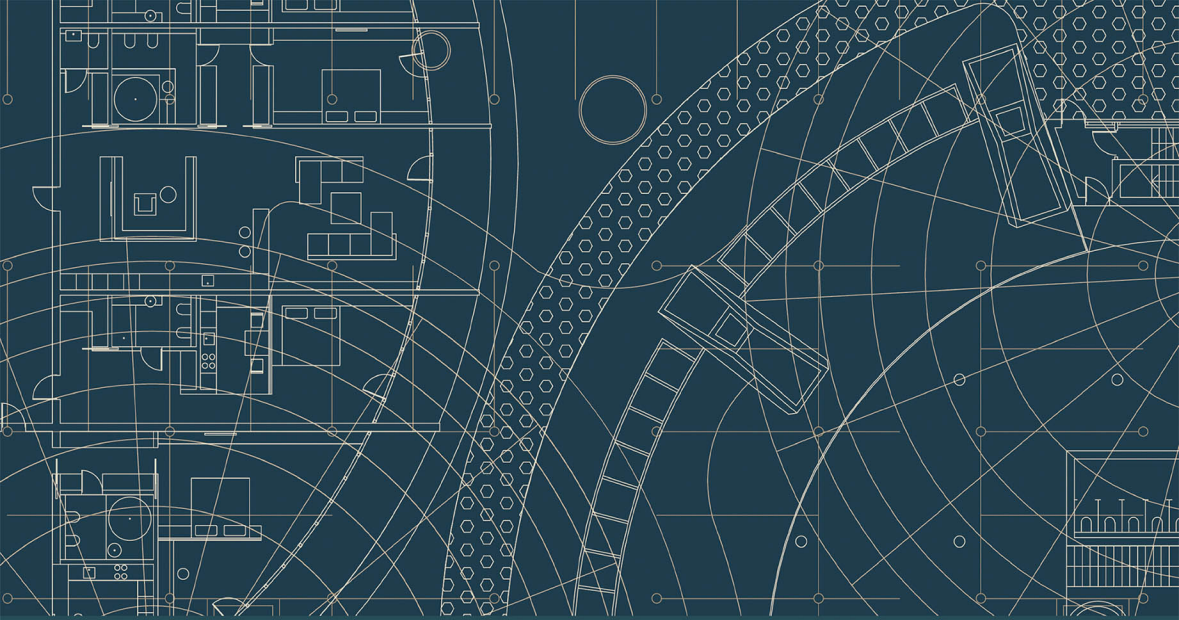

Participatory Memory Practices

CRAFTING MUSEUM SOCIAL MEDIA FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION WORK

Cassandra Kist

Crafting Museum Social Media for Social Inclusion Work

Crafting Museum Social Media for Social Inclusion Work investigates if and how social media can be integrated into the social inclusion initiatives of museums, and the contextual factors that impact this integration.

Drawing on a year-long case study of Glasgow Museums (Scotland), international mini case studies, and interviews with museum professionals, Kist reveals the complex social and technical negotiations that staff participate in to align social media practices with social inclusion work. Kist argues that the staff practices she observed around social media can be usefully understood through the idea of 'craft'. This reframes staff practices for imagining future museum social media work as iterative, intuitive, and skilled balancing acts. As a craft, staff creatively draw on and work around social media affordances to balance the norms of their social inclusion work with the perceived interests and needs of users and community groups. Understanding the relation between museums' use of social media and their ability to contribute to social inclusion initiatives is imperative, especially given the increasingly pervasive use of social media across the cultural heritage sector in recent years.

Crafting Museum Social Media for Social Inclusion Work will be valuable for academics, practitioners, and students working in cultural heritage, museum studies, or social work.

Cassandra Kist is currently a Chancellor's Fellow at the University of Strathclyde in Computer and Information Sciences. While undertaking the research underpinning this book, she was a PhD student at the University of Glasgow in Information Studies. Her research investigates how engagement with cultural heritage and processes of remembering and forgetting, and exclusion and inclusion intersect with digital technologies.

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Crafting Museum Social Media for Social Inclusion Work

Cassandra Kist

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Preface

This book, while seemingly technology-centred, is much more about people and their social contexts. It is about social media and its intersections with museums' social inclusion missions, which necessitates attention not only to social media, but also the messy social dynamics of organisational policies and structures, and people's practices. In this book, I build on a growing foundation of literature about museums and social media but take a grounded approach, studying social media inside the museum itself by unpacking the behind-the-scenes practices of museum practitioners. In doing so, I push forward the usefulness of 'craft' as a concept through which to understand museum social media practices, drawing on a range of disciplines, particularly museum studies, anthropology, and science and technology studies (STS). This book is inspired by an STS perspective that acknowledges the influential power of technology, while simultaneously emphasising people's agency in shaping technology, their ability to bend it (to a certain extent) towards their interests and needs.

I further take inspiration from museum theories on participation and 'care', particularly the need to view social media, like participation, as an ongoing process. A process which is never perfect but rather a continuous ethical pursuit that is dependent upon staff's ability to listen to and respond carefully with users, participants, and stakeholders. I have been inspired by many practitioners and scholars during the process of my research and the writing of this book, particularly those who address museum social media as sites of activism, advocate for museums to address social justice, and critically question pervasive ideas in the sector around digital media and participation.

While my intention in this book is to formulate key-takeaways for museum staff using social media for social missions, I do not suggest a clear formula for social media 'success'. Particularly, if success is based on numbers or metrics such as followers, likes, and shares. Instead, this book is intended for those interested in the continuous pursuit of ethical museum practices, and particularly, how social inclusion initiatives can be supported by using social media. It reveals these takeaways, not as a set recipe, but rather through the concept of craft – as a range of inspirational messy practices and dynamics that honour the agency and creativity of museum practitioners within the sometimes-contradictory context of the museum institution. These ideas and this book would not have been possible without some

key individuals and organisations. I would like to express my gratitude towards the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme which funded my PhD research drawn on in this book under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement No. 764859.

I would also like to thank my research participants for generously sharing their valuable time and expertise and giving me insight into their work practices. I am indebted to several key Glasgow Museums staff members for your insightful discussions, sharing your expertise, the frequent coffees, and your friendliness and openness. In particular, a special thank you to the Open Museum staff for your support, patience, and your willingness to let me undertake part of my research in your small team. I am also deeply thankful for the POEM network and fellows (a group of researchers and institutions studying Participatory Memory Practices in digital ecologies) for your ongoing support and friendship, inspiring and creative ideas, and insightful research, particularly Franziska Mucha, Susanne Boersma, Inge Zwart, and Quoc-Tan Tran. A big thank you to my team of supervisors and mentors for your encouragement, inspiration, advice, and guidance on my research which helped me grow both professionally and personally: Maria Economou, Gareth Beale, Nicole Smith, Rosie Spooner, Elisabeth Tietmeyer, and my colleagues in Information Studies at the University of Glasgow. Finally, to my partner Chris – thank you for always bringing me back to a welcome reality when my mind was otherwise up in the clouds, often pre-occupied with this book.

Cassandra Kist 2024

Abbreviations

DCMS	Department for Culture Media and Sport
GL	Glasgow Life
GM	Glasgow Museums
ICOM	International Council of Museums
IN	Interview
MA	The Museums Association (UK)
MCN	Museum Computer Network
ME	Meeting (meeting minutes and notes)
MGS	Museums Galleries Scotland
MM	Migration Museum
NMAI	National Museum of the American Indian
OB	Observation (fieldnotes)
OM	Open Museum
SHSMG	Scottish Heritage Social Media Group

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Glossary

Affordances Affordances in this book are associated with the elasticities of social media and different possibilities of applying dimensions of social inclusion work to online platforms. Affordances are not static traits of particular objects, but rather fluctuating possibilities of action due to the relation between the user of the social platform, the platform itself, and the environment, which are influenced by the user's sense and embodied knowledge.

Craft(ing) or craftwork Craft refers to a skilled dialogue between the craftworker, the material they use, and the making process, as well as a dialogue with the community or user that the craft is intended to serve. I use craft to highlight the imperfect nature of social media technologies and, in turn, position museum social media practices as a skilled dialogue in which staff balance their social inclusion ideals, the potentials and limits of social media, and perceived user needs. In participating in this dialogue staff continuously build an embodied and tacit knowledge of the elasticities of social media.

Infrastructures Infrastructures are a system of ambiguous and sometimes intangible social and technical structures that enable staff to carry out different tasks. They can exist at different scales, for instance, as large information networks, or on a micro-scale, for instance, as a set of practices and tools that are drawn together during everyday work. Infrastructures have a duality in being flexible and adaptable but also at times are rigid and difficult to change, particularly due to being entangled with social norms, values, and habits.

Museum social inclusion work While social inclusion agendas have been and are enacted in a variety of ways, trends in contemporary museum practice associate the concept with working towards clear social change by (1) reaching out to individuals challenged by marginalisation and (2) working with them through methods of participation and representation to actively meet their interests/needs.

Social media In this book, I consider social media to be dynamic, shifting, and unstable web-based communication and collaboration channels, their associated tools, and their surrounding organisational and management structures.

Social and technical structures Structures in this book refer to the social and technical dimensions that constitute museum infrastructures, which become relevant in and emerge through practice.

Socio-technical processes Socio-technical processes, also referred to as 'tug-and-pulls' in this book, encompass how museum staff negotiate, balance, and bring together different social and technical structures to sustain their work. It is a term used in human–computer interaction and infrastructure studies to point to the active actions and negotiations of designers, programmers, or staff who are creating things, such as new infrastructures, programmes, and ways to engage users.

Tinkering Tinkering in this book refers to a socio-technical process of listening and being attuned to formulate (care)ful responses to online users which requires constant adaption and reflexivity. From this perspective, tinkering is a style of care that plays with and balances different goods, or in this book, social media affordances, to meet the needs and interests of users.

Translation Translation in this book refers to a socio-technical process that takes place when an infrastructure moves to different contexts, requiring adaption, tweaks, and changes to meet new regulations, standards, and social expectations. Translation as such, is not necessarily about transferring or repeating the infrastructure that existed before, but rather a process of transforming and negotiating social and technical structures from one context to another.

1 Introduction

Museum social media as imperfect technologies

The ability to access and engage with cultural heritage is more than ever readily available at our fingertips. Social media platforms, such as Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook, have made cultural heritage from the famous Benin Bronzes to personal and community memories widely accessible through individual users, groups, and organisations such as museums. In the context of social media, users share and interact with images, heritage, and memories, in turn, both 'performing' and 'forming' their social connections and identities. As such, these common online practices can have real implications for users' feelings of belonging and processes of both social inclusion and exclusion. Due to an increasingly pervasive use of social media across the cultural heritage sector and conditions of marginalisation exasperated by COVID-19, understanding the relation between museums' use of social media and their ability to contribute to social inclusion initiatives is imperative.

A virtual disco for older adults, a time capsule of Asian Canadian experiences during COVID-19, and audio clips of stories from under-served communities are just a few examples that I draw on in this book to depict how museums can and do use social media to pursue social inclusion initiatives. Centring on a rich year-long case study of Glasgow Museums' Open Museum (Scotland), in conjunction with international mini case studies and interviews with museum social media professionals, I investigate social media through a realistic lens of everyday museum practice. Rather than analysing social media as something 'out there', I uncover the relationality between social media and social inclusion work in the museum itself. Drawing on science and technology studies and ethnographic methods, the central argument I make throughout this book is that the staff practices I observe around social media can be usefully understood through the concept of 'craft'.

Some commonalities across very different sectors and their ideas of craft are pivotal for understanding the use of social media in the museum and for reimagining future practices. When thinking of craft, our imagination may be drawn to DIY projects involving mending, upscaling, and repair. Alternatively, we may envision an experienced craftsperson hard at their trade: hammering away at heated metal, blowing glass, or carefully sculpting something unseen from a block of clay. If you work in the tech sector, you may think of designing digital tools, coding new software, programmes, or creating graphic designs. The concept of craft as a critical theory of practice, became popular in response to mass-production and

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industrialisation which catalysed a desire to privilege the tacit, sensory, and experiential knowledge of skilled practitioners in the creation of unique objects (Bunnell, 2004; Shanks & McGuire, 1996). However, importantly, the idea of craft commonly operates under the presumption that the materials a practitioner works with towards a certain means is *never* perfect or ready-made. There is ever and always an expected tug-and-pull between practitioner, the liveliness or even stubbornness of the material, and the intended outcome.

As a result, craft or craftwork can be understood as a skilled dialogue between the craftworker, the material they use, and the making process (Bunnell, 2004, p. 9) but also a dialogue with the community or user that the craft is intended to serve (Shanks & McGuire, 1996, p. 78). From this perspective, the process of crafting is reliant on both an ongoing understanding of the material that the craftworker uses but also the intended users' needs.[1] As I will trace throughout the following chapters, craft highlights how museum staff participate in a dialogue or tug-and-pulls with the potentials and limits of their craft material – social media[2] (a technology certainly not 'ready-made' for social inclusion initiatives), staff's own ideals of social inclusion work, and their perception of user needs. Throughout my research, museum staff demonstrate how the norms of outreach can be 'translated' to social media, and practices 'tinkered' with to adhere closely to museological ideals of social inclusion work. This included creating 'safe' spaces for community groups, enabling connections between participants and cultural heritage through sensory-rich experiences, and catering to participants' interests and needs online. In turn, we witness how staff's tug-and-pulls are underpinned by certain skills, including their ability to listen to users, to be mindful of the affordances of social media, and to experiment with social media practices.

Simultaneously, craft exposes how staff's knowledge of social media and its elasticities, is continuously in development (McCullough, 1998), a development which can be supported or hindered by the museum institution. The staff practices I observed across several museums enable us to envision future social media practices and alternative museum infrastructures. Concurrently, due to social media's limitations, questionable ethics regarding user privacy and commercialisation, accessibility, power dynamics, and harmful discourse, it spurs a critical question: should social media be used for social inclusion initiatives, or even by museums at all? However, recognising the already widespread use of social media across the cultural heritage sector, the core question I pursue throughout this book is '(how) can museums use social media for social inclusion work?'.

Uncertainty regarding the purpose of museum social media channels has been prevalent and come to the fore at times of disruption such as during COVID-19 (reflected in my fieldwork) or the purchasing of Twitter, now 'X' by Elon Musk. These disruptions spark critical questions regarding if and how social media should be used to grow and or diversify audiences, market, educate or cultivate very engaged audiences (SHSMG, 2020). Museums since the shift towards 'new museology',[3] have been increasingly concerned for the experiences of their visitors and surrounding communities (Vergo, 1997). However, from the late 1990s this concern for publics became more concretely associated with missions of social impact and social change, implicated in government policies (McCall & Gray,

2014): museums in the UK were expected to reach out to individuals and groups challenged by social exclusion and work with them in ethical and participatory ways. While adopting technologies such as social media can have relevance for social mandates, we must critically evaluate these platforms for their (mis)alignment with institutional social roles, and how these platforms realistically can be used for social missions or 'shaped' for purpose (if at all). This book builds on other academics and practitioners who address social media reflexively and critically (Edson, 2020; Kidd, 2018; Wong, 2011) and are investigating the intersection between ethics-led museum practice and technology (Giannini, 2019; Malde & Kennedy, 2018; Russo & Peacock, 2009). Yet, this book differs by taking a grounded approach and 'behind the scenes' perspective on museum practices, as I consider if and how social media, with all its pitfalls and potentials can realistically be used for social inclusion initiatives.

My fieldwork, underpinning this book (which occurred between 2019 and 2021), encompassed observing social media posts and museum staff practices with community groups, crossing between online and offline contexts. First, I zoomed in on the practices of staff at Glasgow Museums, an umbrella organisation of 11 museums,[4] in particular, their outreach institution – the Open Museum through a year-long ethnographic and practice research placement.[5] Much of this fieldwork was spent with staff, observing practices with 'hardly reached'[6] community groups, discussing and assisting with posts/projects for social media, and attending institution wide meetings. This fieldwork was followed by a 'zooming out', placing these observations in context within the wider cultural heritage field by undertaking research at three international mini case studies: the Myseum[7] (Canada), an anonymous migration museum,[8] and the National Museum of the American Indian (United States), and by interviewing a range of cultural heritage social media experts in Scotland. Much of this fieldwork overlapped with and was disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, which due to my focus on social media, sparked further insight into its alignment or lack of with social inclusion work.

This chapter lays the foundation for the remainder of the book by positioning my research, the motivations driving it, and the value of 'craft' in context. First, we journey through prominent ideas regarding social inclusion work in the museum sector, its relation to social change, and its implications for social media practices. Secondly, I provide insight into the early adoption of social media in the museum field and its relation to social inclusion values and ideals. Thirdly, I trace a paradox: a stubborn idealistic discourse in the cultural heritage sector associating social media platforms with social goals which, ironically, can position social media and associated practices outside of museum work. This positioning contributes to an observation shared by many (Baggesen, 2014; Kidd, 2011; Fletcher & Lee, 2012): that museums often lack diverse uses of social media beyond marketing and broadcasting, including its use for social inclusion initiatives. I bring these three threads together: (1) an understanding of social inclusion in museology, (2) the adoption and use of social media as part of social roles, and (3) the social media paradox, to cultivate an understanding of my research observations and its relation to current museum discourse and practice. In response to thread three, the social media paradox, I begin to propose the usefulness of craft. The concept of craft deepens our

understanding of staff's tug-and-pulls and the supporting museum infrastructures that are necessary to realistically incorporate social media as an imperfect technology into social inclusion work.

Thread 1: adding 'social' to inclusion in museology

Significantly, 'social inclusion' and what this concept is perceived to entail in museology, impacts how associated practices are and can be applied (or not) to museums' use of social media. Different conceptions of inclusion may become crystallised into social and material structures such as museum policy documents or habits and norms which can shape how staff use social media. While social inclusion agendas have been and are enacted by museums in a variety of ways, trends in contemporary museum practice associate the concept with working towards clear social change by (1) reaching out to people challenged by social exclusion and (2) working with them through methods of participation and representation to actively meet their interests/needs. Besides these two important traits, practices and outcomes of social inclusion are contextually grounded and therefore, diverse: they are emergent and embedded within different museum and social contexts. Importantly, inclusion in museology has not always been associated with explicit social change and the social or political sphere. Rather, until the early 2000s inclusion predominantly remained in the cultural and educational sphere (Tlili, 2008). Early cultural heritage policies were pre-occupied with the inclusion of audiences in museum attendance and cultural heritage representation, rather than the impact that the sector could have on the social experiences of individuals and groups. As a result, inclusion in museums, traditionally, has often been disconnected from social impact initiatives and instead, conflated with audience development and access (Sandell, 2003).

Today, practices of inclusion are idealised across the sector as supporting social change and impact within the frame of not only cultural inclusion, but specifically, social inclusion. Within this context, inclusion is no longer synonymous with simply expanding and developing a wider audience base. Instead, inclusion typically refers to working closely with people who experience marginalisation, drawing on cultural resources and the museum's communicative capacities in order to meet their interests, concerns, and or needs (Sandell, 1998). This contemporary conception of social inclusion, is evidenced by an array of museum 'types' that retain a drive for inclusion but are coloured by diverse missions of social change: such as the activist museum (Janes & Sandell, 2019), the participatory museum (Simon, 2010), and the helpful museum (Chynoweth et al., 2020), and the importance placed on 'social impact' by the UK Museums Association (MA) (MA, n.d.).[9] In part, this conception of inclusion as entangled with social impact is due to the policies put forth by the New Labour government in the UK (1997–2010) who implemented cultural heritage mandates through the Department for Culture, Media, and Sport (DCMS).[10] These mandates include a significant policy document published in 2001 titled, *Libraries, Museums, Galleries and Archives for All: Co-operating across the*

Sectors to Tackle Social Exclusion (DCMS, 2001). The DCMS directives as described by social geographer and museum studies scholar Morse (2019),

> placed expectations on museums to work in partnership with third sector and local organisations to contribute to work around employment, crime reduction, urban regeneration and neighbourhood renewal, rehabilitation, health care and health promotion.
>
> (p. 50)[11]

The DCMS outlined that essential to this work was reaching certain target groups who could be at risk of social exclusion, including, those in socio-economically poor areas, ethnic minorities, and people with disabilities (DCMS, 2001). As such, these policies set out by the DCMS in the UK emphasised the role of museums as being in the service of society to challenge social exclusion. This role was reiterated in the policies of other professional cultural heritage bodies such as those of Museums Galleries Scotland[12] which are particularly relevant to the main case study underpinning this book, Glasgow Museums' Open Museum. In doing so, these policies also defined social exclusion as having multifaceted dimensions. Social exclusion is typically synonymous with increasing social inequalities but is a concept that highlights the complex and dynamic interplay between 'social, economic, psychological and cultural' factors (Tlili, 2008, p. 128) and the processes, institutions, and mechanics that result in exclusion (Haan, 1998). Through this interplay, individuals are systematically excluded from participating in their communities and are denied opportunities to feel fulfilled (Ware et al., 2017, p. 144). Building on this conception of social exclusion, Tlili (2008) tries to explain New Labour's policies for museums in the early 2000s,

> [t]he underlying logic seems to suggest that since the socially excluded are inter alia culturally excluded, cultural inclusion should aim higher than just simply attracting these populations to the museum; it should aim at improving the quality of their lives through a social policy role, rather than simply attracting them into the museum as an end in itself.
>
> (p. 130)

While museums' inclusive strategies are founded in cultural heritage collections and activities, it may, pivotally, be able to combat disadvantage and inequality by linking cultural inclusion to a social and even a political agenda (Sandell, 1998). Inclusive practices and social inclusion work are thus, in this book, used interchangeably, with an emphasis being placed on the intersection of these concepts with the social sphere in terms of their explicit intention for social impact. DCMS policies might seem to build on previous international discourse regarding museums' social role, evident through museum resolutions such as the International Council of Museum's (ICOM) (1971) symposium 'Museum Environment'. This symposium placed significance on how the museum can serve its surrounding environment and communities, including lower classes and ethnic minorities

(ICOM, 1972). However, several scholars have critiqued the UK New Labours' social inclusion mandates. There are multiple reasons underpinning practitioners' and scholars' scepticism of these policies, including their ambiguous implications for museum practice, their different imperatives which can cause tensions in their application, and finally, the performativity of social inclusion language.

The performativity of social inclusion language in the DCMS' mandates was used to justify underfunding welfare organisations, without recognising the limited capacity of museums for this work. Policies put forth by New Labour appeared to continue Thatcher's 'third way' form of governance in the UK which was intended to integrate culture into an ethos of instrumentalisation, placing accountability on individuals (Tlili, 2008, p. 125). Museums, like other social and public organisations would contribute to society by filling in a gap in welfare initiatives with opportunities for people to actively improve themselves (Beel, 2009; Beel, 2011). In conjunction with these new responsibilities, it was under-recognised that for many museums, working with community groups in facets such as health and well-being and social rights was new territory (McCall & Gray, 2014). Moreover, the policies failed to recognise that social inclusion as set out in the policy documents of DCMS could sit uncomfortably with other museum imperatives.

Diverging museum responsibilities and interests continue to be evident in recent discussions about a new definition for museums sanctioned by the International Council of Museums. Discussions regarding a new definition highlight the museum's dual focus on guarding cultural heritage and meeting the needs of local communities (G. Adams, 2022; Brown & Mairesse, 2018). While the DCMS policy framed museums' predominant concern as social inclusion, institutions have other responsibilities and work associated with the physical museum, including collections documentation, digitisation, and conservation. As reflected in the conflict regarding a museum definition, and as evidenced in previous research, some museum staff may define the museum institution's main role in relation to the collections and physical building which can take precedence over community and outreach work (McCall, 2009; McCall & Gray, 2014). The DCMS' policy, thus, failed to recognise and consider how diverging museum responsibilities would and could be balanced by institutions.

As a result, according to Mason (2004), a scholar of heritage and cultural studies, there have been three main discourses associated with social inclusion in the museum sector which emphasise different priorities: including 'economic', 'representational', and 'governmental'. Mason's (2004) description of 'governmental' discourse associated with social inclusion speaks to similar ideas regarding cultural citizenship and cultural rights. That is, social inclusion has been framed by democratic discourse in which cultural heritage is no longer bestowed upon individuals from lower socio-economic classes but rather is a cultural right, which may impact civic participation or active citizenship (a willingness to be active in all parts of society: economic, social, cultural, and political) (Oakley & Naylor, 2005). Similarly, in a Scottish heritage context, comparable policies to that of the DCMS were produced by the Scottish Museums Council. In 2000, they published a guide for museums in Scotland on social justice, which framed inclusion as a social justice concern, intersecting with cultural and social rights (Beel, 2009). In

turn, exercising and accessing these cultural rights was theorised to have implications for visitors' and participants' active citizenship by contributing to their self-confidence and sense of identity. (Newman et al., 2005).

The challenging of social exclusion through exercising cultural rights is intertwined with another social inclusion discourse 'representational' (Mason, 2004). Within this discourse, representations of local communities and their histories, rooted in 1970s–1980s Folk-life museums and Ecomuseums, positioned social inclusion as primarily being associated with local community interests and needs. Mason (2004) points to contemporary institutions and projects such as Glasgow's Open Museum (one of the key institutions underpinning this book), which is grounded in the idea of community ownership and social relevance (p. 60). This representational discourse is supported by others who describe social inclusion as being cultivated by enabling opportunities for local individuals and communities to form and express their identities through cultural representation within both internal museum work and to a larger public (Newman et al., 2005; Sandell, 1998). Further, significance has been placed on the ability of these representations to link people across differences (Simon, 2015).

Importantly, for many scholars and museum professionals, social inclusion, and its relation to social change, is not simply about diversifying representations but about working together with individuals and groups to meet their interests/needs. By working together and supporting groups and individuals to participate, staff can empower participants by valuing their potentials and their contributions (Simon, 2015). From this perspective, inclusion can be defined as encompassing the creation of opportunities not only for the representation of diverse voices and cultural heritage, but also for *participation* with and *access* to cultural *heritage* and the enjoyment that these can bring (Sandell, 1998, p. 410). Through these inclusive strategies, which are often catered towards marginalised participants and communities, it is hoped that museums can help in a small way, tackle the causes of social exclusion and challenge social inequality on several levels (Sandell, 1998, 2003): by enabling different forms of participation and representation, institutions on an individual level, can help participants feel empowered, welcome, and their experiences validated; On a community level, participation may strengthen social connections and networks; Finally, on a societal level, inclusive initiatives can challenge prejudice or assumptions and enable understanding across people and their experiences (Sandell, 1998, 2003).

However, the final type of social inclusion discourse – the economic one, sometimes referred to as museums' marketing imperative, can sometimes sit uncomfortably with social inclusion work (Mason, 2004). The DCMS' social inclusion policies included a need for institutions to report qualitatively, but also quantitatively on how they were reaching and working with individuals and groups at risk of social exclusion (Tlili et al., 2007). As a result, due to the pressure to report on numbers and justify museums' relevance, social inclusion has been, and continues to sometimes be conflated with any activity intended to widen the institution's audience base. Tlili (2008) describes how in their research, a museum staff 'noted that the social inclusion work they were doing with target audiences was weighted towards producing numerical data that could be used by managers and

policymakers' (p. 137). As similarly observed in other institutions, the social objectives of museums can sometimes come into conflict with activities intended to generate income, especially when there is limited institutional resources (N. Morse, 2019). An economic focus then, can have deeper implications regarding which museum practices are prioritised and valued.

Due to these different discourses associated with social inclusion, it is unclear how social inclusion should be implemented through museum practices beyond working with and enabling participation and representation of target groups. Thus, museums have interpreted and even reshaped what social inclusion could mean for their institutions in different contextually specific ways (Dodd & Sandell, 2001). Further, while participation, representation, and access are all intertwined with social inclusion work, these are perceived to have different applications and implications for museum practices. For instance, social inclusion work is sometimes associated with supporting participants' or visitors' health and wellbeing (N. Morse, 2019), with developing confidence and life-long learning (Newman et al., 2005), and as previously discussed, active citizenship (Beel, 2009). These threads are too broad to be discussed here and much has been written elsewhere about their associated practices, intentions, and outcomes. Rather, as mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, this book focuses on socially inclusive practices albeit within the frame of 'reaching out' and 'working with' individuals and groups who experience or are at risk of social exclusion, as emergent and grounded within specific museum contexts.

Despite the museum sector's increasing association of inclusivity with social change, through actively working with people who face social exclusion, such perspectives are not necessarily reflected in museum social media practices and associated research. Museum social media practices rarely reflect the sector's contemporary social ideals that perceives inclusivity as intertwined with social change (Sánchez Laws, 2015). Such practices may be shaped by different conceptions of inclusion including those by governmental bodies and different staff within the museum, which can become crystallised into social and material structures such as policy documents or habits and norms. Specifically, as reflected in the quantitative focus of museum social media evaluation and research, discussed in the following sections, social media practices of 'inclusivity' seem to embody earlier conceptions of inclusion which reflect a quantitative drive to develop an audience base (Sandell, 1998), as opposed to catalysing social change. Further, a disconnection between social inclusion and social media practices may be due not only to different conceptions of social inclusion in the museum, but also a perception of social media as 'transformative' which can be idealised as being a democratic force and participatory technology.

Thread 2: social media for social inclusion

Social media platforms have often been drawn into opposing public discourses when it comes to considering their potential for social inclusion initiatives and social change, enticing dystopian and utopian speculation regarding their potential

impact. From the beginnings of social media in the early 2000s, there was tentative excitement, controversy, and debate in terms of not only how scholars discussed the potentials of the social web (van Dijck, 2013) but also how cultural heritage institutions could use it in their work (Drotner & Schrøder, 2013). The rise of social media coincided with increasing social missions of museums in the early 2000s which were mandated to broaden their audiences and contribute to social change. Simultaneously, at the turn of the century, museums in several parts of the world were challenged by funding cuts and pressured to prove their social worth to society. In turn, as staff learned about social media and its capabilities, including its potential alignment with their social missions, there were internal and external pushes for social media adoption, which was increasingly discussed in professional communities of practice such as the Museum Computer Network (1967) and the Museums and the Web (1997).

Yet, there has been resounding critique regarding museums' limited use of social media as being mainly focused on 'business' and disagreement regarding its use and benefits in the sector (Baggesen, 2014; Booth et al., 2020). While social media adoption in the museum field is now widespread, the development of digital literacies continues to be imperative (Parry et al., 2018) and institutional investment into these processes, as magnified by the pandemic, is less clear (Frost, 2020; C. Morse et al., 2022). In part, museums' limited diversity of social media use alongside pushes for its continuous adoption and application, is due to a common transformative and dramatic discourse which idealises social media as an easy way to improve access and inclusion (Perry & Beale, 2015, pp. 155–156). This discourse is intertwined with social media's potential as a 'novel' technology to enhance the democratic and participatory nature of the museum and ultimately, its failures to fully fulfil these goals. To understand current practices around social media and envision future ones, it is essential that we unpick this transformative discourse associated with social media for social missions and its impact on museum practices.

Recent scepticism of social media and its failure to live up to its promises in the museum field (Kidd, 2018), is intricately intertwined with the social and organisational context of its use, including museums' perceived social roles. This association with context calls for a consideration of the structures or conditions that surround social media's operation and in turn, how we define and perceive social media. Schlagwein and Hu's (2017) definition, writing from a business information systems perspective, highlights an often overlooked but central aspect of social media. That is, social media is constituted by not only its technical structures and capabilities, but also the context within which it is used: 'social media constitutes internet-based communication and collaboration channels, widely in use since about 2005' and '[f]rom an Information Systems perspective, social media tools and their surrounding organizational and managerial structures constitute "social information systems"' (p. 194).[13]

However, these different components are always in flux which makes the category of social media unstable. Therefore, rather than considering social media as a strict category, social media should be considered as: 'dynamic genres, subject to continuous disruption and uncertainty, owing to their deinstitutionalised and

participatory character, and the shifting roles of producers and recipients in the networks and conversations that make up social media content' (Lomborg, 2011, p. 55). In considering social media use by museums specifically, it is vital to reflect on the impact of organisational dynamics and information infrastructures, while keeping in mind that these components are constantly in flux and interconnected.[14] Not only is the context of social media constantly in flux, but also the format and structure of social media, as suggested by their development and subsequent frequent adaption; from, for example, the blog and wall post focus of MySpace (2003) to the video-oriented platform, TikTok (2016). Significantly, as part of a craft practice, this makes social media a lively 'material' to work with, whose affordances are constantly changing.

Powerful ideas regarding social media's potential for contributing to social change has its roots in utopian political discourse, which include resolute ideas that social media can contribute to democracy by supporting citizenship, empowerment, commonality, transparency and accessibility (Arora, 2012; Papacharissi, 2002). From this perspective, social media would theoretically enable anyone to participate and leverage its affordances, including to speak out and express their views on social and political issues. While society at large saw social media as an opportunity for increased democratisation in the political sense, museums viewed the social web as a way to democratise the historically authoritative nature of their institutions by increasing their reach, diversifying communal heritage narratives, creating symmetrical forms of communication, and enabling new opportunities for participation (Giaccardi, 2012). For museums, participation is often conceptualised as benefiting the individual by cultivating visitor empowerment and skills, as well as having wider social impacts which is further discussed in the next section (Runnel & Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt, 2014). Therefore, the rise of social media at the turn of the century, which coincided with funding cuts and politically mandated social missions, was considered by some, as a cheap and publicly visible way for museums to become more participatory, collaborative and democratic, and in doing so, prove their social worth to funders and society (Axelsson, 2018).

The potential of the social web for transforming the museum institution is often suggested in academic discourse that perceives museums to have changed or as having to change to fit into the networked era, as agile/mobile (Baggesen, 2018), distributed or pervasive (Proctor & Dziekan, 2018), adaptable and on-demand (Wilson-Barnao, 2018), and perhaps most importantly, participatory institutions (Simon, 2010). Along similar lines, social media's transformative potential is reflected by shifts in terms for referring to online visitors which attribute them different levels of agency. For instance, academics have referred to visitors as not only audiences or consumers but also more active interpreters (Stylianou-Lambert, 2010), users or participants (Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt & Runnel, 2018), producers, and prosumers (bringing together production and consumption) (Valtysson & Holdgaard, 2018).[15] These descriptions embody changing perceptions of visitors, their relationship with the museum and the museum's position in society. Specifically, these perspectives conceptualise museums as placed within a diverse digital ecology co-existing with other institutions, non-profits, and users, enabling

'institutionalised' or 'official' heritage narratives to live alongside 'non-official' forms. As a result, there is recognition that visitors construct meaning from different sources and are active agents, exerting potentially more agency depending on the situation and circumstances (Runnel & Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt, 2014).

Due to their networked context, museums are called upon and even held accountable to prove their social worth in terms of their inclusion, diversity, and relevance, propelling several challenges to traditional museum practices and organisational structures. For instance, social media users can demand museums to change their practices to respond to global contexts and contemporary issues. Often museums are involved in this discourse unwittingly; users have frequently used social media to call for object restitution and to express critique regarding the colonial origins of these objects. Such expressions and discourse are evident to anyone who visits the British Museum's social media pages. Social media enables movements such as #MeToo and #Decolonise which both critique institutions and call them to respond (Giannini, 2019). Some examples include activist takeovers and even performances in museum spaces, such as those that took place in the British Museum in response to its sponsorship by the BP oil company. Such acts emphasise that museums must adapt to networked contexts which call for transparency and place pressure on institutions to adhere to standards of inclusion and diversity (Giannini, 2019, p. 108).

To meet these pressures, and address users' changing needs, including social inequalities, scholars have called for museums to restructure organisational infrastructures and alter staff practices. Museums are called to become responsive to meet the changing needs of users (Baggesen, 2018) adapt practices to a fluid cultural environment (Proctor & Dziekan, 2018), become nimble and flexible while building new tools for the social web (Kelly, 2013) and in doing so, reorganise responsibilities to align with the responsiveness of the networked era (Kelly, 2010). Associated with this emphasis on the flexible and responsive role of the museum for the social web, are new terms for the role and practices of staff and curators. For instance, curators are called to be facilitators by leveraging assets to create exhibitions (K. P. Adams, 2018), programmers – emphasising a shift in practice from mediation to co-creation (Proctor & Dziekan, 2018), or to focus on social curation – the building and cultivating of relationships between the users and the museum (Stuedahl, 2018).

Several museums have tried to respond to demands for these changes in ways that speak to social inclusion work. Practices associated with social inclusion work in the museum often share two dimensions: as mentioned above, the first is working with groups who face challenges associated with social exclusion and may be 'hardly reached'. The second, is working together to meet the needs of these individuals and groups through facilitating participation and representation – drawing on cultural resources. For instance, some institutions have used social media to diversify voices and contributions by offering various avenues of participation; museums have experimentally used social media for collaboration, curation, co-design, and interactive design, enabling new ways for users to actively engage and create with the museum. Some examples include formative evaluation

of museum exhibitions (Cameron & Kelly, 2010), using social media as a mode and a medium for exhibition design (Smith & Iversen, 2012), crowdsourcing user generated content such as images or object tags (Ridge, 2013), and using social platforms to enable real change to object labels (SHSMG, 2020), amongst others.

