick reply that added to the conversation with his community.

Users may also reply to your posts. Figure 3.9 includes a response from a user who commented on our Facebook post about the digitized MSU student newspaper. The interaction gave us the opportunity to let the user know we appreciated her story.

## Responding to User Needs

Your library can also reward engagement by listening to your community and chiming in when the library



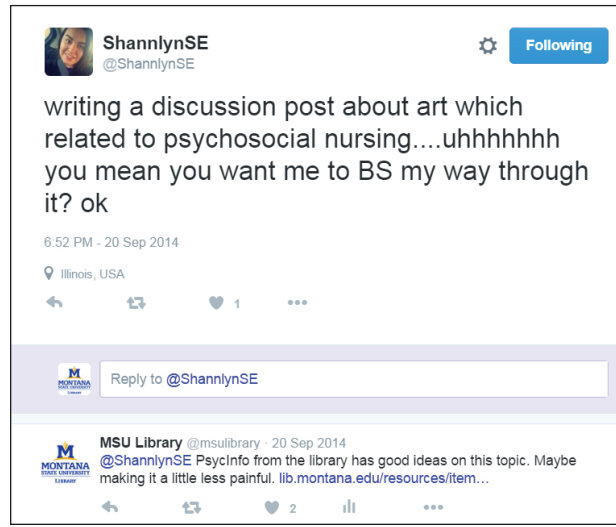
**Figure 3.9**  
Direct library mention on Facebook

can help. In one instance, a student mentioned a service that we knew the library could provide for her. We took the opportunity to point her to the library's subscription of PsycInfo (figure 3.10).

## Monitoring Hashtags

Beyond using hashtags to encourage sharing of content as described in the chapter on Principle 2, monitoring hashtags and those used by your community members can offer opportunities to reward engagement by the community by replying to the users when they use a certain hashtag. Several social networks index hashtags, which can be searched through the platform's native interface or through other third-party services, such as Hootsuite. As noted in the chapter on Principle 2, hashtags consist of a number sign (#) and a word or a string of words without spaces between them. These tags may be a part of a larger conversation when employing a commonly used tag, or they may provide greater context to the sentiment in the posts from your community when the tag includes emotions.

Hashtags may be established around an event (e.g., #AcademyAwards, #SuperBowl #OccupyWall-Street). They may be widely employed because they are commonly used words to describe an entity or person (e.g., #DavidBowie, #DeltaAirlines), an experience (e.g., #MontanaMoment, #FirstDayOfSchool),



**Figure 3.10**  
Interacting with a student who mentioned an information need on Twitter

or an activity (e.g., #Travel, #Photography, #Sewing). Hashtags can be used to express a sentiment using an everyday word or phrase (e.g., #Annoyed, #Common-Sense, #Happy) or a string of words providing sub-text to the post (e.g., #LoveSleepingIn, #SoOverIt, #GettingMyMoneysWorth). And, as discussed in the chapter on Principle 2, they can be used to describe a place (e.g., #Florida, #NewYorkCity, #WrigleyField, #Outdoors, #Beach) or a social media campaign (e.g., #IReadEverywhere, #BPLgetcarded). Finally, people attending conferences or online chats may tag around those events as part of a community conversation (e.g., #BayBookFest, #MTedChat, #ALAMidwinter).

Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, YouTube, and LinkedIn all support use of hashtags in the original posts and in any comments and replies. Within these networks, you can search for hashtags used. Google+ supports hashtags in posts and comments as well, and it will add hashtags to content if its algorithms determine them appropriate to the content. (This option can be turned off through user settings.) Let us consider the use of hashtags for several of the major social networks.

