They Don’t Have to Like You
Facebook Marketing for Libraries in the Age of Paid Ads
Elizabeth Marcus and Jill Ellern

Introduction and Purpose
Hunter Library uses multiple social media platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to market resources and services. The presenters noticed that the library’s Facebook fan engagement was low and wondered why. Are patrons using newer social media platforms? Did recent newsfeed and page changes bury the library’s content? Does the lack of a staff member devoted solely to social media management hurt our engagement?

Ultimately, do the outreach benefits outweigh library staff time/resources required to maintain a Facebook page? Can libraries produce and manage an effective page with little to no funds?

Research Questions
In summer 2016, we began exploring how other libraries in North Carolina use Facebook. Data was collected about 113 academic libraries, answering some of the following questions:

• Does the library have a Facebook page?
• How many likes, followers, or “has been here” does each library have?
• What was the fan growth rate during our study?
• What contributed to the highest growth rates?
• How many posts included photos/text/videos?
• How often does the library post and how many fans do they engage?

NC Academic Libraries by Likes
March 2016 – Oct 2017 – Cullowhee, NC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Likes</th>
<th>Increases</th>
<th>Photos</th>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Videos</th>
<th>Posts per day</th>
<th>Events posted</th>
<th>Pages liked</th>
<th>Can users post?</th>
<th>Interaction with users</th>
<th>Engagement over likes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University of North Carolina at Greensboro</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>125</td>
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<td>512</td>
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<td>0</td>
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NC Academic Libraries by Like % Increase
March 2016 – Oct 2017 – Cullowhee, NC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Initial Likes</th>
<th>Current Likes</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Total Likes</th>
<th>Posts per day</th>
<th>Events posted</th>
<th>Pages liked</th>
<th>Can users post?</th>
<th>Interaction with users</th>
<th>Engagement over likes</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Elon University</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>832</td>
<td>257%</td>
<td>211</td>
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<td>35%</td>
<td>53</td>
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<td>32%</td>
<td>35</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lenoir-Rhyne University</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Benedict College</td>
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<td>389</td>
<td>276%</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue Ridge Community College</td>
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<td>154%</td>
<td>23</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary</td>
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<td>44%</td>
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<td>145%</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tr>
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Facebook timeline
March 2016 – Facebook posts are made available for iPhone and Android
February 2016 – Facebook allows companies to run ads on its platform
May 2016 – Facebook begins selling stock to the public

Decline of Organic Reach
October 19, 2017 – Winston-Salem, NC

Increase your Reach!
October 19, 2017 – Winston-Salem, NC
Checklist for Optimizing Your Library's Facebook Page Settings

☐ When creating a new page for your library or revitalize an established page, consider choosing/changing your page type to Local Business/Place. This page type allows administrators to include the most detailed, practical information for local users including real time library hours, mapped location with directions, and multiple contact information options for patrons.

☐ Update your account profile to include the most recent, thorough contact information, an About statement, library hours, website link, and other social media links. Add up to three page categories to help Facebook/search engine users find your page. Suggested categories include, but aren’t limited to, Library, College & University, and Education.

☐ Review your page’s Insights tab weekly to view in-depth data about the account including page views, post engagement, and event reach, as follower activity can vary widely day to day.

☐ Use Facebook’s Scheduled Posts feature under Publishing Tools to increase and consistency of posts and reach followers if they are primarily online after regular office hours. Identify the time of day/day of the week most of your followers are online through Insights>Posts.

☐ Identify your general audience demographic trends (% of students, faculty, alumni, community members) through Settings>People and Other Pages. Tailor your content to this audience and/or reach out to new followers using some of the tips below.

Tips for Engaging Fans and Increasing Organic Reach

- Distribute content no more than 2 times per day, on average. Create a post schedule to using the guidelines above to encourage consistent marketing, even after hours.

- Ask open-ended questions or encourage feedback about library services, requesting that fans respond or react to your post.

- Relate posts to Facebook’s trending news to boost news feed relevance and draw a broader audience.

- Present content in photo and video form, as news feed algorithms often rank these formats higher. Use Canva, PicMonkey, Piktochart, or Easel.ly to create professional images and infographics for free.

- Feature your Facebook page in a visible location on the library website, as well as other print and online library marketing materials like newsletters, brochures, bookmarks, and flyers.

- Collaborate with larger, established Facebook page/group administrators in your institution/community to share content and target new audiences. Examples: Official Western Carolina University page, WCU Residential Living Class of 2021
Checklist and Tips References


Additional Poster References


Poster Images


