



Review

The Librarian's Nitty-Gritty Guide to Social Media

Laura Solomon. Chicago: American Library Association, 2013. 211 pp. ISBN: 978-0-83891-160-0. \$52.00.

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In a world dominated by social media, the ways in which libraries market to and interact with their users have changed dramatically. The question is not *if* you should use social media, it is *how* to use it effectively. It is easy to get a free account on one of the hundreds of social media sites that exist, and chances are your library is already participating on one of these sites. However, many libraries do not understand that using social media takes more than just having an account.

Laura Solomon details how the new age of marketing is not about pushing out your product; it is about engaging with your community and providing the highest level of customer service to your patrons. Social media allows libraries to directly connect and engage with patrons in real-time: something no other medium can offer. *The Librarian's Nitty Gritty Guide to Social Media* reveals how relationships are the key to using social media effectively. Using social media simply to promote and advertise the library will not fly. Yes, promote programs and services, but make sure that you are also a strong,

consistent member of your online community. Solomon explains her strategies and advice through the concept of social capital, providing value to your followers through engagement, reciprocity, and other-centered content. To be effective, libraries must maintain a balance between “earning” and “spending” social capital; this requires a plan with stated goals or objectives and someone best suited for the job.

Having a plan with clear goals and objectives will help measure your success and track progress. Developing a library’s online presence requires a great deal of time and effort. Do not expect your efforts to pay off overnight because, “social media is rarely easy or trouble-free, but it can often be amusing and insightful” (p. 170).

This book shows librarians how to go beyond just being on social media to doing social media so it matters. Solomon highlights the most effective social media strategies while providing examples of the good, bad, and ugly. This is more than just another book discussing the different types of social media technologies; it provides a critical, in-depth look at our understanding of social media’s role in libraries. Solomon provides strategies for improving your library’s social media presence, gaining administrative support, and rethinking status updates to garner attention and interest from your patrons. Change happens quickly in social media. The popular site of today could be gone tomorrow, but the concepts discussed by Solomon are relevant regardless of the tool – make connections, be human, and have a plan.

Social media’s importance is increasing, and this book is a highly recommended read for any librarian responsible for or interested in social media. Whether you are just starting to build your library’s social media presence or looking to resurrect your library’s accounts, this book will inspire you to get your library’s social media efforts on track. While Solomon primarily focuses on examples from public libraries, the scope of her writing is applicable to any type of library.

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