Social Networking, Web 2.0 Made Easy!

DATE AND TIME
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SPEAKER(S)
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SESSION DESCRIPTION
Feeling overwhelmed by the explosion of social networking online? Not sure what Web 2.0 means and more afraid that the world will skip to Web 3.0 without you? Come straight to this session to learn how Facebook, Twitter, and more Web 2.0 collaborative processes are being used, how they can help your agency interact with the community, and why it is important to implement, not avoid this societal phenomenon!

Session focused on the myriad of ways in which park and recreation operations can be promoted through the use of modern technologies in social networking sites such as Facebook, MySpace, Ning, Twitter, and Google Buzz or Web
Ads via opportunities such as Google AdWords, local websites, and Facebook Ads. Matt Wolf said, “technology is like a marriage” since commitments have to be made to systems, programs, and other elements once good communication is established and needs are assessed.

Online communities are opportunities to network and/or increase participation by reaching a broader audience and engaging a target community by using the internet and social networking sites. Self-assessment of communication skills and desired web presence as well as broadly set goals for achievement are necessary to creating an advantageous social networking opportunity through the 4 Step Process: 1) lay a foundation (choose one or more sites but don't spread your resources out too far); 2) promote your online community and encourage initial growth; 3) engage those who join; 4) blatant self-promotion and “going viral” (don’t be afraid to ask others to recommend your network and reach maximum potential at key times during the day/week). Once the network is created, you can control and promote the web presence of your agency or organization.

SESSION LEARNING OBJECTIVES
- Describe and identify avenues for social networking that are agency appropriate.
- Develop and implement a plan for developing an appropriate and useful park agency social networking presence on the web.
- Validate the important benefits of using social networking with your park agency with agency and community leaders.
New Media

Building Online Communities to Increase Participation

Matt Wolf

Technology Manager, Eppley Institute for Parks and Public Lands at Indiana University

Technology, why?

- Promises
  - Increased Productivity
  - Increased Revenue
  - Decreased Costs
  - Time Saving
  - Improved Processes

- Reality
  - Disappointment
  - Unmet Expectations
  - Financial Problems
  - Frustrations
  - Sometimes Failure

So you could say...

Technology is like marriage

(or a relationship)

Welcome to Relationship Management 101

- Marriages
  - Email
  - Cell Phone
  - Imposed Computer System
  - Websites

- Casual Relationships
  - New Computer Systems
  - Social Networks
  - Many More

The key to healthy relationships with Technology

- Know what you are getting into before getting married to a specific technology (research/dating)
- Know what your specific needs are
- Chose technologies that allow a casual relationship, avoid commitment.
Ground Rules

- Please Interrupt
- Share your experiences
- One who asks a question is a fool for five minutes; one who does not ask a question remains a fool forever.
  -- Chinese Proverb

Overview

- Communities
- Goals
- Methods
- Tools
  - Email
  - Content Management
  - Social Media & Networks
  - Office Productivity (time permitting)

Building Online Communities to Increase Participation

- What is a “Community”?
- Is it possible to “build” a community?
  - Lay the groundwork
  - Provide a space
  - Encourage membership and participation

Why build an online community?

- Common interests breeds action and information share
- As an agency much can be learned
- User interaction generates information and knowledge

So you want to build an online community. Now what?

Self assess your:
- Communications
  - Email
  - Social networking
- Web Presence
  - Website
    - RSS, Content Mgmt.
  - Social web presence
  - Blog
- Set some broad goals.
  - Increase participation
  - Increase revenue
  - Offer more programs
  - Website page visits
  - Website RSS subscriptions
  - Social: Friends, Fans, Followers, or Members
  - Preservation

4 Step Process

1. Laying a foundation for your online community
   - Facebook
   - MySpace
   - Ning
   - Twitter
   - Many Niche Social Networks
2. Promote/Grow your community
   - Social Tools
   - Website
   - Web Ads
   - Word of Mouth
3. Engage your community
   - General Content
   - Discussions
   - Surveys
   - Contests
   - ETC
4. Blatant Unabashed Self Promotion
   - Email Marketing
   - Promotional Videos
   - Event Promotion
   - Program and League Promotion
   - Limitless Possibilities
1. Lay a Foundation: Choosing Platforms

- Don’t spread yourself too thin
- Concentrate on a few distinct platforms/tools
- Going custom is costly and may result in lower membership
- Facebook
- MySpace
- Twitter
- Ning
- Buzz
- Many Other Possibilities

Social Networking

Movie 1min48sec
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6a_KF7YKVc

Facebook (Almost a necessity)

- 400 Million members
- 50% of users log on daily
- More than 20 million people become fans of Pages each day
- Majority of users between 18-34
- Women over 55 is the fastest growing segment
- Easy to grow and promote a community
- Groups and Fan Pages

Facebook Group or Fan Page

- The foundation of your community on Facebook
- Groups and Fan Pages are similar.
- I recommend a Fan Page for a park agency.
- Work with an “Alpha Geek” in your office.

