Library’s Social Media Guidelines

Philosophy
The Donald F. and Mildred Topp Othmer Library of Chemical History (hereafter, Othmer Library) collects, preserves, and makes accessible materials relating to the history of science, technology, and medicine, with an emphasis on chemistry and chemical engineering from ancient to modern times. In its work, the Othmer Library supports the mission of its parent organization, the Science History Institute, to preserve and celebrate our scientific and technological culture and to make it accessible for investigation and knowledge creation. In keeping with this institutional mission, the Othmer Library recognizes the value and usefulness of social media sites in sharing collection materials with a broad audience of users and engaging in conversation with these users.

Purpose of this Policy
This policy is for library staff members who participate in the Othmer Library’s social media accounts. This policy provides standards and best practices to ensure consistency in the library’s social media use.

Social Media Defined
Social media is defined here as third party hosted online technologies that facilitate social interaction and dialogue. For the Othmer Library, these online technologies encompass the following social media sites: Tumblr and Pinterest.

Responsibility for Social Media Set-Up & Content Creation/Curation
The set-up, organization, ongoing maintenance, and statistics-tracking of any social media account for the Othmer Library will be conducted by the library’s social media administrator. Content creation and curation will be a collaborative effort amongst the library staff. Monthly planning meetings will be scheduled by the library’s social media administrator to facilitate discussion on the library’s social media content.

Standards for Social Media Use
The following standards should be observed when using any of the library’s social media sites:

- Account information, specifically usernames and passwords, will be centrally located in a password-protected document and shared only with those library staff members contributing to the library’s social media accounts. Account information will be updated when necessary to ensure the security of the library’s different social media channels.
- Content will be added regularly depending on the social media platform at hand.
  - For Tumblr, planned content will be posted twice per day with a morning post featuring original content created by library staff and an evening post featuring content from other Tumblr blogs as well as relevant news stories or online articles. Spontaneous posts (i.e., not planned in advance) will occur from time to time on the blog due to events in the news, popular culture trends, exceptional library finds (e.g., new acquisitions), etc. These additional posts should be brought to the attention of the library’s social media administrator so that an optimal posting time may be discussed.
  - For Pinterest, content will be added on a monthly basis. Content includes new boards as well as pins to existing boards.
- Social media accounts will be monitored on a daily basis.
Best Practices for Social Media Content

- Post quality content – content should not only reflect the rich diversity of the Othmer Library’s collections including its rare books, archives, images, modern monographs and journals, as well as its services, but it should also look to introduce users to relevant, valuable, and interesting content from other sources (i.e., online resources, fellow institutions, etc.).
- Be honest and authentic
- Use common sense
- Be respectful and polite
- Avoid using any profanity
- Maintain a personal yet professional tone
- Proofread what you write
- Encourage dialogue by posing questions, asking for feedback, holding contests (e.g., “Caption this Photo”), and responding in a timely manner to users’ comments and/or questions
- Respect copyright law, trademarks, intellectual property, and privacy rights
- For Tumblr, include the “othmeralia” tag on every post featuring original content

Comments from Users

“Social media, in many cases, is happening in close to real time. Failure to respond promptly to a conversation, either positive or negative, can result in a great deal of harm to your library’s reputation” —p. 41 in The Librarian’s Nitty-Gritty Guide to Social Media (2013) by Laura Solomon.

To ensure that the Othmer Library is responding to all user comments, messages, and questions in a timely manner, the library’s social media sites will be monitored on a daily basis. In most instances, comments, messages, and questions will be answered by the library’s social media administrator.

Social Media Analytics & Effectiveness

The analytics for the Othmer Library’s social media sites will be formally assessed at the end of every month and compiled into a monthly report. These analytics will be surveyed using both platform-specific statistics tools and third-party products such as Google Analytics. The effectiveness of the library’s social media sites will be measured by growth in the number of followers, number of engagements (on Tumblr, the total number of notes on a post and any messages received), number of page views, and number of pages viewed per session.

Review of Guidelines

These guidelines will be formally reviewed on a yearly basis.