Our University Communications office established #MontanaState as its hashtag of choice for promoting activities around the university. We regularly check this hashtag to see what others are posting about the university, and we add this hashtag to posts that we wish to associate with the university and possibly surface to the university's social media coordinator, who we know also regularly monitors this hashtag and therefore might reshare our content to the broader university community. A student may post an enthusiastic tweet about being accepted to Montana State University using the hashtag #MontanaState. We

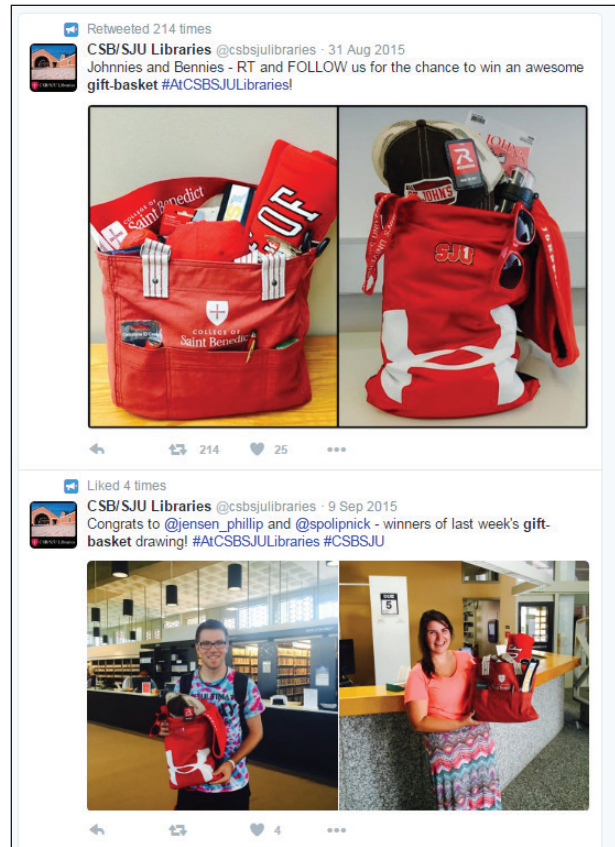


**Figure 3.11**  
Student tweet with library photo found by monitoring #MontanaState hashtag

would use this opportunity to reward engagement by congratulating the student on her acceptance and let her know that she is always welcome at the library.

We also follow many Montana State University students on Twitter and Instagram to see what is happening in our community and to chime in, as we see appropriate. For example, if a student posted an Instagram photo of a dirty keyboard at a library computer keyboard and humorously but pointedly used the hashtag #NeedAHazMatSuit, we have the opportunity to reply knowing that the student was not impressed with the condition of the computer equipment. As an example, an MSU student used the #MontanaState hashtag in a tweet that included a picture of the library that was the setting for a film being made by an MSU student group. We replied to this post and had a nice interaction with the student group (figure 3.11).

Some libraries create campaigns that have a contest element, encouraging users to use a designated hashtag. In these content-style campaigns, the library offers prizes for those participating, thus rewarding engagement. The College of Saint Benedict/Saint John's University (CSB/SJU) used the hashtag



**Figure 3.12**  
CSB/SJU gift basket promotion

#AtCSBSJULibraries in conjunction with a gift-basket contest. People were encouraged to retweet and follow the library to be entered into the drawing. Figure 3.12 shows the initial call for the drawing and the eventual prize winners. Such a campaign can generate community growth and engagement as members of the library's community share library content with their own communities.

## Rewarding Geotagging

Using geolocation tagging or "geotagging" is a way to engage with members of your community in a specific location. Social networks like Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter all allow tagging a place in a post—known as geotagging. Each platform varies in the level of specificity for the geotag. Jessamyn West offers three ideas for libraries and geolocation services: people finding the library, the library finding people, and people and the library interacting.<sup>3</sup> In this chapter, we discuss the library finding people, and people and the library interacting through geotagging. In the chapter on Principle 4, the topic of people finding the library is discussed.



**Figure 3.13**  
Instagram photo tagged with the MSU Library by a student

Through a geotag search, the library can find people who have tagged the library or a nearby location in photos. Figure 3.13 shows an image of a student who tagged two images from the MSU Library’s second floor over the five hours she spent studying. We were able to find this person who is a library user, follow her on Instagram, and interact with her with a comment about the post. Regular monitoring of geotags offers the opportunity to find members of your community, to understand how they are using the library building, and to engage with their posts to strengthen the library/user connection.