On the other hand, museums have also strived to address social issues by using their social media to advocate and or to support activists. For example, the Museum of Homelessness (UK) actively promotes better equality and social conditions on social media for local people who are facing homelessness in London, including recently, migrants (G. Adams, 2020). The Vagina Museum (UK) is also committed to addressing political issues such as period poverty and advocating for equal access to period products amongst a range of issues, such as protecting sex workers and enabling access to abortions (Williams, 2019). Some museum practitioners have taken a grassroots approach to social media by using it to entice change within the sector regarding organisational dynamics and institutional positions on social and political issues. These are evident through hashtags such as #museumworkersspeak[16] and #museumsrespondtoFerguson[17] (Jennings, 2015). COVID-19 may be further motivating museums' responsiveness to contemporary social issues such as those intertwined with social exclusion, as traditional forms of museum communication and interaction has moved into online spaces (Samaroudi et al., 2020).

One recent example of museums using social media to reach out and work with participants towards social change, suggests how such practices require drawing on the public potential and reach of social media while contending with its limitations and risks. In one recent initiative, the Museum of Indian Arts and Culture (New Mexico) and the Maxwell Museum of Anthropology (New Mexico) created exhibitions to address the protests against the building of the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL). The DAPL protests were a continuation of Native American opposition to the American government's imposition on their rights and land by using social and other forms of digital media. Museum staff contacted users/activists via their public social media posts or private messaging to contribute to the exhibition via crowdsourcing. The generosity of users in contributing photos and media to the exhibition spoke to the activists' mission but also their trust in the museums, and the relationships which were already established by museum staff (Kieffer & Romanek, 2019). According to Kieffer and Romanek (2019) the successful use of social media for supporting Native American perspectives was only possible by leveraging existing relationships, different forms of media, and the institutions' established 'trust-worthy-ness'. This is just one example which suggests that museum staff must approach social media with recognition of its inherent limitations and explore creative ways to reach out to and work with users to challenge issues associated with social exclusion.

However, the intersection between museum social media and social change may be further hampered by recent government commentary on the 'neutrality' of institutions. A 'climate of fear' may be propagated by the UK government's intervention in the recent removal of colonial statues (Rea, 2020). This may be partly why such uses of social media by museums have been the abnormality rather than the

norm. As observed back in 2015, few museums on social media were speaking out on social issues, let alone offering advice (Jennings, 2015). The potential of social media for social missions and sector-wide recognition of the need for institutional change, alongside the development and subsequent changes to the social web, would implicate the need for institutional investment into social media use and active action of staff.

Comparatively, there have been several critiques aimed from within and outside institutions regarding the de-prioritisation of social media and online engagement in comparison to traditional analogue mediums (Byrd-McDevitt, 2019). Coupled with this under-investment are also critiques of museums using social media mainly for marketing or broadcasting their activities rather than aligning social media practices with social goals (Fletcher & Lee, 2012; Malde & Finnis, 2016).[18] These critics suggest that like for-profit companies, museums are implying inclusion through terms such as participation, representation and access for their own institutional gain, where it is in fact, lacking. Instead, museums on social media flatten their promise of participation by framing their communication online as 'one-way' which misaligns with the expectations of users (Kidd, 2011). Similarly, McMillen and Alter (2017), in their research on the experiences of users with disabilities engaging with museums, found that 'participants identified art museum's social media platforms solely as a medium for advertising and to promote an exhibition, not as a method to connect with the museum or include them personally' (p. 121).[19] Thus, museums are perceived as struggling to move away from one-directional communication and marketing.

Consequently, some museum staff are thought to passively rely on social media for its transformative and utopian ideals in enabling the institution to achieve the democratisation of heritage and broader social goals (Walker, 2016; Baggesen, 2014). This can hinder staff's conscious and active investment into social media practices, and internal and external processes of change (Liew et al., 2015; Malde & Finnis, 2016). Despite increasing indication of critical and reflexive discourse around social media in museum and heritage contexts (Bonacchi & Krzyzanska, 2021; Kidd, 2021), and creative projects that explicitly pursue social goals, the common trends in practice discussed above have resulted in scepticism of the promise of the digital. In turn, the participatory potential of social media has been framed as an unattainable myth in museum literature (Kidd, 2016, p. 45). Recently, in their introduction to the publication *Museum Activism*, Janes and Sandell (2019) warn against viewing social media as culture, a suggestion which may be based on the perception of social media as a method of avoiding responsibility for social issues as opposed to a realistic method of addressing them (p. 15).

The critiques associated with current museum social media practices and calls for further reflexivity may be due to the conceptualisation of social media as a novel technology which ironically, becomes something outside of, external or adjunct to museums' socially inclusive practices. In comparison to perceiving social media as finished or 'ideal' technology, the following sections point to how its technical potentials and limits are entangled with the museum organisation. From this

perspective, it is imperative to understand social media and its relation to social inclusion work within context, as underpinned by staff's tug-and-pulls referred to throughout this book as social and technical (socio-technical) negotiations. As suggested throughout this book, social media practices can usefully be perceived as a form of craft, a skilled but also intuitive balancing act: encompassing tug-and-pulls between social media affordances, a practitioner's social inclusion ideals, and perceived user interests/needs.

Thread three: locating social media on the periphery of the socially inclusive museum

Currently, there is a disjuncture between the idealisation of social media as 'transformative' compared to how museums have commonly approached and used social media in their everyday work. This may be due in part, to a common conceptualisation of social media as a novel technology imbued with utopian and participatory ideals and simultaneously, its failures to live up to this standard. As a result of this perception, social media is sometimes positioned as something external or adjunct to museum work and thus, the institution's social role within which museum professionals actively and reflexively work towards social goals. The relegation of social media to the periphery of museum work is revealed, as discussed in the following paragraphs, by its positioning as an 'add-on' or extension, by a common perception of participation on museum social media, and a lack of current literature investigating social inclusion practices of staff in relation to social media. The disconnection between the ethically driven and value-led practices of the museum with social media is also propelled by the corporate underpinnings of social media, and as further discussed in Chapter 2, its embeddedness in the context of museum culture, values, social practices, and the organisation of work.

Persisting today, social inclusion and outreach are at the core of museum responsibilities and are commonly considered the crux of museum relevance (N. Morse, 2014). Conveniently, the social web promised to easily fulfil these responsibilities and specifically, with little staff investment by enhancing the reach of cultural heritage institutions and their potential for engagement (Liew et al., 2015, p. 387). As a result, some suggest that museums fell for an imagined internet, a mythical space, constituted by democratic ideals through which they could *easily* facilitate inclusion and deliver on their social missions (Baggesen, 2014). In turn, sparking the warning that institution's '[u]nquestioned evangelism, hype and un-reflected inclusion of social media could end up having the reverse effect, simply paying lip service to the social obligations of the museum' (Baggesen, 2014, p. 128).

Ironically, due to this idealism, social media work tends to operate on the periphery of museum practices and its social inclusion role. This is evident by calls for institutions to invest in strategic planning, digital growth, and in particular, explore the connection between value-led practices and digital media (Malde & Finnis, 2016; Malde & Kennedy, 2018). Such calls, insinuate that being led by values is a weak spot in social media practices and is continuously disconnected

from museum work. As suggested by Malde and Finnis (2016) who are part of an impactful organisation – Culture24,[20] online communications tend to be siloed in museum practices and focuses more on its potential value for institutional promotion as opposed to its potential value for the public (p. 10). This segregation of social media has resulted in calls for staff to exert care and reflexivity in investigating the connection between their social role and digital or in this case, social media practices (Kidd, 2016; Russo & Peacock, 2009). Further, additional suggestions aimed at breaking the siloed nature of social media work, includes encouraging the dispersion of its responsibilities across the institution as opposed to its maintenance by key individuals and in turn, a perception of social media as constitutive of the museum as opposed to an add-on or extension (Parry et al., 2018).

The location of social media as on the periphery of the museum's social role is also marked by a common conflation in museum literature of the quantification of users' engagement online with participation, and in turn, advancing the institution's social role. 'Interaction' and in particular, 'participation' is often deemed as unquestionable good in the cultural heritage sector and as having the potential to contribute to the institution's social role. These two terms are frequently used in relation to the web from both a media and cultural heritage perspective, which often parallel and intersect in meaning and use: interaction and participation are associated with, to different extents, democratisation. As such, with the incorporation of social media into everyday life and society at large, researchers and professionals alike have and continue to debate what this means for the inclusion of a range of voices and perspectives which could have significant implications for museums' social roles. Participation, in a museum context, is closely tied to two dimensions: sharing power between staff and participants, and within a social media context, publicly visible user action and communication, signifying symmetrical communication.

For instance, regarding power sharing, a participatory model created by media theorist Carpentier (2011), first and foremost defines participation as based on the equalisation of power between actors. In comparison, they define interaction as being sparked by media, encompassing a process of meaning making and interpretation (p. 519). Jensen (1998) another media scholar, in a similar vein, defines interaction as the extent that a user can impact the content or form of the media communicated (p. 201). However, Carpentier's (2016) model acknowledges that interaction to some extent can slip into minimal participation and eventually lead to greater or 'maximal' forms of participation where power is shared or negotiated. This understanding is reflected in museological practice and frames where participatory initiatives and their success are often based on the extent of power sharing between participants and staff. This includes the 'participatory ladder' stemming from urban planning (Arnstein, 1969) within which in museology, greater choice on the part of participants is perceived to be most impactful and democratic (critiqued by N. Morse, 2020).

Yet, on the web, participation as power sharing and the destabilisation of authority takes on a similar but different twist. Social media platforms are idealised in part, because they theoretically allow anyone to speak out and interact with cultural

heritage and the museum – potentially impacting how cultural heritage is valued and perceived by the museum and users (Giannini, 2019). As a result, museum practitioner and scholar Wong (2015), suggests that on the web, participation and engagement in the cultural heritage sector are often biased by a definition of publicness in the form of communication or interaction. In turn, the opportunities social media affords in terms of liking, commenting, and sharing can be conflated with community building – leading institutions to prioritise high quantities of public action and communication (Wong, 2015). According to Wong (2015), this is a process of confusing methods with goals. Such an assumption of participation as comments, likes, and shares and its synonymity with social goals such as 'building communities' is implied by studies that focus on publicly visible (in)action of users and museums (Suzić et al., 2016). Further affirming this perspective, cultural heritage staff have expressed fear regarding a lack of public contributions which can inhibit their institution's use of social media (Liew et al., 2018).

The assumption of participation as public communication and action online is also reflected in research which analyses museums' social media posts in relation to the resulting user actions to synthesise suggestions for museum best practices. These studies point to connections between the content posted by the museum, its genre or frame (type), length, hashtag or no hashtag, image or no image and the correlated number of user likes, shares, and comments (Courtin et al., 2015; Furini et al., 2018). Within these studies, the value is placed on quantification of the users' actions of sharing, liking, and commenting. Further, researchers exploring the reasons behind public participation or lack of on museum social media also suggest that tone and museum responsiveness impacts the resulting public response of users (Antón et al., 2018). Additional suggestions of best practice for GLAMs (Galleries, Libraries, Archives, Museums) on social media is based on the correlation between the frequency of tweets and the number of users who follow institutions (Mon & Lee, 2015).

However, these analyses and suggestions, although useful, assume that more public action is inherently 'better' and automatically contributes to the museum's social role and initiatives. A public biased form of participation is potentially propelled by the idealisation of museum posts/content as successful if 'going viral' (Lessard et al., 2017). A key example referred to in the sector is the Absolute unit Twitter post of the Museum of English Rural Life (MERL) (UK) although 'virality' was not the MERL's priority (Aldridge, 2023). Such a perspective reflects the quantitative and public bias aspect of social media evaluation rather than a critical investigation of the implementation of social agendas. Recently, Arias' (2020) research on the Manchester Art Gallery's (UK) social media intervention acts as a warning for this pursuit of participation as public communication: despite wanting to cultivate conversations online, the gallery's intervention resulted in information being shared asymmetrically across actors cultivating negative and accusatory discourse online.

An emphasis on public participation and its quantification, is also implicated in the testimonies of museum professionals and calls since the 2010s to diversify the metrics of social media engagement, with academics reiterating that the 'count' does not reflect user experiences and or intended outcomes (Chan, 2008; Eid,

Compared to my critique of a tendency within the museum sector to conflate participation in the form of public communication with the museum's social role, several researchers have investigated the relation between social media and social initiatives in meaningful ways through quantitative or mixed methods approaches. For instance, Bonacchi and Krzyzanska (2021) through both quantitative and qualitative methods provide insight into the heritage processes involved in acts of othering and tribalism that can inform museum practices. Along similar lines, several scholars have gone beyond idealisations of social media for social missions to investigate its potentials for museum practices through a variety of methods both reflexively and critically (Giaccardi, 2012; Kidd, 2018; Russo, 2011). Previous literature has explicitly investigated social media in relation to the social role of the museum, referring to 'inclusion' through museum social media as cultivating interested communities (Kidd, 2011), as incorporating the user's content and contributions into the museum's work through reshares and commenting (Baker, 2017), and finally, by addressing the needs/interests of marginalised groups (Kieffer & Romanek, 2019; McMillen & Alter, 2017). While these references potentially open up opportunities for social inclusion work, few works explicitly focus on reaching out to and working with users who may experience social exclusion to pursue the intersection between participation and social change (McMillen & Alter, 2017).

The disconnection between social media and a socially inclusive museum practice is reiterated by the lack of museum literature investigating the (dis)connections between social media and social inclusion work, and recent calls for attention to be paid to targeting users who may be in want of participation through social media (Hartley, 2015; Walker, 2016).[22] Similarly, others have recognised a disconnection between museum digital practices and associated ideas of participation, engagement, and accessibility with a direct connection to institutional missions of social change (Eid, 2019). This disconnect is also evident in several publications on museum social media. For instance, discourse on countering social issues and enabling social change is relatively absent from prominent handbooks in the sector that address social media.[23]

Therefore, to align social media practices with the socially inclusive role of the museum, it appears from the discussion above that practitioners must actively negotiate the commercial underpinnings of the social web: moving beyond an idealisation of social media to reach out to and work with users to challenge issues of social exclusion. However, other aspects of social media may shape its potential for social inclusion and its integration into museum practice. This includes, as suggested by the definition of social media, and further discussed in Chapter 2, the intersection between museum structures including the institution's imperatives, culture, and organisation, with social media, including the platforms' commercial underpinnings, its co-opting of data, ecological nature, and ethical implications. Together, navigating the intersection of these structures to enact social media as part of a socially inclusive museum practice requires active action and digital literacies that go beyond 'technicalities', to encompass social and technical (socio-technical) negotiations.

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Therefore, to align social media practices with the socially inclusive role of the museum, it appears from the discussion above that practitioners must actively negotiate the commercial underpinnings of the social web: moving beyond an idealisation of social media to reach out to and work with users to challenge issues of social exclusion. However, other aspects of social media may shape its potential for social inclusion and its integration into museum practice. This includes, as suggested by the definition of social media, and further discussed in Chapter 2, the intersection between museum structures including the institution's imperatives, culture, and organisation, with social media, including the platforms' commercial underpinnings, its co-opting of data, ecological nature, and ethical implications. Together, navigating the intersection of these structures to enact social media as part of a socially inclusive museum practice requires active action and digital literacies that go beyond 'technicalities', to encompass social and technical (socio-technical) negotiations.

Responding to the social media paradox: a note on the structure of this book

In this chapter, I traced a gap between the ideals and transformative discourse associated with social media in theory, compared to its use or lack of, for social inclusion work in museum practice. Social media tends to be approached as a novel technology, contributing to this gap, and therefore, sparse attention has been paid to its realistic potential for supporting museums' social inclusion work. This disconnection between the museum's social role and social media practices is potentially perpetuated by the interplay between the social and technical structures of the museum organisation and social media platforms. As such, in the following chapter, I suggest the importance of considering social media for social inclusion work within museum contexts. I weave together common trends in cultural heritage literature to create a foundation for understanding and further investigating social media and its connections to social inclusion work as underpinned by socio-technical processes which become visible as 'negotiations' or 'tug-and-pulls'. I then summarise the research methods and materials underpinning this book which are necessarily messy – cutting across social platforms, different museums, community projects and groups, and my own positioning as researcher, emerging practitioner, critical friend, and colleague.

In the following chapters, I draw together my observations from the main case study, the mini case studies, and interviews with social media professionals across Scotland to discuss museum practitioners' social media practices and its relation to social inclusion work in institutional contexts. This includes Glasgow Museums staff's feelings of failure/inadequacy associated with participating in social media (Chapter 3). These feelings and associated practices reveal challenging institutional infrastructures that hinder staff's ability to participate in meaningful socio-technical negotiations. Vice versa, these feelings and practices also hint at alternative institutional infrastructures for supporting social media practices at Glasgow Museums and beyond.

Propelled by the context of the pandemic, the Open Museum team and staff from the international mini case studies (the Myseum, the National Museum of the American Indian, and an anonymous migration museum) reveal how they 'translate' the ideals and norms of their social inclusion work to the context of social media: this includes the creation of safe spaces, the ability to reach 'hardly-reached' participants, cultivate connections through sensory experiences, and finally, cater to participants' interests and needs (Chapters 4 and 5). Staff from the mini case studies further elaborate on the importance of constantly listening to users and social contexts to iteratively adapt their practices which underpins staff's feelings of sincerity – a process I frame as 'tinkering' (Chapter 6).

Together these two processes (translation and tinkering) and their absence, suggest the potential of tug-and-pulls for enabling social inclusion work when underpinned by certain skills, knowledge, and institutional support. I conclude by drawing the observed processes together, to suggest the usefulness of understanding social media for social inclusion work as a form of 'craft' and further elaborate on how this mindset can inform future museum practice and research (Chapter 7).

Notes

1 Throughout this book 'needs' is a short-handed way to refer to a variety of interests, needs, and concerns of users associated with inclusion. In the following chapters this encompasses: overcoming social isolation, challenging misrepresentations, speaking out against injustices including xenophobia/racism, and enabling understanding across differences.
2 While not a perfect metaphor, social media is a network, perhaps even a 'fabric' let's say of social and technical dimensions.
3 A transition from an 'old' museology to a 'new' museology embodies a philosophical shift across the sector from a focus on the museum institution and its collections, to an expanded concern for the relationships between the museum, society, and surrounding communities (McCall & Gray, 2014).
4 These include: Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, Riverside Museum, Gallery of Modern Art, The People's Palace, Open Museum, Provand's Lordship, Glasgow Museums' Resource Centre, Kelvin Hall, Scotland Street School Museum, St. Mungo Museum of Religious Art and Life, and The Burrell Collection.
5 As explained in Chapter 2, this research while based at the Open Museum also followed the practices of other Glasgow Museums' staff who contributed to and participated in the institution's social media.
6 'Hardly reached' is a term used by Open Museum staff to refer to groups and individuals who have faced cultural and social exclusion, which places responsibility on social/cultural structures and institutions rather than these individuals and groups.
7 While referred to throughout this book and during the fieldwork as the Myseum, the museum has recently re-branded to the Museum of Toronto: https://www.museumoftoronto.com/collection/press-releases-and-media/2024-04-02/
8 This mini case study is referred to descriptively as a 'migration museum' to adhere to the interviewee's wish to remain anonymous.
9 A professional membership organisation which advocates for the social impact that museums can have.
10 DCMS is branch of the UK government, founded in 2007 to govern culture, media, and sport.
11 Copyright ©2019 From The social role of museums: From social inclusion to health and wellbeing by Morse, N., in *Connecting Museums* edited by O'Neill, M., Hooper, G. Reproduced by permission of Taylor and Francis Group, LLC, a division of Informa plc.
12 Museums Galleries Scotland (MGS), previously the Scottish Museums Council is an independent charity and the National Development Body for 448 museums and galleries (MGS, 2023).
13 For further insight into 'Social information systems' see also Germonprez et al. (2011) and Schlagwein et al. (2011).
14 I use the definition of social media presented here (dynamic channels/networks, in part, constituted by contextually specific socio-technical structures) to explore social media's relation to museums' social inclusion work. However, as hinted through the findings in this book and other research, defining social media as a 'space' with its own conventions and dynamics of power would provide another insightful avenue for further investigating its implications for processes of social inclusion and exclusion (Giannini, 2019).
15 In this book I use the terms 'users' and 'participants' interchangeably, placing emphasis on their agency in using both the museum and social web. These shifts in terminology reflects the 'transformative' potentials of social media for the museum in discourse. However, while touched upon later in this book in relation to how the case studies target certain audience groups, more research on how online 'publics' are conceptualised by cultural heritage institutions would enable broader understanding of both user experiences and processes of inclusion and exclusion.
16 Museum workers speak (on 'X', previously Twitter as @Museumworkers) are an activist collective advocating for better working conditions, diversity, and inclusion in the museum workforce: https://rb.gy/n57o4

17 #MuseumsRespondToFerguson was a social media conversation on race and racism and the role of museums in challenging social injustices sparked by the murder of an unarmed African American teenager, Michael Brown by a police officer in Ferguson, MO, US in 2014: https://rb.gy/kp3jf
18 See also critiques from: Kidd (2011); McMillen and Alter (2017).
19 Social media, social inclusion, and museum disability access by McMillen & Alter. *Museums & Social Issues*, 12(2), Taylor & Francis, reprinted by permission of the publisher (Taylor & Francis Ltd, http://www.tandfonline.com).
20 Culture24 is an independent charity that supports arts and heritage organisations to implement institutional changes, particularly associated with digital technologies.
21 Copyright ©2013 *Post Critical Museology: Theory and Practice in the Art Museum* by Dewdney, A., Dibosa, D., & Walsh, V. Reproduced by permission of Taylor and Francis Group, LLC, a division of Informa plc.
22 According to these authors this encompasses users who experience marginalisation and who could benefit from participation.
23 E.g., there is a noticeable absence of references to using these platforms for social change in recent handbooks: Drotner et al.'s (2018) *The Routledge Handbook of Museums, Media and Communication*, Decker's (2015) *Engagement and Access: Innovative Approaches for Museums* but have made appearances in recent books such as Giannini and Bowen's (2019) *Museums and Digital Culture: New Perspectives and Research*, and a few chapters in Janes and Sandell's (2019) *Museum Activism*.

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2 Museum social media as socio-technical negotiations

To use social media as a part of museum practices and particularly, social inclusion work, staff must participate in social and technical negotiations. These are ongoing tug-and-pulls between social and technical structures[1] (socio-technical processes) such as the values, habits, and norms of staff, the interests/needs of users, the resources and culture of museums, and the potentials/limits of social media platforms. Socio-technical process is a term often used in human computer interaction and infrastructure studies to point to the active actions and negotiations of designers, programmers, or staff who are creating things, such as new infrastructures (Bolton & Foxon, 2015), programmes and objects (Vinck & Jeantet, 1995), and or ways to engage users (Peacock et al., 2018). Therefore, positioning social media as underpinned by socio-technical processes allows us to understand staff practices and its intersection with not only the capabilities and limits of technology but also with the context of the museum, while attributing staff agency.

As I will discuss in the following sections, several scholars have previously investigated museum social media and identified several barriers that museum staff encounter to its general adoption and use. These barriers encompass an understanding that social media penetrates social and cultural layers of museums and, as such, like other forms of digital media, build on and intersect with other existing material, technical, and social structures. That is, these barriers to staff practices point to the importance of understanding social media work as impacted by different institutional social norms, rules, and values, and the affordances of social media. For instance, the importance of using multiple platforms to engage and work with users who are challenged by issues of social exclusion was recently demonstrated by the de Young Museum in San Francisco (US) while collaborating with community groups. Together, they developed an exhibition titled *Contemporary Muslim Fashions* (Museum Computer Network [MCN], 2019). Importantly, in collaboration with community groups the museum aimed to challenge misinformation and Islamophobia, drawing on social media platforms to educate the public. However, this process also revealed the importance of creating a safe online space for participants and collaborators by trialling private community social media pages.

As such, I further find an 'infrastructural lens' useful for understanding the research discussed in this book, by drawing attention to the relations between different social and technical structures (such as the publicness/privateness of social

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platforms) that intersect and emerge with staff's social media use and social inclusion work. Infrastructures can bring to mind large scale, and somewhat static systems such as railways, telephone lines, or water/sewage systems. Indeed, infrastructures are commonly described as assemblages that enable action and everyday work to take place, typically supporting the movement of things such as information (Marttila & Botero, 2017, p. 103). However, infrastructures can also exist on smaller scales, and as opposed to being static, they can also be adapted, developed, or created through everyday practices (Erickson & Sawyer, 2019).

Infrastructures are difficult to define and capture, however, several scholars have tried to describe their attributes. Star and Ruhleder (1996) have defined eight key facets of infrastructures. Two attributes are particularly significant for this book: the first is that infrastructures are not only material or technical but are also connected to and are entangled with social dimensions such as conventions of practice and social organisation and second, that infrastructures are in flux and can be adapted, changed, or built. For instance, infrastructures are considered to be 'relative'; they become relevant in their use or practice and become particularly visible upon breakdown or due to malfunctioning (Star & Ruhleder, 1996). Due to their invisibility in sustaining everyday work, infrastructures are constituted by and simultaneously sustain aspects of social order, such as everyday practices, rules, or norms (Sims, 2009). As Larkin (2013) describes, infrastructures, including those that sustain the museum, are 'poetic', meaning they stand for more than themselves; they are engrained with values, biases, and imperatives, which are constituted by and simultaneously shape future practices.

A socio-technical study of museum infrastructures enables us to understand staff's social media practices and its relation to social inclusion work at multiple levels. There is some plasticity to infrastructures, actors can reshape and reframe the functioning of infrastructures to a certain extent, but there is also agency in infrastructures themselves. For instance, inherent in social media sites are challenges such as echo chambers[2] which cannot be accounted for only at a micro level. Moreover, while some infrastructures are susceptible to change even being created through everyday practices, others are more static, evidenced by the concept of an 'installed base'. This is a concept frequently used in infrastructure studies to parse out how pre-existing processes, resources, people etc. hinder institutional change (Aanestad et al., 2017; Star, 1999). Specifically, social dimensions such as values, staff roles and norms of practice which in part, constitute an installed base, can be the most difficult to overcome and continuously shape future practices (Edwards et al., 2009). The concept of infrastructures has thus, a certain ambiguity and duality: they can be in flux and adaptable constituted by a wide range of possible elements and structures to achieve a variety of goals *or* stagnant/stubborn to change.

As opposed to considering infrastructures as macro and relatively stable structures, this book takes inspiration from studies that focus on workplace practices which highlight staff processes of working within the shaping, complementary, and contradictory aspects of institutional infrastructures (Bietz et al., 2010; Vertesi, 2014). From this analytical perspective, infrastructures can emerge

in practice through the drawing together and negotiation of social and technical structures or, in other words, as socio-technical processes to pursue specific goals, such as social inclusion initiatives.

In the following sections, I briefly discuss some of the social and technical dimensions of museums that are potentially cultivating disconnections between social media and the social inclusion work of the museum. I have grouped these under three main themes: (1) the practices, norms, and culture of museum organisations; (2) the unequal and unsafe terrain of social media; and (3) digital literacies, which is followed by a brief note on the materials and methods underpinning this book.

The practices, norms, and culture of museum organisations

In museums, barriers to social media use broadly, are connected to the organisation of staff responsibilities, available resources, but also 'traditional' museum culture. Traditional museum culture refers to institutional authority, an aversion to risk, hierarchal communication, and organisational neutrality which historically has underpinned the museum institution. This culture has created foundational institutional legacies that continue to haunt staff practices. For instance, researchers have identified barriers to social media work as a fear of losing institutional authority and respect on the web, fears regarding a lack of user response and interaction or alternatively, publicly shared negative reactions or feedback (Liew et al., 2015, 2018; Walker, 2016). The associated risks and barriers to using social media stem not only from the cultural heritage institution but also from broader governing bodies such as city councils (Liew et al., 2018). Due to hierarchal networks which often characterise museums, museums respond to uncertainty by increasing control, central decision making, and planning (Tan, 2013). As a result, organisational control might increase in the unpredictable context of the social web limiting staff practices.

Institutional restrictions may be particularly challenging due to social media being a 'contested space' in which users can speak out against museum practices, enabling a sense of risk in staff's use of social media (Giannini, 2019). The institutional culture of museums may inhibit social media use, especially when it calls for museums to be relevant to contemporary social issues. For example, in a series of seminars held by the Challenging History Network in the UK, museum practitioners and academics identified a series of obstacles staff faced in facilitating engagement with and interpreting challenging heritage (Kidd, 2009). These barriers included, but were not limited to, the absence of communication, training, evidence to inform practice, the presence of embarrassment or discomfort and significantly, 'museum culture' (Kidd, 2009, p. 4). Part of museum culture implies strict timescales and an aversion to risk, which could lead to staff feeling unable to take risks and or push institutional change (Kidd, 2014, p. 6). One aspect of museum culture and this 'aversion to risk' could include the avoidance of social issues and or the maintenance of a certain neutrality both in-venue and online. This

is evident by frequent museum practices of censoring or removing political statements from exhibits and communications.

Such aversion to risk was recently exemplified by the US National Archives which blurred political signs in a photograph of an annual Women's March, an act that was widely critiqued on social media (BBC, 2020). While audiences in this case held the National Archives accountable and called it out for its false neutrality, this pressure could restrict museums from being critical of governing bodies. It is evident from this example of the National Archives that cultural heritage institutions may still be hindered by the perception that they are neutral institutions and to remain as such, they may feel compelled to avoid enabling engagement around topics that go against dominant narratives perhaps especially on public social platforms (Spruce & Leaf, 2017). Such topics could include the lived experiences of people who are challenged by social exclusion and associated social issues. This example highlights how organisational dynamics including an aversion to risk and being 'political' shape museums' use of social media.

The potential of social media for social inclusion initiatives is in part, also impacted by the organisation of responsibilities or where social media sits in the institution and who can contribute. For instance, if social media is relegated or 'siloed' to the marketing department, there may be less chance of its use and the perspectives it represents being diversified (Wong, 2012). Moreover, there is increasing recognition that the museum workforce must be diversified if there should be any hope of diversifying the stories it tells (Khadraoui, 2019). On the other hand, social media is highly valued for marketing which relates to the commercialised context of social media platforms and the often-limited resources of museums, making it challenging to reappropriate these value-laden platforms for staff's social intentions. This can lead to a focus on social media for bringing in visitors to the analogue institution, prioritising social media for publicity, rather than a focus on engaging with online users and associated methods of evaluation. As discussed in Chapter 1, museum staff are often obligated to report to upper management and stakeholders, different evaluative indicators, which are frequently quantitative. For instance, online this can include an institution's number of followers, likes shares etc., which prioritises the 'count' and can make the value of social media for user experiences and engagement, and in turn museum social missions – ambiguous.

Finally, digital and social media, despite often being heralded for their perceived ability to solve several challenges faced by museums (Axelsson, 2018, p. 68), can simultaneously be viewed as illegitimate or not as good, specifically for engaging with 'authentic' collection objects (Drotner et al., 2018a). Museum objects are often used as social connectors within the frame of inclusion initiatives (Simon, 2010); objects can enable shared expression and the formation of affiliative identities, affirm identity and perhaps even, enable an understanding across differences (Sandell, 2007; Silverman, 2010). The role of objects for enabling representation and catalysing relationships tends to be associated with its effective potential for engendering empathy or the meaning making of users. For instance, for visitors to

the Anne Frank House (Netherlands) and the St. Mungo Museum of Religious Art and Life (Scotland), the multisensory context of the museum and the viewing of the 'real thing' in-person had an impact on visitors' ability to make connections between self and others (Sandell, 2007).

However, what counts as a museum object online, in terms of its ability to engender similar emotional responses through participation and representation, might be destabilised. As scholars point out, non-institutionalised images and objects can perform in similar ways to those of the museum (Dallas, 2018). Thus, a traditional prioritisation of 'in-person' engagement with objects may be another contributing factor to why social media and digital more broadly is often under-invested in, and frequently an add-on to museum practices.[3] Yet today, there is resounding recognition of the potential of digital objects and the materiality of digital itself, including its own 'authenticity' as made evident by a Museum and Society issue on this topic (Arvanitis & Zuanni, 2021) and thus, the sector appears to be progressing beyond this material/immaterial dichotomy (Jones, 2010).

The unequal and unsafe terrain of social media

Apart from institutional barriers to staff use, social networking platforms themselves limit how inclusive practices can be enacted (if at all) and participatory projects developed. Social media platforms can contradict museum ethics due to paralleling inequalities offline, the potentially unsafe nature of these platforms, and how they intersect with issues of trust. For some, platforms such as Facebook, inherently contradict the social role of museums by being about popularity, entertainment, and commercialisation, while also being exclusive and propagating falsehoods (Edson, 2020). Contrary to the initial optimism and utopian narratives of the web, real-life socioeconomic divisions are paralleled online, muddying the original excitement that imbued Web 2.0 with democratisation and social imperatives (Taylor & Gibson, 2017). Such divisions are due not only to differential access to technology but also digital literacies (Helsper, 2017). Social media specialises in transporting people who share similar ideas and interests to envisioned environments, creating communities (Chayko, 2014). However, individuals who have access to the internet and the necessary tech are not guaranteed to connect with a social group. The ability to connect with like-minded people, might rely on digital literacies which are culturally shaped (Dekker & Engbersen, 2014).

The diverse digital literacies required for engaging online result in an unequal terrain for digital interaction on social media platforms. Supporting this idea, it was recently found that users in the UK who could benefit the most from digital engagement with museums, such as the elderly and individuals with physical disabilities, had decreasing participation with arts and culture online (Mihelj et al., 2019). One possible explanation is due to differences in digital literacies; however, it may also relate to a historically rooted perception of arts and culture as 'not for me' (Mihelj et al., 2019). This is a feeling that develops over time due to years of barriers and inaccessibility, issues which continue to persist in arts and cultural institutions, resulting in museums that are hard to reach (Thain-Gray &

Patrick, 2018). On the other hand, digital inequality is also a relative, complex, multi-dimensional concept, and users may approach the internet with a similar feeling of 'not for me' (Helsper, 2017). While digital literacies, amongst other factors, impact users' ability to use and experience social media, institutions similarly struggle but with another set of literacies. These literacies as discussed further in the following section, encompass understanding the limitations and unequal terrain of social platforms. For instance, this includes understanding the bias created by algorithms, the commercial underpinnings of platforms, and interaction norms, and how, within this context staff can align the use of social media with social missions.

Due to the potentials and limits of social media, they can act as a double-edged sword when it comes to advancing social change. Some of the early dystopic discourses surrounding the social web emphasised its potential negative impacts on users relating to sociality, truth, privacy, and control (Lomborg, 2017). Such fears were highlighted by scholars as early as the 1990s (Kling, 1996), but continue to persist today based on real negative potentials that users and institutions must negotiate, subvert and/or justify. Specifically, anxieties developed around the idea of the isolated social media user and potential user abuse due to the anonymity that the social web could provide (Wong, 2015). Such anonymity and the potential for connecting with like-minded people can advance social agendas. However, on the social web, individuals and communities challenged by marginalisation can also be the targets of abuse and racism. The structures and context of both the larger web (McIlwain, 2017) and social media (Daniels, 2012) also impact how race and identity are played out, sometimes in 'disturbing' and harmful ways (Daniels, 2012, p. 702). This calls for further consideration of how, the web, through its value laden structures, produces race and creates unequal systems (McIlwain, 2017, p. 1073). Moreover, in the ecological context of the web, heritage narratives, even those with the best intentions, are at risk of being re-framed, re-interpreted, and even sensationalised in harmful ways (Bonacchi & Krzyzanska, 2021). Therefore, social media can also be an unsafe and unequal terrain, where users may be negatively impacted by others and by the mechanisms that constitute and underpin it.

In terms of trust and control, scholars and professionals alike worry that social media is leading to the loss of the professional and lament the rise of the amateur, which is often legitimised through accusations of manipulation, a lack of authenticity, and falsehoods (Crilley & Gillespie, 2019; Lomborg, 2017). Significantly, fear regarding a lack of trust[4] and the authenticity of professionals is connected to the web's 'convergent' culture which has empowered users to mash-up content and become self-taught experts, blurring the line between professionals and users, producers and consumers, and memory institutions and the web (Jenkins, 2006). While this blurring can provide opportunities for creativity and social expression, there is also a fear amongst institutions and individuals regarding the loss of control over content and its de-contextualisation or even 'weaponization' (Arkwork Cost Action, 2021). This includes losing control of how an individual or group's heritage, memory, identity, and data is represented which can have negative implications for users beyond what is typically assumed, such as ads that target vulnerable

individuals (Edson, 2020), tribalism, and the formation of boundaries between 'us' and 'others' (Bonacchi & Krzyzanska, 2021).

Digital literacies

Despite the empowering and disempowering potentials of the social web, research has also revealed that many museum staff still lack digital strategies (Walker, 2016). Moreover, they struggle to move beyond utopian discourse associated with the social web to approach social media critically, balancing its potentials and limits in ethical ways (Walker, 2016). One perspective suggests that museum digital literacies,

> involves the learning of both the format and the form...here we mean "form" to be the style and approach to content that will be delivered through a medium, and "format" to be the container that is used for that delivery.
>
> (Pavement, 2018, p. 42)[5]

These factors, 'form' and 'format', point out that understanding the structures of the web and social media spaces requires digital competencies, skills and social understanding that institutions struggle with, especially since these competencies are constantly in flux, requiring frequent adaptation (Stassin, 2015). For staff to develop an understanding of social media's form and format, researchers advocate for understanding user engagement in online spaces, such as the resulting gratification of users engaging with cultural heritage (Ntamkarelou et al., 2017) and their memory practices (Tan, 2013). These authors suggest that this focus could provide museums with valuable insights to inform how they use social media to engage users. Attention has recently been increasing in this area, providing unique insights into the use of social media by visitors in relation to memory institutions (Bakogianni, 2021; Budge & Burness, 2018). For instance, Weilenmann et al. (2013) revealed how users create narratives of their museum visits through Instagram posts and Budge (2017) drew attention to the communication of visitor experiences through museum objects on Instagram. Bakogianni (2023) recently provided insight into how users think and feel in response to museums posting online about social issues.

