

Introduction

Over the years, librarians have discovered the benefits of using social media to communicate with their patrons. Platforms such as Snapchat and Instagram are now communication staples for many key library demographic audiences, particularly those between thirteen and thirty-four years old. Along with that popularity, social media platforms have become more sophisticated, and user expectations have increased. A simple text post or even a basic image just doesn't cut it anymore. It's not uncommon to see video posts that include animated GIFs, digital stickers, music, and filters. Additionally, ephemeral content sent with Snapchat Stories and Instagram Stories are created alongside more stable forward-facing timeline posts. These advanced features and heightened user expectations are often hard to stay abreast of in the ever-changing social media environment. While many librarians are starting to use Snapchat and Instagram Stories, they are still looking for guidance on more creative avenues for reaching their library patrons.

In this issue of *Library Technology Reports*, I explore the ways libraries can maximize their presence on Instagram and Snapchat, paying special attention to the transitory world of Instagram and Snapchat Stories. I start with a mini-case study based on interviews I

conducted with 11 standout library professionals who are using the aforementioned platforms in very effective ways. Then, I build upon these ideas to bring you a series of practical ideas, tools, and resources that you can implement to enhance your library's content on these primarily mobile applications. Special focus has been devoted to Snapchat and Instagram in this issue because they offer a broad suite of creative applications, which often require more advanced skills and knowledge specific to each platform.

The increased usage of Snapchat and Instagram (particularly when it pertains to video content) over the past two years and growing interest among librarians using these platforms speaks to the need for this report. It can be used by individuals at any stage of the marketing process, from considering if your library is ready for Snapchat or Instagram to finding new ways to craft fresh content on your established account(s). Currently used by many librarians to tap into the exclusive world of teens and young adults, Instagram and Snapchat provide a unique and valuable communicative avenue for reaching these demographics. This issue is intended to provide librarians with best practices, content ideas, and real-world examples that can help them enhance their current social media outreach efforts.