### Positive Community Contributions

Being active on social networks, and being a part of a community more broadly, offers the library the opportunity to reward engagement in those networks. Engaging with your community lets them know that you are listening, that you care about them, and that the content you post isn’t all about you, the library.

In another example, we congratulated a student we follow on Twitter on her plans to travel, even though the tweet wasn’t library-related. This interaction with the student rewarded her engagement on social media and gave her a chance to reply and share her excitement (figure 3.14).

In 2016, the MSU men’s lacrosse team completed the year undefeated and won its regional championship. We quoted its victory announcement tweet and added our note of pride, which was subsequently liked and retweeted by other members of our community (figure 3.15). We regularly engage with groups such as MSU sports teams, student clubs and organizations, student government, speaker series, campus events, and so on, as these are part of our larger community for whom we want to show our support and appreciation—as many of them do for us!



**Figure 3.14**  
Student tweet and library interaction when not library-related



**Figure 3.15**  
Quoted tweet of MSU lacrosse team victory announcement

### Following and Following Back

As discussed in the introduction, your social media guide should include a community focus. Following users is rewarding in that it shows interest in what your community is sharing. You will want to be strategic and considerate in deciding who you follow so that you are not overwhelmed by content in your network’s feed and so that others who look at your account get a clear understanding of who you see as your community. You may want to be more liberal with following when initially launching your social network accounts to get a better sense of which users fit into your identified community. You can also follow back users who follow you first if they fit into your community scope. This is another way to reward engagement and show that you are actively listening. Once your

own accounts have matured you may want to unfollow accounts that are inactive or that post content you find not useful. Most social media networks allow you to follow the accounts of your user community. An exception to this is Facebook, which does not allow organizational accounts to follow individual users. And some user accounts are set to “private” and will require the user to approve your request to follow them.

## Privacy Considerations

It is important to consider the role of privacy when engaging with users in social networks. When users interact with the library on social networks, they may have expectations regarding privacy. It is important to be up front about the library’s privacy policies and to respond to users if they voice discomfort. To encourage transparency at MSU, we have both a privacy policy for our entire website and a social media page that provide overviews of how user information is treated.<sup>4</sup> On our social media page, we state: “One of the ways we want to share with you and have you share with us is through our uses of social media. Since social media works by being ‘social,’ we encourage you to comment, re-tweet, and share your stories in all those social media ways.” We go on to say, “We also want to share your experiences, enthusiasm, and ideas with others, so we reserve the right to reuse your comments for research purposes and promotional materials so that we can understand and showcase our thriving online community.” We want users to understand that we seek to build community. Our regular assessment of user engagement will help evaluate impact and value on social networks, thus allowing us to be more productive in our community.

We have only received one piece of feedback expressing discomfort with commenting or interacting

with social network posts. In that case, after we retweeted a user’s comment about studying in the library, the user let us know through a direct message that she was embarrassed since the library’s retweet greatly increased the visibility of her original tweet. We want to be diligent about respecting our users’ feelings, so we deleted the retweet and let the user know that we had done so.

## Conclusion

*Rewarding engagement* offers many opportunities for the library to build its community by interacting with users. We can let users know that we are listening and appreciate their engagement with the library resources and services, with other members of the community, and on social networks. Through these interactions, we can imbue the voice of the library with a human element rich with personality.

## Notes

1. “Analytics,” Twitter website, accessed June 10, 2016, <http://analytics.twitter.com>.
2. “Email Notifications,” Twitter website, accessed June 21, 2016, <https://twitter.com/settings/notifications>; “Notification Basics and Settings,” Facebook Help Center, accessed June 21, 2016, <https://www.facebook.com/help/327994277286267>.
3. Jessamyn West, “Meta-Geolocation,” *Computers in Libraries* 35, no. 8 (October 2015): 24.
4. “Montana State University Library Privacy Policy,” Montana State University Library website, accessed May 25, 2016, [www.lib.montana.edu/policy](http://www.lib.montana.edu/policy) and “Social Media at Montana State University (MSU) Library,” Montana State University Library website, accessed May 25, 2016, [www.lib.montana.edu/about/social-media](http://www.lib.montana.edu/about/social-media).