However, as suggested by the definition of social media posed in Chapter 1, and the perspective I take in this book, social media should be understood in relation to its surrounding organisational context and practices. From this perspective, digital literacy is not only about understanding the form and format of social media, but also in the context of museum practice, the relation between the form, format, and museum's social goals, culture, and resources. While a range of opportunities for inclusive initiatives and social change could be supported by the affordances of social media, few studies focus on staff practices of inclusion in situ in conjunction with everyday social media engagement, with few exceptions (Hartley, 2015; Walker, 2016). As described in *The Routledge Handbook of Museums, Media and Communication*, the above analysis exposes a '…research paradox between an

unquestioned focus on media in museum practices versus an equally unquestioned marginalisation of media as museum practices' (Drotner et al., 2018b, p. 173).[6] Through a grounded perspective that observes socio-technical processes, this book acts as a step away from an idealisation of social media which becomes external to museum practice, to view social media as an imperfect but ongoing practice grounded in institutional contexts.

In the following chapters, through first-hand observations of museum practices, I begin to suggest that staff's use of social media can usefully be understood as a form of craft. Craft positions social media a skilled but also intuitive balancing act encompassing multiple tug-and-pulls (socio-technical negotiations) that reflect and builds staff knowledge of social media. In this book, socio-technical processes make visible certain skills, including being mindful, experimental, and listening, that are necessary for staff to connect social media practices to social inclusion work.

A note on research methods and materials

To study museum social media through an infrastructural lens and as underpinned by socio-technical processes, the research used in this book draws on museum staff practices contextually situated. In doing so, it highlights some of the structures, conditions, and importantly, processes that support and or hinder staff's adaption of social media for social inclusion work. To fully explore the 'how' of a social media practice for social inclusion several methods were essential. This included a *case study* of Glasgow Museums' outreach institution: the Open Museum, which encompassed *practice research* and additional qualitative methods associated with a *social media ethnography*. This main case study is nuanced and grounded by the analysis of three international mini case studies and six interviews with eight social media professionals based in cultural heritage institutions across Scotland. These combined approaches are discussed in the following sections including an overview of the different types of data collected and the processes of data collection and analysis.

Before proceeding, it is important to note both the focus and limitations of the research underpinning this book. While attention is placed on staff practices, the book does not examine the ways in which social media is used by staff outside of their professional identities, including their attitudes and approaches to social media platforms in different contexts which could ultimately influence and impact how they practice social media in the museum. This influence and correlation would be a compelling avenue for future research. Further, the research that underpins this book does not focus explicitly on how social platforms exert agency on the inclusive practices of museum staff but rather on the approaches, concerns, and strategies of museum staff as they draw on and navigate social media in their everyday work.

The main case study: Glasgow Museums' Open Museum

The main case study I draw on in this book is the Open Museum (OM) which is the outreach branch of one of the UK's largest museum services, Glasgow Museums

(GM) which encompasses 11 museums and galleries. GM is run by a charitable organisation at arms-length to Glasgow City Council, called Glasgow Life who oversees the city's arts, culture, and sports (registered as a charity in 2007). Additional background information and social context of these institutions are provided in Chapters 3 and 4. I chose to research GM because they are known for their accessibility measures and ongoing pursuits of social inclusivity and representation (O'Neill, 2007), and because they are a partner institution of the EU training network which I am a part of: 'POEM' or 'Participatory Memory Practices'.[7]

As a result of the contrasting inequalities and divisions that persist in the city of Glasgow,[8] GM have strived to develop an increasingly meaningful social role, which today, is still emphasised by their mission under Glasgow Life. In the early days of the museums, Honeyman, Director of Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum (often considered to be the flagship of GM) from 1939 to 1954, instituted a range of public engagement activities which they argued was an attempt to welcome all Glasgow's publics (Honeyman, 1971). From their perspective, Kelvingrove Museum was obligated to ensure accessibility to and appreciation of art, particularly for those who found art to be confusing and complex (Honeyman, 1971, p. 57). This inclusive ethos also coincided with an early social agenda: according to a subsequent director of Glasgow Museums, Mark O'Neill (2006), GM has long had an objective to continue progressing its role in relation to social change (p. 33). Through several capital projects, the Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum and the ten other GM institutions have developed common social goals and associated structures which increasingly move beyond achieving visitor access to actively challenge issues of social exclusion.

The OM especially, is characterised by its participatory activities with a wide range of Glaswegian communities. It started as a pilot project in 1990 and persists today as a distributed museum or a museum without walls, meaning that it brings museum collections to communities that could or would not typically visit GM sites (The Incluseum, 2015). The staff at the OM are recognised as spearheading museum practices that are oriented towards social change and social inclusion initiatives (Dodd et al., 2002). While the OM staff's work often takes place out in communities, their office spaces is located at Glasgow Museums Resource Centre, a hub for GM' collections and engagement.

My placement with the OM took place over approximately one year (from September 2019 to September 2020), with different projects and interventions happening with and around social media over this time. In March 2020 the pandemic restrictions came into place, which disrupted practices at the OM and broader GM and shaped their approach to digital practices, providing further insight into its potential to support social inclusion work. In taking a case study approach, I drew on multiple sources of evidence and considered the 'how' of a social media practice for social inclusion work from multiple angles (Yin, 2003), including the perspective of staff across GM institutions who contribute to social media (mainly the Digital Media team and the Learning and Access staff) but also from the perspective of OM staff and members of the public/community groups who participated in their outreach work. During my

one-year placement with the OM, I employed practice research (Goldkuhl, 2012) and additional qualitative methods encompassed by a social media ethnography (Postill & Pink, 2012). Practice research involved supporting OM staff in their use of social media, having discussions about potential content, attending meetings, volunteering at outreach events, and also reflexive social media contributions and posting on my part.

Beyond practice research, I employed additional qualitative methods of data collection and analysis within the frame of a social media ethnography (Postill & Pink, 2012). This required close attention to practices around and through social media, including participant observation (put simply – observing staff practices), a social media frame analysis, and interviews with staff and participants. To understand the relation between staff's social media practices and social inclusion work, the positioning of practices in context was essential. As such, an attention to staff practices was not limited to one particular social media platform,[9] rather, my observations cut across staff's use of different platforms as everyday practices flowed across these within the context of staff's everyday museum work. At the beginning of my placement, I undertook a frame analysis of a small sample of 50 social media posts from Instagram and Facebook (where available) of four of the GM institutions: Open Museum (OM), Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum (KG), Riverside Museum (Riverside), and the Gallery of Modern Art (GoMA). Using a frame analysis, I unpicked and created a snapshot of the main purpose/intention of social media posts across these institutions (Kidd, 2011).[10]

Over the course of the main case study, the data I collected included participant observation notes, meeting notes and minutes, institutional documents, social media posts, semi-structured interviews,[11] informal discussions, and self-reflections.[12] Ethics approval was obtained from the University of Glasgow for this project.[13] The methods used in different online and offline contexts of the main case study and mini case studies were shaped by considerations for the safety and privacy of research participants and additional ethical concerns. For further insight into the ethical considerations of this research, see Appendix: A. Informed consent was obtained, giving staff the choice to be anonymised, albeit within the frame of the Glasgow Museums case study, or to be identified by their names. As several GM staff wished to be as anonymous as possible and to be fair to staff as a group, only pseudonyms are used in this book and staff roles are not directly linked to their pseudonyms. The quotes used in text or inferences made in relation to the data, are referenced as either stemming from my fieldnotes encompassing observations, reflections, and informal staff discussions (OB), interviews (IN) and meeting notes (ME). References to the interview data are described by starting with staff or participants' pseudonym followed by an underscore and the associated data reference, for example, GM_staff B_IN or Participant A_IN.[14] The associated dates for observation notes and meeting notes are included in footnotes, while dates for interviews in association with staff pseudonyms are included in Appendix B.

Moreover, to situate the main case study in context, I also undertook interviews with eight social media professionals across a variety of cultural heritage

institutions in Scotland. Comparatively, interviews with external professionals are referred to by their role, for example (Marketing Manager) and interviews with staff from the mini case studies are referred to by their institution, for example (Myseum staff).[15] The dates of interviews with external staff members and their roles are also included in Appendix B.

The mini case studies

The research investigated not only the OM as embedded in the GM institution but also expanded to three other institutions identified through desk research: The National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) of the Smithsonian Institution (US), an (anonymous) (MM), and the Myseum (Canada). These three institutions were chosen based on a stated and observed ethical intention of using social media for challenging inequalities and a shared feature of their social media channels; centring voices, perspectives and experiences of users who are often challenged by social exclusion. The missions and structures of these three museums are further discussed in Chapter 5. The analysis of the mini case studies also overlapped with COVID-19, however the research was focused on these institutions' use of social media and its relation to social inclusion work more broadly, as opposed to only during the pandemic.

These three institutions cannot be conceptualised as 'full case studies' as in the case of the OM which comparatively, draws on a wide range of perspectives and sources, building knowledge of socio-cultural and historical context of social media practices (Yin, 2003). However, to understand the social media practices within the specific context of these three other institutions, I draw on a few different data sources and thus, I refer to these to as 'mini case studies'. The methods for investigating the social media practices of the three mini case studies did not involve practice research or participant observation but a series of semi-structured interviews[16] with a staff member from each institution and a thematic analysis of a small sample of posts from each museum's Instagram. As a starting point for investigating the mini case studies, I undertook an initial scan of the three institutions' respective Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram pages taking observational notes of patterns across posts, stories, and profiles in relation to the research questions. I then thematically analysed approximately 30 Instagram posts from each institution (see Appendix D for a codebook). Thematic analysis was undertaken using both Madden (2017) and Vaismoradi et al.'s (2016) recommendations to parse out the ways their social media posts connected to their respective institutions' social inclusion initiatives.

As a small sample of Instagram posts was collected, these were not intended to be representative of the overall strategy of each institution, but the analysis would allow for a snapshot of their practices that could be expanded upon and nuanced by the interviews. In this way, the analysis of social media posts and their use in eliciting discussion but also understanding the responses of museum professionals, took inspiration from object-oriented interviews which stimulate discussion through an object (Owen et al., 2021).[17]

Studying more than one institution enabled me to investigate the phenomenon under study, that is the 'how' of a social media practice for social inclusion work from different angles. This is supported by Macdonald et al. (2018) who see research that proceeds from multiple sites as enabling investigation of (dis)connections, similarities, and differences across various contexts, enabling broader theories and understandings (p. 143). Thus, I use the findings from the OM to further investigate overlaps and differences regarding the potential 'how' of a social media for social inclusion – the associated processes and structures, with three other institutions.

Notes

1 Structures in this book refer to social and technical dimensions that constitute museum infrastructures, which become relevant in and emerge through practice.
2 Echo chambers are spaces that reinforce our own beliefs and perspectives (Diaz Ruiz & Nilsson, 2023).
3 See for instance, recent blog post that reiterates this problem from the Museum Association 'Social media staff need backing' (Yates, 2021).
4 Another highly related concern is the abuse of 'truth' on social media which is evidenced by misinformation scandals around political and health-related campaigns, for example, the effects of masks and vaccines during COVID-19.
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7 POEM is an EU training network, funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant, of 13 PhD students, supervisors, and partner institutions. Together across the EU, the network investigated inclusion and memory practices in digital ecologies. The network has and continues to be a dynamic source for inspiration, knowledge, and support.
8 According to the Glasgow Indicators project (2022, n.p.): socio-economic health inequalities are evidenced by a 17-year gap in male life expectancy and 13-year gap in female life expectancy across different areas of the city.
9 This is a particular characteristic of other participant-observation methodologies such as 'netnography' (Kozinets, 2011).
10 Frames, as proposed by Goffman (1986), are a guide for interpretation, facilitate the meaning-making of events, information, and experiences, but they also function in guiding both individual and collective action.
11 For initial themes and questions guiding interviews with the OM staff see Appendix C.
12 Research participants were mainly from three divisions of the Glasgow Museums organisation entitled 'Curatorial and Operations', with a few participants from two other main sections of the organisation at the time of the research: the 'Burrell Renaissance Project', and 'Collections and Programming'.
13 Ethics approval number: 100180125.
14 In cases where staff were very critical of the institution and or the potential to cross-identify staff was high, the alphabetical pseudonym is excluded.
15 This form of referencing follows APA guidelines (which is the style used in this book for also referencing literature) for referring to research participants in-text which also privileges participants' anonymity.

16 For initial themes and questions guiding interviews with the staff from the mini case studies, see Appendix C.
17 Instagram was chosen for the analysis due to its visuality which could provide insight into the use of collection objects which became an important topic at the Open Museum, discussed further in Chapter 5.

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3 Museum organisational conditions for supporting social media as 'craft'[1]

Craftwork is reliant on both an ongoing understanding of users' interests and needs and the material or in this case – media that the craftworker uses. It requires museum practitioners, as craftworkers, to constantly participate in socio-technical negotiations or 'tug-and-pulls': staff actively negotiate the potentials of social media, their own ideals of social inclusion work, and user interests/needs. By *listening* to users and their social contexts, being *mindful* of the relation between social inclusion goals and the affordances of social media, and approaching social media *experimentally*, staff can enact negotiations that bring social media closer to social inclusion work. Understanding social media for social inclusion as 'crafting' highlights some of the wider organisational structures of the museum that can support or hinder staff's ability to participate in these meaningful socio-technical processes. As made evident by staff at Glasgow Museums and echoed in different ways by social media staff across Scotland, organisational conditions have a significant impact on how staff use social media, or if they use it at all. Therefore, rather than discussing socio-technical processes that are seemingly 'successful', this chapter first explores how and why staff feel that their social media practices are not good enough or 'unsuccessful'.

There is a long history at Glasgow Museums (GM) of uncomfortable tensions between different institutional priorities which impact staff's social media practices today. In particular, the institution has long had a dual focus of meeting local community needs and attracting international tourist audiences. These priorities and their tensions are embedded in institutional infrastructures, including the museum's organisation of work, resources, tools, and everyday practices and norms. Specifically, these dual priorities feed into three infrastructural facets that shape GM staff's social media practices: an ambiguity regarding the purpose of social media across staff, an institutional aversion to risk, and an institutional politics of value – in terms of what practices are prioritised. These infrastructural dimensions can exclude staff from participating in social media in meaningful ways. Similar barriers and process of exclusion are recounted by social media professionals across cultural heritage institutions in Scotland, whose voices and perspectives are threaded throughout the following paragraphs. Together, their perspectives and experiences illuminate in this chapter the infrastructural conditions of museums that can hinder social media as a craft practice, and vice versa, the conditions that are necessary for craft.

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Museum infrastructures for social media as exclusionary

'I'm not going to cure diseases or save people's lives, but I can hopefully make them feel welcome, make them feel seen and appreciated in any way I can, and to have that stifled is really frustrating' (Digital Content Editor).[2] A Digital Content Editor at a museum in Scotland expresses in this interview quote a desire to contribute to user experiences through social media, and, in turn, frustration with the institutional limitations they encounter. The ideal participatory potentials of social media in theory can perpetuate an organisational reliance on utopian discourse associated with social media (Walker, 2016). In turn, contributing to an institutional tendency to focus on marketing or broadcasting. However, as outlined in the quote above, there are complex factors that shape the connections and disconnections between museum social media practices and social inclusion work. The above Digital Content Editor goes on to talk about a perception of social media that they feel is common across museum management and as a result, social media staff's persistent engagement with institutional limitations: '[s]o, you fight against that quite a lot, where social media is [perceived as] great and the only solution to selling tickets – which it isn't, but absolutely not the way to talk about complex issues'. Comparatively, the staff member goes on to argue, '...no, there is a middle ground here where we can do all those things' (Digital Content Editor).

As reflected in this practitioner's quote, social media practices can be torn between different institutional priorities which reflects how organisational infrastructures are still growing to accommodate social media. Museum infrastructures can be considered complex systems which enable different forms of cultural heritage work to happen. They are continuously developing and emerging (Karasti & Blomberg, 2018), and encompass social dimensions such as the institution's conventions, culture, and dynamics, and technological dimensions, such as the affordances and materiality of digital and social media (Aanestad et al., 2017). While social media is certainly no longer 'new', cultural heritage institutions, as reflected throughout this book, are still at varying stages in adapting organisational conditions for social media work. Throughout my placement at GM, in social media meetings and interviews, GM staff frequently expressed a sense of inadequacy in relation to the institutions' social media accounts. As I have recounted previously, many staff critiqued the institutions' social media as being 'patchwork, 'dis-jointed' or 'haphazard' in relation to tone, intention, content, and engagement (Kist, 2021, p. 286). As I discuss in the following paragraphs, staff's perceptions of the 'unsuccessful' state of social media are rooted in the following three core facets of the museum's infrastructure: (1) institutional priorities for social media, (2) institutional risk aversion, and (3) a politics of value.

Institutional priorities: social media for promotional vs. public value

Different institutional priorities associated with attracting internationalism and engaging local communities can feed into ambiguity regarding the purpose of museums' social media. I first observed this ambiguity while at GM which was

reiterated in similar ways by social media staff from other cultural heritage institutions in Scotland. Diverse institutional priorities, as I will elucidate here, can significantly hinder staff's ability to be mindful about how social media can align with socially inclusive practices. While social media has been somewhat idealised in the museum sector for its potential to contribute to social missions, institutions have been critiqued as using social media for mainly promotional value, as opposed to public value. The marketing 'frame' of social media posts, as described by Kidd (2011), is about promoting the face of the institution. It is frequently used to promote the institution's venue, activities, or events. As observed from a frame analysis of GM social media content at the start of my fieldwork during the Autumn of 2019, the Riverside Museum, the Gallery of Modern Art (GoMA), Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum (KG), and the Open Museum (OM)'s social media accounts were dominated by marketing frames.[3]

Despite a predominance of marketing content and public announcements observable in the analysis of these social media posts, there are several posts that demonstrate GM staff's creativity which cultivate pockets of user engagement. These examples include direct invitations for users to share or participate. For instance, in their social media posts, the Riverside Museum invited users to guess mystery objects, the OM invited users to reminisce around social history objects, and KG called users to participate in a range of ways, including through Instagram quizzes and to share their personal memories. Interpreting objects and storytelling around collections was also a common frame across the institutions analysed, with staff showing ingenuity in bringing together objects, narratives, and current socio-cultural context. For example, this included such things as 'on this day' posts (#OTD) and posts in relation to special events, such as Movember or Halloween. There was also evidence of all four GM institutions analysed thinking about their social role through social media posts. A social media frame I have titled 'social awareness' encompasses posts that draw attention to staff's responses to social issues such as those associated with climate change, migration, and homelessness. However, in many cases, the social awareness frame of posts focused on the analogue museum and often overlapped with the marketing frame. For example, an Instagram post by GoMA mentioned a socially relevant topic: migration and identity, but this was mainly to advertise an exhibition. Such a post shows how the social awareness dimension of social media posts rarely stood as a central feature.

The predominance of marketing content at GM is partly due to an ongoing process of staff still finding a balance between the different priorities that social media cuts across. In an interview with a Marketing Staff member based at a library, they described social media as its own unique communication channel, 'I think it's recognised as its own route to the audience rather than just one more marketing channel'. This perspective was similarly reflected by a Digital Content Creator based at another museum, who described social media as 'deserving of its own space' due to traversing different departments such as marketing, curatorial, research, and education/engagement. As a result, finding an appropriate balance between content and institutional imperatives may take years, as reflected by the Digital Content

Creator: 'I've been here for about four and a half years, but even in that time, we are now starting to see how it merges more with press and marketing and how we figure that out'. A museum Digital Content Editor further reflected in their interview on how balancing social media content and use could be challenging:

> But for us, like everything you know – everything they know in learning, or the exhibitions knows, or business knows, everything that ops [operations] knows or front-of-house. We can't know all of that all the time and even if we did – balancing that is hard… You sort of have to everyone in your head at the same time.
>
> (Digital Content Editor)

This 'balancing' process at GM is ongoing, with persistent ambiguity between staff responsibilities and associated imperatives. Such ambiguity seemingly also reiterates and is rooted in long-lasting tensions between GM' prioritisation of promoting the image of the institution to a large international audience, versus engaging with smaller groups of local Glaswegian communities.

The development of GM' different priorities underpins the institution's current infrastructures. This history, importantly, has significance for the way social media can be and is used by museum staff. To understand infrastructures and how they condition practice, it is important to understand both the past and present relations between the materials, structures, and people (Star and Ruhleder, 1996). A common thread can be woven through the history of arts and culture initiatives in Glasgow and the social role of GM, which is one of conflict and contestation due to Glasgow City Council's dual priorities in attracting international tourism and serving local communities. Glasgow is known to be a city of stark contrasts and divisions, which has significance for the role of its museums as being, on the one hand, for the well-being of local communities, and, on the other hand, for the city's overall economic vitality and regeneration. Over the last several decades, the city's inequalities have led to a repeating rhetoric which teeter totters between the city's arts and culture initiatives as benefiting local communities versus a façade that overlooks the city's striking social inequalities to boost economics through tourism and place marketing (Paddison, 1993). Upon my arrival in Glasgow in late 2018, the city's persistent contrasts were to my eyes – extremely visible, including a division between east and west neighbourhoods, wealthy, and poor, and new architecture contrasted against old architecture (Gray, 2006).

In the background of these divisions, almost everywhere – adorning garbage bins, buses, and the infrastructure of the city, are bright pink banners stating, seemingly in case the locals should be forgotten, 'People Make Glasgow'. The uneasy relationship between the arts and culture sector and the city's inequalities is potentially rooted in Glasgow's industrial development and subsequent decline. Glasgow was a centre for manufacturing during the industrial period which stemmed from the city's role in colonialism and the transatlantic trade of enslaved people. Prior to the Industrial Revolution, the city's merchants from 1740 to 1790 invested in and monopolised the products grown by enslaved people, such as sugar and

tobacco (Devine, 2012; Mullen, 2009). These top colonial merchants known as Tobacco Lords developed enormous wealth as evidenced by their grand homes, some of which still stand today.[4] Despite these colonial merchants and the trade of enslaved people progressing the city's industries and wealth, during the nineteenth century, stark divisions in wealth and class gave Glasgow a dual reputation as being one of the most prominent commercial cities in Europe and plagued by considerable social problems (Gray, 2006). In particular, by the 1960s, during the decline of Glasgow's industries, poor health and crime and over-crowded housing were prevalent across the city (Keating, 1988).

Even though stark inequalities persistently haunt Glasgow, today, the city is frequently depicted as a role model for transforming a post-industrial city suffering from poverty into a flourishing creative centre sustained by arts, culture, and tourism (Garcia, 2005). There have been several attempts to regenerate the city through arts and culture initiatives which can be traced back to the 1980s (MacLeod, 2002). For instance,

> [e]arly in the 1980s, a solution to the city's ailing economy was devised when Glasgow's elites instituted a program to rid the city of images of its industrial past and subsequent decline and actively use its cultural infrastructure for the sake of urban revitalization.
>
> (Tretter, 2009, pp. 118–119)[5]

The cultural infrastructure this strategic plan relied upon included the city's object collections which were initially grown in the 1800s by individuals who brutally exploited the working class. These privileged wealthy entrepreneurs frequently donated to the city of Glasgow – buildings, collections, and funded exhibitions (Kinchin et al., 1988; O'Neill, 2006). With the idea of revitalising the city through arts and culture in mind, the Burrell Collection opened as a museum in 1983, as one of the city's initial strategies. This also included in the same year, the development of the Greater Glasgow Tourism Board and the launch of the annual art festival, the Mayfest (Murphy & Boyle, 2006). From the 1980s onward, Glasgow continuously added to its attractions, including festivals and events as part of a city-wide strategy to encourage social regeneration and place promotion (Paddison, 1993).

The hosting of world-renowned events in Glasgow, such as the International Exhibition (1888, 1901), the Garden Festival (1988), the European City of Culture (1990) and the Commonwealth Games (2014), has been defined as a strategy of 'trickle-down' culture (Gordon-Nesbitt, 2016; Reason, 2006). A strategy which is intended to enhance and promote the image of the city, forming a renewed city identity through arts, culture and other activities, with beneficial impacts that would supposedly filter across society and benefit people from lower socio-economic classes (Paddison, 1993). However, this strategy of revitalising the city through cultural initiatives has been critiqued as not directly benefiting Glasgow residents, particularly those who face challenging inequalities (Gordon-Nesbitt, 2016; MacLeod, 2002; Reason, 2006). As Salisbury (2016) argues in their study on

Glasgow's hosting of the Commonwealth Games, there is a lack of evidence suggesting that deprived communities in Glasgow benefited from the event (p. 1879).

Similarly, despite Glasgow's successful bid for the European City of Culture (1990) (ECOC),[6] a milestone in the narrative of the city's rejuvenation (Garcia, 2005), there was little evidence regarding the economic impact and value for populations that live in deprived areas of Glasgow (Gordon-Nesbitt, 2011). Thus, some suggest that the commonly told tale of Glasgow's cultural rejuvenation is an exaggeration, critiquing the city's approach to arts and culture as based on cultural economics or cultural capitalism (MacLeod, 2002; Reason, 2006). Such sentiment was shared by several Glasgow residents who questioned both the value of cultural events for locals and its reflection on the realities of Glaswegian life. For example, The Worker's City Group[7] and several artists frequently critiqued the European City of Culture events based on their perception that such events were not relevant to the needs and interests of local Glaswegians but rather prioritised the interests of big businesses (Reason, 2006, p. 76).

The ECOC initiatives were, thus, critiqued due to a lack of representation of Scottish and Glaswegian life, and in turn, for emphasising main events of the City of Culture or high culture rather than smaller community-based ones across the city. As a result, some locals may have felt that they were part of a performance staged by the government to advance cultural tourism and benefit the economy while having little relevance to their everyday lives (Liu & Lin, 2011, pp. 369–370). Simultaneously, in the 1990s, the New Labour party entered power, and the social role of cultural heritage, particularly for UK museums, became publicly mandated: these policies pushed museums to not only have a curatorial and educational role but also a role in fulfilling social objectives (Morse & Munro, 2018, p. 362).

In comparison to the above criticisms, O'Neill (2016) previous director of GM,[8] describes such major cultural events including the ECOC as part and parcel to the successful dual role of the city's arts and culture industry. They argue that Glasgow's arts and culture sector is successful in being *for* Glaswegians, taking on an important social role – aligning with New Labour's social policies, while still appealing to a larger external populace. These dual roles are embodied in the creation of Glasgow Life, a charity that could earn profit to support the arts and culture sector while at 'arm's length' from the city council. Glasgow Life was originally registered as the charity – Culture and Sports Glasgow in 2007 and continues to be responsible for most of the city's arts and culture provisions, including GM services. O'Neill (2016) suggests that big cultural events including capital museum projects[9] have contributed to the long-term strategy and coherency of Glasgow Life. However, they acknowledge the legitimacy of critiques directed at Glasgow Life for leaning towards external publics rather than local audiences by suggesting that sometimes the organisation's priorities can be skewed one way (O'Neill, 2016, p. 28).

The balance between serving locals and attracting global audiences to Glasgow continues to be apparent in the current activities of Glasgow Life. While Glasgow Life strives to be socially responsible and inclusive as evident in their mission statement which emphasises culture and sport should be accessible to everyone,

there has been criticism regarding their actions correlating with their words (Glasgow Life, n.d.). This mission is seemingly contradicted by the closure of Glasgow Life venues in the most deprived areas of Glasgow during budget cuts in 2009 (Gordon-Nesbitt, 2011). Similarly, due to the financial impact of COVID-19, closures of cultural heritage institutions were announced in areas of the city that are predominantly home to people of colour and in the case of Pollokshields, a less affluent area of the city (Lennon, 2020). In turn, the upkeep of affluent areas and tourist attractions were and continue to be prioritised. Such lack of adherence to social goals and measures would imply that the arts and culture sector is a mask of the real Glasgow, intended to attract international tourism which does not necessarily benefit local Glaswegians, particularly those who face stark inequalities (Fitzpatrick, 2018; Reason, 2006).

Similarly, tensions in Glasgow's arts and culture industry are reflected in the activities of GM. There is sometimes a conflict between who the GM service is for and its associated role in contributing to either local well-being or economic regeneration, and attracting internationalism or serving local communities (Beel, 2011, p. 154). Today, Glasgow Life's strategic plan incorporates both concern for the well-being of local communities and the city's international image and tourism (Glasgow Life, n.d.). The tensions these priorities cause were still evident during my fieldwork at the OM; however, they were also broadly visible across GM' social media practices. In particular, the dual priorities of promoting the institution internationally and engaging with local communities are reflected in the tension between staff's use of social media for marketing and engagement.

At GM I observed a tension between marketing content on social media, characterised by the 'marketing frame', and content intended to cultivate engagement between the museum and social media users. For instance, GM staff frequently critiqued the channels as being filled with too much marketing content. As one staff member argued, 'if you're not reaching out and having a two-way conversation, you're really just marketing. In most cases, we tend to market too heavily' (GM staff F_IN). The organisation of social media at GM potentially perpetuates and supports this tension between institutional priorities and responsibilities. GM, at the start of my placement in 2019, had over 28 social media channels across Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram which does not even include their YouTube channels, blogs, and Flickr account. The diverse range and the sheer number of these channels would require an expansive and cohesive team to run them, but as of 2019, GM' digital team mainly consists of two Digital Managers and a Digital Curator. One Digital Manager (A) leads digital initiatives across all the museum venues (as a reminder there are 11) in conjunction with the Digital Curator, while the other Digital Manager (B) leads digital offerings for the Burrell Renaissance project. The work and expertise of both Digital Manager A and the Digital Curator are in high demand across GM, causing their schedules to be constantly full.

In turn, the upkeep of these social media channels is shared between the digital team, other museum staff members, and Glasgow Life's marketing team.[10] As a result, social media responsibilities at GM are diffused, a model of digital work that has been idealised (Parry et al., 2018). However, this diffusion potentially

contributes to additional challenges regarding the balance of social media content, and its potential to aid different institutional priorities. As a GM staff member reflected, the differential levels in staffing for engagement compared to marketing creates challenges for balancing content and use:

> I could tell you simply looking at the backend of one of the social media channels – Kelvingrove for example, might have approximately 15 administrators for Facebook and out of those 15, 10 of those are marketing and the other 5 are me and [my colleagues] and one or two members of staff. So that balance is really hard.
>
> (GM staff_IN)

Another staff member remarked on a perceived conflict between the marketing team and other staff contributing to digital: 'I suppose they [GM staff contributing to digital] are still trying to look for ways they could make this work together with the marketing team, but I suppose that is a specific issue' (GM staff V_IN). Similarly, another GM staff critiqued the institution's social channels, imagining future changes which could balance out the marketing frame:

> At the moment I see them [social media] being used to advertise events and then give feedback on events that happened. Other than that, we don't really use them for anything else, so it would be good to put something in the mix. Riverside [Museum] do their mystery objects and things like that, and its good fun because you see the dialogue that comes underneath with people posting stuff.
>
> (GM staff L_IN)

Staff have also occasionally been referred to during informal chats as a 'team against marketing' (as I have specified elsewhere (Kist, 2021, p. 287)). This sentiment highlights significant tensions resulting from the tentative balance between social media priorities associated with marketing and engagement (OB).[11]

Moreover, a marketing imperative at GM is closely associated with promoting the institution's image and attracting audiences which can take precedence over engagement and wellbeing. This seems to echo long-lasting tensions between the institution's priorities of attracting international tourism to the physical venues and serving local communities. This was reflected in a comment made by one GM staff during COVID-19:

> I would be lying if I didn't say I had concerns about what they [museums] will want from audiences. Or the kinda- the pressure to open to the public in a bid to survive. I feel like that's symptomatic of the politics behind all of it. Because you are talking about something that is run by a local government and I think things like the wider UK rush to reopen the economy is being placed ahead of people's wellbeing. One can only speculate how that might pan out in this situation.
>
> (GM staff Z_IN)

Another GM staff member reflected on these different priorities pre-COVID and suggested,

> [s]o, tourism and all these things are really important too and it's about trying to find that balance between being that international museum service that has wonderful things for people to come see from outside Glasgow and on the flip side, providing a good service for people who are residents as well. Sometimes I think there is a bit of a conflict between those two.
>
> (GM staff_IN)

A tension at the intersection between social media for marketing and user engagement was similarly reiterated in different ways by social media professionals from other cultural heritage institutions across Scotland. For instance, in their interview, one Digital Content Editor at a museum in Scotland reflected on institutional imperatives associated with social media:

> It is about extending the reach of the museum, talking to people who may never visit. And I suppose some people in our department, are like oh yeah, the people who haven't visited yet who will then obviously visit. I mean hopefully that will happen but that is not what motivates me...I think it is really important for us to be able to reach audiences that will never physically come to the museum and that is just as important to me as someone who does walk through the door.
>
> (Digital Content Editor)

As reflected in the Digital Content Editor's quote, for some institutions, there can be a conflict between institutional priorities of attracting audiences to the physical museum and engaging with users on social media. While there is a desire on the part of museums such as GM to support the well-being of local communities and enable engagement online, from my observations, this can collide with other institutional priorities associated with marketing and promoting the institution to broad and international audiences. As such, this ambiguity and even tension between the priorities associated with social media can hinder staff's ability to be mindful of the connections between social initiatives and social media practices. In recent discussions in the wider museum field on museum's digital transformation, this has also reached a pinnacle concern, with staff calling for attention to be paid to local community interests and concerns rather than performing transactions that prioritise the tourist visitor (Frost, 2020). Due to staff's expressions of frustration associated with marketing imperatives, the infrastructure that surrounds and serves as a base for social media use at GM (but which also extend to other institutions) are not necessarily 'invisible' but rather for staff, act as a constant obstacle. This includes not only tensions between institutional priorities but also an aversion to risk.

Institutional aversion to risk

When undertaking social media practices at GM, I observed staff frequently encountering 'red tape' or hierarchal controls that I argue are entangled with institutional attitudes of risk aversion. Such controls hinder staff's ability to practice and experiment with social media to explore its connections with social missions. Social media is intricately tied to public identity, which can cultivate a sense of risk for the content of posts and types of engagement an institution is willing to support (Spruce & Leaf, 2017). Museums are traditionally espoused as being neutral and authoritative operating on a top-down decision structure which can be contradictory to the interactive, playful, and personal/subjective context of social media. During my research, GM staff encountered infrastructural barriers to experimenting with social media content resulting in the need to 'tiptoe', and some staff even disengaged entirely.

These instances were often evidenced during institution-wide social media meetings. Beginning in approximately 2012, GM' digital team set up a monthly meeting for staff from across the institutions who contribute to social media to parse out any concerns, discuss upcoming events, and share practices that were (un)successful at their respective venues with colleagues. As I have described previously, 'during these meetings staff shared and reflected with their colleagues on content and forms of engagement they had experimented with, from mystery objects at the Riverside Museum to April Fool's Day across the institutions' (Kist, 2021, p. 288).

These meetings suggest that staff desire to experiment with social media content and are paying attention to the context of their users. However, they also appeared to be a space for staff to express concerns or uncertainties regarding ideas for digital content and projects. One telling scenario was a social media meeting in which one of the Digital Media staff and myself led discussion around upcoming holidays and what staff felt to be 'effective content' for their institutions' social media channels. Staff discussed the value of humorous content, old photos connecting people to place, and content around upcoming events, particularly, Halloween. In relation to Halloween, staff discussed creating posts about the Wizard World Tour taking place at Kelvin Hall, bats in KG or old and creepy technology (ME).[12] However, the challenges that staff raised in conjunction with ideas around being funny or humorous emphasises a concern for how social media may negatively reflect on institutional image. Some staff discussed the need to balance the 'corporate tone/formality with being fun' and they observed that with having so many people contributing to the social media channels, it is hard to have a coherent tone of voice or personality. On the other hand, staff expressed fear over being inappropriate, and discussed how some curators may decide certain objects, due to having a serious background, should not be used for humorous content (ME).[13]

Such concerns regarding social media's implications for institutional image, were also evidenced by top-down restrictions placed on social media content that could challenge or draw GM' 'neutrality' into question. This was highlighted by a city intervention: during my placement, the OM's curators and I posted about a collaborative intervention with an organisation called Invisible Cities.[14]

Figure 3.1 Intervention as part of the 'To absent friends' festival (Glasgow City Centre). November 1, 2019. Image taken by author.