Features
- Discussion
- Events (with RSVP)
- Wall
- Videos and Photos
- Mass Messaging/Email Blasts
- User Subscription

MySpace Groups

- Community on MySpace
- Ads are more intrusive
- Not as broad of an audience as Facebook
- More focused on music
- Would avoid MySpace and use Facebook

- Forums
- Bulletins
- Images
- Video
- Music
- Messaging
- No Events
Ning

- Build your own social network
- Customizable look
- Good option if you have a large existing mailing list
- More Personal
- Can integrate with Facebook

- Events
- Photos
- Videos
- Forums
- Groups
- Messaging

Twitter

- Video 2min 25sec
  [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ddO9idmax0o]

Twitter is

- 75 Million Users
- 17% of accounts tweeted last month
- Micro-Blogging
- Social Messaging
- News
- Social Media Marketing

New User’s Guide to Twitter

- Sign Up
- Complete your profile
- Post a few “tweets”
- Search for and follow users in your geographic
- Search using your email lists and follow
- Many people will follow you back

Google Buzz

- New
- Integrates Twitter, RSS, Blogs, Picasa, Flickr, etc
- Impact could be huge
- Highly Automated
- Part of Google’s world domination plan!
Why are Twitter and Buzz useful to Park Agencies?

- Promotion
- Customer Service
- Building Community
- Youthful Audience
- Stay in touch with your “fan/follower” base
- Announcements
- Going Viral

Going Viral

- Video [1min]
- Humorous Images
- Instructional Content
- Free Stuff
- Provide Value

Goal
- Self replicating posts
- Link to something views and visits to your website
- Keep visitors at your site or inform them of something

Method
- Call to Action
  - Check out...
  - Follow this person
  - Please vote
  - Help me
- Questions, e.g. “What do you think of...?”
  - Be sure to say please
  - Timing 10-6

Other Options

- Forums
- Wikis

Do a Google search on “social network”

Social Media

- Twitter (again)
- Blogs
- Blog Comments
- Forums
- Participate in other communities (with a link back to your website)

2. Promote/Grow Your Community

- Social Media
- Website
- Web Marketing
- Word of Mouth
- Current Members

Goals
- Reach everyone in your geographic community
- Get them to join your online community
- Get them to invite their friends to join the online community

Looping in Your Website

- Social Network Icons
  - Facebook
  - Twitter
  - Youtube
  - Flickr
- Twitter Feed
  - Display your twitter feed on your website
Web Ads

- Google AdWords
- Web Ads
- Search Terms
- Geographic Targeting
- Local Website
- Contracted Ads
- Usually paid per click or per impression
- Facebook Ads

Facebook Ads

- Adverts on Facebook
- Facebook Content
- Facebook Ads
- Facebook Ads

Facebook Ads - Targeting

Facebook Ads - Pricing

Word of Mouth and Current Members

- Put your Facebook link on literature
- Mention that you are “on Facebook” or “We have a Facebook”
- Use your email list to find others on Facebook and twitter
- Ask members on your online community to invite their friends to join
- Ask staff members to invite their friends

3. Engage your community (casually)

- Content
- Relevant Links
- Discussions
- Surveys
- Contests
- In most communities interaction among members will happen naturally
- There are some things you can do to help start discourse
- Just posting events and registration deadlines may be enough
Discussions
- Pose interesting questions
- Avoid taking a stand on politically hot topics
- Have someone assigned to moderate if necessary

Surveys
- Create a survey on an easy to use survey tool to ask for their opinion
- This shows you care about the community and allows you to better serve
- Effective as an event follow-up

Contests
- Use your imagination:
  - First 5 to sign up for an event
  - First one to invite/recruit 100 friends to the community
  - Best Video
  - Picture Uploads

4. Blatant Unabashed Self Promotion
- This is where you work to achieve mission critical goals
- They are your fans, friends, followers, and members
- They want to hear what you are doing
- They want to know about events
- They genuinely care about parks

Email Marketing
- Collect email addresses using your website.
- Use your email list to increase participation.
- Newsletters, events notices, registration deadlines, etc.
- Try to target emails to the relevant demographic

Email Marketing - Microtargeting
- Collect Data
  - Event Signups
  - Age of Children(or DOB)
  - Interests Based on Participation
  - Target Demographics
    - A 9 year old that plays basketball, may be interested in the 10 year old league next year.
- Benefits
  - Give the recipient more relevant information based on their interests
  - Makes the recipient less likely to unsubscribe for your mailings
  - Increase rate of “conversion” or “participation”
  - Alternative to managing multiple mailing lists or a way to further segment a list.

Tools
- SurveyMonkey
- SurveyGizmo
- Zoomerang
- Email Services

Tools
- Email Marketing
- Promotional Videos
- Event Promotion
- Program and League Promotion
- Limitless Possibilities
Video

- Communication tool
  - Promote an event
  - Encourage physical activity
  - Get people excited about what you do
  - Others in the community can also share their videos and comment on existing videos

What you need:
- Video Camera ($200 - $1000)
- Inexpensive Video Editing Software ($0-$500)
- YouTube Account (Free)

Event Promotion

- Create an event
- Invite friends and group members
- Create Targeted ads for events
- After the event add photos and videos from the event

Event Promotion - Create

Event Promotion - Details

Event Promotion - Invite

The Final Event Page
4 Easy Steps

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Taking Action

- What can you do today?
- How can you plan for tomorrow?
- How to keep up with ever-changing trends?

Tips for Success

- Network access: you may have to sell your manager on these ideas to get network access to some of these sites.
- Make strategic hiring choices (and use Facebook to screen applicants)
- Be careful about mixing personal accounts with your professional
- Consider what are the Alpha-Geeks are doing?

Keeping up with technology.

- Read Popular Websites
  - Wired Magazine
  - NY Times Technology
  - Digg.com technology
  - Slashdot
- Seek out and read technology blogs you like.
  - Gizmodo
  - Lifehacker
  - Engadget
- Podcasts
  - NY Times
  - CNET
  - DiggNation
  - Engadget
- Strike up a conversation with someone in the tech department
- Talk to the alpha-geeks

Question & Answer