



Book Week Scotland - Building new audiences with social media

A case study by Danny Scott, Scottish Book Trust

In 2012, Scottish Book Trust was tasked with delivering Scotland's first week-long, national celebration of books and reading. Book Week Scotland was born.

With the challenge of creating a national, participative celebration we set about devising a brand and campaigns that were fun and inclusive for readers of all backgrounds and abilities. We needed an approach to social media to match this ethos.

Our objectives were to:

- Design and create social media platforms with a different look, approach and voice to Scottish Book Trust's but recognisable as Scottish Book Trust vehicles.
- Employ those social media channels to amplify the noise made by our mass participation events across Scotland.
- Develop relationships with a network of key partners in the public and arts sectors offline to help us reach different networks and audiences across Scotland online.
- Adapt Book Week Scotland campaigns for digital to drive traffic towards our new website.

Our target was readers of all backgrounds, ages and reading ability. Book Week Scotland isn't about high-brow, intellectualising about books. It's about fun and enjoyment of reading of all kinds. Our social media voice had to reflect this.

During our pre-launch planning process, we decided that the Book Week Scotland brand differed enough from that of Scottish Book Trust to earn its own channels on social media. We launched these on the same day as Book Week Scotland itself.

Breaking Book Week Scotland into strands, we then created a framework for other organisations, and departments within Scottish Book Trust, to use for their own activities. Twenty-five of these organisations became our 'star organisations' receiving funding to create book and writer-related activity. These organisations became key partners for boosting Book Week Scotland's profile online and on social media.

We used the same approach with local authorities, libraries and other arts organisations keeping everyone updated on our plans, including our digital marketing strategies.

These strategies, at their centre, had a commitment to fun and interacting with readers on a one-to-one level.

With our brand voice, look and feel nailed on we set about building engagement through our Twitter and Facebook channels, sharing our new website content, launching a reader portrait photo competition, putting a call out for an elite squad of book recommenders called The League of Extraordinary Booklovers and more.

However, our flagship campaign, digitally, was our top secret book sculpture treasure hunt where we hid five book sculptures from a mystery book sculptor around the country.

To engage people in their discovery, we developed a trail of clues (hidden on website pages) that led to each sculpture's secret location. These clues, related to the novel on

which the sculpture was based, and could be solved online by anyone, however the winner needed to travel to the venue to win. We were able to use Google Analytics live tracking software to time our announcements to keep interest high. Our book sculpture webpages became the most popular of the week attracting thousands of visitors. The images of the book sculptures made it to the Metro, BBC, Guardian and New Yorker.

Using the book sculptures as a template we added digital elements to all our campaigns including The League of Extraordinary Booklovers, our national 'Reading Hour' and the distribution of our free book *My Favourite Place* throughout Scotland.

By including an interactive element to all these activities, we enjoyed social media engagement on a level which far surpassed what we thought was possible considering the size of our followings.

We met these new audiences with a friendly, fun voice on social media, celebrating all comers to the party and not just focussing on the big fish.

We generated 85,000 website pageviews during the week from visitors from 108 countries and enjoyed a spike of 1000% to our Facebook activity. This strong activity was reflected on Twitter where @BookWeekScot or #BWS2012 received over 5,000 mentions in 7-days.

Offline over 20,000 people made their way to a Book Week Scotland event and 95.5% of them loved the experience. In the classroom, we also had an impact on the 30,000 pupils we reached with 94.9% of teachers saying the week had a positive impact on their pupil's reading and writing.

Key learnings for effective practice:

- A lot of groundwork is necessary offline to guarantee social media success for a new venture. Engaging key partners is crucial unless you enjoy a lavish advertising budget.

- Simplicity and reciprocity are two of the key tenets of social media campaigns. We did all we could to share our partners' news and those of key cultural organisations in Scotland. We also sought to keep our campaigns simple and understandable at a glance.
- Breaking through one's network into other areas was our main challenge. In future, we'll seek to develop campaigns that tie in different interest groups.
- Investing in solid social media analytic tools and developing a good grasp of Google Analytics were essential parts of understanding what worked and reporting to funders.
- Due to the late arrival of our website, we weren't able to schedule as many social media updates as we would have liked. Advanced scheduling of these is essential.

Building a new social media presence for Book Week Scotland, away from our existing brand, gave us the freedom, flexibility and presence to deliver a social media campaign that encapsulated and built upon our new sub-brand. By adding digital elements to our campaigns we were able to generate large spikes in website and social media campaigns and, more importantly, interact on a 1:1 level with our audience.

In the weeks immediately before Book Week Scotland we were concerned about our low audience numbers and reach. However, the work we had put in building a network of partners and keeping them up-to-date about projects meant social media activity really blossomed during the week of our campaign.

Visit the Book Week Scotland website: <http://scottishbooktrust.com/bookweekscotland>

Watch our video, read our blogs and look at our Book Week Scotland 2012 photos: <http://scottishbooktrust.com/reading/bws/2012>

Read our Storify of the week: <http://storify.com/BookWeekScot/book-week-scotland-2012-2013>.