The intervention, as part of a city-wide festival known as 'To absent friends', was a memorial for the 47 people who passed away on Glasgow city streets while homeless in 2019. The team placed 47 pairs of shoes, representing those who passed, on the steps of the Royal Concert Hall in the city centre (Figure 3.1). This garnered significant public attention on social media and several comments which resulted in the organisation restricting staff's social media posts. As contextualised by user comments, the post and by extension the museum appeared to be an activist body causing GM to, as one staff member described – 'over-react' (OB).[15]

An institutional aversion to risk, was similarly hinted at by staff critiques regarding GM' responsiveness to issues that local communities face. During my placement (September 2019–September 2020), these issues included the lock-out on refugees, the climate crisis, and the Black Lives Matter Movement. These circumstances which GM could have responded to in various ways including through online mediums, were instead either responded to in ways that staff critiqued as the 'bare minimum' or not at all. For instance, in relation to the climate crises, in 2019 youth took over the museum to raise awareness of climate change called the 'Dippy Die in' (named for the Natural History Museum's (London) dinosaur 'Dippy' visiting Kelvingrove) which was widely shared on KG's social media.[16]

After the fact, one staff critiqued asking, 'And did you actually go and speak to them and talk about working on projects together, did that dialogue happen? Did you say, "we need to redo our natural history galleries?"' (GM staff_IN). The staff member as a result, insinuated the institution benefited off the 'die in' without committing to its own collaborative actions. However, generally the larger institution has been recognised as being much slower to change and react, and according to Dodd et al. (2002) in discussing GM, this change is usually not uniform (p. 43). Change may be perceived as risky by GM service, as explained by one staff member, the incorporation of diverse voices or new projects may first, be tested out at one institution, and then spread to the next. In discussing an exclusionary narrative, the staff member reflected, '...we find a safe space to find things out, when really, we should be saying this is what every museum in the city should be engaging with, not just one museum' (GM staff F_IN). These examples suggest that GM may be hesitant due to a sense of fear, in terms of how social media publicly conveys the museum identity as being insensitive, political, or neutral. In turn, this limits staff's ability to experiment with social media, or indeed, use it at all.

In a similar vein, social media staff interviewed from other cultural heritage institutions in Scotland experienced censorship on content deemed the slightest bit *provocative*. An example given by a Digital Content Editor included being restricted from using emojis. They suggested the tone of the institution at one point during their employment 'was incredibly conservative and corporate' and they were 'surprised at what was deemed a risk'. A Digital Content Creator from another museum described discussing difficult histories on social media and the challenges of getting institutional approval for responding to associated user comments: 'as a team I think it makes us hope that it [the approval process] doesn't make us completely shy away from telling these stories, but it is that we need to think of it wider in how we would respond to them'. Similarly, an Outreach Staff contributing to social media at an archive in Scotland described in an interview how they valued social media for its responsiveness to social issues. However, the interviewee also suggested that their institution could sometimes get nervous: 'senior managers and the board – they concede that they might be able to *blip* your social media when you start to have a debate' (Outreach staff).

GM' potential aversion to risk was also highlighted by staff's attempts to work around restrictions and limitations. As one staff member described, as result of the restrictions, 'some [staff] prefer to use their own accounts or not at all' (OB)[17] which according to another staff member enables them to have 'leeway': 'I don't have to be as careful politically about what I say' (GM staff K_IN). However, at the time of my placement, many GM staff members due to the precarity of their contracts may have been averse to taking part in risky behaviour that could be encapsulated by social media work. Staff who are not guaranteed permanent work may feel limited in their ability to experiment with social media practices. For instance, some staff also lamented that sometimes it was hard to convince their colleagues to contribute to social media, describing how 'most colleagues are all on mobile phones but will deny that they do very much on social media' (GM staff_IN): a

practice which may be connected to staff's self-monitoring and a compulsion to tread carefully around social media.

The absence of some of these restrictions during COVID-19, however, further reveals the infrastructural facets limiting social media practices and the ways museum staff *could* be supported to practice social media. In one sense, restrictions on social media in terms of gatekeeping and the type of content posted increased, yet the context also provided new opportunities for staff experimentation. Initially, with the onset of lockdown in Scotland (March 2020), GM faced increased restrictions on social media access with some smaller social media channels being completely cut. A strict posting timeline was also put into place as an attempt to meet different audience interests and institutional imperatives at specific times of the week. While these restrictions slowly eased, marketing gained a stronger role in gatekeeping the social media and maintained this role until the end of my placement (September 2020).

By gatekeeping, I mean all social media content suggested by GM staff had to be emailed to an overseeing staff member and then to marketing for approval and posting, while many staff no longer had access to the collaborative social posting software – Sprout Social (OB).[18] Despite these new organisational arrangements, staff insinuated they felt the loss of other forms of restriction that were associated with their everyday workplace and institutional structures. Staff described how during the lockdown a flurry of activity took place, with several individuals across different departments wanting to contribute to social media (OB).[19]

For instance, one staff member suggested a certain freedom in relation to conveying an un-polished institutional image supporting staff's different social media styles, levels of skill, and the ability to get 'messy':

> This is a good time for experimentation because I have no digital media skills, I have no video skills – I have nothing, but it doesn't matter, because everyone is the same and so everybody' s turning out all these videos, but the thing is, it doesn't matter. You normally wouldn't get a chance to experiment like that because normally it would have to be Glasgow Museums all polished and lovely shiny and – oh it's got to be fantastic. It really doesn't matter right now – you can get away with having really crap skills but still connecting with people…
>
> (GM staff K_IN)

This was a sentiment similarly shared by other staff: the increased focus on connectivity over 'polished' content and institutional image, and the experience of being away from the office and in the comfort of their own homes, enabled creative thinking, learning new tools, and experimentation with social media (GM staff G_IN; GM staff B_IN). Staff reported feeling freer and had more time to learn digital tools (GM staff G_IN). In turn, staff trialled different practices often using everyday household resources, and shared content with each other, providing feedback to improve their colleagues' online practices (GM staff B_IN).

Another staff member described their own experiences of experimenting with social media content creation during COVID-19,

> [i]t can take like three hours to fanny about these video things – because you are trying to get your flat to look quite neutral and then you are trying to set it up and then you are doing it and then you are like 'oh that sounded shit', I will have to do it again. Or I did something wrong there. And then you are trying to get to grips with the editing app or something and then the file's huge, so it takes two hours to send it because the file is so big.
>
> (GM staff B_IN)

As indicated in the quote above, staff relied on household objects and trying out new apps and technologies through trial and error to create content. With the lockdown there was a new drive for creative experimentation and self-learning, that was typically limited by the institution's red tape and the tensions between different institutional priorities. The disruption caused by COVID-19, reveals the resourcefulness and personal investment some staff give to social media work and could if it were not for the infrastructural challenges they face. Therefore, an aversion to risk and associated organisational restrictions can result in, on the one hand, staff who are still eager to participate in social media – propelled by personal motivations. On the other hand, infrastructural conditions can also result in disempowered staff who may disengage, contributing to a disconnection between social media and institutional social missions.

An institutional politics of value

By situating social media practices in the ongoing entanglements of staff's agency, their daily work, and contextual challenges they face, the relations of value and order that shapes their social media use becomes apparent (Jackson, 2014). Investment in social media practices at GM are in part, shaped by staff's intrinsic motivations, an ambiguity regarding the purpose of social media channels, and an aversion to risk. However, in addition to these infrastructural facets, those staff members that do volunteer to take care of the social media accounts also frequently complain that one significant limitation is a lack of resources and time. As a previous Glasgow Museums staff member and digital media professional explained in their interview, 'the technology platforms that they [GM] work on, are archaic and highly problematic, in terms of responsiveness and services'. This lack of resources and time is indicative of GM' limited financial resources but is also associated by staff with a politics of value.

While some GM staff volunteer to undertake these tasks eagerly, social media is often not written into their job descriptions and when time becomes a commodity, social media drops low on the priority list. As one staff described, '[d]ue to how much time our main roles take up social media is ad-hoc and takes a backseat' (GM staff P_IN). These comments were echoed by many other GM

staff who reinforce the limitations of using social media as a form of engagement due to a lack of technological tools and time (ME).[20] Critically, this results in the de-prioritisation of social media; 'I try to do a bit of it [social media] here, but we are so busy it definitely gets pushed to the side' (GM staff E_IN). Another staff member reflected, '…we are juggling trying to do the day-to-day as well, so maybe we are not utilising them [social media] as well as we could' (GM staff L_IN). As I have referenced previously, one staff member explained that this lack of time forces staff to choose between engaging with communities or posting on social media (GM staff C_IN) (Kist, 2021, p. 289). As such, this lack of resources further perpetuates the predominance of marketing content on social media and as evident in the quotes above, can result in the prioritisation of engagement as an analogue rather than a digital practice.

While the lack of time and resources attributed to social media work is associated with institutional wide budget cuts, it may also be due to a discrepancy in value applied to certain forms of museum work over others. As one GM staff described during COVID-19, 'one of the things that we've all known on the ground for a long time is Glasgow Life's poor connectivity situation, but it's just become really, really obvious now to the people who can actually change it…' (GM staff Z_IN). The predominance of the marketing frame with pockets of user engagement and displays of social awareness on social media, from a senior management perspective, may appear to operate nicely within the confines of GM' boundaries and imperatives. As discussed earlier in this chapter, such an approach to social media would complement the historic trajectory of the institution's prioritisation; a priority that leans towards larger international publics with concern for institutional image which can sometimes over-shadow the engagement of locals. That is to say, the predominance of marketing content and staff's creative agency in contending with institutional limitations may make it appear to senior management that social media and its surrounding structures are currently smooth sailing. As a result, another staff member explains, 'I think management have never really been on-board a lot with the social stuff, I think they kind of think – "oh that's digital and marketing that do that" so it's covered, and they've never really had their head into it really' (GM staff_IN).

In comparison, staff on the ground observed several problems and challenges. In critically discussing the lack of resources for social media at a meeting, one staff member reflected, '…there is a problem here that needs to be reported to upper management' (ME).[21] GM staff members further evidenced this discrepancy in value by complaining that their managers would not participate in social media work (ME)[22] and that '[t]here isn't a lot of investment possibly because higher up managers don't take it [social media] seriously and don't see the value in it' (GM staff M_IN). Another staff remarked on this discrepancy of investment on the part of the larger museum service: 'as a museum service I think we fire fight a lot, we just don't...we are not at the stage where we can really sit down and feel comfortable about just trying to work with audiences, to see digital as a tool that can really make a change' (GM staff_IN). Thus, social media may not be given the same resources as other forms of engagement due

to its seemingly successful but limited operation within existing infrastructures. This includes social media's operation within institutional control and as fulfilling mainly marketing imperatives as opposed to contributing to potentially risky forms of engagement.

Therefore, while a sense of disjointedness may be observable and experienced by GM staff working with social media, staff in positions of power may not share the same perspective and exert passivity in relation to attributing it more resources. In turn, a cycle may be created within which some staff invest labour, emotions, and time into contending with institutional factors to practice social media; yet, due to a lack of resources and time, an aversion to risk, and tensions regarding the purpose of social media, social media continues to be dominated by marketing frames and social media engagement drops low on staff's priority list. As Vargas, a researcher from One-by-One[23] suggests in a podcast interview, only by attributing resources and recognising the professionalisation of practices in online mediums can museums begin to use these channels for social change (Frost, 2020). The desire of some GM staff to use and experiment with social media is shaped by the institution's infrastructure, within which there exists tension regarding the intention of social channels, an aversion to risk, and a lack of time and resources which is underpinned by a politics of value.

Moving beyond an organisational infrastructure of exclusion

GM staff's everyday practices and frustrations expose infrastructural challenges rooted in legacies of institutional priorities. Museum social media practices can be torn between different aims, collide with an institutional attitude of risk aversion encompassed by red tape, and be hindered by the value attributed to social media practices. In turn, these limiting structures ultimately have significance for staff's ability to participate in and shape the potential alignment between the institution's social media channels and social inclusion initiatives. For example, there is conflict between staff regarding the marketing and engagement intention of their social media practices, hindering social media use generally but also staff's ability to connect its use with social initiatives. According to Culture24, it is essential for institutions to underpin their digital practices with shared institutional mission and values (Malde & Kennedy, 2018) which could potentially be pursued through the co-creation of a social media strategy. In their interviews, a few social media professionals from other cultural heritage institutions in Scotland suggested social media guidelines and institutional direction could be empowering (Kist, 2021). As one staff reflected,

> we sort of figure it [social media] out a lot ourselves as we go along, which is why I think it can get skewed a certain way. So, we have a social media, I guess "strategy" is a bit of a strong word, it is more something we can refer to which empowers us to do what we do. It [the strategy] is about extending the reach of the museum, talking to people who may never visit.
>
> (Digital Content Editor)

Such a perspective implicates the importance of a clear institutional direction and agreement on the priorities associated with social media, enabling museum practitioners to be *mindful* of the balance of associated responsibilities, including social goals. Thus, a lack of shared social media guidelines and the observed tensions between the different responsibilities and uses that social media cuts across could contribute to feelings of divisiveness in relation to social media practices at GM and other institutions.

Further, as discussed in Chapter 1, inclusive practices for challenging social exclusion in museology are also connected to responsiveness. This encompasses being able to *listen*, reach out to and collaborate with surrounding communities and users who may be excluded or disenfranchised, and respond accordingly to meet their needs (Dodd & Sandell, 2001; Silverman, 2010). However, organisational red tape in terms of decision-making processes around social media may prevent staff from using it to respond to social challenges. As indicated by GM staff's resourcefulness, particularly during COVID-19- red tape may also hinder their ability to *experiment* with what is possible within the limits of social media. These facets along with a lack of time and resources may be underpinned by the organisation's politics of value within which social media is perceived to be running 'smoothly' due to fulfilling marketing imperatives and potentially, a facade of social awareness. In turn, together, these infrastructural dynamics restrict staff's ability and motivation to engage online with users and their contemporary contexts, including the needs of the communities they are intended to serve. As a result, these facets form an organisational infrastructure of exclusion: it effectively excludes staff from being able to participate in practices that explore the relation between social media use and social inclusion work.

The challenges that staff at GM and other institutions encounter, suggest the necessity of infrastructural change. Infrastructural changes are needed to progress the inclusion of staff in social media practices that are *mindful* of the potential alignment between institutional social missions and social platforms, *experimental*, and involve *listening* to user interests/needs. This chapter suggests a need for further staff support in ongoing organisational processes of finding a balance between content and associated social media responsibilities, which may be governed by a shared mission and strategy. In terms of risk aversion and red tape, senior management could support more open and trusted spaces which value staff's already very active enactments of resourcefulness and experimentation. Previous research has also highlighted that social media staff need space for reflexivity and experimentation (Walker, 2016; Frost, 2021) which as suggested from GM staff's experiences during COVID-19, may need to take place outside of formal institutional spaces.

Staff's social media practices, as depicted in this chapter, often relied on colleague support: from acting as a 'team' against marketing, from empathetic discussions at social media meetings, and from giving each other resources and feedback during COVID-19 lockdown. Informal colleague learning and support also aligns with findings from the One-by-One report, Mapping the Museum Digital Skills Ecosystems (Parry et al., 2018) which implies the importance of creating additional opportunities for cross-departmental communication, perhaps through

chat-based platforms which could expand room and frequency for shared learning amongst staff. However, the institution must also invest in staff's social media work by allocating it both time and resources, breaking out of a perceived 'passivity' in relation to social media. Such an investment may encourage and include staff in social media practices without exploiting their intrinsic and emotional motivations for this type of work, and simultaneously avoid propelling their disengagement and frustration.

Conclusion

Museums' social media practices which can appear passive due to a predominance of marketing frames may be caused, in part, by a reliance on an idealistic perception of social media as imbued with utopian ideals, or a perception of social media as a novel technology (Walker, 2016, p. 240). However, these social media practices or lack of, must also be contextualised by infrastructural constraints. In this chapter, I further nuanced critiques of museum social media practices by positioning social media in the context of the behind-the-scenes nitty-gritty work of museums. Staff's practices at GM, paralleled by other cultural heritage institutions, expose how organisational structures can exclude staff from using social media and create disconnections between social media practices and social inclusion initiatives. In turn, based on these limitations, I envision the organisational conditions that might support staff to be included in social media practices and align social media's use with social initiatives.

A long-lasting tension at GM between institutional priorities of promoting the institution's image to attract international audiences and engaging with local communities, feeds into confusion and tension over the purpose of social media. Moreover, what appears to be an institutional attitude of risk aversion limits staff's ability and willingness to use social media, while a politics of value shapes which forms of work are valued, limiting the resources that are available for staff using social media. In turn, staff practices also hint at structures that could potentially support staff to be included in social media work and begin to align its use with social inclusion initiatives. A shared intention or strategy for the social media channels, senior management support and investment, and additional opportunities for staff co-learning and communication with a focus on connectivity over 'polished' content might enable staff to; *listen* to their social media users, to be *mindful* of the connections between social media and social inclusion work/ideals, and to *experiment* with social media.

Notes

1 This chapter is based on a previous conference paper (Kist, 2021), which has been reshaped and expanded to fit within the narrative of this book and exemplify the importance of craft and the necessary institutional conditions. Copyright © 2021 From Museum social media practices in need of repair? By Kist, C. in: Shehade, M., Stylianou-Lambert, T. (eds) *Emerging Technologies and the Digital Transformation of Museums and Heritage Sites*. RISE IMET 2021. Communications in Computer and

Information Science, vol 1432. The arguments are reused here with permission of Springer Nature Switzerland AG.

2 As a reminder to the reader, quotations from cultural heritage professionals in Scotland who were interviewed out-with Glasgow Museums are referred to simply by their position. These interviews took place over the duration of the main case study from 2019 to 2020 and are mainly referred to in this chapter. See Chapter 2 for further explanation and see Appendix B for dates and roles of interviewees.
3 See Appendix D for a description of the different types of posts observed for each of the four museums through a frame analysis.
4 In fact, Glasgow Museums' Gallery of Modern Art (GoMA) is renowned for being originally built in 1778 and owned by a Tobacco Lord - William Cunninghame (Walvin, 2011).
5 Used with permission of John Wiley & Sons - Books, from *The Cultures of Capitalism: Glasgow and the Monopoly of Culture* by Tretter E.M. Antipode, 41(1) ©1969; permission conveyed through Copyright Clearance Center, Inc.
6 The European City of Culture (ECOC) is designated to a European city by the European Union (EU) for a full year within which the city hosts a series of cultural events. This title and the associated events are recognised as having the capacity to bolster the designated city's economy and international image.
7 The Worker's City Group was led by three notable writers in the 1990s who published news-sheets across the city and advocated for the role of ordinary locals in shaping the city.
8 Mark O'Neill was an ambitious leader of Glasgow Museums from 1998 to 2009 (The Times, 2023).
9 Several capital projects have helped refurbish and rebuild more than a few Glasgow Museums over the years (during my placement this included the Burrell Renaissance project and a bid to refurbish the People's Palace). These projects impact the institution's resources, priorities, and methods of working.
10 Glasgow Life's marketing department is mainly responsible for the marketing capacities of Glasgow Museums.
11 Observation notes taken January 28, 2019.
12 Meeting notes from October 29, 2019.
13 Meeting notes from October 29, 2019.
14 Invisible Cities is a social enterprise that trains people who have experienced homelessness to provide alternative city tours. Find out more about Invisible Cities https://invisible-cities.org/cities/glasgow and the To absent friends festival here: https://invisible-cities.org/news/2019/invisible-glasgow-remembers-homeless-people-who-have-died.
15 Observation notes taken November 4, 2019.
16 Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum (Glasgow Museums) Instagram post of the Dippy die-in (April 27, 2019): https://www.instagram.com/p/BwxHcQglwkF/.
17 Observation notes January 7, 2020.
18 Observation notes April 7, 2020.
19 Observation notes March 18, 2020; May 27, 2020.
20 Meeting notes from February 21, 2020.
21 Meeting notes from February 21, 2020.
22 Meeting notes from February 21, 2020.
23 One-by-One is a multi-partner initiative intended to support digital transformation in museums and build digitally confident institutions (One-by-One, n.d.).

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4 Museum social inclusion work and perceptions of social media

In this chapter, I focus on the material and virtual interceptions of the social inclusion work of Glasgow Museums' (GM) outreach institution – the Open Museum (OM). I reveal how social media can sometimes seem irrelevant and even contradictory to the OM's work, due to the social and technical structures staff typically draw on to facilitate analogue outreach. In turn, the OM's outreach practices set the stage for exploring potential synergies between social inclusion work and social media through skilled socio-technical processes of 'translation' discussed in Chapter 5, and 'tinkering' discussed in Chapter 6. The OM staff's outreach practices and hesitancy towards social media in this chapter also emphasises an essential component of '*craft*', advocated for throughout this book: the importance of learning about the potentials and limits of social media through practice.

Existing values and practices in relation to being a socially engaged and inclusive institution have the potential to result in institutional structures which shape possibilities for other museum work. For instance, if we consider the wider museum field, there are increasing discussions around the social participatory role of museums on the one hand, and their role as guardians of memory and material culture on the other. These dual roles are heavily implicated in the recent discussions regarding a new ICOM definition of museums. It was suggested that the new definition should incorporate dimensions of social advocacy and impact, and well-being (Small, 2019, n.p.). However, this suggestion was critiqued as pushing the museum into unwanted political territory (Small, 2019, n.p.). Such epistemological orientations and prioritisations may differ between museums and even staff members, resulting in associated arrangements of 'action possibilities' which impact user engagement.

As I illustrate in this chapter, OM staff draw together different social and technical facets of the museum, such as people, relationships, tools, objects and or spaces, based on a frame of what they value, creating infrastructures that support their outreach practices and shape user engagement. Infrastructures can be created through the assembling of objects, technologies, people, and social practice underpinned by certain values and norms to support a task or everyday work. Museum infrastructures can therefore be envisioned as multiple messy interconnected systems that overlap, intersect, and collide and which are socially maintained and constituted. Understanding how infrastructures are constituted by the OM staff to

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support outreach in this chapter, creates a foundation for imagining if/how these ideals can be applied to and supported by social media.

Situating the OM within Glasgow Museums

According to Julian Spalding, visionary director of GM (1989–1998) and key founder of the OM, they envisioned the OM as a museum that moved beyond performative promises of accessibility (Spalding, 2010, p. 121). The OM was experimental, an outreach institution founded as a pilot project in 1990 that initially consisted of five staff members. It was funded by Glasgow District Council, and Strathclyde Regional Council who provided the OM with additional support through Strathclyde's Education and Social Services departments (Dodd et al., 2002; Spalding, 2010). The OM is an institution without walls (meaning it has no physical venue) and from its formation was intended to engage groups who are typically excluded from cultural heritage activities and are often considered marginalised, with the intention of creating social impact. This is evident by the social agenda or remit of each OM curator which includes experiences of being in confined spaces (associated with mental health and incarceration), poverty and homelessness, migration, and ageing. As represented by these social concerns, it is not simply enough to offer 'access' to cultural heritage: many participants face social inequalities and injustices, and part of the OM's work is being flexible in enabling forms of individual and community participation to challenge processes of social exclusion.

The OM seems to embody and merge the two types of museum strategies described by Sandell (1998) as agents of social inclusion, including working with specific community groups and leveraging the museum's public communicative and educational capacity in public venues. The museum staff describe themselves as reaching out, bringing participants and objects together in unique ways to co-create and facilitate projects that address participants' interests and needs. Specifically, staff have adopted a participatory ethos, acting as 'catalysts' to support participants and groups to drive their own projects and concerns, often working in strong partnership with a variety of non-profit organisations. According to O'Neill (2002),

> The Open Museum, despite its high ideals, recognises that it is just one contributor among many to inclusion. Just as exclusion is a result of a complex of reinforcing factors (poverty, ill health, poor education, unemployment, racial discrimination, disability), inclusion comes about when a system of reinforcing support enables individuals to break through to a place where they can take advantage of the opportunities offered by society.
>
> (p. 3)

Since its formation, the OM has continued to work closely with Glasgow-based community groups and non-profit partners. Together, they facilitate workshops, create unique projects, handling kits (boxes of collections objects), and develop

exhibits which tour in museum and non-museum venues such as libraries, schools, and malls, often using real collection objects (GM staff D_IN).[1] These exhibits and projects are driven by local communities and are intended to address their interests and/or concerns, emphasising the museum's responsive and flexible nature (Dodd et al., 2002). The OM also strives to push the boundaries of representation and participation of the other Glasgow Museums by calling into question the role of the institution in creating and exhibiting heritage narratives, in terms of who they include and exclude and which stories they fail to address (Addington et al., 2010). As a result, the OM has been at the forefront of experimenting with new collection and curatorial practices. From these initiatives, it appears that the OM strives for inclusivity in terms of representation, participation, and access by reaching out and working with under-served communities.[2]

Strategies of inclusion for social change have been described as reliant on an institution's embeddedness in its networks and communities, and its ability to respond to their needs (Dodd & Sandell, 2001; Janes & Sandell, 2019). One study suggested the OM's success in this regard by revealing the museum's beneficial impacts on participants/collaborators, including an increase in their skills, motivation, self-confidence, and an altered view of GM (Dodd et al., 2002). The study further revealed how museum objects enhanced formal and informal learning, facilitated personal and group social connections, and assisted in not only representing diverse identities but validating diverse experiences (Dodd et al., 2002). During my placement, importance was placed by OM staff on the aspects of outreach projects and sessions that enabled social and emotional connections between participants, including opportunities for informal chats and check-ins often around coffee and biscuits, but also importantly the connective capacity of collection objects. While many of the GM institutions strive to meet participant and local community needs, the OM has flexibility due to operating 'on the edge' of the institution. This position has benefits in enabling staff to prioritise the needs of surrounding communities but also results potentially, in an unsteady relationship between the OM and the larger institution.

In part, socially inclusive practices across GM were envisioned as being cultivated through a process of the museum service not only 'breathing out but [also] breathing in' (Spalding, 2010, p. 121).[3] That is, the museums would not only reach out to engage local communities but also bring that engagement and learnings *into* the museum, particularly through the work of OM. The OM as a small dynamic and responsive team was intended to contribute to larger infrastructural change: GM through OM's satellite work, methods and ethos would encourage and enable new ways of working across the institutions which would minimise the gap between the realities of local communities and the museum service (Spalding, 2010). One aspect of this work was the re-organisation of GM staff in the early 2000s to include Education and Access curators and staff who would link the OM's participants, partners, and concerns with the other museum venues (McPherson, 2010; O'Neill, 2006). These staff members and their role in the museums, were seen as pivotal and were thus, put on par with the role of 'curator'. The OM's way of working has continued to be taught through curator secondments – a period in which GM

curators across the institutions work with OM staff to learn and apply community engagement methodologies.

However, there are some contradictory voices that lament the limited impact the OM has had on the infrastructure and associated practices of the other museums. As Dodd et al. (2002) reflects, despite the institutional changes made to GM in pursuing a service-wide socially inclusive approach,

> perhaps the Open Museum is still serving as a focus for the inclusion for the service as a whole – a role which may in some way absolve some other parts of the service from bridging the gap between the museums and the people of Glasgow.
>
> (p. 44)

One OM staff member echoed this sentiment, similarly suggesting,

> ...the Open Museum has been working this way for a very long period of time and the way that we work has gradually trickled a little bit through to the institution, but I think that there is probably a long way to go.
>
> (GM staff L_IN)

Despite ongoing institutional changes within GM as a whole, there are some persistent contradictions within the museum organisation. However, from my initial experiences at curatorial forums,[4] it appeared that staff across GM are actively working to challenge inequalities associated with social exclusion through upcoming displays and in some cases, by collaborating with community groups. Within the curatorial forums I attended there was often a focus on changing narratives within the institution: this included the refurbishment of the People's Palace, an upcoming city exhibition on the legacies of slavery, and the revamping of the Scottish Identity gallery in Kelvingrove Museum. In turn, there were discussions around 'who' would be involved in community collaborations and the 'how' for these projects. Further, recent partnerships and projects evidence a continued push for institution-wide approaches to connecting with communities (O'Neill et al., 2020).

On the other hand, in many ways the larger institution still appears to be catching up with or 'breathing in' the OM's methods of working. A need for GM to still breathe-in OM's practices was first highlighted for me at a curatorial forum which took place in the basement of Kelvingrove Museum. Drinking tea out of colourful reusable cups the curators had assembled, as they do every 6–8 weeks, to discuss in an 'open space', their ideas, achievements, and to develop shared strategies and standards. This was also a space for staff to chit-chat with colleagues and discuss ideas informally. A couple of moments within these meetings highlight that despite the diversity of projects, GM is still breathing in the OM's inclusive ways of working through wheezy breaths. At one meeting, a GM' curator discussed their secondment with the OM and their time working with OM staff on community collecting. In their discussion, they joked about the fast-paced nature of the OM, claiming that the team can finish a project in the time it takes for a curator to write a label (ME).[5]

This was met with several chuckles and smiles on the part of the forum and perhaps a shared acknowledgement of this joke containing some truth.

While humorous, this jest hints at the disconnections that persist between the OM and the larger museum service. The OM is valued and perhaps idealised for its ability to contribute to the inclusive and well-being initiatives of the institution – it is, as perceived by Dodd et al. (2002), perhaps placed with too much onus over this responsibility. One OM team Zoom meeting exemplified this; during a meeting in June 2020, the OM staff reflected on the Black Lives Matter movement. Staff questioned how the museums could make real change to the way they work, who is involved and what projects are deemed as important. One suggestion of many the team made, was a need for a collaborative and cohesive approach across the institutions to action going forward (ME).[6] The team brought these concerns to senior members of staff but as conveyed through team meetings, were disappointed by the response which made staff feel responsible for institutional change. This resulted in OM staff expressing dejection, but as I noted in my observations at the associated meeting, many were still motivated to try their best and lead by example (ME).[7]

Despite this significant responsibility, some have observed that the OM is not consistently provided with the necessary institutional support, due in part, to working in different ways from the central organisation (Edwards, 2010). As its first Senior Curator, Nat Edwards (2010) suggests, part and parcel to the OM's role is working against engrained institutional cultures often upsetting colleagues (p. 123). While many of the OM's principles and practices are now embedded more widely in the institution's infrastructure as evident by the extension of their work through Education and Access curators, McPherson (2010), a previous OM staff reflects, 'it often didn't feel like that [was happening]' due to the need for the 'constant reiteration and defence of its [OM's] principles' (p. 124).[8] As discussed in the previous chapter, this lack of support may also be due to a legacy of larger institutional priorities which can sometimes sway towards attracting external audiences over engaging local communities. Significantly, these tensions have resulted in staff feeling compelled to push the institution for social responses and to meet the team's needs or to justify their work. As a result, the way the OM works and operates has also been expressed by staff as coming into conflict with the structure and practices of the larger GM; in fact, it is sometimes defined in opposition to the larger institution.

The OM is at once a living symbol of the digital era, embodying a mobile form of media due to its unique 'virtual' structure, which is networked across local communities and is participatory and social. Yet staff, at the start of my placement, used social media and other forms of digital media for that matter, infrequently in their outreach activities.[9] During my fieldwork at the OM, it became evident that this is in part, due to the challenging nature of GM infrastructure as a whole (discussed in the previous chapter). However, significantly it is also due to a discrepancy in the significance that the OM staff attribute to analogue over social media engagement due to the structures that support and sustain staff's routine practices. If we consider practices associated with the OM's work, we can understand how

these practices are perceived to contribute to social inclusion initiatives and in turn, influences perceptions of and significance attributed to social media.

Specifically, implicit hierarchies of value and knowledge result in certain possibilities for social inclusion work and not others. This aligns closely with the concept of infrastructures: infrastructures are 'poetic', meaning they also represent something greater, including the social values of staff (Larkin, 2013). Consequently, I use the concept of infrastructures to paint a picture of the overlaps and tensions between an inclusive museum practice and social media use. In doing so, I identify an infrastructure for social inclusion work by observing the elements and associated relations that OM staff frequently draw together to carry out everyday practices associated with this type of work. These elements and structures as I will depict below, include the 'physicality' of museum collections, safe and welcoming spaces for participants, and lastly, a focus on reaching out to and working with hardly reached groups and individuals.

An infrastructure for social inclusion work

In the work of the OM staff there is a strong focus on the role of material objects. In particular, 'objects and wellbeing' is one of the mantras of the OM, and it is this centrality around material objects that structures the everyday outreach work of staff and their inclusive practices (Addington et al., 2010). For example, the OM, sometimes in collaboration with groups of participants, creates and loans out handling kits which are also frequently used in outreach sessions. These kits contain real or 'authentic' museum collections that together address a specific theme or relevant topic. Authentic, in this instance, refers to physical objects that are registered as part of the main museum collections, rather than props, digital surrogates, or objects that have been formally deaccessioned. As I have quoted elsewhere, handling kits are considered to be the 'bread and butter' of the work that the OM does (Kist & Tran, 2021, p. 412).[10] The handling kits consist of a range of authentic objects within a case that is handcrafted by the OM's in-house carpenter. They also frequently contain supplementary material, such as laminated images and interpretation for facilitators to help provide context. From reminiscence to breaking the ice between a new group of participants, and inspiring different participatory projects, these kits and their objects are meant to be social and emotional connectors or act as 'social' objects (Simon, 2010). They are a mediator that triggers participant stories, an understanding of their experiences, and social and emotional connections across participants, staff, and the public.

Throughout my participation at the OM team meetings and attendance at events, I observed that authentic collection objects are imbued by staff with significance; objects have the power to inspire, to entice sharing, connect participants, trigger memories and emotions or to ironically, make people uncomfortable or uncertain. As one staff member remarked, expressing concern about the interaction that the objects could cultivate or hinder, 'you go out with a box, and you think "what if they don't like it or it's not their cup of tea?" (GM staff B_IN). Another suggested in planning an upcoming outreach project the need to pick out objects bright in

their own way (ME),[11] referring to their ability to inspire. It is specifically the materiality that is often privileged as having this sensory and in turn, effective power. It is the ability to touch and feel the weight of objects, to pass them around, something that the OM really had to push GM' Conservation Department for in its early years (Addington et al., 2010). As a result, staff may attribute less value to interaction around collection objects through social media. Infrastructures, particularly those that have served as a long-term base or foundation for practice, also known as an 'installed base', are typically created through complex historical processes having implications for how current and future practices can take place (Aanestad et al., 2017).

The 'historical' development of the OM's work and their practices which constitute infrastructures are complex but also continuously developing. Much time and effort has been and still is, invested by OM staff into the possibility of object handling for participatory projects. As suggested in an interview with an OM staff member:

> We work very closely with Conservation to do this, as inside the kits are genuine museum objects they are "not props or replicas"; they are genuine museum objects, so these have to be checked with our specialists that they are able to be handled.
>
> (GM staff K_IN)

Such time and effort speak to the conception of using real collection objects as embodying a 'top-tier form of service' for community groups. Therefore, the bread and butter of outreach activities tends to be these kits and fundamental to the handling kits are their material aspects. Such a focus on the physical objects may imply that online or virtual copies and the associated interaction are considered to be less effective and potentially in some circumstances, a disservice to community groups.

Another OM staff member also emphasised that physical objects play an important role in their work and that they have a hard time imagining working with virtual elements or objects:

> [O]ther people may have different opinions on it, but from my point of view, I think actually having it [the object], you know getting to feel the weight of it, getting to look at it – its texture and smells. Because obviously the object is not just about a thing, it has got so much more to it – it has a smell, all the intricacies of it that you wouldn't get from an image.
>
> (GM staff L_IN)

Another staff member remarking on their outreach experiences with groups, reflected that 'I still get surprised that people get so into a pile of fairly random things…' They go on to suggest that this interest may be due to the authentic museum frame as signifying '…more of a preciousness, I don't know...' (GM staff B_IN). Further, during COVID-19, a staff member critically remarked that without the physical objects and the in-person factor, the work they were doing

was a 'shadow' compared to previous offline engagement (discussed further in Chapter 5).

Such value attributed to authentic objects may be traced back to the engagement and learning practices of museum work, and barriers to accessing collections. For instance, in discussing engagement, an OM staff member also talked about how education in museums used to be viewed as sullying collection objects. Consequently, public engagement and learning used to be separated from the collections and siloed to the 'underbelly' of the museum (GM staff L_IN). As a result, the staff member argues that the virtual should not exist on its own. In making this connection between past and present engagement practices, they imply that to use just the virtual object, would result in a similar disconnection between visitor interaction and learning from the physical collections. Without a connection to the physical collection objects, social media engagement would be a reiteration of traditional practices which de-valued, even prohibited engagement around museum objects. Moreover, a focus on materiality may be in response to long lasting institutional conflicts regarding preservation and physical access to collections. In particular, a history of museum staff fighting for object handling potentially manifests in their anxiety over institutional regression associated with digital investment. This was expressed by one GM staff member during COVID-19, indicating the impact of this history on digital practices today:

> The dangers in the way forward, the reasons why I would say let's not accept we are going to do this all digitally, the danger in the way forward is that we fought for years to put our hands on objects, we fought for years to bring down barriers and all of these new rules are a very very easy way to put all those barriers up without question. So, I think that – I don't know, it has taken a long time to make museums as interactive as they are, it didn't just happen.
>
> (GM staff Z_IN)

During my own experiences with the OM there was less concern for object handling causing institutional conflicts, with staff reaffirming that conservation staff can now, only make recommendations and cannot make final display decisions. Perhaps, partly due to this history, as Dodd et al. (2002) recounts and observed in my own research, although led by community initiatives, the collections continue to be a central focus of the OM (p. 43). In turn, the value attributed to museum objects in part, sustains the identity and social role of OM staff; as one staff argued, '… we are the objects, that's what museums are' (GM staff K_IN). Similarly, another staff suggested, '…if you are doing something that doesn't have any focus on the collections then you don't really need a museum to do that' (GM staff H_IN). Such commentary emphasises the intricate relationship between the physical collections and staff's role and identity.

The disconnection between engagement with authentic collections and the use of social media is also evident by a staff member in their reaction to a series of OM social media posts. These posts were about an intervention as part of a city-wide festival called 'To absent friends' which was done in collaboration with an organisation known as Invisible Cities. As discussed briefly in Chapter 3, the

posts consisted of images of contemporary shoes that staff collected and placed within the city centre to draw awareness of and honour people who had died in Glasgow while homeless. The posts garnered significant interaction, leading to comments and shares. This caused one team member to reflect, '[i]t is also odd because it wasn't museum objects you know, it wasn't our collection' and '[i]ts strange isn't it, we are kind going in circles now, it's kind of an art piece actually if you think about it' (GM staff B_IN). These reflections support the value staff typically imbue material objects with due to their ability to inspire connections and in doing so, embody a high level of service. Such reflections imply that by providing not just virtual interaction but material interaction around authentic objects, staff are expressing care for their participants and community groups.

In turn, the OM's social media posts reflect this prioritisation of the physical objects and interaction around material, with little use of object interpretation or storytelling through social media (at the start of my research in autumn 2019). Rather, much of the social content was sharing past events or marketing for upcoming events, often using images of participant's hands. These social posts emphasise that the interaction that takes place during physical sessions are viewed as worthy of being shared through social media, rather than focusing on social media as a stand-alone for developing other forms of interaction. Reflecting on the challenges of using social media for participation, one staff suggested, '[i]t seems silly and odd to post images of hands or places people won't recognise and not understand the why' (GM staff B_IN). Thus, there is recognition that the prioritisation of material engagement may be hindering social media use. Similarly, another staff described the OM's initial approach to social media as '…more for awareness raising in terms of events, not really a set plan but put things out there and hope people were interested' (GM staff H_IN). Therefore, a lack of attempts at enacting inclusive practices online coupled with a tendency to broadcast could be due to a lack of resources and the prioritisation of analogue outreach activities over social media engagement.

However, another element of this infrastructure for social inclusion work has to do with associated safe, welcoming spaces. An infrastructure is composed of several elements and systems which are open-ended, 'relational, connected, and emerging and accreting' (Karasti & Blomberg, 2018, p. 241). In this case, an infrastructure for social inclusion work is also constituted by another facet – safe and welcoming spaces. The necessity of safe spaces can be attributed to two aspects of OM's social inclusion work, the first is creating space for participants to share and express themselves, initiating connections even with topics that might be challenging. The second, is for staff to be able to listen to participants' interests and needs and help adjust projects, co-create, and collaborate accordingly. For instance, regarding the first aspect, in facilitating engagement and discussion potentially around difficult topics that the objects may trigger, one OM staff argued that museum practitioners need a 'certain amount of skills and techniques to facilitate conversations in a physical space'; however, on social media, '…you put something out there in the sphere of Twitter or social media,

you cannot manage that space for dialogue, it's just, there is a comment out there, have a chat about it' (GM staff K_IN).

Therefore, in their typical outreach practices, engagement around objects in a physical space often takes the form of dialogue and is seen to necessitate a moderator and physical space, something that is less applicable to social media. That is to say, the individuals and groups the OM works with may have faced hardships and diverse experiences which when brought up in discussion require a level of sensitivity. The groups/individuals staff work with are associated with each curator's portfolio area which are based on aspects of social impact and well-being. As previously mentioned, this includes working with people who have experienced migration/forced migration, homelessness and poverty, being in confined spaces (associated with mental health challenges and incarceration), and challenges associated with ageing in Glasgow. Their circumstances and lived experiences, whether triggered through objects or as being expressed and made accessible to other groups through exhibitions or other interpretations such as handling kits, require a level of comfort and trust. This is exemplified by the OM staff's own experiences, from which they suggest that only after strong relationships are formed '…you can do very experimental things, sometimes with controversial and sometimes with difficult subjects because the partnerships are now so solid…' (GM staff K_IN).

In the OM's work the creation of safe and welcoming spaces is also connected to staff's ability to listen to and accommodate participants, adjusting projects to meet their interests and needs. OM staff suggested that they must approach participatory projects with a laid-back philosophy to accommodate the complicated lives of participants. For a project to be successful, there must be communication and collaboration between participants and staff: it 'is done in partnership, very strongly in partnership. You don't go in with any pre-conceived ideas and it is shaped the whole way through by the group you are working with and it's not you – the museum professional going in and throwing your weight around' (GM staff L_IN). Similarly, another OM staff described the importance of listening to community groups:

> they might come to you and say we want to do something around this theme [….] so they have ownership, […] and I say, "I can show you this or this or this" and let them choose the objects. I don't want to influence it, being a "curator" in quotation marks.
>
> (GM Staff K_IN)

Staff further suggested that catering to participants also requires integrating opportunities and spaces for communication throughout the life of a project:

> projects can change as they are happening which is why having the opportunity to sit down and talk to the group while the project is happening, to have a cup of tea, and talk and see how the project is going, and where they see it going, rather than thinking this isn't going very well but let's just run with it.
>
> (GM staff L_IN)

Creating safe and welcoming spaces is therefore very important to support participant and staff dialogue whether for facilitating emotional and social connections or for adjusting projects to meet participants' interests and needs.

As discussed above, in the work of the OM team, safe spaces for dialogue are associated with participants' ability to form social connections and express themselves, which requires the cultivation of trusting relationships between staff and participants, and a sensitive moderator. Moreover, safe spaces for dialogue are also associated by staff with their ability to adapt and adjust practices by ensuring that there is space and time to change projects, through for instance, informal check-ins with participants over tea. Creating these spaces for connections and dialogue is also reliant on the small group format that often characterises OM's work. As one staff member suggested, enabling positive social outcomes often necessitates focusing on small groups (GM staff L _IN). This speaks to similar conceptions in museum literature of cultivating safe spaces for participants to share and connect by creating a non-stigmatising environment through staff's ability to invest their attention and express sensitivity and friendliness (Morse, 2020; Silverman, 2010). Yet, such a position implies the application of traditional object-engagement and associated 'safe spaces' for 'dialogue' to social media which limits potential actions or engagement opportunities. That is, these elements together act as a substrate for socially inclusive practices to happen and user engagement, enabling certain forms of engagement and not others.

While these two elements (objects and safe spaces) in part, construct an infrastructure for social inclusion work, 'who' counts as participants within OM's outreach remit makes the value of social media work somewhat ambiguous. In turn, resulting in a critical perception of social media in relation to staff roles. Staff's roles are closely associated with local communities in Glasgow which are both hardly reached and may be under-served. In describing their social inclusion work, a defining factor is the process of going out or reaching out to local communities who typically cannot or will not visit the museum institution. This element of their work is often described in opposition to the larger GM institution, with staff reflecting that there can sometimes be a conflict between its focus on large publics with reference to tourism and its tension with a prioritisation on the local realities of Glaswegian communities. During COVID-19, this became increasingly explicit with staff reflecting that even with a pervasive increase in digital media use by GM, the OM's remit is specifically local which is due not only to the OM's mission but is also in part tied to their funding which is through city council tax. As I have quoted elsewhere, one staff member critically reflected during the challenging and exhausting periods of lockdowns, '…so what I've been doing is sticking to I think local, [which] is the most important thing for me. We're outreach right, so our target is vulnerable communities and so on (GM staff K_IN)' (Kist & Tran, 2021, p. 413).[12]

Infrastructures are in part sustained by the systems that are aligned or misaligned against them. In this case, the larger institution's occasional leniency towards a broader audience focus also enables and defines a local element in relation to OM staff's identity and their social inclusion work. However, there was also recognition

by OM staff of the potential benefits that social media could have for local communities and the representation of their voices on a larger scale. For example, the OM's adjunct project in collaboration with the British Council called Our Shared Cultural Heritage was actively working to provide a space for South-East Asian cultural heritage on Twitter. To do so, a contracted staff member would work with young local participants to amplify their voices and heritage, suggesting social media could fit within an inclusive practice if it benefited the participation and representation of participants.

Despite a local focus, the OM team have experimented with social media in other ways. For instance, staff members have attempted to replicate reminiscence on social media using collection objects, calling for user participation. However, these attempts were few in the social media sample analysed (in autumn 2019), suggesting a lack of investment in comparison to facilitating analogue material engagement which takes precedence. There was a sense of defeat when we discussed this creative use of social media in an interview prior to beginning my placement with the OM, in that staff did not think these posts could get the quantity of public participation observable on other areas of the web (GM staff D_IN). While these posts are a sign of thinking and practicing social media creatively, they also emphasise and reaffirm the value that is placed on existing museum modes of engagement with authentic collection objects by trying to replicate these sessions through social media. Geismar (2018) suggests that the digital tends to replicate museum practices and associated issues of value, classification, narration, and perspective in gallery displays. Comparatively, digital collections should be perceived as new material forms rather than simply representations of old collections, or in this case, new forms of engagement (Boast & Enote, 2013).

Beyond these flashes of insight, during my fieldwork, staff often seemed reluctant to work with and post on social media. Suggestions for complementing outreach events with social media use were often put off or delayed to the point that it seemed incompatible with the reactionary nature of social media. For instance, when crowdsourcing user perspectives through social media for an upcoming photography exhibit, social media was seen by staff more as a last resort rather than a primary mode of engagement. It was voted to be used last minute, due to a lack of community contributions rather than as a unique way to connect the exhibit with virtual contributions (ME).[13] In fact, beyond social media use, one of the initial ideas for the community photography exhibit was to encourage participants to use polaroid cameras rather than digital or mobile phones. Staff valued the idea of participants sharing a tangible object and in turn, being able to give participants a material object (their photo) to take home after the exhibit (ME).[14] This highlights the value staff attribute to the in-person interaction and physical objects which can take precedence over online media. The OM's local focus and the prioritisation of material objects and associated safe spaces together both puncture and determine the envisioned experience and perceived value of other structures for supporting their social inclusion work.

The intersection of museum infrastructures

Despite the inertia in OM's social media use, caused by their infrastructure for everyday social inclusion work, it is also important to note its intersection with other dimensions that constitute GM' infrastructures. Importantly, what appears to be staff's reluctance and de-prioritisation of social media is perpetuated by other facets of the larger GM, including the restrictions placed on social media use or red tape, tension between institutional priorities, and a politics of value. For the OM team, the intersection between larger organisational factors associated with red tape further hinder staff's interest and investment in navigating the structures of social media and exploring its potential for inclusive practices.

As raised in staff meetings, some staff were fearful about posting something that could be perceived as inappropriate, and further Sprout Social requires training and practice – so generally there was a concern about doing something wrong (ME).[15] This uncertainty in the face of control further bumps into and propels the value attributed by the OM to their routine analogue practices which are sustained by the relations between physical museum objects, safe spaces, and the prioritisation of local/hardly reached audiences. This results in less value being attributed to social media use. While a desire exists to engage with communities and work towards social goals in diverse ways, including through social media, the lack of autonomy is an additional factor that increases OM's hesitancy towards social media. Further, the OM's use of social media due to the nature of their unique work could be challenging for the institution as a whole.

Infrastructures are embedded in social practices and are closely associated with staff's values and sense of self; thus, we can understand the OM staff's practices as constituted by authentic collection objects, associated safe spaces for dialogue, and a particular audience remit as expressing and sustaining their role as a socially engaged and inclusive institution. Specifically, these elements sustain staff's role as catalysts which is described in two ways. The first is through catalysing connections across participants: as one staff member explained, 'there's the main thing which is about social connections and us, and us being a sort of...facilitator isn't the right word...I'm looking for a better term – almost like a catalyst I guess of those social connections' (GM staff H_IN). The second, is by catalysing the creation of unique projects: as another staff member described,

> I always see myself as a catalyst I don't see myself as a stand-alone museum person, I am just a catalyst that helps make things happen. You know the collections and the community groups and me in the middle just kind of facilitating it.
>
> (GM staff L_IN)

Thus, on the one hand, these elements of OM's infrastructure for social inclusion work enable connections and opportunities for understanding across participants. On the other hand, they enable staff to privilege participant agency by opening-up opportunities for communication and in turn, collaboration, and co-creation to

pursue participants' needs. As a result, staff invest into offline practices and social inclusion work, as the elements that constitute and sustain this work may appear to be contradictory to the limitations and potentials of social media.

These dimensions of social inclusion work, while enacted by the OM team in contextually specific ways, has been discussed in broader literature as having significance for social inclusion work. For instance, working closely with marginalised communities and particularly those local to the museum, has long been tied to institutional missions of social inclusion (McCall, 2009; Morse, 2019; Sandell, 1998). Cultivating safe spaces through sensitive moderators and establishing trusting relationships to collaborate and co-create are defined as pivotal for authentic and ethical social inclusion work (Boersma, 2022, p. 98; Morse, 2020). Finally, physical collections and their sensory abilities have been valued for enabling social and emotional connections, and even understanding across participants (Sandell, 2007; Silverman, 2010). From this perspective, social media not only at the OM but also broadly across the museum field, can seem at odds with social inclusion work. However, as will be discussed in the following chapters, an infrastructure for social inclusion work can be translated in various ways to the context of social media, albeit changing both staff practices and potentially the resulting value for participants and users.

Conclusion

To conclude, the OM can be envisioned as networked, fluid, and participatory but rooted in the construction of a specific infrastructure for social inclusion work. The museum's collection objects, their audience remit, and the reliance on safe spaces enables their social inclusion work to take place. However, the perceived value of these dimensions of their work, can create disconnections between social initiatives and staff practices with the social web. Aanestad et al. (2017), in discussing changes to infrastructure, suggests that such changes are dependent on constraints, encompassing existing institutional/regulatory social and technical provisions, shaping what can realistically be realised in this context (pp. 28–29).

From this perspective, we must ask if, how and with what resources can the OM and more broadly, museum staff adapt existing infrastructures they draw on for their social inclusion work to social media? In doing so, would the drawing together of users, objects, spaces, and associated resources still sustain social inclusion work? Answers to such questions, as illuminated through the remaining chapters, require staff's ability to enact active listening, experiment with social media, and be mindful of social media's affordances. Developing and enacting these underpinning skills, however, may in part, be dependent upon negotiating institutional priorities and breaking down museum structures of power and control.

Notes

1 As a reminder, the reference to data in text obtained from Glasgow Museums encompasses a staff pseudonym as GM staff 'alphabetical letter'_ 'type of data' such as

participant observations which include reflections (OB), meeting notes (ME) and interviews (IN).

2 It is important here to note that despite similarities observed in methods of working, social work as a profession is different from museum outreach and practices. Yet, museums are applying social work goals and frameworks, and collaborating with social work professionals (Silverman, 2010, p. 147). As suggested by O'Neill (2002), social inclusion can come about through a networked and collaborative approach to challenging social exclusion – requiring museum staff and other non-profits, community members, and social workers to collaborate.

3 Used with permission of Glasgow Museums from Perspectives: Behind the Open Museum by Spalding, J. in *Out there. The Open Museum: Pushing the Boundaries of Museums' Potential* edited by Macleod, F. ©2010.

4 This institutional wide meeting happening every six to eight weeks in which curators share and update about their work and address upcoming, changes, events, ideas, and concerns.

5 Meeting notes from June 19, 2019.

6 Meeting notes from July 21, 2020.

7 Meeting notes from June 10, 2020.

8 Used with permission of Glasgow Museums from Perspectives: Behind the Open Museum by McPherson, M: in *Out there. The Open Museum: Pushing the Boundaries of Museums' Potential* edited by Macleod F. ©2010.

9 Significantly, there is evidence that the OM pioneered early uses of digital technologies for engaging with audiences at Glasgow Museums in the early 2000s, for insight into the development of digital interactive technologies across Glasgow Museums see Mathews (forthcoming 2024).

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11 Meeting notes from June 24, 2020.

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13 Meeting notes from January 22, 2020.

14 Meeting notes from October 16, 2019.

15 Meeting notes from October 29, 2019; February 21, 2020.

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5 Translating museum social inclusion work to social media

The Open Museum's (OM) everyday social inclusion work is often reliant on the use of physical 'authentic' collections, the creation of safe spaces for participants, and reaching out to and working with hardly reached audiences. Together, these elements create an underpinning infrastructure that sustains the OM's work and identity, having been shaped by the institution's mission, organisational context, and a history of staff practices. In this chapter, I illuminate how the OM staff can and do translate the dimensions that constitute this infrastructure for social inclusion work to social media, motivated by the disruptive period of COVID-19. To deepen understanding of how these dimensions can be creatively enacted by other cultural heritage institutions, I draw together the social media practices of three other museums (referred to as mini case studies),[1] providing diverse multi-faceted perspectives. These mini case studies encompass institutions leading impactful community work: the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) in Washington D.C. (US) the Myseum in Toronto (Canada), and a migration museum (MM).[2] By bringing these institutions' social media practices into conversation, I illustrate the 'how' of translation in re-shaping dimensions of museums' social inclusion work to online contexts.

However, translation is just one socio-technical process or 'negotiation' important for carrying out social inclusion work online. In the following chapter, I consider the three mini case studies through another lens to exemplify how 'tinkering' is similarly essential for aligning social media practices with the museum's social inclusion work and social role. Together these two processes are underpinned by key skills: these skills encompass staff's ability to *listen* to users and their social contexts, be *mindful* of how the affordances of social media can be leveraged for social inclusion work, and finally, approach social media *experimentally*. In turn, as staff participate in these negotiations or tug-and-pulls between social and technical structures through translation and tinkering, they continuously build an embodied knowledge of social media's potentials and limits, and its relevance for their work and communities.

Infrastructures are actively and consciously built but also grown through habitual social practice and learned as a part of membership, often becoming 'invisible' as they are embedded into everyday museum work. In the case of the OM, aspects of their social inclusion work, including a particular user remit of under-served

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individuals and groups, the use of materiality for their effective capacities, and associated safe welcoming spaces for participants can hinder social media use. This is because the affordances of social media platforms can appear to be contradictory to these aspects which sustain staff's social role, identity, and existing practices. However, I use the concept and term 'infrastructure' in this chapter to emphasise its ability not only to structure opportunities for participation but also its susceptibility to change. Specifically, while some infrastructures are more enduring and static than others, they are always open-ended and can fluctuate or be altered (Karasti & Blomberg, 2018). The elements that constitute an infrastructure and their relations are permeable to change: infrastructures are not static but are porous or, pulling on Anthropologist Ingold's (2013) description of objects – they are 'leaky' and are susceptible to transformation (p. 95).

Infrastructures are always grafted onto an existing world or 'base'. Thus, when a new system or technology is introduced, existing infrastructure provides both the limits and the potential from which it can be transformed (Aanestad et al., 2017). Translation takes place when an infrastructure moves to different contexts requiring adaption, tweaks, and changes to meet new regulations, standards, and expectations (B. Larkin, 2013, p. 330). As infrastructures are, in part, constructed by routine social practices, the destabilisation of infrastructures must take place in a crisis of everyday routine with agents or staff facing an unfamiliar situation (Reckwitz, 2002). The transformation and disruption of infrastructures are closely intertwined with the idea of affordances. Affordances in this book are associated with the elasticities of social media and different possibilities of applying dimensions of social inclusion work to online platforms.

Affordances are not static traits of particular objects, but rather fluctuating possibilities of action due to the relation between the user of the object, the object itself, and the environment (Gibson, 2015). Bareither (2019), a Cultural and Digital Anthropologist, recently conceptualised affordances a step further; building off previous theorists, they argue for a closer connection to be made between practice and affordances. Affordances in themselves are influenced by the actor's tacit and embodied sense. As a result, they go on to explain that relationships between humans and technology are in part, dependent on emotion and other aspects of socio-technical contexts (Bareither, 2019, p. 12). Therefore, it could be said that the affordances of social media or its capacity to be used in different ways are influenced by the habitual and the embodied knowledge of OM staff in relation to an existing infrastructure for social inclusion work.

COVID-19 and disruptions to museum practices

The COVID-19 pandemic created a unique context that prompted many cultural heritage institutions to invest in diverse digital activities and institutional change, including Glasgow Museums (GM) and the OM. Albeit these changes are potentially temporary. The pandemic prompted cultural heritage staff such as those at GM to do new things, use unfamiliar digital tools, and importantly, to '…think of new ways of doing things…' (GM staff K_IN). Social distancing and a period of lockdown in the

UK motivated the OM to change their ways of working and move their engagement practices to online forms. As one OM staff member described, without the handling kits they were truly 'learning from scratch' (GM staff H_IN). As a result, the pandemic enabled and created a unique space for OM and other GM staff to learn and experiment with digital media. Staff cite that they had new time without the limitations imposed by 'the office' which constitutes limited access to certain websites and programmes (GM staff F_IN; GM staff B_IN), not to mention slow computers (GM staff G_IN) which for some, created a tangible buzz of excitement. 'I guess because none of that [digital practices and tools] is in place, it is quite exciting because you feel that you can maybe push some boundaries and take some risks that you wouldn't be taking otherwise…' (GM staff H_IN). This context seemed to provide the motivation and 'open' environment for the OM and potentially other institutions, to expand staff practices and incorporate new social media/online tools.

Research stemming from the museum field such as from the International Council of Museums (ICOM), cite the pandemic as cultivating a sector-wide pivot towards digital technologies and increased investment in its use (ICOM, 2020). Lockdowns motivated institutions to diversify their use of online platforms to engage for example in live streams, online exhibitions, games, and engagement through social media (Zuanni, 2021). Without the physical institutions and the typical context and tools to deliver everyday museum work, staff were pushed to consider alternative methods of working and diverse uses of platforms, with online media, such as social media in effect becoming the main mode of communication (Kidd & McAvoy, 2022). However, while staff may have diversified the types of social and digital content they created, in the case of institutions in the UK, evidence suggests that there was no increase in or sustained museum use/activity on Facebook or Twitter during the pandemic (J. Larkin et al., 2023, p. 641). Moreover, the period of the pandemic exposed how larger more resourced institutions were better digitally equipped to adapt quickly and sustain social media channels, while smaller and less resourced institutions struggled even more with maintaining social media posting and followers (J. Larkin et al., 2023).

Museums' diversified digital offerings during the pandemic also add an urgency to persistent questions regarding the value of such content and forms of engagement for audiences. A study on social media activity across cultural institutions in the UK and US, for example, showed that while institutional content increased, user engagement decreased (Ryder et al., 2021). Moreover, museum practices during the pandemic sparked critical reflection on the role of the museum in networked contexts, particularly for serving individuals and groups who face challenges associated with social isolation. On the one hand, such technologies potentially provide alternative pathways for social connection; on the other hand, such technologies can be inaccessible and as discussed in Chapter 1, can pose risks, particularly for marginalised individuals and groups.

Within remote projects during COVID-19, the OM staff tried to translate elements of their routine practice and associated structures to social and digital media, to enable the participation of hardly reached individuals and community groups. Translation, as will be further touched upon throughout this chapter, is

not necessarily about 'transposing' or 're-iterating' what existed before but rather a process of transforming and negotiating the relation between an infrastructure for social inclusion work and social media (Krämer, 2015). In a recent update shared with the larger institution, the OM staff explained during the pandemic, '[c]colleagues rose to the challenge of adapting what they do to allow people to get up close to artworks, make connections with their own lives and engage with objects…' (OB).[3] Another staff member reflecting on their virtual work suggested, '[v]ia the current climate, I think we have already started to think about what we traditionally deliver and how it is delivered and if this is still a "fit"' (GM staff L_IN). Through translation, staff attempt to re-create an inclusive infrastructure using social media and, in this process, some features of their work were emphasised, and others lost as each media creates standards and limits for translation.

Two projects during the pandemic, facilitated by the OM staff, provide insight into these translations and their relevance for sustaining social inclusion work online. Staff practices in these projects are a useful entry point to understand the negotiations that happen at the intersection of social media's potential and limits and staff's creative adaptions. In the following paragraphs, I first introduce the OM's projects during COVID-19 and the three mini case studies, followed by four deep-dives into staff's translations, encompassing shifts (1) towards immaterial effect:[4] from touch to staying in touch, (2) in audience remits by negotiating the local, and (3) in safe spaces by focusing on consent and sensitivity which are underpinned and perceived as valuable in part, by staff's ability to (4) cater to participant needs. I then bring these translations together to discuss if and how they sustain staff's social role.

Introducing the projects and mini case studies

The extended outreach activities of the OM staff during COVID-19 relied on several forms of online media. This included email, Zoom, Skype, YouTube videos, Facebook video chats and through a recent partner project with the British Council – Twitter, and continuing despite a period of increased restrictions, Instagram posts. Two of the OM's outreach projects are discussed in this chapter, as they highlight how tensions across social media and analogue practices were negotiated and their resulting value for social inclusion initiatives. The projects analysed from the OM include first, a weekly disco for people over 50, while the second project, 'Art Extraordinary' involved the creation/dissemination of YouTube videos based on a new handling kit connected to themes of mental health. The first project is a weekly disco which was part of a collaboration with a non-profit organisation that provides activities, adventures, and discos for older adults. During COVID-19, the non-profit partner who facilitates the discos created virtual dance activities and a series of virtual walks by using Facebook video chat, Skype, and Zoom. The OM continued their collaboration by facilitating short sessions within these discos through staff and volunteers, including myself, with images of museum objects on a weekly basis. These sessions encompassed prompts for sharing, reminiscence, and learning.

The second project, 'Art Extraordinary', is a creative collaboration between multiple partner organisations, the OM, and the University of Glasgow to interpret a collection of 'outsider art'.[5] This began as an analogue project involving several outreach and engagement sessions and the eventual co-creation of an exhibit and a handling kit. During the pandemic, several YouTube videos (eight were planned at the time of my placement) were a way to pilot the handling kit (Art Outside the Box) which was finished just prior to the initial lockdown in the UK. The handling kit includes pieces of artwork, different forms of interpretation, and activity prompts that became incorporated in different ways into the YouTube videos and shared with non-profit partners and participants. The discussion in this chapter draws on several remote projects and activities facilitated by the OM during the pandemic but is exemplified by the details of these two projects – the weekly discos and Art Extraordinary.

The analysis of the two OM projects (the discos and the Art Extraordinary YouTube videos) took place in different ways, due to different levels of access to project facilitators and participants, and in part, due to the extenuating circumstances of COVID-19. As a result of volunteering for the discos, I had personal experience in facilitating the museum sessions and was familiar to participants. Due to this connection, it was easier and perhaps more ethical to do interviews with participants and the non-profit facilitator from this project. Therefore, I was able to undertake five semi-structured interviews with disco participants, OM staff and a non-profit facilitator/partner. In comparison, I had limited access to the groups and individuals who were involved in the Art Extraordinary and the partner organisations but was able to interview OM staff about the projects and watch four associated YouTube videos.

The analysis of the three mini case studies (the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI), Myseum, and the migration museum (MM)) involved semi-structured interviews with a social media expert from each institution and a small thematic analysis of each institution's Instagram posts.[6] A brief introduction to these mini case studies and their respective missions for their social media pages will add further context to the following insights (see Table 5.1 for an overview). The NMAI is the accumulation of three different institutions, having a museum in New York and another in Washington D.C., along with an open-collections facility in Maryland. The NMAI is also part of the Smithsonian Institution, a collection of 21 cultural organisations, the National Zoo, and research facilities. The NMAI's mission concerning their social media, as described by a staff member, is '[w]ell I go by our mission statement which we partner with Native Peoples and we try and share Native voices…I want people to see the positive parts of Native people and the diversity'. While working towards social inclusion for this NMAI staff relates to partnering and sharing Native voices, both the Myseum and the MM take a similar approach but with different aims and contexts. The Myseum is a virtual museum in Toronto that does pop-up events and exhibitions online and offline. According to a Myseum staff, their goal in using social media is,

> just to and it sounds ambitious but, for people to have more of an understanding of the city that they live in, that they don't read in a textbook for

> instance…what we are doing and what we are trying to do with like trying to unearth and talk about these often-uncomfortable histories.

Thus, Myseum staff are active in seeking out underheard voices and stories to rectify historic and contemporary exclusion within Toronto. The MM, like the Myseum, is also a pop-up virtual museum that is concerned with how migration is valued and included in national and local narratives. According to the MM interviewee, social media as part of larger institutional projects 'is intended to create a forum for dialogue on migration stories…to make a case for why projects… [are] important to diversify the national narrative'. Despite shared social concerns, these institutions have key differences: the two virtual museums lack material collections (at the time of the research) and instead rely on oral histories and archival stories, while the NMAI has a large and unique object collection. The governance of these institutions also differs with the Myseum and MM operating off government grants and private donations, being governed by board members. Comparatively, NMAI is funded in part, by the United States Federal Government and is run as a part of the Smithsonian Institution. These differences in governance and access to collections frame and impact these museums' respective social media practices.

Table 5.1 Overview of the mini case studies

Museum	*Paraphrased social media missions*	*Location/structure*	*Quick facts*
The Myseum	To share 'your' Toronto stories, alterative histories, and uncover uncomfortable truths.	Canada Virtual pop-up museum	Established: 2015 Funded by: private funders and grants Collections: oral histories
National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI)	To share Native voices and perspectives and enable shared understanding through education.	USA (Washington D.C. on the mall) A physical venue – and a sister museum of three other venues[7]	Opened (on the Washington Mall): 2004 Funded by: donations and the American Government as part of the Smithsonian Institution Collections: 266,000 catalogue records[8]
Migration Museum (MM)	To create a forum for dialogue on migration and represent underheard communities.	Virtual pop-up museum	Established: 2015 Funded by: grants and private funders Collections: oral histories

While the three mini case studies exist in vastly different contexts and have very different institutional structures, they are all active in using their websites and social media for social inclusion in ways that align with the definition of social inclusion work posited in Chapter 1. This encompasses 'reaching out and working with' participants to challenge issues associated with social exclusion.

(Im)material effect: 'from touch to staying in touch'

A major aspect of the OM staff's everyday outreach work is the use of material objects and their sensory qualities. As discussed in Chapter 4, authentic collections described as 'tangible material objects' are valued for sparking social and emotional connections. Across the sector, museum objects and their sensory affordances are considered as essential for outreach, community engagement, and participation due to their ability to spark various feelings, connections, and conversations (Morse, 2014; Silverman, 2010). As one OM staff member explained, '…cause you have no clue about that person's background you don't know where they've come from and what they've experienced. It's not until you get them in contact with those objects that those stories start to develop' (GM staff L_IN). This was further emphasised by an OM staff member who discussed one project that shifted from analogue engagement sessions to an online version during the pandemic. In discussing their participants' online experiences, the staff member argued, 'I think the only reason this is actually even working is because the groups we've got have seen the objects, they've felt them, they've worked with them [in analogue sessions], they know what they feel like' (GM staff K_IN).

However, due to COVID-19, object handling, which often takes place with vulnerable groups became impossible and perhaps the most hazardous of the OM's activities. Consequently, in online projects, staff were pushed to leverage different affordances of social and digital media to try and still enable sensory entry points with collections and in turn, support participants' social and emotional connections. One OM staff member reflected on these changes, 'it's quite complicated, it's a bit strange thinking [about] how we will do outreach when we always take handling boxes' (GM staff B_IN). As a result, another staff member suggested, the transition to working online was a process of shifting from the centrality of object handling to social connections or from 'touch' to 'staying in touch' (GM staff K_IN), which was carried out in several ways. Staff's practices did not necessarily shift towards using objects as mediators of social connections, as this was already a key feature of the OM team's outreach work. Instead, the OM staff creatively leveraged different sensory affordances through social and digital media to still enable connections across participants. As another OM staff described, they shifted towards the visual elements of their work:

> I mean all of our object handling is very tactile, it's about getting very hands on with things. We can't do that right now, so we are very reliant on PowerPoints and sharing your screen which is obviously very different sort of approach in terms of what we can offer.
>
> (GM staff H_IN)

For example, in the disco sessions, images of museum objects and paintings were shared on video chats through screen-share using a variety of tools such as PowerPoint and photo galleries. During one session, staff encouraged participants to imagine themselves in the seascape and as recalled in a participant interview, this brought up rich memories of vacationing and surfing in Scotland (Participant A_IN). Despite their 'immateriality', the images and staff's prompts elicited user communication and, in doing so, acted as a contributor to participants' emotional and social connections. In another disco session, staff shared a painting by Beryl Cook titled 'Hen Party' and associated Scottish traditions. In doing so, they invited participants to share their own colourful hen parties, their memories, and traditions from alcohol to tea drinking to bride-to-be parades (OB).[9] During a themed walking tour of Egypt, an adjunct disco activity, I presented on some of the Egyptian artefacts from Glasgow Museums at different points in the tour. In the process, I felt a shared tangible excitement across participants, as some shared their own experiences of visiting the pyramids, which one interviewee recounted positively, suggesting that 'it is wonderful to hear people's stories and experiences of these places as opposed to a brochure description' (Participant C_IN).

Complementing these responses, the images of museum objects, according to some of the disco participants interviewed, enabled them to learn. As one participant described, 'some of the objects are quite intriguing, you try to guess what they are. You know, nine times out of ten I'm wrong anyways but it's so good to see how these ancient people lived their lives and the objects they used' (Participant E_IN). Moreover, the images contributed to social connections, by prompting participants to both hear and share each other's perspectives and experiences. The value participants placed on the opportunity to socially connect is also evident through the interviewees' emphasis on their enjoyment of the social aspects of the disco sessions and their reflections on how this helped them overcome feelings of isolation. As one participant described, 'it just seemed like good fun and good exercise as well, you know, and it stopped me feeling so isolated because I live alone, and it's been really, really, good' (Participant E_IN) (Kist, 2022, p. 108).

Similarly, in the OM's Art Extraordinary outreach engagement activities, staff used YouTube to trial the handling kit 'Art Outside the Box'. A staff member reflected on the inability to use physical objects during this process: to enhance the visuality and user connections through object-based activities, the staff member suggested that they felt the need to be explicit in their descriptions of the objects and 'crafty' with video editing:

> Because obviously if you have an object, you can just hold it and show it, whereas if you are doing an activity you have to be quite crafty with editing and being able to speak, and then in your video add in an image of the person, the object or add in a little bit of text. It's quite hard because of the objects.
>
> (GM staff_IN)

As a result, these YouTube videos of collection objects were embellished with different forms of interpretation, such as a poem created by participants in a previous

outreach session, titbits about artists featured in the Art Extraordinary handling kit, music, and activity prompts, providing different sensory entry points for users. In the process of 'fitting' practices to social media, staff had to lose some effective aspects of collection objects, such as touch and smell, but in doing so, emphasised other effective qualities such as sound, imaginative prompts, and visuality to sustain connections. Staff's prioritisation of other forms of sensory engagement through digital, aligns with a vast array of literature on the effective potential of the digital object as operating in a different way rather than in opposition to the analogue (Geismar, 2018).

On the other hand, a strategy of encouraging participants to use at-home objects to describe, share, and connect with each other was common across several of the OM's online projects during the COVID-19 lockdowns. This practice enabled a tactile element to be maintained in these sessions and shared through Twitter and Zoom. In the disco sessions, this included inviting users to share souvenirs and travel magnets from foreign places and their memories associated with each. As a result of still being able to enable connections through museum objects and across users, one OM staff member described the projects and associated user participation as extending their role as 'catalysts' of connections between the collections and participants. As the staff member recounts, the disco sessions like other outreach sessions are 'about people being able to connect to each other, and people to connect to the museum and museum objects…I suppose that is what I hope those do' (GM staff_IN). This perspective highlights that although some effective capacities of museum collections are lost in the digital sphere, the translation of an object's sensory potentials to online mediums can still be complementary to the OM team's existing practices.

While the OM staff and their partners leveraged different aspects of social media to try and cultivate sensory entry points, social media staff at the three mini case studies, the NMAI, the Myseum, and the MM privileged collection and non-collection objects online for their ability to be associated with narratives and or voices. Like the objects at the OM, the objects used by the three mini case studies were also valued for enabling sharing across users and participants and in turn, cultivating emotional and social connections but on a larger public scale. This is observable both in the comments of interviewees and through the Instagram posts of their respective institutions. In particular, the images or 'objects' used for posts vary across the museums from collection objects, archival documents, to images, videos, and audio clips of participants.

NMAI staff, in particular, use collection objects on Instagram frequently. These objects tend to fall into two categories: as complementary to the themes addressed in the text of the posts or as the central subject matter of the text. Associated with both these categories are the representation of different Native voices through quotations cited from interviews, past projects, and even other sources. As one NMAI staff member suggested in discussing posts and related articles on Thanksgiving, it is these voices and perspectives that add an effective quality:

> a lot of these things may not be traditional attire at the average Native American Thanksgiving dinner or lunch, but it gives a different perspective – "wow

> I didn't know there were Indian chefs" or "wow I didn't know Indians eat this". Now that sort of 'wow' I like to hear that!

While anecdotal, a few comments from the NMAI's social media posts support the effective ideal of Native voices initiating surprise and challenging assumptions. Some commentors on social media, for instance, suggested that it was amazing to learn about this history through Native American voices.

Similarly, but in a slightly different way, staff at the two pop-up virtual museums emphasised the importance of objects as storytelling tools, honouring the agency of participants: 'we are trying our best to use objects as a way to story tell with our storytellers [participants], but that is only if they've shared it with us and that's only if they have given us consent to share it' (MM staff). From my observations of MM's Instagram page, it appeared that staff mainly use contemporary photos, including those of participants, local neighbourhoods, and collages. These images and clips were frequently contextualised by participant's lived experiences of migration and of living in particular neighbourhoods. When personal or collection objects are used, they are at the choice of participants and based on their perceived usefulness in telling stories. A similar perspective was reflected by the Myseum interviewee,

> using artefacts would be an additional tool to telling a story or creating some visual engagement but again so many of the stories we try to tell, the communities probably have those objects in their home somewhere but aren't necessarily in the archives or anywhere else accessible for us.

The Myseum's Instagram page also draws on a wide variety of images including archival and media sources from different organisations, from the City of Toronto Archives to news organisations such as the CBC (Canadian Broadcast Company), and clips from their own virtual events/collaborations as opposed to their own collection objects. Assembling these disparate elements in posts enable Myseum staff to share diverse user perspectives through text, audio, and video on topics such as climate change, gentrification, and over-policing. These approaches and elements employed by the different museums suggest a recognition of the effective potential of not only digitised collection objects on social media but also 'unofficial' objects such as user images, mashups, and videos which are enmeshed with voice and lived experiences. Thus, this interweaving of narrative and voice forms new 'cultural heritage objects' which can potentially connect people through the social traces of quoted users and participants. However, the different approaches of these staff members and the use or lack of, of official collections are also based on institutional context and specifically, the availability of collections. For staff at the two virtual museums, the institution's 'collections' consist of oral histories or researched stories, so staff rely on the material objects of participants in pop-up exhibitions and projects.

Ultimately, the social media staff members from these mini case studies and respective Instagram posts suggest that official collection objects and non-official

such as photos, audio, and video clips online are valuable due to their ability to be associated with participants' voices and narratives which can potentially enable emotional and social connections between people. This aligns with discourse that argues that 'the displacement of the object is accompanied by the increasing importance of narrative' (Witcomb, 2003, p. 117).[10] The NMAI, the Myseum, the MM, and the OM indicate that the effective potential of objects on social media can be cultivated in different ways through, on one hand, leveraging social media's communicative potential for voice and narrative. On the other hand, negotiating its sensory limitations in the absence of 'touch' and physical collections by incorporating prompts, audio or visual embellishments and even offline aspects. However, for the OM staff, closely associated with the effect of materiality is their audience remit and the creation of safe, welcoming spaces for discussion which can cause further tensions between social inclusion work and the use of social media.

Audience remit: negotiating the local

Social inclusion work, including practices of participation and representation are often associated with being close to the needs of local communities (Dodd & Sandell, 2001), which raises interesting questions regarding the use of social media. While social media can be perceived as intended for a broad ambiguous public, it can also have local significance. For instance, social media use has been recognised for its potential to enhance users' sense of place, through such aspects as photo sharing and community archive building which can address the interests or needs of users in a specific area (Giaccardi, 2012). Essential to several of the OM's online projects during COVID-19 was the use of more private spaces and communication channels that created both a 'safe' space and reaffirmed a focus on specific local under-served individuals and groups. This practice was seen to align with staff's social role which they compared to the practices of GM as focused on broader publics in relation to their social media content creation and engagement.

As an OM staff stated, in discussing Glasgow Museums' social media use, '[s]o I don't really see the point of putting things out for world-wide appeal, it's not what we do – it's for the people of Glasgow' (GM staff K_IN). Using social media and online tools for engaging locals was considered essential by OM staff, despite being somewhat contradictory to the global reach and potential of social media:

> We're still very much like this is our local geography, this is the area we are engaging with. I think there is an interesting thing there in term of we are saying "we want to work with people in a select geographic region" which is what we are going to do and where our resources are from.
>
> (GM staff H_IN)

The disco sessions for instance, were facilitated through closed video groups on Facebook, WhatsApp, Skype, and Zoom that could be joined by emailing the partner organisation and the Art Extraordinary YouTube videos were shared with

participants and partners via a private/unlisted link. While the private nature of the disco sessions was due to the non-profit partners' existing format, engagement sessions in several other OM projects and activities were also created through email, Webex, or Zoom with a public aspect being mainly apparent in the Our Shared Cultural Heritage (OSCH) partner project involving Twitter.

On the one hand, the use of private YouTube video links and other private forms of online media enabled a sense of safety and on the other hand, allowed curators and staff to personalise content and activities for participant groups. As one OM staff member described, '…that's what I mean about tailoring it, it's a personal touch – everywhere right now I feel like it's very impersonal, personally, I think that's where the OM could be doing better. That personal tailored approach is what we are known for and how we engage' (GM staff K_IN). In critically comparing their practices to the wider institutional approach to social media, staff reflected on its relation to inclusive practices and social goals: 'just in the sea of trying to do stuff, is it the right stuff that we are doing? And I'm quite cynical about that' (GM staff K_IN). Another staff member similarly suggested, '[s]o I suppose in that sense it still has a value [social media], it just doesn't feel like you're really reaching the right audiences with that kind of thing' (GM staff B_IN). The public aspect of social media use by GM is thus, intricately intertwined with what OM staff perceived as a broad and ambiguous approach to user engagement and content creation.

In comparison, by leveraging the private affordances of social and online media the OM staff were able to create semi-private spaces which enabled staff to focus on the interests and needs of specific groups. This was evidenced by staff's back and forth communication with participants and in turn, the adaption of their practices. However, due to having an audience remit of not only local but also audiences who face inequalities associated with social exclusion, this meant that intended participants often could not be reached through social and digital media. This is due, in part, to digital inequalities encompassing the inaccessibility of tech and Wi-Fi, and digital literacies amongst other complex factors (Helsper, 2017). As an OM staff member reflected,

> Some of the groups I've historically worked with, we can't really work with as they aren't really doing much digitally. So, the only things we can do are maybe to say, "oh can we post out some stuff to your members?"
>
> (GM staff H_IN)

Thus, social media for social inclusion initiatives can only be used so far due to digital divides and was used by the OM staff mindfully in conjunction with analogue approaches and activities such as sending out home-kits and postcards.

Social media staff from the three mini case studies did not express clear tensions between local and global audience remits; although staff expressed concern for the needs of local communities and partners, they also saw their relevance on a larger global scale. For the two virtual museums and the NMAI, participants were reached by actively leveraging existing relationships and 'networks'. For instance,

the NMAI staff member stated, '[t]hat's what I do, I'm a networker', which is reflected in the institution's Instagram posts that describe reaching out to 'friends' across the network to share Native American voices and perspectives. Such practices speak to social inclusion work on social media as grounded, not necessarily in geographic place, but other temporalities dependent on shared interests, experiences, and identities (Papacharissi & Trevey, 2018).

Yet, staff at the two virtual museums (Myseum and the MM) maintained a focus on localness by reaching out to other non-profits and potential partner organisations within their respective cities, forming new connections and relationships. For example, the Myseum staff member described collaborating with a small museum in Ontario (the Buxton Museum) to amplify Black heritage during the summer of 2020. In the winter of 2020, they also sought partnerships with the 'Encampment Support Network' to challenge rising homelessness in the city of Toronto. These collaborations have resulted in diverse social media projects, including virtual panels and takeovers. As a result of these partnerships, the Myseum staff member in describing their local remit suggested, 'I think over the years we've just found our voice and our place within the community as an organisation that is trying to establish itself in the city…'.

Comparatively, the MM perceives itself to be 'community engaged' and works actively with local community groups by identifying 'storytellers' – individuals or groups who have significantly contributed to their local neighbourhoods. The museum then reaches out to form relationships and collaborate with storytellers and local partner organisations. 'We reach out to them sometimes, and by we, I mean the teams reach out to the partner organisations once we establish a link between the two' (MM staff). Yet, the MM staff member also expressed a desire to expand nationally, connecting experiences and identities across networks on a larger scale. Across all three mini case studies was also a concern for connecting local remits to issues that pop-up on a global scale as further discussed in the following chapter. While there are limitations on who can be reached through social media, staff try to negotiate these limitations by leveraging existing networks and building new relationships, locally and globally to meet to some extent their audience remit, fulfilling this aspect of inclusive practices.

In the public realm of social media, the approaches of the staff members from these mini case studies also suggest that the 'local' in social inclusion work can sometimes be redefined as a 'temporality', encompassing users who at a particular moment may share common experiences, identities, interests, and needs. For instance, these practices speak to an understanding of affective publics, or networked individuals who ephemerally come to share certain emotions online, which can be prompted by contemporary events. Papacharissi and Trevey (2018) discussing the potential of affective publics and connective action online for social change suggest that: 'in contemporary societies, affectively motivated and networked publics come into being, connect or disband around bonds of sentiment' (p. 88).[11] Such a perspective, emphasises the potential value of re-orienting the OM's drive to reach local audiences in their social inclusion work, to international users who at a certain time may share a common experience or identity.

'Safe spaces': applying sensitivity[12]

Safe spaces are essential for facilitating outreach and participatory work that is ethical. However, museum practices associated with creating safe spaces is complicated when outreach and associated social inclusion work moves across different public/private spheres and associated structures, such as social media. In the following paragraphs, staff from the OM and the three mini case studies suggest ways that 'safe spaces' could be pursued in online contexts, including through private spaces, ensuring participant consent, and sensitivity. For instance, the private nature of the OM's online engagement sessions as discussed above, not only allowed staff to focus on the 'local' but also enabled a sense of safety for users. By drawing on the private affordances of social media chats and Zoom within the disco sessions, the disco facilitator suggests that a semi-private group with repeat users was created. As the facilitator explained, this strengthened participants' social bonds, and contributed to participant's feelings of safety and comradery:

> They've [participants] given feedback to say it [the discos] has really helped their mental health and a lot of folk have remained sane – in their words, because of being able to see one another and connect and talk about their feelings, and to remain positive as well and hopeful. Yeah, the comradery has been really helpful.
>
> (Facilitator_IN)

Based on the disco participants' experiences, this sense of closeness and repetition allowed them to feel safe in sharing and connecting with others. For example, some disco participants recounted how they felt empowered to share their experiences and feelings, as I have quoted previously, one attendee described: '[i]t has felt like a safe environment for sharing thoughts' (Participant D_IN) (Kist, 2022, p. 105). Another observed that 'people are opening up a wee bit about their true feelings in there and you know it will not go any further. And it's like a safe haven for people' (Participant E_IN) (Kist, 2022, p. 105). As participant E insinuates, the development of relationships over time enabled trust in the participants present, and was thus, intertwined with the discos' structure as a semi-closed group. Consequently, all disco interviewees emphasised that they enjoyed hearing about each other's days and feelings, even the negative aspects associated with COVID-19. This reinforced as Participant A suggests, a shared comfort in being all in the same situation: 'we are all just trying to be happy, get a wee bit of exercise'.

As the disco facilitator described, 'we've got to know people more because of these meaningful conversations and that's added to the richness not that I thought it would, technology-wise…' (Facilitator_IN). Thus, the private nature of the video chat sessions enabled participants to feel safe and comfortable to empathise, share, and connect in relation to each other's experiences. Such commentary by both staff and participants highlights the successful process of translating 'safety' by leveraging the private affordances of social media. However, for the OSCH project, due to not only the OM's concerns about participant safety but also the partner

organisations' regarding its focus on youth participants, a detailed safety protocol was brought up for engagement to take place via Twitter.

In terms of creating safe spaces, social media staff from the three mini case studies mainly emphasised the importance of participant consent and social media policies as opposed to creating private or semi-private spaces. As the Myseum staff member shared,

> Yeah, you know, we definitely seek permission prior to sharing content from programs on our social media, in terms of clips. And if anyone was to object after the fact, we would take that down. We are very open to you know the real possibility that someone might change their mind.

The migration museum, in relation to questions about safety also emphasised that nothing ever gets posted without consent and along the same lines, staff follow a zero-tolerance harassment policy which is shared during live virtual events. However, in creating and in some cases co-creating social media content, staff also discussed the importance of applying sensitivity. Respect and sensitivity were closely intertwined at NMAI with cultural knowledge. As the NMAI interviewee reflected, '[i]t is, it's a great responsibility. I think I am the right person I feel for it [their role], because I know what information to share but importantly what information not to share with the public'. This is also outlined clearly in the webpages of NMAI, which states that staff do their utmost to adhere to their network's wishes regarding the representation or non-representation of material from various Native American Indian tribes (NMAI, n.d.).

The staff member from the Myseum, in discussing a past live Question and Answer (Q&A) session on social media, emphasised the importance of safety through an empathetic sensitivity regarding participant needs. They described checking in with participants during livestream sessions, '[we] are always trying to be sensitive but there are days where we try to be a bit more delicate to [the speaker's] schedule and needs'. According to Wallis (2019), institutions trying to incorporate and work with people who have been historically excluded must amongst other recommendations, create safe, welcoming spaces. This is in alignment with best practice according to community engagement and outreach (Morse & Munro, 2018; Silverman, 2010). Yet, such a prospect is at odds or at least has been unclear in relation to its translation to social media (Wong, 2012). As Boersma (2022) found in their research on museum participatory practices, participants can feel unsafe in the context of online museum spaces. In these online spaces participants may no longer have a say in the museum's activities and feel pressured to communicate in ways that the museum views as favourable (Boersma, 2022, p. 158).

The creation and cultivation of feelings of safety online is illuminated by the different strategies of the OM and the mini case studies. On the one hand, the OM staff cultivated a sense of safety through creating or supporting more private, intimate spaces, catering to participants' needs. On the other hand, staff from the mini case studies tried to enable a sense of safety on social media by privileging the agency of their users and participants through consent, by outlining rules of

Table 5.2 Dimensions of social inclusion work on social media

Museum	*Effect of objects*	*Safe spaces*	*Audience remit*
Open Museum	Effect is created through visuality, prompts, activities, music, and sound.	Uses private channels, enabling the repeated participation of users.	The institution reaches out to existing partners and participants, again leveraging mainly private communications.
Myseum	Effect is created through narrative, voice, and archival photos.	Employs sensitivity to participants' needs but also emphasised user consent.	The institution reaches out to local current and potential partner organisations.
National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI)	Effect is created through narrative and voice, digitised collection objects, and various images.	Safe spaces were associated with cultural sensitivity regarding what is appropriate to share with the public.	The institution reaches across staff and the institution's networks and collaborators according to shared interests/ needs.
Migration Museum (MM)	Effect is created by interweaving narrative and voice with audio clips and images of participants.	Safe spaces were associated with participant consent and trusting relationships. It was also enabled by engagement policies shared at live online events.	The institution reaches out to local organisations but also neighbourhood representatives.

engagement, and being sensitive of the cultural and emotional needs that participating in a public sphere may entail. These different translations and enactments by the OM and the three mini case studies are summarised in Table 5.2.

Catering to participant needs

The translation of the key dimensions of the OM staff's social inclusion work through social media was not only what defined 'success' for staff. Instead, the success of these projects was intertwined with the OM staff's ability to centre the voices, perspectives, and needs of their users and respond or adapt accordingly. This involved in a sense being aware of their users' social context but also relied on more explicit feedback between users and staff. For example, during online engagement sessions, the OM staff frequently incorporated objects that

spoke to current experiences of isolation or opened-up discussion about current events. The first few sessions of the disco included paintings from different scenic travel destinations, taking inspiration from 'armchair travelling' to engage users with environments other than home (as most participants were in isolation at this time). Other disco sessions incorporated engagement around current popular lockdown hobbies such as baking bread or about nutrition and healthy eating. Beyond being attuned to current context and participants' experiences, in both OM projects, the Art Extraordinary YouTube videos and the discos, staff emphasised the importance of opening the creation of online engagement and projects to ongoing participant and partner feedback.

Based on the perceived engagement of users, their comments, expressions and their more explicit feedback, staff altered their approaches to online engagement. This included focusing on participant suggested themes and materials, music, using different digital platforms, and the inclusion of more activity prompts. Staff described this process as '…doing a couple [of] pilots and then going back to [the non-profit partner], going "is this working, what's working what's not working" and then thinking maybe we need to tweak this, this, and this for it to work more effectively' (GM staff_IN). Several other staff members also described meeting with partners to figure out what sessions and activities would be useful and interesting for participants during this period. For example, one staff member suggested the need to 'get proper feedback on [if this] is working. And what would you like to see in these videos? Is it more kind of activity related? Is it more about developing resources who are going to be in isolation for a bit longer?' (GM staff_IN).

This form of feedback, in terms of co-creating to different extents engagement with a specific target group, was what staff's perceived success and effectiveness of the online practices relied upon. For example, an OM staff member reflected that from the online projects '…actually, I suppose one of the things out of this, is that you can work with groups and respond to their needs and then put things out digitally working with groups in the same way you develop a face-to-face community engagement session' (GM staff H_IN) (Kist & Tran, 2021, p. 417).[13] As a result, the staff member acknowledged, 'I think I always separated out digital engagement with community engagement and always had them as two separate things in my head. I guess one thing I've learned from doing all this is that they can be one and the same' (GM staff H_IN) (Kist & Tran, 2021, p. 417).[14] Such a perspective suggests the importance of learning about the possibilities of social media for social inclusion work and meeting user interests and needs through experimentation, and as the staff member above described, in 'doing all this'.[15] The importance placed on this continuous learning was made apparent by an OM team discussion on future concerns and opportunities stemming from the pandemic, with some expressing the desire to expand their digital offerings and break new ground in their practices (OB).[16]

However, the use of social media by another OM staff member was not seen in the same positive light, and instead they referred to their own digital projects as a 'shadow' of their previous outreach work. In part, the critical staff member, implies

their perception of online engagement as a 'shadow' due to the absence of material objects, but also the inability of participants and staff to be together. They state:

> I don't care what you do, I don't care how fancy your videos are or your social media, nothing can replace those objects, nothing can replace that touch. And sense of being together, that's never going to be replaced for me, this is just a shadow.
>
> (GM staff_IN)

In association with this comment, at the time of our interview, a feedback session had been planned with the partners and participants regarding the project. Thus, this critical perspective may have been influenced by the fact that the staff member did not yet know the resulting experiences of their users and, therefore, lacked an understanding regarding the potentials of social media for meeting user interests/needs. This knowledge could further develop over the course of the pandemic through ongoing experimentation and user feedback. Comparatively, the other online projects were perhaps considered valuable exactly because of the synchronous communication and the opportunity for continuous user input.

These instances indicate the importance of listening to participant and partner feedback and needs, while also considering the potential impacts of social contexts and current events such as COVID-19. As will be further discussed in the following chapter, listening was also an essential aspect to the work of the social media staff at the three mini case studies and in turn, the ability to be flexible and adapt to evolving user interest and needs. While the OM pursued flexibility in their structuring of participation through social media by welcoming continuous feedback, staff's translations and their ability to experimentally adapt to users was also tied to other elements of institutional infrastructure. Infrastructures are composed of multiple systems which do not always operate smoothly together but rather can create disconnections resulting in challenges and failures (Karasti & Blomberg, 2018). For the OM, larger organisational limitations continued to hamper staff's ability to translate elements of a socially inclusive infrastructure to social media and other digital platforms during COVID-19. For example, many staff members had to be resourceful by actively self-learning digital tools and more elaborate practices of video editing through trial and error or experimentation, often taking initiative in finding resources and tutorials. During this period, staff collaborated by frequently sharing resources through email; as one staff member described: '… everyone's shared their online resources and articles and stuff like that as well, and all of that is just really interesting in general for your reading and knowledge and learning' (GM staff B_IN).

Further, during COVID-19 there were restrictions to email access, the OM's official social media channels, and the museum collections system. In the first few months of lockdown, GM took a blanket approach, limiting staff's email access and tightening control of social media accounts, despite the close connections between the OM staff and their partners and participants. Due to the inability to access their emails, staff lost ways to communicate with some of their partner

organisations and participants. This resulted in staff expressing frustration and a sense of grief in being disconnected from these relationships (ME).[17] Moreover, due to a lack of access to Mimsy (Glasgow Museums' collection management system), staff had to rely on the public collections' portal which was suggested to contain mainly the 'star' objects as opposed to an adequate representation of the diversity of Glasgow Museums' collections. One OM staff expressed their frustration,

> [i]t's interesting again with priorities what gets digitised first. Yeah, I think I would be good if I had access to images of stuff, it would just help so much with the online engagement…because not everything is on the public collections navigator things and when you look at [some of the] collections, it's like the bottom of the barrel in terms of what's been put on that.
>
> (GM staff X_IN)

As a result, staff's process of adapting their practices had to be somewhat inventive and dependent on their own initiative during an already challenging period, hindering the process of translation.

In contrast, some of the social media staff from the three mini case studies, despite also encountering challenges during COVID-19, expressed gratitude for their organisational dynamics which was perceived as enabling their flexibility and creativity, specifically through management's support. As a staff member at the MM shared, 'what I loved about doing social media was that I had full support, so that meant that I had agency'. Similarly, the NMAI staff member described the support they receive from management as enabling '…our creativity to expand and there's no stopping what we can write about'. The Myseum interviewee also emphasised the importance of freedom in their work by reflecting on the opposite, '…if I had someone micromanaging what I post or how I do it, it would feel like, I would feel so disingenuous using these platforms…'. These reflections suggest that staff feelings of empowerment were essential to pursue social goals in terms of experimentation and creativity allowing staff to feel genuine in their approach to social media.

Sustaining staff's social role

As we observe through the two OM projects (the discos and Art Extraordinary), the COVID-19 crisis motivated OM staff to try and translate elements that constitute an analogue infrastructure for social inclusion work to social media. This included sensory aspects of materiality, the creation of safe spaces, and reaching their audience remit through social media. Social media staff members from external institutions provide further insight into the different ways these facets can be enacted through the affordances of social media. This translation process exposes how staff practices are underpinned by their ability to be mindful of the material of social media by carefully leveraging its affordances and working around its limitations. Moreover, OM staff practices also reflected a mindfulness by critically considering

the elasticities of social media and its potential or lack of to align with their inclusion goals, for instance, in relation to a 'hardly reached' audience remit. The perceived success of these translations for OM staff, however, was also reliant on their ability to listen to users, and experimentally adapt their practices – a process further theorised in the next chapter as 'tinkering'. In turn, staff's knowledge of social media and its relevance for their work increased through practice and will continue to increase going forward.

According to literature on museum social media, inclusive social media practices can entail resharing social media content of users, in a way, involving them in the institution's activities (Baker, 2017), cultivating communities of interest (Kidd, 2011) and by representing the identities and pursuing the interests or needs of marginalised users (McMillen & Alter, 2017). However, museums' social inclusion work and inclusive practices, have a history of being associated with practices and ideals that pertain to an ethics of 'reaching out' and 'working with' – which is touched upon by these scholars, but not actively pursued as a part of social inclusion work. Therefore, my research began with a return to museum discipline and practices to explore in closer detail if and how the dimensions that constitute museums' social inclusion work are and can be adapted to social media. In doing so, the nitty-gritty of this process and the results give insight into how an infrastructure for social inclusion work through social media might be constructed.

As I illustrate through this chapter, the process of translation is not a one-to-one trans-position but rather a transformation in which aspects of collection objects, safe spaces, and an audience remit are both gained and lost. These dimensions take on different shapes and forms suitable to the medium of social media, depending on how staff enable social inclusion work in different ways. Specifically, where collection objects begin and end on social media becomes ambiguous with effect being cultivated through not only visuality but also additions in the form of poems, prompts and interpretive material, and its enmeshment with voice and narrative. It is these additions which form the newly perceived 'object' and its effective potential which could then act as a social connector between users. This aligns with recent literature on museum social media posts as forming, through the relations between its elements such as text, image etc., a new 'artistic piece' or object (Najda-Janoszka & Sawczuk, 2020).

Maintaining an audience remit at the OM and the mini case studies highlights and echoes similar observations that social media can sometimes only play a supporting role, if at all, in underpinning social initiatives due to a lack of accessibility (Malde & Kennedy, 2018). Thus, it is important for institutions that are developing relationships with under-served groups and relevant partner organisations to cultivate and maintain these relationships both on and offline. Further, the mini case studies exposed that reaching target groups and collaborators, may mean reaching beyond specific geographic locations to users who share identities, interests, or concerns. This perspective aligns in a way with Wong's (2015) recommendation of catering to networked individuals rather than trying to create communities around the museum. Similarly, Hartley (2015) advocates for museums to shift their understanding of publics online as rooted in neighborhoods and

geographically rooted communities to online publics existing in a collapsed time and space. Alternatively, some suggest, by, expanding an audience remit encompassing both online and local offline users and organisations, museums can situate themselves within a networked ecology, working with organisations to meet user needs (Knutson, 2018).

Finally, in terms of safe spaces, while this was associated by the OM staff with the private and intimate element of their social media projects, it was connected by social media staff from the three mini case studies with user and participant consent, stating rules of interaction, and being sensitive to users' needs. Together, both the perspectives of social media staff from the mini case studies and the translation of these elements at the OM suggest the potential to (re)create a socially inclusive infrastructure for social media. To do so, staff leverage social media's affordances and negotiate its limitations to shape how connections can still be catalysed while a sense of safety is enacted, and an audience remit maintained. While the research discussed here, investigated the experiences of the OM's disco participants, providing some insight on the effectiveness of these translations for the OM's social inclusion work, further research is needed to understand the effects of the strategies employed by social media staff from the mini case studies.

While staff from the mini case studies suggested the importance of user permission and sensitivity in relation to safety, their responses lacked a critical interrogation of the unsafe nature of the ecological context of social media, in terms of how public content may be re-used and re-framed in unintended ways. Alternatively, as suggested by Boersma's (2022) cautionary findings: museum participants may not experience online participation in meaningful and 'safe' ways. Therefore, understanding the experiences of users' engaging with the mini case studies would further nuance the impact of social media's structures on staff's social inclusion practices and their effectiveness.

Conclusion

To conclude, the two series of OM's outreach sessions (the discos and Art Extraordinary YouTube videos) discussed in this chapter demonstrate the 'how' and potential for translating dimensions of social inclusion work to online and social media contexts. A process that was already in motion at the OM but spurred on by the disruption of COVID-19. While the OM, NMAI, the Myseum, and the MM have very different organisational contexts histories, practices, and perspectives, they all provide interesting insight into how the core facets of OM's social inclusion work can be translated and enacted through social media. The translation and construction of safe spaces, the effect of digital objects, and the maintenance of an audience remit that is traditionally hardly reached, exposes a need for museum staff to approach social media *mindfully* – leveraging and negotiating the affordances of social media, drawing together different elements in creative and thoughtful ways.

The above discussion also highlights the importance of resources, tools, and perhaps most importantly, staff's freedom to exercise *experimentation* in adapting

to their users while simultaneously, learning how social media can support their social inclusion work. As evident through the analysis, it was pivotal for OM staff to *listen* to their users and their social context, and adapt their practices, catering to users' interests and needs. The importance of this back-and-forth process was reflected in the experimental attitude of OM staff who acknowledged that their projects were an 'evolving process' and simply figuring out what is possible within the 'limitations of the internet' (GM staff H_IN). A similar importance was placed on this listening and adaption process by staff from the mini case studies, enabling us to dive-deeper into the relevancy of not only 'translation' but also 'tinkering' for social inclusion work.

Notes

1 The research involving the mini case studies also took place near the end of the pandemic but as explained in Chapter 2, the research was focused on understanding their enactment of the key facets of the social inclusion work at the OM through social media. Although I compare and contrast social media practices across institutions, it is important to note the OM's investment into social media practices was new compared to that of the mini case studies, and at a time of increased pressure and isolation – these comparisons are intended not as critique, but rather to expand insight into potential enactments of social inclusion work through social media.
2 The third mini case study is referred to as a migration museum (MM) and its location not specified to adhere to the interviewee's wish for anonymity.
3 Observation notes from May 27, 2020.
4 I have used 'effect' here to emphasise the potential of collections and their different dynamics/sensory elements for enabling participants' emotional experiences and social connections. In this way, effect overlaps with ideas around 'affect/emotions' as responses to other people and objects. Ahmed (2014) describes emotions as not residing in the body or an external object, but rather resulting from our interaction/reaction to other people or objects which shapes our sense of self and collectivity (p. 7).
5 Outsider art is typically considered to be art that is created by someone who does not have professional training or a lot of contact with the mainstream art world.
6 Refer to Chapter 2 for further details about the research methods.
7 The other two NMAI venues include: The George Gustav Heye Center (GGHC) in New York City and the Cultural Resource Centre (CRC) in Suitland, Maryland (US).
8 More information on the collections and the collections' history at the NMAI can be found here: https://americanindian.si.edu/explore/collections/object-collections.
9 Observation notes from April 20–21, 2020.
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12 The concept of safe spaces in this section of the book is expanded on in one of my previous publications, which discusses the creation of safe spaces for older participants and the importance of passive social connection for encouraging participation: Kist, C. (2022). Repairing online spaces for "safe" outreach with older adults. *Museums & Social Issues*, *15* (1–2), 98–112. https://doi.org/10.1080/15596893.2022.2064983.
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15 While experimentation and learning through doing could put users at risk, these instances highlight the importance of close listening and communication, encompassing a careful and cautious approach.

16 Observation notes June 8, 2020.

17 Meeting notes from April 29, 2020.

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6 Tinkering with social media for social inclusion work

For museum staff, social media can appear to be disconnected from the ideals of social inclusion work and an institution's social role. This was highlighted in the previous chapters by a discrepancy between the perceived affordances of social media and an infrastructure which supports and encompasses the Open Museum (OM) staff's everyday social inclusion work. Such a perceived disconnection echoes critical discussions pertaining to how an ethical museum social media practice can be defined (if at all), in light of social media's potentials and limits (Wong, 2011, p. 108). However, during COVID-19, the OM staff and the three mini case studies depict how their work might be translated to a certain extent through social media, by being mindful of platform affordances and their relation to social inclusion work, creatively drawing on social media's elasticities. Significantly, for the OM staff, the value of translation for their social inclusion work was also tied to their ability to listen to users and experimentally adapt and expand their online practices. This listening and responding is also an essential element of social inclusion work at the mini case studies, further divulged in this chapter through the socio-technical process of 'tinkering'.

Inclusive practices for challenging social exclusion are often associated with staff being close to community needs and in turn, enabling opportunities for user participation and representation to address these needs in various ways. Staff do not simply define an issue without communication, rather they are committed to listening and being responsive (Janes & Sandell, 2019, p. 15) and relevant to their participants' interests and concerns (Lyons & Bosworth, 2019, p. 177). From a participatory perspective, addressing these concerns with participants can have implications for challenging inequality - through not just the outcome of a project but also through the collaborative process (Simon, 2015). However, actively challenging social exclusion and associated inequalities also requires staff to be committed to ongoing practices that are not only collaborative but also reflective (Lynch, 2019, p. 123).

Interviews conducted with staff at the three mini case studies expand upon these perspectives by revealing how a similar ethos may be enacted on social media through 'tinkering'. As inferred from staff's emotional expression and more explicit statements, building on my observations at the OM, I further frame social

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media for social inclusion work as a skilled practice. It requires staff to continuously participate in socio-technical processes, such as translation, and, as discussed in this chapter, tinkering. These socio-technical processes are reliant on staff's ability to *listen* to their users, to adapt their social media practices *experimentally*, and perhaps most importantly, their ability to be *mindful* of social media's potentials and limits to navigate these. Museum staff from the three mini case studies do not idealise social media but rather carefully leverage and mitigate its affordances to listen or be attuned to their respective communities or networks and experimentally adjust their actions to align with user interests, concerns, and needs.

In doing so, staff from the mini case studies reveal some ways other cultural heritage institutions may further align social media use with social inclusion work through different forms of listening and responding to be relevant to their users. Staff respond to users by bringing together content in the form of 'voice' such as stories or perspectives and users themselves in collaborative relationships. In doing so, staff negotiate the affordances of social media and draw on different resources to create new ephemeral infrastructures that sustain the institutions' social role. Staff referred to these infrastructures as 'a community hub' (Myseum staff), a 'platform for dialogue and awareness raising' (migration museum staff), and a 'platform to share our Native voices' (National Museum of the American Indian staff).

This chapter is split into three main sections: in the first section I explore how staff listen and are 'attuned' in similar but different ways, and in section two I demonstrate how in turn, staff respond by leveraging and circumventing the structures of social media to bring together user perspectives, stories or voice, and in section three – users themselves to engage or participate in experimental ways. In section four I pull these themes together to argue that aligning social media practices with institutional social roles is reliant on staff's ability to listen to users/networks and respond by navigating and leveraging social media affordances but also external resources, in iterative ongoing processes of *tinkering*.

Being attuned to users and networks

According to interviewees across the mini case studies, integral to their social media practices is being embedded in the communities and connected to the networks they intend to serve. This includes a commitment to active listening both on a local and larger social scale which could pave the way for responses in terms of staff's actions, content creation, or inviting collaboration with different users. Listening is generally considered an important part of social inclusion practices and as essential for the flexibility and reactivity of staff to work with participants towards social change (Janes & Sandell, 2019; Morse, 2020). '[B]eing open to listening and genuinely working with others, lie at the heart of museum activism' (Janes & Sandell, 2019, p. 9).[1] Typically, this is in relation to group settings in which projects start to form, however, based on my observations, listening through social media is also the first step to forming posts, projects, partnerships, and collaborations by first

understanding areas the museum can potentially offer value. For each staff member interviewed, a commitment to listening encompassed different forms, including listening to users and partners but also larger social contexts such as news or current events, misunderstandings regarding social identities, gaps, and absences in knowledge or in heritage narratives, and injustices.

These instances of listening speak to an anthropological 'attunement' which refers to listening practices that are not only about a direct back-and-forth communication between users and museum staff, but an act of being oriented towards (Graham, 2019). An attunement recognises the complexity of everyday social contexts and worlds due to having different 'tempos, sensory knowledges, orientations, transmutations, habits….' (Stewart, 2011, p. 446). As such, this form of listening privileges a sensory immersion that requires an awareness of social tempos and orientations, an understanding of what's happening in the world through social media to understand the potential needs and interests of the individuals and groups the museum intends to serve.

As the Myseum interviewee explained, they are interested in hearing what topics communities in Toronto care about and staff try to be attuned to relevant events and current conversations happening across different user groups through social media. Being attuned at the Myseum is in a sense collective but also contextually specific to the City of Toronto. The staff member describes getting up in the morning and although their physical surroundings may appear the same, they approach social media by asking 'what is going on in the world today?' Rather than necessarily starting with stories or histories that the institution possesses, the staff member begins by looking and listening outwards. As the Myseum interviewee explains, this process of listening is in part, about identifying who is left out of contemporary conversations and what issues and topics their users frame as significant:

> Because of being on social media and seeing what's happening through that lens and seeing what other organisations are up to, I'm a lot more in tune with what is happening in the city and which communities are being heard and which communities are being left out of the discussions that they should be involved in…but, right now we just kind of try to keep our ear on the ground of what's happening and what kind of things people are really finding important as a topic of conversation.

This commitment to listening was further attested to by the Myseum staff member's reflection on how being attuned could also be challenging. Due to paying attention to contemporary social issues through social media, staff are often fed back content by platform algorithms that are emotionally taxing.

The migration museum (MM), on the other hand, has identified a gap in contemporary and heritage narratives associated with newcomers to the country, and works to fill this gap by amplifying the voices of Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC) through their programmes, exhibitions, and social media. This gap in heritage narratives drove the founding of the migration museum and motivates staff to be consistently attuned to their users and local communities through

social media. For example, the interviewee reflected that they must follow trends 'that are mission-aligned'. While this might refer to such fads like sea shanties that hit social media by storm during the 2021 lockdown period of COVID-19, this often appeared to be in relation to social issues. An instance of this is indicated by several of the MM's Instagram posts which are related to community care during COVID-19. In these posts, staff commended the strength of local communities and welcomed user contributions to share with the museum and the public their own experiences. Another Instagram post shared a community panel event on this exact topic and invited both attendees and contributors. These posts exemplify that the MM staff member is aware of the potential impact of COVID-19 and current events on their respective and potential users. Thus, it could be said that they are attuned to the institution's context which pertains to specific parts of their respective city but also the impact of topical events on the institution's users and user groups.

Like the MM discussed above, the branch of the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) that is located on the Washington D.C. Mall, was created in 2004, in part, in response to social critiques regarding a lack of awareness and understanding, and a gap in public knowledge of Native American peoples. The institution's vision reflects this purpose with a focus on social justice and its intersection with learning and empowerment (NMAI, n.d.). To fulfil this vision, the NMAI interviewee, reflecting on their approach to social media, described partnering with and sharing Native voices. Through the analysis, it became apparent that the staff member's actions through social media and its alignment with the institution's social role are dependent on being attuned to social contexts. In their interview, the NMAI staff member placed importance on their knowledge and understanding of contemporary events relevant to Native Americans, different Native American cultures, people across the institution's networks, and Native American histories. The interviewee described themselves as a 'seeker of knowledge', a 'networker', and a 'mediator'. These terms were used in association with different but similar tasks including, seeking out Native Americans with many diverse backgrounds and accomplishments and broadening the understanding of who Native Americans are and what they can do, to a broad public.

In doing so, the NMAI staff member stressed the centrality of also understanding where users (inside and outside the venue) are coming from, their biases and misunderstandings. As they reflected,

> I want to make people think! I want to make people question you know, wow, why, I mean who told them that and who taught them? Where did they get that? You know and because I want to expand people's minds to what Indians are capable of and do!

Listening was underpinned by an emotional or impassioned feeling regarding its connection to the institution's social mission, with the interviewee explaining that answering questions from visitors was their most fulfilling role. On the other hand, while the NMAI staff member listened for absences and misunderstandings, they

were also attuned to timely issues and concerns across networks of Native Americans. For example, the interviewee emphasised their willingness to change directions, in that they were not and would not be static; '[t]here will be a lot of new information and topics that I have yet to even think about and issues that come up that I need the public to know about and that's my job'. Further, the NMAI staff are active in listening to contemporary contexts such as COVID-19 and its challenging impacts on their respective networks.

These forms of listening, while sometimes encompassing a direct back-and-forth communication between staff and users, often also involved an ongoing and somewhat emotionally laborious process: staff listen or tune into social contexts through social and other media, becoming aware of events that impact the communities that the museums intend to serve. With this understanding, listening as an essential part of museums' social inclusion work online is reframed to a longer and more immersive process of being 'attuned'and becoming oriented towards. This type of listening has significance for staff and institutions wanting to pursue social inclusion work through social media. In response to these different forms of listening, museum staff experimentally adapt their practices in several ways, but a trend throughout was privileging voices of different publics through first-person perspectives and quotations, discussed in the following section.

Privileging user perspectives, voices, and stories

A commitment to being attuned and listening to their intended users, networks, and surrounding communities enables staff to iteratively respond, often bringing together content encompassing user perspectives, stories, and voices, as well as users themselves in collaborative projects. In assembling narratives and voices, and reaching out to users in different ways, staff constantly navigate, leverage, and draw on different structures within and around social media. The Myseum, for instance, has a mission to share diverse stories, histories and perspectives that implicate the museum as relevant to the City of Toronto – hence the 'My' in Myseum. As integral to this mission, the staff member suggested the importance of unearthing and discussing uncomfortable or hidden histories. For example, in response to current topics of conversation, social issues, or what they may identify as a missing perspective, staff will research stories leveraging city archives but also by reaching out to experts, including local Torontonians, established historians, and activists. As the staff member described, '[s]o, I'll be constantly researching different stories, looking at what other organisations are up to, other activists [and] communities are up to in the city and really just trying to understand different communities in the city better'.

Depending on the subject being addressed, this can spark potential collaborations or social media takeovers. The Myseum's different methods of responding are reflected in a common practice across the institution's Instagram posts, which is storytelling through collaborations. For example, the museum recently did a collaboration with Tea Base (@Tea.base), which is a creative arts community organisation that supports social justice movements and activists in and around

downtown Toronto's Chinatown. Together they created a Quarantine Capsule of Asian Canadian experiences during COVID-19. To do so, together they called for community members to share their stories of hope and resilience. Such a project is timely, in relation to acting against xenophobia, but also as the institution describes in several Instagram posts, the increasing gentrification of the city. Associated with this action, the interviewee suggested the importance of privileging user agency: 'we never try to own a story…we want the community to speak for themselves as much as possible' and in turn, staff's success is based on 'community approval'. Such sayings and doings imply that the Myseum staff have an intuitive feeling of rightness in creating space for user groups and their voices. Doing so, sustains the institution's identity as integrated in different Toronto communities, whether that is through unearthing hidden stories or inviting and collaborating with participants.

Further, the Myseum staff member also placed significance on leveraging social media to respond to user needs not just once, but consistently. The interviewee argued that they must be constantly engaged with the topics and social issues that are rising in and around the city. One example that the interviewee gave was a takeover of the Myseum Instagram account by Ontario's Buxton Museum. The institutions worked together in response to the Black Lives Matter Movement in summer 2020. The Buxton Ontario Museum interprets a settlement created in 1849 by Rev. William King, who created a refuge for enslaved fugitives and Black people. According to the staff member interviewed, the Myseum wanted to sustain the visibility of Black History so that anyone opening their screens would encounter Black History during this particular period. However, the staff member then went on to exemplify that approaching histories and social issues like these must not be an occasional one-off but something to do consistently. In comparison, they described how other institutions responded during this period:

> when the Black Lives Matter stuff happened for instance, all these museums or institutions conveniently started to talk about that subject matter. I know friends who work in those museums are pretty pissed off about it, as were the public.
>
> (Myseum staff)

Thus, the Myseum staff member expressed that consistency in terms of responding to social context and user needs has significance for sustaining their social role, and inconsistency is contradictory to this.

Despite the ability and perhaps obligation to consistently respond through social media, the Myseum staff member also tried to mitigate this affordance. They reflected that finding stories and creating collaborations and projects are very time intensive, so when countering social issues, it is easy to be overwhelmed. Therefore, they emphasised the importance of quality over quantity and knowing where and when to disengage. This included finding a balance between collaborations and content, so as not to lose steam: '[a]nd so I think a lot of the challenge with like managing a social media channel is finding a balance as well to not have to engage

in everything, it's a marathon not a race type of thing'. Approaching social media work as a marathon was also connected to the challenging content that social media algorithms can feed staff. Consequently, the Myseum staff member reiterated the importance of disengaging:

> it can be overwhelming at times, especially this year with how much tumult there's been – for example, just based on the algorithms it feeds you and the content you share, a lot of the content I share is rooted in social activism and those things. So, some days it's a lot to handle, I'll go on and I'll think I'll try again later.

Therefore, the Myseum interviewee, indicates the importance of leveraging social media's potentials. This includes the ability to amplify different narratives and voices by drawing on a range of resources including other cultural heritage institutions and participants to create content, while simultaneously knowing when to disengage.

The MM is responsive to both a gap in heritage narratives and contemporary social context by sharing first-person narratives and experiences across their platforms, including social media. The interviewee described the institution as raising awareness and highlighting important community members who may be under-heard and underrepresented, creating a 'forum for dialogue'. The institution's programmes which take place across the city are based on community interests and needs but are grounded in the museum's frame of narrative and storytelling with newcomers to the country. From these projects, staff work to amplify the resulting narratives, perspectives, and concerns of 'storytellers' (their participants) through various mediums, including their website, pop-up exhibits, panels, and through social media. To amplify and highlight these communities and their voices, staff commonly relied on past and present collaborations and co-created exhibitions to continue sharing their participant's voices and perspectives in response to social contexts.

One example is an Instagram post of two sisters who share through an audio clip and text their experiences of living in a particular neighbourhood as migrants. The neighbourhood they discuss is reflected on as having a negative reputation in relation to poverty and crime, but their experiences give a new twist to this perception. They contribute to an alternative image of the neighbourhood by recounting their childhood memories depicting it as a resilient and caring community. Through this post, staff bring together user concerns, voices, and social context by sharing perspectives from the institution's collaborative projects. As the MM staff member explained – referring to a new social media staff member and how they draw on the traces of collaborative projects:

> [They] literally have a goldmine to work with. Like for me, with my work load this year and last year, it's been hectic, so for me I tried my best to create meaningful posts, but they took it to the next level of meaningfulness and I'm really happy they are doing that. They are really shining a light on the storytellers, their stories, their objects, and histories and what not, and using the materials they approved.

Another example of adjusting to social context was the MM's response to the Black Lives Matter Movement. In response to the events around the movement, staff posted across their social platforms indicating their support for BIPOC individuals and groups. In text images on Instagram, staff make clear through the institutional voice their support of these movements. In relation to this post, staff exemplified that they see taking a stand as a continuation of their role and existing use of social media in sharing their platform with under-heard individuals and groups. That is, this action was perceived as sincere due to 'fitting' within and as part of their existing work and role and like the Myseum, a part of the process of continuously responding to user needs. As the MM staff member argued,

> We are just using our own public platform to do the best we could – representing under-voiced, under-heard, under-represented communities that have been historically excluded from the national narrative of whose story you can tell and whose story you can't tell so on and so forth. So that's our work, that's our advocacy for marginalised communities, for those communities.

From this quote, we observe an impassioned feeling by the interviewee who feels that sharing under-heard narratives through social media but also responding to social issues and injustices their users face is intertwined with their work. Therefore, these social media practices are perceived by the MM staff member as supporting the institution's role in filling a gap in cultural heritage narratives of the city. Responding to these social contexts and injustices required the MM staff to continuously bring together user needs, user voices, and social context from a range of sources, including audio, images, and text from current and past participatory projects and exhibitions.

Similarly, as part of their mission to serve as a platform for Native voices, the NMAI interviewee described sharing the narratives and experiences of Native Americans who are on the 'Paris runway' or who have 'been to the moon', challenging misrepresentations of Native Americans. This was also in relation to promoting a broader understanding of different Native American histories, cultures, and experiences and as reflected in their social media posts and made explicit by hashtags on their Instagram that state #RepresentationMatters and #inclusionMatters. To share perspectives and stories, NMAI staff draw on a variety of media sources: for example, staff use their own past collaborative and participatory projects, they invite contributions and interviewees, and draw on a range of other media outlets. This practice of pulling on different resources and sources to privilege different perspectives to challenge misrepresentations is evident in several Instagram posts in which staff share first-person perspectives, for instance, on Thanksgiving or to challenges during COVID-19.

From the first-person quotes of teachers and parents in one NMAI Instagram post,[2] we witness the unique challenges that some Native Americans face during the pandemic, including access to the internet but also neglect due to an unjust healthcare system. One individual expressed concern over families' internet access, particularly for education. On the other hand, there are existing inequalities

that exasperate the impact of COVID-19, as there are systemic issues of prejudice in health care systems, that are even more pressing during COVID-19. Such various perspectives reflect and communicate to a broad public the different everyday concerns of teachers and families during the pandemic. Such a post shows NMAI staff acting creatively, by leveraging the affordances of social media for amplifying voices and to continuously listen and respond to their users, while also mitigating and circumventing to some extent, the platforms' limitations.

In discussing the practices and perspectives of staff from the three mini case studies, we witness a common trend in privileging user perspectives, voices, and stories. Such practices speak to the importance of representation and communication as one aspect of fulfilling socially inclusive practices and challenging processes of exclusion (Sandell, 1998). To do so, as discussed above, staff pull on different affordances of social media – such as its ability to assemble a range of perspectives and amplify voices, and worked around its limitations, such as its inaccessibility and ability to overwhelm staff. Significantly, in reflecting on their actions, all three interviewees emphasise a commitment not only to listening but consistently responding as integral to the institutions' social role and its sincerity.

Reaching out and working with

Facilitating social connections and collaborating with participants are practices often associated with social inclusion work and were a core part of these museum staff's practices through social media. Bringing together user voices, perspectives, and needs is reliant on collaborative, co-creative or participatory processes with users. Staff from the three mini case studies relied on several resources to reach out to and invite users to participate, occasionally circumventing issues associated with social media access. For example, some staff leveraged their existing networks and reached out to create new partnerships and collaborations. As reflected by the NMAI staff, '[s]o through my network and that's my specialty with the museum, I'm able to identify Native people anywhere, in the entire hemisphere anywhere'. While the NMAI staff reached out to potential collaborators through the institution's channels, they also described using their own social media accounts to invite contributions: 'I solicit from my own Facebook different Native voices on how Native people all over celebrate Thanksgiving and every now and then, even Americans living in Canada they share, they do…'. The process of reaching out helps to sustain the NMAI's social mission and the staff member's similar imperative, as they reflected, 'I feel it's important that people see us, and we get exposure'.

Similarly, at the migration museum, the staff member networked with local communities to identify potential participants or 'storytellers' and partner organisations. For example, the MM staff member discussed how their staff build relationships with community storytellers:

> [w]e reach out to them sometimes, and by 'we', I mean the [museum] teams reach out to the partner organisations once we establish a link between the

> two…So we get them connected to our partner organisations and our partner organisations work with the teams and then they go from there.

As suggested in this quote, staff work around social media to reach out to organisations and storytellers to invite their participation. The Myseum, as previously mentioned in Chapter 5, also actively reaches out to partners and other organisations such as the Encampment Support Network, Tea Base, and the Buxton Museum – constantly seeking embeddedness in local communities, which they discuss as an essential part of creating a 'community hub':

> And so really using Instagram as less of a vanity tool and more of a community tool and almost like this digital community hub or community space. I think continuing to build towards that and I don't think that building ever ends, is something that would also be a metric of success for us.
>
> (Myseum staff)

Building relationships through the three mini case studies' respective social media platforms was also evident through a common practice of reciprocation. Staff actively re-shared the posts, events, and campaigns from other relevant/partner institutions and community groups and frequently tagged relevant organisations, partners, and participants. The interviewee from the Myseum suggested, '[i]n terms of organisations, we tag [them] so that they can share with their audiences and people can tune in digitally'. In turn, the Myseum staff try to support other organisations by 'sharing and engaging with different organisations really, using it [social media] as a way to support other organisations like go check out this event, it's happening this day, this organisation is awesome!' Similarly, the MM interviewee described, '[a]nd with our followers we showed reciprocity [to those] who were missioned-aligned with our mission itself. So that meant we liked, shared, and retweeted posts that they put out'. Besides reaching out to organisations on social media, the Myseum also tried to build relationships and support users and organisations by hosting go-fund me pages on their Instagram account.

On the other hand, aware of social media's elasticities, the Myseum staff member referred to how they actively work to circumvent some of its limitations. For example, the interviewee acknowledged accessibility issues surrounding social media and suggested they do not want the institution or users to be limited by this. As a result, the staff member expressed an awareness that although certain organisations or users may want their perspectives or causes heard, they might not have the resources or time to create social media content. For instance, the Myseum not only offers their accounts up for takeovers but will also create content based on their partner's needs, i.e., they are willing to give up their infrastructure and resources for this purpose. To exemplify this, the interviewee discussed how the Buxton Museum mentioned above, did not have enough time to do a full takeover and instead, sent the Myseum different pieces of content and requested the Myseum staff to create the social media takeover for them.[3]

As a result of centring user voices and needs, reaching out to and working with users, some of the interviewees argued that Instagram posts and social media-related projects could have social value: this included enabling direct connections between users and staff, cultivating feelings of being seen but also a new understanding across different users. The way users engaged with posts and in virtual sessions were discussed by staff as evidencing these benefits. For instance, the migration museum staff member shared, '[w]e've even had one of our storytellers in our evaluation surveys say I felt heard…There's moments like that, that makes me feel like my work matters'. The NMAI interviewee similarly discussed a blog piece and associate social media posts about Day of the Dead in 2020. The post included different quotes from users sharing their traditions and as a result, the staff member recounted how users expressed gratitude for being included,

> Yeah, I…now that [Day of the Dead] is something I knew nothing about but the more I got into it, it was fascinating and the article came out and a lot of people appreciated it and they sent me personal Facebook emails for saying "thank you for including us, we are from south of the border but we are Native too and you know in our heart, felt you and I are the same".

Beyond feelings of gratitude in being seen and belonging, social media posts could also spark user surprise and enable new understandings across differences. For the Myseum this was reflected in a post about a Black hockey player, Herb Carnegie: '[s]o, I think for me, that story in particular – some people look at it and they're like "oh it's a hockey story, cool" and then they read it and they're like "oh, like this sucks". His name should be in the Hockey Hall of Fame for instance'. This perspective was shared by the NMAI staff member who discussed how sharing their platforms and amplifying Native American voices or stories could surprise and cultivate a new understanding across users: '[a]bsolutely! And I make it interesting, there's photos and quotes and information that people go "Wow I never knew that!" Even Natives go "Wow I never knew that!"' These moments of surprise and connection were emphasised by staff as 'real', which reflects the idea that although the structures they create through social media and online platforms may be ephemeral, these connections are potentially powerful in their own way: '[y]eah, and it is like you know a tool, but in terms of how we should be viewing it, it's just part of your existence as much for a lot of people – of the physical world' (Myseum staff).

Relationship building, in terms of reaching out and working with participants has been framed in museum literature as an essential part of social inclusion work. However, the success of participatory and outreach projects often relies on the quality of these relationships across networks (Morse, 2020). In broader participatory museum literature, social connectivity has been theorised through the metaphor of hosting a cocktail party (Simon, 2010), being for some individuals a central motivation for participating in cultural heritage projects (Boersma et al., 2025).[4] Social media however, is characterised by 'weak' links or ties and series of interactions, in which groups may come together briefly due to shared identities, interests or concerns (Papacharissi & Trevey, 2018). In the context of social media, social

connections and collaborations may take on alternative forms and require alternative critical methods of evaluation.

Moreover, the ability of museums to sustain social connections with their participants post-participation even out with social media is challenging (Boersma et al.). In the context of social media, we can therefore assume staff encounter a similar if not more difficult challenge to sustaining social connections with participants/users. For example, there was some critical reflection by the Myseum staff member regarding the sustainability of relationships and collaborations initiated through social media: 'it would probably be better to have someone out there who is honing these relationships rather than not being kept, making sure these relationships are kept up with after the fact – an Instagram takeover being done, for example'. Thus, museums may need to invest more resources in keeping up and sustaining relationships that result from social media-related projects.

These social media-related relationships and the sharing of the museum's social platforms are for staff and users, punctuated by moments of 'real' and powerful connections across differences, feelings of gratitude, belonging, and understanding. According to Dodd and Sandell (2001),

> the most important connections do not, in fact, come down a fibre optic cable. They come, instead, between visitors and objects, people and their communities, and individuals and their own sense of self and identity. The more we embrace this idea, the more new media will be seen – rightly – as just one of many powerful ways to mediate social change.
>
> (p. 107)

As critically reflected by this quote, digital media such as social media are not equated themselves with connections, rather connections develop due to the agency and interplay between staff, users, their stories, or voices, needs, and social context. In the cases discussed above, these connections were characterised by instances of surprise, newfound understanding, and feelings of being seen. While such connections can be considered ephemeral, social media staff's practices were founded upon a long process of being present and listening, becoming attuned to their respective users, networks, and communities. In turn, staff try to be flexible and responsive to gaps, issues, and topics that are of interest to their respective users. The museum staff respond, adapt, and adjust in various ways, specifically by navigating social media: they leverage social media affordances to connect with users and organisations, and circumvent some of its limitations by drawing on other resources such as staff's own networks and those of other organisations.

Tinkering for an inclusive use of museum social media

Museum literature has pointed to the potential of a wide range of social media practices for social inclusion initiatives. In reflecting on how digital tools could contribute to inclusivity, Malde and Kennedy (2018), writing for Culture24, suggest

that they can enable a wide range of voices to be heard and expand an institution's reach (p. 27). Spruce and Leaf (2017) discuss social media's potential in a similar way, as an educational tool for museums and publics to progress social justice initiatives and advance social change. However, to align social media use with social initiatives, there is recognition that museum staff must be authentic or sincere as opposed to tokenistic (Sánchez Laws, 2015). Expanding on these perspectives, social media staff from the three mini case studies, indicate that using social media for social inclusion in sincere ways is dependent on staff's commitment to using these platforms to continuously listen and in turn, iteratively respond and adapt their practices. The commitment to responding and adapting to perceived user needs relates to the Science and Technology Studies (STS) concept of 'tinkering'. Tinkering, according to Mol (2010) studying care home residents and workers, is the ability of practitioners to be attuned, adapt, and compensate to fulfil users' (or care home residents') needs.

It is feeling the tensions in practice and in this case, understanding how different elements, including the affordances of social media can be assembled, negotiated or 'worked around' to support inclusive practices, which makes for successful work (Mol, 2010). For the concept of 'tinkering' within this chapter, I take inspiration from both feminist theory in STS and from theories of care. Tinkering has a history in hacking, DIY cultures, programming, science research and education. However, the persona of 'tinkerer' has roots in what Giordano (2018) argues is a colour-blind privileged white male position in scientific communities, who ironically has petitioned for the democratisation of science without challenging the associated hierarchical, racialised, and gendered systems of knowledge creation/access. Rather than throw out tinkering, the author argues that the concept can be reused within a feminist theory framework. Tinkering from their perspective becomes an ethical pursuit, a process, and a way of 'being or becoming' which is explicitly, 'politically motivated' (Giordano, 2018, pp. 226, 223).[5]

In Mol's (2010) work, tinkering is seen as a process of listening and being attuned to formulate a (care)ful response which constantly changes and adapts, requiring reflexivity. From this perspective, tinkering is a style of care that plays with and balances different goods, or in this case social media affordances, to meet the needs of users (Mol, 2010). This aligns with Giordano's (2018) iterative qualities of tinkering, which is not only about problem solving – but also becoming increasingly responsible with each iteration (p. 229). In terms of becoming more responsible or 'ethical', tinkering also relies on sensory perception or an experiential understanding and knowledge of what qualifies as 'good work' based on context (Lutz, 2013). Tinkering, like the concept of craftwork, relies on a connection between staff's 'head' – their knowledge and tacit understanding, and their 'hand' or active actions, enabling staff to feel when their practices are sincere or good (Sennett, 2008). While Giordano (2018) applies tinkering to scientific research and Mol (2010) to healthcare, I have used tinkering in this book as a frame to interpret how staff from the mini case studies support their social inclusion work using

social media, having significance for museum practices more broadly and institutional support systems.

For social media staff, reflections on sincerity and feelings of 'rightness' or 'wrongness' relate to the tensions in practices between inclusion and the possibilities and limits of social media practices. Staff from the mini case studies stressed the importance of ongoing listening or attunement and a commitment to responding. For instance, the Myseum staff member emphasised the importance of institutional bravery when faced with discomfort and ongoing engagement with communities and their needs on social media. Comparatively, the migration museum staff expressed an emotional commitment to continuously sharing underrepresented voices and perspectives, and like the Myseum, continuously addressing injustices they face as part and parcel to sustaining their institutional role. The NMAI expressed an impassioned commitment to responding to gaps and misunderstandings in broader public discourse and concerns of Native American networks. Within each of these case studies, staff committed to listening and adapting their practices according to perceived user needs and their institutional mission by navigating, leveraging, and mitigating social media affordances.

However, unlike typical forms of tinkering, museum social media staff do not intervene in physical structures, such as in the production of pottery or glass but rather tinker with less-tangible structures and resources to pull together voices, narratives, users, and user needs, creating different transient arrangements. For instance, to amplify and centre user voices and perspectives, staff from the MM, Myseum, and NMAI researched stories by drawing on other cultural heritage resources and experts. In turn, they meshed together content using quotes from other media outlets and content from past exhibitions and projects. Further, staff reached out to users to create participatory opportunities through their own social media but also through partner organisations and other mediums, and cultivated these relationships through the affordances of social media in enabling reciprocation. However, tinkering is not necessarily successful (Lutz, 2013) and it might not be worthwhile, which is a critical question raised in relation to museum social media practices for social inclusion work.

While not a traditional conception or portrayal of tinkering, these mini case studies align with the ethos of tinkering through staff's feelings regarding a job well done. Staff connected this feeling to being attuned to the local and social context of users and in turn, iteratively adapting possibilities for engagement in ways that sustain their institution's social role. Through tinkering, staff from the mini case studies indicate that beyond adopting social media in their practices they must also adapt their work to meet social goals. Rather than relying passively on the conflation between social media adoption for fulfilling socially inclusive roles, museum staff must adapt their practices creatively to draw on a range of structures and resources for their socially inclusive work. In doing so, the processes of listening and carefully responding by navigating, leveraging, and circumventing social media affordances, potentially form new ad hoc or ephemeral infrastructures that support the institution's social role and identity. For instance, this includes adapting practices and associated structures to value migration and associated narratives

(MM staff), to challenge assumptions and promote understanding of Native Americans (NMAI staff) and highlight under-heard stories of Toronto cultivating new understandings of the city (Myseum staff).

Moreover, as framed by 'tinkering' staff indicate the importance of adhering to different forms of listening and the structures that may be required to do so, pointing to practices that may similarly be adopted by other institutions. As will be further unpicked in Chapter 7, museum staff invested ongoing labour and time to listen through and around social media, paying attention to events and social context relevant to the communities and users they intend to serve. This expands on and echoes previous calls for museum institutions to advance social missions by learning from and about audiences through social listening (Spruce & Leaf, 2017). Further, staff illuminate the importance of representation in the context of social media, by using their platforms for non-museum/non- institutional voices: enabling participants, individuals, and community groups to share their perspectives and concerns. In doing so, staff collaborated in different ways with participants and users, forming social connections through collaborative social media projects and enabling connections across users through social media posts.

The use of tinkering in this chapter, which emphasises social media for social inclusion as an ongoing process of listening/being attuned and in turn, responding and adapting practices, is also a direct response to the conclusions made in the previous chapters. Tinkering builds on the careful and experimental approach represented by the OM staff's processes of translation, within which they mindfully leveraged and circumvented aspects of social media to translate practices and values associated with their analogue social inclusion work in novel ways. Moreover, the OM staff listened to their partners participants, and their social contexts to experimentally adjust their practices, participating similarly, in a form of tinkering.

Conclusion

To conclude, in this chapter, I expanded on the observations made at the OM to argue that social media for social inclusion initiatives requires not only the translation of the structures that support a museum's existing social inclusion work but also constant listening and the adaption of practices. Social media staff's perceptions of what constitutes a sincere social role, implicated by staff's affective expressions of a 'job well done' in this chapter, suggests the necessity of using social media to listen to the needs and contexts of their respective networks and iteratively respond and adapt their practices. Staff from the NMAI, the MM, and the Myseum responded to issues that arose and absences or misrepresentations by reaching out to collaborators and contributors, and bringing together users, user needs, and voices in different ways by leveraging and circumventing social media affordances.

This style or approach speaks to the concept of 'tinkering' which is beneficial for understanding the intricacies of pursuing social inclusion through social media. It positions social media work as an active, dynamic ongoing process of listening/being attuned and adapting practices, requiring staff to negotiate the affordances of

social media in meaningful ways. Moreover, tinkering positions staff's responsiveness as ongoing and underpinned by an ethical intention. As such, the concept of tinkering also nuances the process of these practices in representing perspectives and stories of marginalised users on social media which externally can be critiqued as a tokenistic measure of inclusion or an 'inauthentic' performance of a museum's respective social role (Baggesen, 2014; Sánchez Laws, 2015).

Social media staff expressed an emotional importance regarding consistent practices of listening and iteratively responding which underpins the sincerity of their social media practices. The ability of staff to adapt and adjust practices is founded upon the idea that rather than looking at what 'we' the institution have in terms of collections and stories, or what 'we' want, social media staff begin by listening outwards to the groups that are under-served or hardly reached, actively trying to connect through social media and other media. In turn, responding becomes a process of centring user voices by drawing on a range of resources including other cultural heritage institutions and media sources, and users themselves within the frame of institutional missions.

The importance of listening and responding was similarly evident at the OM during COVID-19: the perceived success and legitimisation of their online forms of engagement was reliant on communicating with their users and partners and adapting to their needs. In the process of translation and tinkering museum staff draw on certain skills, including their ability to listen by being attuned to the needs of local communities or user groups, be mindful of the affordances of social media for existing values in relation to social inclusion work, and to continuously experiment with practices. Since social media platforms are constantly changing and evolving, social media as a skilled practice requires space for experimentation, for openness on the part of the institution, and for failure or foolery. It requires time to develop a connection between staff's head and hand, getting a tacit feel for how social media affordances can be drawn on to sustain an institution's social role and be used to meet user interests, needs and or concerns. In the following concluding chapter, I thus, bring together these socio-technical processes, to argue that using museum social media for social inclusion work in the sector can be informed by the concept of craft. The concept of craft or 'craftwork' stresses the skilled and dynamic nature of using social media for social inclusion work, and the entanglement between the ongoing development of underpinning skills (mindfulness, listening, and experimentation) and experiential knowledge of social media's elasticities.

Notes

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2 See for example, Instagram post by the National Museums of the American Indian here: https://www.instagram.com/p/CD5B8KsApqZ/
3 Post available to view here: https://www.instagram.com/p/CBeDkTuAKuI/?hl=en&img_index=1

4 Forthcoming chapter titled: Shifting from 'inside-out' to 'outside in': envisioning ways of structurally integrating participatory principles by Boersma, S., Kist, C., Mucha F., Zwart, I., Economou, E. in museums in *Future Memory Practices: Concepts, Cases, Critique* (Ed.) Koch, G., Quoc-tran T., Smith, R. (2024).
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7 Crafting museum social media for social inclusion work

While the 'how' of a social media for social inclusion will be particular to each individual institution, the previous chapters expose some of the processes and structures which situationally, can bring social media closer to social inclusion work. Using social media to support social inclusion work relied on staff's ability to pursue certain socio-technological processes[1] such as the 'translation' of practices and structures (e.g., welcoming spaces) for social inclusion work to online contexts. It also relied on staff's ability to 'tinker' – that is, being 'attuned' to online users and iteratively adapting and responding their practices to perceived user needs.[2] In this chapter, I conclude that the processes I observed including translation and tinkering highlight the skilled dynamic nature of using social media for social inclusion initiatives which can be usefully understood as a form of craftwork.

Despite the idealised participatory potentials of social media platforms, museum social media is often critiqued as being used mainly for promotional rather than public value (Malde & Finnis, 2016). One factor that propagates this disconnection between the ideals of social media in theory compared to its use in museum practice, is its conceptualisation as a high-tech or novel device outside of or adjunct to the museum. Moreover, when social media is used towards social intentions, museums risk being critiqued for putting on a social performance, rather than authentically using social media towards social change (Sánchez Laws, 2015). Therefore, at the beginning of this book, I identified a need to understand social media for social inclusion work within context. This focus I argued, could reposition social media as a part of museum practice by acknowledging that it is constituted by complex practices at the intersection of different infrastructures. I theorised that an attention to museum staff practices in context, could generate knowledge on how social media can realistically be used as a part of everyday social inclusion work and the processes and structures[3] that support or hinder this use.

This focus enabled me to investigate social media as a part of museum practices and its ability to support the museum's role as agents of social inclusion, building on previous studies that consider social media for similar but different intentions, including social work (Malde & Kennedy, 2018; Meecham, 2013) social justice (Spruce & Leaf, 2017), and inclusion (Baker, 2017; Drotner & Schrøder, 2013). Throughout the research underpinning this book, I paid close attention to the-behind-the-scenes practices of museum staff through a qualitative approach

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encompassing a social media ethnography and practice research at the Open Museum (OM) under the umbrella of Glasgow Museums service (GM). Further, to expand upon these observations, I carried out additional interviews with eight social media professionals in cultural heritage institutions across Scotland and completed an analysis of three international mini case studies (the Myseum, a migration museum (MM), and the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI)). Through the synthesis of this research, we observe how museum staff continuously navigate the structures of social media to creatively fit these and associated practices within their social inclusion work, which can be supported or hindered by the museum organisation.

Staff's processes in pursuing a fit between social inclusion work and social media practices, align with previous literature that calls for cultural heritage staff to be cognisant of this process, insinuating the need for new literacies. For instance, cultural heritage institutions have been called to be clever in finding a 'match' between platforms, intended engagement and cultural heritage institution by pursuing active reflexivity (Liew et al., 2015, p. 379). This is reiterated by academics who argue that institutions must understand both the context and form of social media communications (Pavement, 2018, p. 42) and be able to continuously change the museum's infrastructure to meet the demands of the social web (Kelly, 2010). Similarly, the processes observed within this book, including translation and tinkering, suggest that using social media for social inclusion work encompasses an active ongoing negotiation. This aligns with the argument made by Pipek and Wulf (2009), who study e-infrastructures, that the distinction between designers and users should be abolished due to user innovations and adaptions. In this research, museum staff continuously navigate, draw on, and work around the affordances of social media – finding the right 'fit' for their work.

In Chapters 1 and 2, I suggested that staff might need to participate in ongoing negotiations of social structures such as museum culture and norms and their ability to reach out and work with individuals who experience marginalisation, with social media affordances. However, my fieldwork highlighted another significant negotiation. This negotiation, as observed from the staff practices, happens at the intersection between museum staff – their existing social inclusion practices and ideals, user needs, and what can be realised through the limits and potentials of social media platforms. Social inclusion work, as defined in Chapter 1 includes reaching out to users who are challenged by social exclusion and working with them to meet their needs. Yet, as made evident through the fieldwork at the OM this was associated by staff with a range of other practices and ideals, for example, creating safe spaces for participants and enabling social and emotional connections through authentic collection objects.

The identification of this situated ongoing negotiation in pursuing social inclusion work through social media emphasises the understanding that these platforms do not automatically contribute to the democratisation of cultural heritage or associated social goals. Rather, staff must pursue social goals actively with awareness of social media affordances, grounded within users' social contexts, and be supported by their museum institution to do so. Significantly, pursuing these

negotiations or socio-technological processes in ways that are effective, based on user/participant responses and staff's own perception of 'sincerity', is reliant on a particular skillset that reflects and continuously builds staff's experiential and tacit knowledge of social media affordances. The findings, as discussed further below, paint a picture of using museum social media for social inclusion work as reliant on ongoing socio-technical processes such as translation and tinkering, which are effective due to being underpinned by staff's ability to be *mindful, experimental, and listen to users/social context*.

These three skills combined (mindfulness, experimentation, and listening) point to the usefulness of understanding staff's social media practices for social inclusion initiatives as a form of craft or craftwork. There are many applications and different theoretical positions on the understanding of craftwork/craft as a critical theory of practice. Building on perspectives pertaining to digital archaeology (Beale & Reilly, 2017; Shanks & McGuire, 1996), in this book, craft encompasses a skilled negotiation or dialogue between craftworkers, in this case – museum practitioners (their social inclusion practices and ideals), the material they work with (the elasticities of social media), and end-user interests/needs. Importantly, as described by authors who study the intersection between digital and craft, by participating in these negotiations and making with their craft material, the craftworker continuously increases their knowledge of the material they work with (Bunnell, 2004; McCullough, 1998). From this perspective, crafting is reliant on both an ongoing understanding of the intended users' or community's interests and needs and the material that the craftworker uses.

In the following paragraphs, I use the concept of craft to further highlight and discuss how enacting skills of mindfulness, experimentation, and listening reflect and continuously build museum staff's knowledge of social media. In drawing on the concept of craft, my intention is to propose in opposition to an idealisation of social media as a high-tech device which automatically conveys participatory or democratic potential, that pursuing social goals requires staff to enact certain skills. In turn, in enacting these skills, staff continuously develop their knowledge of the limits and potentials of their craft material, social media. With this understanding in mind, I create a provocation for future museum social media research and practices.

Mindfulness

As I show in the previous chapters, staff from the OM and the mini case studies practiced a mindfulness in attempting to understand the relation between the material or affordances of social media and how it could be used to support their social inclusion roles. We can understand this type of thoughtfulness as a central aspect of 'craft' which expands upon previous critical calls for staff to exert reflexivity by highlighting the messy entanglement of this ability with staff's continuously developing knowledge of social media's elasticities (Axelsson, 2018; Kidd, 2016). The OM and social media staff from the mini case studies showed a reflexive investigation of social media's variabilities by leveraging and mitigating its affordances, rather than allowing their practices to be passively determined by the tech itself.

Through the placement with the OM, I revealed how facets of their existing analogue social inclusion work which I described using the conceptual tool of infrastructure, supports and affirms their social role and identity, and in doing so, can hinder social media use.

Nonetheless, in the context of COVID-19 restrictions, the OM staff were highly motivated to maintain outreach practices with their participants. During this period, I observed how staff attempted to translate the dimensions that support their non-digital social inclusion work to online contexts in exploratory ways by leveraging certain aspects of social media and working around others. For instance, to prioritise the sensory capabilities and effect of collection objects, staff drew on the visual capabilities of social media and its ability to connect objects with different forms of interpretation such as sound, music, and poems. The dimensions of OM's analogue socially inclusive practice, as expanded upon by the mini case studies, are and can be carried out differently by each institution online to fit within a particular institutional remit.

Importantly, during this translation process, OM staff critically questioned their own approach and that of the larger institution to online engagement, reflecting on if what they were doing was right or reaching the 'right' audiences. Similarly, staff from the mini case studies discussed a conscious pursuit of their social roles such as cultivating a platform for community voices by pulling together different resources and social media affordances. In doing so, they also reflected on the aspects of social media practices that could signify disingenuity in relation to their institution's respective social role, such as inconsistency. Therefore, by reflecting on their inclusive practices and ideals, museum staff in my research attempted to mindfully map these onto social media affordances, intervening in and getting to understand the potentials and limits of social media.

However, mindfulness in terms of reflecting on inclusive practices and how they can be enacted through social media was potentially hindered at GM by institutional barriers including limited resources and time and a lack of shared goals across staff for the social media platforms. In Chapter 3, I discussed how GM' infrastructure could exclude staff from using social media in meaningful ways. As a result, staff had to invest an immense amount of effort to simply contend with organisational constraints, taking up energy, labour, and resources that could be devoted to reflexive, experimental, and creative processes in integrating social media into social inclusion work. Moreover, GM staff indicated confusion and even tension regarding the balancing of different institutional responsibilities through social media; without shared goals amongst staff for using social media, the mindful application of associated social practices can be challenging. This observation highlights the importance of thoughtfully applying shared practices and ideals, and its entanglement with staff's ability to continuously develop their understanding of the elasticities of social media.

The ability to experiment

This brings us to the second skill underpinning staff processes: their ability to experiment and explore the potentials or limits of social media. This ability speaks

to a form of learning through making or using the material associated with craft, within which staff gain an understanding of the limits and potentials of social media and how it can be used to meet user interests and needs (Shanks & McGuire, 1996). Processes of translation and tinkering suggest staff desire and need to find out what is possible within the limits of social media. For example, what it is like to do outreach virtually (or without handling kits) and how to continuously respond to changing user needs within the possibilities of social media platforms. Further, as discussed in Chapter 3, several GM staff attempted to learn through experimentation with social media by being resourceful in their self-learning and felt freer during COVID-19 to fulfil this aspect of their practices.

During the pandemic, in an institutional blog post, one GM staff reported on this aspect of their social media practices as being experimental by suggesting that key to learning was by trying out different platforms and posts and generally by using social media (Glasgow Life, 2020). In Chapter 5, staff from the OM also evidenced this experimental approach by trying out different platforms to continue carrying out their work. In turn, they emphasised the need to continue this exploration by experimenting with digital learning and outreach (OB).[4] Moreover, OM staff suggested an understanding of the potential alignment of social media with their work 'by doing' or using social media and other online platforms during the pandemic. For one staff member, as described in Chapter 5, it was through several lockdown periods and trying things out, that they realised they could use digital platforms and work on outreach projects with participants in similar ways to working offline. The importance of this learning through practices, however, became most palpable during a follow-up email with another OM staff member in August 2021.[5]

At the start of the pandemic, this staff member was extremely critical of using social media and the web for outreach but after working online for a year had a change in perspective. They described feeling successful in their online work due to reaching and working with individuals who face similar barriers, describing themselves as a 'digital advocate'. Such a change in perspective implies the importance of an experimental approach to social media, which allows staff to develop an understanding of the material, in this case, social media and how it can align with social inclusion work through doing. It is important to note that experimentation, broadly understood, is not inherently ethical and indeed, can have negative ramifications for users and staff. However, the experimentation advocated for here, under the umbrella of craft, is seen as entangled with both mindfulness and listening which together can help staff to pursue social inclusion work 'through doing' reflexively and carefully.

Listening to users and social context

Yet, it is not sufficient for staff to only be mindful and approach social media with an experimental attitude, the two skills I just summarised. They must also exercise a third one – listening to their users and their social context. This listening, as observed at the OM and mini case studies, also speaks to the craftworkers' need to anticipate their end user needs and, in turn, staff's responsiveness in drawing on different affordances of social media to continuously adapt their practices. As the

OM and social media staff from the mini case studies suggest, as part of staff's social media practices, they must not only translate the facets that support their social inclusion work but must also be 'attuned' to and continuously responsive to the needs of their users. By being attuned, staff in the analysis could further tweak the format and content of engagement to try and meet user interests/needs and simultaneously, further their own understanding of how the affordances of social media could be leveraged for this pursuit.

Despite the OM staff's active mindfulness in translating aspects of their practice to social media, this process was reliant on and legitimised by back-and-forth feedback between staff, partners, and participants. Similarly, staff across the three mini case studies expressed a feeling of sincerity in their social media use when listening closely and paying attention to their intended users, networks, and their social context. In turn, these staff members committed to responding iteratively to their users' interests and needs by navigating, leveraging, and circumventing social media affordances to amplify user voices and by reaching out to and working with their users, a process I frame as 'tinkering'.

On the one hand, this research showed that listening involved explicit feedback and discussions between users and staff and on the other hand, an awareness of social context and contemporary discussions amongst an institution's users. Such practices suggest that staff are not only thinking critically but are also, what Ingold (2022) describes in relation to skilled work, as participating in a sort of sensory perception of their users' context by reaching out into their surrounding environment (p. 14). For instance, the Myseum interviewee described this skill as being 'in tune' with their communities, while a Marketing staff member at a Scottish cultural heritage institution described it in an interview as 'that kind of like non-monolithic conveyor belt mentality, it is actually much more responsive you know, to your audience and being *in tune* with them hopefully'. Museum social media work therefore, calls for concentration rather than mindlessness, a consciousness that involves not only an experiential understanding of the potentials and limitations of platforms but also an awareness and sensory perception of user needs.

According to McCullough (1998), discussing craftwork in the digital sphere, craft is perceived to be successful or good, or valuable based on one's own experiences with the material, a community of practice or significantly, the intended users. As evidenced by museum staff's tacit or experiential feelings of sincerity in Chapters 5 and 6, how they perceived the success of their social media practices relied on their ability to be attuned to their users/networks and consistently respond to their perceived needs. Inclusion on social media has been connected by other scholars to incorporating user generated material into the museum's social media communications (Baker, 2017), cultivating communities of interest (Kidd, 2011), or even representing a range of perspectives online (Cuseum, 2020). However, through this study, it is refocused on staff's ability to listen to their users through a back-and-forth dialogue and by paying attention to their larger social contexts at a particular moment. Such a perspective positions listening, a practice previously advocated for (Spruce & Leaf, 2017) but further nuanced here, as having an ethical intention. In being attuned to in the networks the museum intends to serve,

museums' social media is re-focused on how it can be used to serve users, rather than necessarily, on how it can benefit the museum.

The discussion above points to the centrality of approaching social media with the three combined skills (mindfulness, the ability to experiment, and listen to users/context) for museum staff as craftworkers to effectively participate in an ongoing dialogue and negotiation between their social inclusion practices and ideals, the affordances of social media, and user needs. This dialogue, as framed through a lens of craft, also importantly highlights that these practices are an ongoing process through which staff continuously develop an embodied knowledge of social media's affordances. This ongoing development was also reflected in the comments of staff referring to their social media practices as constantly growing and evolving. For instance, the NMAI staff member explained, '[w]e won't be left in one situation, we will evolve'. Similarly, the migration museum staff member reflected on the development of their practices,

> [s]o in terms of major changes to social media and what not, I don't really know, because I think it's an ongoing evolving thing. It's kinda like raising a child – you don't know what you are going to see the next day.

Pivotally, and moving forward, I suggest from other craft-related literature (McCullough, 1998; Yair & Schwarz, 2011) that the craftworker's skills should be developed not only through the making process but also through a supportive environment and a community of practice or increasingly, a network of practitioners. This suggestion is supported by GM staff's reliance on their colleague – staff learned from and depended on their colleagues for empathetic support around social media practices in Chapter 3. However, staff across the institutions analysed also evidenced the need for a top-down form of support through organisational investment in social media work in terms of the attribution of resources and the need to cultivate a trusting environment for staff. A summary of the enactment of staff's skills and processes is shown in the diagram (Figure 7.1) below, which depicts the ongoing negotiations between structures that are encompassed by staff's social inclusion practices and ideals, social media affordances, and user needs to pursue social inclusion work. However, the diagram also acknowledges that these negotiations are grounded in and impacted by aspects of museum infrastructure, including its resources and culture.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the need to further develop these skills such as mindfulness, experimentation, and listening at the OM and GM but also in the wider museum sector, became paramount. Simultaneously, the previous deficiency in the pursuit of these skills was made dramatically visible. The need to develop social media skills was made evident in publications and blogposts on museum work across the sector during COVID-19 which suggests that the pandemic is pushing museum social media practices around the globe to be responsive to the social contexts and needs of their users (Longo, 2020; Samaroudi et al., 2020). This is further evidenced by the range of resources made available to support practitioners' social media practices.[6] In my own research, the rush to develop skills associated with social media was also made apparent by the increased number of

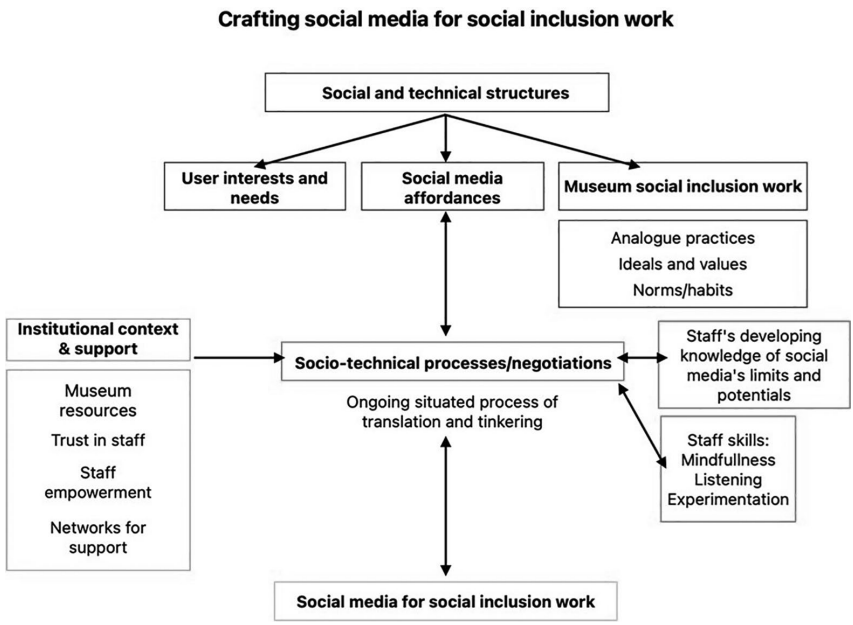

Figure 7.1 Screen-capture of the author's diagram created using FreeForm, summarising the processes and skills through which museum staff negotiate social and technical structures to pursue social inclusion work through social media.

attendees at Scottish Heritage Social Media Group meetings.[7] Thus, the pandemic has potentially motivated professionals in the sector to investigate how institutional social goals can be mapped onto the affordances of social media through the support of their colleagues and professional networks.

While I have previously questioned the usefulness of museum social media campaigns during COVID-19 for social goals (Kist, 2020), the campaigns do demonstrate how the pandemic has motivated museum professionals to experiment with social media, change their practices, and seek out peer support. Aspects of craftwork, including understanding the craft material through making or doing and the need for a supportive environment to develop practices, raises future questions about how the sector can cultivate associated skills. Craft, according to McCullough (1998), is a 'view' of digital technology that encompasses the idea that media is only as good as those who master it and is reliant on a practiced skill including but not limited to: 'tacit knowledge of tools – experiences in the affordances of media, and intelligent practices…' (p. 271). As a view applied to museum social media, for instance, we might question if an apprenticeship model often used in craftwork can enable novice museum professionals to learn from more practised social media staff and to play or experiment with social media to develop an embodied understanding of how its varied affordances can be used to meet user needs within the frame of institutional missions. By viewing museum social media for social inclusion as a form of craft, defined by the skills discussed above, the findings in the following section are synthesised into some suggestions for practice and future research.

Speculative recommendations for practice

In this section, using a lens of craft, the observations from the fieldwork are further synthesised and put forward into suggestions for how museum practitioners can develop their ability to be mindful, experimental, and to listen, further aligning social media with social inclusion work. Acknowledging that the development of these skills is influenced by context, I outline some additional takeaways for how senior managers in cultural heritage organisations can actively support the enactment and development of these skills. Finally, reflecting on the findings and methods underpinning this book, I suggest some avenues for future research. These suggestions, based on the observations made in this book, are not intended to be formulaic static directions but rather, I hope they serve as both an inspiration and a provocation for pursuing social inclusion work through social media.

Listening: dedicate time to being 'in tune'

To practice social media as a form of craft, it is important for staff to dedicate time to listening and integrating themselves into their intended user networks and groups, also described by staff from the Myseum as being 'in tune'. Staff from the OM, for example, indicated the importance of listening to their participants by considering both their social context and associated impacts of COVID-19 and by having explicit back-and-forth feedback with partners and participants to cater to their interests. Similarly, staff from the mini case studies suggested that a central aspect of their social media practices involved listening to the social contexts of their users including, as made evident in the analysis, 'trends', 'gaps', and 'injustices' through social media and around social media in local neighbourhoods and communities. Other museum practitioners may, similarly, focus their social listening on 'gaps' and 'injustices' and like the staff from the mini case studies, by following organisations that are 'mission aligned', relevant hashtags, activists, and key community representatives. Further, as shown by staff from the Myseum and migration museum listening can be intricately intertwined with showing reciprocation to an institution's partners, collaborators, and users on social media through actions such as hosting go-fund me pages and re-sharing content.

Following similar tactics of listening and reciprocation, staff practicing social media at other institutions can pursue becoming integrated or 'grounded' and form relationships in the networks their museums intend to serve. Listening, which can also be an invisible form of work, also points to the importance of staff approaching social media as an ongoing process. Seeing social media as an ongoing process in anticipating and meeting user needs diverts a focus away from cultivating more public and quantifiable participation such as comments and likes which can be conflated with social goals. As Morse (2020) suggests, participation from a care perspective can entail 'caring with' to create and co-create projects and forms of engagement which suit participants' interests, needs, and concerns which align nicely with my observations regarding staff's processes in pursuing social inclusion work. However, as with listening and outreach work in analogue contexts,

these forms of listening online similarly require emotional investment and labour on the part of staff and, as such, further institutional support. This long-term form of social listening should be understood as complementary to explicit back-and-forth communication with individuals and community groups which together can enable social inclusion work to take place through social media. However, it is not enough to simply listen, but staff must also be willing to respond by adapting their approach to the content used, reaching out to their intended users to invite participation, and creating new projects.

Mindfulness: applying shared social goals and ideals

To enact mindfulness, approaching social media through a lens of social inclusion ideals and practices is essential. Staff in the analysis, including from the OM and the mini case studies, appear not to idealise social media but rather leverage some of its affordances and negotiate its limitations to create a fit between their existing social inclusion work, practices and ideals, and the elasticities of social media. In this process, staff should not attempt to create a one-to-one transposition of these practices in online contexts but rather pursue their transformation in ways that fit within the context of social media while continuously questioning the usefulness of these practices for their users. For instance, staff from the OM leveraged the private affordances of social media to cultivate, in a similar but different way, feelings of welcomeness and safety for their participants which was central to their analogue social inclusion work. However, being mindful also implicates the importance of knowing when social media's elasticities cannot be bent in a certain direction or only partially fulfil an aim. In turn, staff must be empowered to draw on other resources and tools, to for example reach inaccessible community group or to create spaces where individuals or groups feel comfortable to engage in sensitive topics.

The ability to approach social media through a lens of social inclusion ideals and practices also suggests the importance of having a shared understanding of social media and its relation to social inclusion practices amongst staff. As discussed in Chapter 1, a range of social inclusion discourse can exist at one time in a museum and can shape museum practices and structures. Moreover, in Chapter 3, Glasgow Museums' approach to social media appeared to be shaped by a tension between conflicting museum imperatives, creating an ambiguity regarding the purpose of social media. Having a shared understanding across staff of social inclusion work and the associated role of online contexts could be underpinned by a social media strategy or document. Such a document could empower staff action and subsequent reflection in finding a 'fit' between social media platforms, their practices, and user needs. Such policies, however, must be carefully developed to enable and empower staff's social media practices rather than restrict them – which can potentially hinder creativity and experimentation. Further, constant communication between colleagues can help ensure they are on the same page to avoid tensions between staff responsibilities, as discussed in Chapter 3. This could be enabled, for instance, by using internal chat platforms or other communication channels amongst staff such as WhatsApp or Basecamp.

Experimental: view social media and associated practices as unfinished projects

To enact experimentation, staff should approach social media playfully as a series of potential materials from which to draw on creatively in conjunction with other structures and resources, rather than a set technology. For example, museum staff involved in the research, indicated a willingness to try out different platforms to meet user interests and needs, leverage different affordances, and use social media in combination with other resources which was essential to their practices. One telling example is how the interviewee from the NMAI reaches through but also around social media to contact intended user groups: staff will reach out to participants through the institution's official social media platforms but also try leveraging the personal channels of staff. Importantly, staff must navigate the affordances of social media not once but continuously, which evidence both their practices and social media as a developing process. To embrace this development, staff must acknowledge social media practices as a form of ongoing learning. Because of its risky feel, institutional support as discussed further below, is perhaps most essential to develop and enact an experimental approach.

Further, the three skills discussed in this chapter – listening, being mindful, and experimental – pivotally reflect and require the ongoing development of staff's experiential and embodied knowledge of the elasticities of social media. It was importantly through the 'doing' process of leveraging and mitigating social media affordances that OM staff developed an understanding regarding the fit between social media and their social inclusion practices. Moreover, recognition of this practice as continually developing was similarly referenced by staff from the mini cases studies as constantly evolving or even 'growing' (MM staff). This understanding places emphasis on the ability of staff to learn through doing or the making process but also presupposes the importance of staff wanting to develop these skills to join or create communities of practice. Communities of practice can provide a network of support and opportunities for co-learning. In a Scottish context, this could include joining the Scottish Heritage Social Media Group network, creating a community of practice in one's own institution, and using collaborative platforms for constant co-learning between staff internally.

Upper management: include staff in meaningful social media practices through investment and support

To encourage the development of social media as a craft, upper management of museum organisations should help create organisational conditions that enable staff to explore and connect social media work to social initiatives. This could for instance, include creating and cultivating safe spaces for staff to experiment. Drawing on the observation of GM staff's social media practices pre-COVID-19, a sense of safety and trust could be encouraged by giving staff direct access to social media accounts and letting staff develop and post content without stipulating the need to go through loops and receive upper management approval. Instances of 'hand-slapping' observed in the research such as in the example of the 'To absent friends' festival could be avoided by attributing staff agency in fulfilling shared

institutional social goals through a range of social media practices. Such goals could and should be laid out in an institutional document that is not strictly prohibitive but rather empowers staff to take action. Further, an experimental context and ethos could be encouraged internally by taking inspiration from Culture24's action research to frame activities of staff in relation to the social web as exploratory and thus, practices may be perceived by staff as playful as opposed to risky. This aligns with recent research on cultivating staff empowerment with digital practices by enabling staff play and experimentation (Frost, 2021). Moreover, it is also pivotal for upper management to attribute resources and time towards social media work. Such time and resources would further, enable staff to enact a mindfulness, to experiment, and listen to their users/social context.

The importance of this recommendation is further supported by the observed exclusion of staff from extensive engagement with and through social media in the perceived absence of institutional investment at GM. For example, to reflexively question practices and to iteratively respond to user needs by playing with different social media affordances and platforms, staff need time allocated within their work schedules. The allocation of time is also essential to enable staff to not only learn through doing but also participate in and learn from communities of practice and other professional networks, which may, for instance, take the form of apprenticeships or secondments. Moreover, the allocation of resources to social media, would further legitimise social media - the necessary skills, knowledge and (emotional) labour as a part of a museum practice, further enabling staff to investigate its potential alignment with institutional social missions.

Recommendations for future research

The research discussed in this book hints at the resulting social value of processes such as translation and tinkering when underpinned by staff's ability to be mindful, experimental, and listen to their uses and social context. In the context of OM's collaborative discos within which staff practiced these three skills, participants were able to challenge feelings of isolation during COVID-19 and feel that they were in a welcoming and safe space to share and connect with their peers. Similarly, museum professionals from the mini case studies observed the formation of emotional and social connections across users in their social media pages. A particularly, speaking moment was the response of Native Americans in Mexico who wrote to an NMAI staff member thanking them for the Day of the Dead programme.

However, further research is required to parse out, beyond staff reflections and user comments, the impact on users and collaborators through their experiences first-hand. As suggested through my critique of online participation in Chapter 1, future studies should involve not only consideration of users' publicly visible action and reaction on social media but also the invisible experiences and ongoing engagement of users through interviews and surveys. This future work is essential, as while this book suggests the importance of staff's craftwork due to their perceived sincerity by staff and the resulting social value for users, their actions online may have unforeseen consequences. For instance, representations that are activist on social media can perpetuate divisions and fail on a large public scale

to positively impact perspectives on issues such as race (Bonacchi & Krzyzanska, 2021). However, based on the discussions in Chapters 5 and 6, there is some hope that pursuing social inclusion practices through social media can have positive impact on a micro-level for the participants or users involved.

While the focus of this study was mainly on museum staff, understanding how individuals and groups who are challenged by social exclusion in general create their own digital infrastructures beyond the cultural heritage sector to feel socially connected, supported, and safe could be valuable knowledge for both social enterprises and cultural heritage institutions. Additionally, a qualitative approach encompassing practice research and ethnography proved useful for the research underpinning this book to understand the nitty-gritty of staff's everyday practices and processes in negotiating social and technical structures. This form of in-depth qualitative work could complement large quantitative studies that consider the relation between these practices and the resulting social value for users on a larger more public scale. Finally, building on the view of social media as a form of craft, the processes of translation and tinkering could be applied to other forms of digital media and platforms that the museum uses to test the usefulness of these processes to design, from the onset, opportunities for social inclusion work.

Conclusion

Craftwork as suggested through this book, serves as a useful concept for re-envisioning social media work as a complex museological practice that is grounded in context and continuously in development. It helps to further overcome the binary between tokenistic perceptions of social media use and its idealisation for social goals by pointing to the messy intersection between the development of skills, practices, and knowledge in using social media for social inclusion work. Through this book I suggest that social media can potentially support the socially inclusive role of the museum institution through processes such as translation and tinkering which together, encompass ongoing negotiations between staff's social inclusion practices and ideals, social media affordances, and user needs. These negotiations are underpinned by staff's ability to be mindful, listen to users, and be experimental. Importantly, these skills also reflect and require the continuous development of staff's experiential and tacit knowledge of social media's potentials and limitations.

Socio-technical processes, when underpinned by the skills discussed above, can enable staff to centre user concerns and interests, moving participation away from a conflation with public action such as commenting or liking, to be a process of meeting user needs. These processes can thus, potentially support the ways in which museum social media is already becoming user centred and the rising role of the museum institution in enabling social change. Museum social media for social inclusion work as a form of craft, therefore, requires staff to be willing and supported by their organisation to anticipate and respond to their users' needs and, in doing so, continuously develop their own experiential knowledge of the potentials and limits of their craft material, social media.

Notes

1 As described in Chapter 2, socio-technical processes encompass staff's active navigation or negotiation of social structures – such as museum culture and norms with technical structures, such as the affordances of social media which are enacted and become relevant through practice.
2 As mentioned in Chapter 1, and reflected particularly in Chapters 5 and 6, 'needs' is a shorthand way of referring to the interests, needs, and concerns of users encompassing in these chapters: overcoming social isolation, challenging misrepresentations, speaking out against injustices including xenophobia/racism, and enabling understanding across differences.
3 Structures, as a reminder to the reader, are described in Chapter 2 as social and technical dimensions that constitute museum infrastructures, which become relevant in practice.
4 Observation notes May 27, 2020.
5 Despite the exchange occurring after the research period, the staff member gave the author permission to refer to our email exchange.
6 Some of these resources include – Cuseum (2020) 'Webinar: How Museums Can Experiment with Social Media to Boost Audience Engagement During Coronavirus': https://cuseum.com/webinars/how-museums-can-experiment-with-social-media-to-boost-audience-engagement-during-coronavirus-video; Rebecca Atkinson (2020) 'How Can Digital Platforms Help Museums Connect to Audiences During Covid-19 Emergency?', Museums Association: https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/19032020-how-digital-platforms-be-used-to-support-musems-during-covid-19-crisis.
7 This is a group that provides peer-to-peer support for individuals who contribute to social media in the context of the cultural heritage sector: https://scottishheritagesocialmediagroup.com.

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Appendix A

A note on the ethics of online/offline research

The ethics of the research underpinning this book, both online and offline, was a dynamic process within which my decisions were influenced by the different dimensions proposed by Whiteman (2012) writing about internet research. These include my research institution or university, myself as the researcher, and the partners, and participants involved in the research (Whiteman, 2012, p. 25). In this section, I reflect on some of the key decisions I made during my research, regarding participants' consent, anonymity, and some of the ethical situations posed by my own participation, research interests, and positioning in the field.

The length of my placement with the OM (1 year) allowed me to familiarise myself with staff's practices and projects, their workspaces, institutional structures, and protocols, and observe different projects and interventions that happened in and around social media. Further, it allowed me to develop familiar and friendly relationships between myself as the researcher and several Glasgow Museums staff. As a researcher, I tried to remain impartial, but inevitably, the way I have presented my findings is informed by the relationships that colour my perspectives and positioning. Through a lengthy placement underpinned by qualitative methods, including practice research and an ethnography, I could dip my toes into the museum social media field, yet also remain a member of an academic community. At times, this position felt uneasy, due to straddling the insider/outsider position as an academic/museum professional. This split resulted in uneasy moments, within which I felt the persona of researcher fell behind that of practitioner, requiring careful reminders towards staff of my research intentions. The length of time, however, also provided the opportunity for an iterative back-and-forth motion between theory and research over extended periods.

Participating in and with museum staff in practices through 'practice research' was envisioned as 'ethical' by myself and staff as giving back to the museum in terms of labour, ideas, and time, while producing knowledge that was coloured by my specific interests. Thus, the museum itself influenced my methodological approach, an approach however, that posed ethical dilemmas throughout the research process. Specifically, at times, I was unsure about how much to participate, how much to intervene, create, and suggest and when to step back. As a result, my position was dynamic, constantly in flux between more passive observation and active participation. Despite this flux and dynamism, I strived to be transparent

regarding the aims of the research project and the intention of my practice and qualitative research with the museum staff. Informed consent was obtained for the project, giving staff the choice to be anonymised, albeit within the limiting frame of the Glasgow Museums case study, or to be identified by their names. As explained in Chapter 2, due to a few staff wishing to be as anonymous as possible within the case study, and to be fair to staff as a whole, pseudonyms are used throughout. In cases where GM staff were particularly critical of their institutions or have a high likelihood of being identifiable, their pseudonyms are left out.

In comparison, for the online data collection and analysis, I took a different approach based on a combination of consulting ethical standards and my own perception of the field sites under study. The collection of social media content, as with any kind of research data, requires a critical ethical consideration. Ethical guidelines regarding social media collection and analysis are not clear cut; rather they are very much based on circumstance, the type of data intended to be collected, the context of where the data is collected from, the researcher's own positioning, and the data's suitability to the research questions (Association of Internet Researchers, 2012). The social media pages of the institutions studied are open pages and groups where it is reasonable to expect that the users are aware of the potential to be publicly observed and where topics were not expected to be of a personal sensitive nature. Therefore, this project considered the content under analysis as existing in the public domain, supported by the British Psychological Society (2017) 'Ethics Guidelines for Internet-mediated Research' and 'Social Media Research: A Guide to Ethics', created by the University of Aberdeen (Townsend & Wallace, 2016). However, according to the Association of Internet Researchers' guidelines, the identity of individuals must be protected, and digital communications critically examined to minimise potential harm (Association of Internet Researchers, 2012). I applied this to my research by considering if comments contained information that would reveal user identity or personal data and deleted these from the dataset.

Due to the open nature of Glasgow Museums' social media pages, and the content of comments which typically were not of sensitive nature, I foregrounded privacy over other concerns that researchers have posited, such as copyright and attribution of social media content to respective users. In this study, acknowledging that users may not want their data published or identifiable within the frame of my research, I envisioned the privacy and protection of social media users as of the utmost importance. As such, I was vigilant in anonymising and securing data. Further, there existed the risk of accidentally collecting data from protected individuals. Facebook requires users to be 18 years of age, however even so, it is possible for minors to falsify age. As a result, social media comments are not directly quoted within the chapters.

Further, it is important to note that the focus of the research underpinning this book was influenced by its embeddedness in the European Union (EU) Horizon 2020 POEM training network. POEM, which stands for Participatory Memory Practices, is interested in the intersection between participation, memory practices, digital ecologies, and social inclusion and cohesion. This large project is split into three working groups or work packages (WPs), including WP1: Memory

institutions (where my own project is situated), WP2: People and groups, and WP3: Memory modalities, which encompasses the 13 PhD fellows, their supervisors, and partner institutions across the EU. From my own experiences working in museums and from my background in museum studies at the University of Toronto, the agenda of POEM spoke to current socially engaged discourse in the museum field and an important, timely criticality of museum social media practices. The POEM network has been an essential form of support, providing advice and critical feedback throughout my past and current research. Particularly, without the other members of Work Package 1 and critical friends from Work Package 3, my research would not have flown in the same direction and inevitably was shaped by their expertise.

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Appendix B

Dates of interviews

Table B1 Interviews with professionals contributing to social media at cultural heritage institutions in Scotland

Interviewee role(s)/department	*Date of interview*
An Outreach Staff and a Head of Collections	August 21, 2019
Digital Content Creator and a Director of Digital Content	August 15, 2019
Digital Media Professional	August 21, 2019
Marketing Staff	August 16, 2019
Archivist	October 4, 2019
Digital Content Editor	January 15, 2020

Table B2 Interviews with practitioners from the mini case studies

Mini case studies interviewees	*Date of interview*
Myseum staff	December 2, 2020
National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI)	November 6, 2020
Migration Museum (MM) (anonymous)	October 9, 2020

Table B3 Interviews with Open Museum disco project stakeholders

Disco interviewees	*Date of interview*
Facilitator	June 12, 2020
Participant A	June 22, 2020
Participant B	June 23, 2020
Participant C	June 30, 2020
Participant D	July 2, 2020
Participant E	July 2, 2020

Table B4 Interviews with Glasgow Museums staff members

GM staff pseudonyms	*Date(s) of interview*
Staff A	July 15, 2019
Staff B	November 6, 2019
	May 29, 2020
Staff C	July 7, 2019
Staff D	July 11, 2019
Staff E	June 19, 2019
	July 3, 2020
Staff F	August 6, 2019
	May 22, 2020
Staff G	May 21, 2020
Staff H	October 28, 2019
	May 18, 2020
Staff I	October 19, 2019
Staff K	November 9, 2019
	May 21, 2020
Staff L	November 20, 2019
	August 1, 2020
Staff M	June 27, 2019
Staff N	October 4, 2019
Staff O	July 4, 2019
Staff P	July 4, 2019
Staff Q	June 27, 2019
Staff R	July 3, 2019
Staff U	June 19, 2019
Staff V	September 12, 2019
Staff W	July 3, 2019
Staff X	February 5, 2019
	May 21, 2020
Staff Z	June 4, 2020

Appendix C

Themes addressed in research interviews with museum practitioners

Themes and questions that guided initial semi-structured interviews with Open Museum (OM) staff

Interviews were open and worked from general themes to more specific including:

1 Organisational and platform structures (affordances, organisation of work, policies)

- Roles of staff, their projects/programming and participation – esp. with difficult/social issues of their participants.
- Why create these projects/what were or are the aims, etc.
- Steps in creating projects.
- Use of digital/social media for engagement and participation.

2 Social practices and role (values, habits, norms, emotions)

- Description of social media work in the museum – aims? Importance/potential?
- Feelings about social media.
- Views on social media as engagement tool.
- Imagined improvements or changes.

Potential questions included:

1 Description of their role(s) in the institution (grand tour question)?
2 Can you tell me a bit more in depth about one of the projects you have going on or currently working on?
3 What do you think is key to creating a successful outreach project?
4 How would you define outreach?
5 You've been with the OM for a number of years what are some changes that you've observed in the museum and otherwise?
6 How would you describe the relationship between the other Glasgow Museums and the Open Museum?
7 Your projects appear to be related to social issues in the city albeit contemporary issues can you discuss a recent project that addresses a social issue?

8 How do you feel the social media channels have been since you have been with the OM?
9 How do you think a social media channel belonging to the OM could or should look?
10 What is the best part of your job and what is the hardest?

Themes and questions used to guide semi-structured interviews with staff from the three mini case studies

Themes from the Open Museum were explored in the mini case studies: 'Negotiating' with, 'adjusting' or 'subverting' social and organisational barriers to social media use. Including the following facets or sub-themes:

1 Organisational barriers: a lack of communication across staff, balance of content – push for marketing, hierarchal control, and risk aversion – avoiding material that may seem biased or 'activist'.
2 Barriers due to OM's socially engaged practices: Based on perceived safe spaces and the role of collection objects on social media (concern about participants, safety measures or protocols, perceived value or lack of objects – past reflection or future envisioning).
3 Social media limitations and affordances: Staff may leverage certain affordances of social media over others for specific intentions.
4 Rebelling: Staff subvert institutional protocols or find institutional workarounds (Reflections on being 'naughty' or breaking the rules).
5 Perceived value of content and approaches for participants (feedback from participants or observations from comments?)

Example questions for National Museum of the American Indian staff:

1 Could you start by describing how social media happens in the museum in terms of how the work is organised? (E.g., who contributes or monitors channels? What is the relation like between social media at NMAI and the Smithsonian as a whole?) (Grand tour question) (Themes 1 and 2)
2 Could you describe a bit about the approach to the museum's social media channels, any strategies or goals? (Theme 3)
3 I noticed on Instagram that you pull a lot on contemporary voices and perspectives of Native Americans, how and why did this approach to social media develop? (Facets 3 and 5)
4 Have you received feedback from participants regarding the process of sharing their quotes, stories, and voices on social media? (Perceived value/Sense of risk) (Themes 2 and 5)
   b Have any user comments/responses on the NMAI posts stuck out for you? (Themes 3 and 5)
5 How are participants/community members invited to share their perspective and stories? (Theme 3)

6 When stories and contemporary voice becomes a substantial part of the content, do you see collection objects as still playing a role on social media? (Theme 2)
7 Who do you perceive to be the Instagram audience? Does that influence the content that is posted and created? (If so, in what ways?) (Themes 3 and 5)
8 Could you share a post that you are proud of, a bit about it and the why? (Themes 3 and 5)
9 Has anything changed in terms of social media practices during your time at NMAI? (Themes 1 and 5)
   b Is there anything you would like to see changed going forward? (Themes 1 and 5)
10 Overall, what has your experiences been like working in this role? (Themes 1 and 4)

Appendix D

Codes and descriptions for social media analysis

Codebooks for the frame analysis of Glasgow Museum's Facebook and Instagram posts

Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum (KG)

Number of posts in sample: 50 Instagram and 50 Facebook posts
Posts span November 30, 2019–September 20, 2019

Table D1 Codebook for the frame analysis of KG's social media posts

Code	*Code description*
Invitation to participate on social media	Explicit call/invitation for users to take action online (contribute, comment, etc.) For example, 'share your memories of your first visit to Kelvingrove Museum'.
Object interpretation/storytelling	Interpreting an object historically or in social context, including the museum building. For example, a description of Salvador Dali's painting 'Christ' and its collection by the museum.
Marketing	Advertising an event/trying to attract users to the venue.
Public announcement	Statements about museum infrastructure, for example, opening times and closures.
Social awareness and support	Connecting museum work to social impact. For example, helping refugees and fighting climate change – such as through the 'Dippy Die-in' posts (discussed in Chapter 3).
Being humorous	Using play on words or making a joke as the main intention of the post.
Sharing aesthetic image	Images shared with little to no text often of the museum building.

Riverside Museum

Number of posts in sample: 50 Instagram post and 50 Facebook posts
Posts span October 30, 2019–September 21, 2019

Table D2 Codebook for the frame analysis of Riverside Museum's social media posts

Codes	*Description*
Marketing	Advertising an event/trying to attract users to the venue.
Object interpretation	Interpreting an object historically or in social context, including the museum building.
Invitation to participate	Explicit calls for users to take action online (contribute, comment, etc.).
Public announcement	Statement about museum infrastructure. For example, opening times and closures.
Social awareness	Connecting museum work to social impact – one example is fighting climate change.
Sharing aesthetic images	Images shared with little to no text often of the museum building and automobiles.

Gallery of Modern Art (GoMA)

Number of posts in sample: 50 Instagram and 50 Facebook posts
Posts span September 23, 2019–August 17, 2019

Table D3 Codebook for the frame analysis of the GoMA's social media posts

Codes	*Description*
Invitation to participate on social media	Explicit call for users to take action online (contribute, comment, etc.).
Object interpretation and storytelling	Interpreting an object historically or in social context, including the museum building.
Marketing	Advertising an event/trying to attract users to the venue.
Public announcement	Statement about museum infrastructure. For example, opening times and closures.
Connecting art to health and wellbeing	Statements about the connection between creativity, artworks, and mental health/ well-being.
Social awareness	Connecting museum work to social impact – for example, helping refugees by developing English skills and fighting climate change through related workshops.
Connecting to other galleries	Tagging other galleries and connecting art works across other cultural heritage institutions.
Sharing past engagement activities	Images and text describing past workshops, for example, with school kids.

Open Museum (OM)

Number of posts in sample: 50 Facebook
Posts span: August 31–May 15, 2019

Table D4 Codebook for the frame analysis of the OM's social media posts

Codes	*Description*
Marketing	Advertising an event/trying to attract users to community appearances/pop-up exhibits.
Object interpretation and storytelling	Interpreting an object historically or in social context (typically from handling kits), for example an old washing board.
Invitation to participate on social media	Explicit call for users to take action online (contribute, comment, etc.), for example asking, 'does anyone remember this object?'
Public announcement	Statements about museum infrastructure. For example, announcing upcoming appearances and community events.
Social awareness and support	Connecting museum work to social impact, for example combatting loneliness, cultivating creativity, and supporting people with dementia.
Describing past engagement activities	Images and text describing past workshops, for example reminiscence sessions.

Thematic codebooks for Instagram posts from the mini case studies

National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI)

Number of posts in sample: 29
Posts span: January 2020–March 2020

Table D5 Codebook for the analysis of NMAI's Instagram posts

Codes	*Description*
Addressing inequalities and misrepresentations	Discussing or taking a stand against stigmatisation, prejudice, appropriation, for example, discussing Christianisation and representing microhistories #representationmatters
Sharing quotes, perspectives, voices	Sharing first-person points of view – use of quotes or recorded material.
Connecting to partners	Tagging or reciprocating with other institutions and users through social media.
Creating relevancy	Connecting content to current events (Christmas/Memorial Day/treaty signing)/ contemporary issues that have historical roots.

Migration Museum (MM)

Number of Posts in sample: 20
Posts span: March 2020–June 2020

Table D6 Codebook for the analysis of the MM's Instagram posts

Codes	*Description*
Encouraging dialogue	Explicit invitations for users to contribute, provide insight and feedback.
Promoting communities	Explicit references to skill building, encouraging resiliency, positive community identities.
Connecting to relevant issues and current events related to migration	Responding to topical issues – racism, value of migration but also care during COVID-19.
Platforming stories and experiences	Sharing first-person perspectives/clips of narratives and experiences.
Affirming localness	Referring to specific neighbourhoods and connections/relationships with organisations.
Building and sustaining relationships	Explicitly refer to or tag community organisations, partners, and reshare partner's content.

Myseum

Number of Posts in sample: 31
Posts span: November 2020–January 2021

Table D7 Codebook for the analysis of Myseum's Instagram posts

Codes	*Description*
Addressing topical issues	Events, actions, or words addressing topical issues such as racism during COVID-19, Black Lives Matter Movement, homelessness during winter.
Storytelling through collaborations/sharing platform	Invitations for users to share, join or collaborate and the act of sharing voices and perspectives.
Emphasis on place	Sharing histories and traditions that are tied to Toronto as a city.
Creating partnerships and relationships	Recognising collaborators and reciprocating other organisation's posts.

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