

Seminars

Using social and digital media to reach and engage audiences

Kingsley Jayasekera, Director of Communications and Digital Strategy, Sadler's Wells; Jesse Ringham, Digital Communications Manager, Tate; Sam Scott Wood, Marketing and Development Manager, Artsadmin

Kingsley Jayasekera is Director of Communications and Digital Strategy, Sadler's Wells Theatre. He is responsible for the digital, marketing, press and ticketing functions at Sadler's Wells, the UK's leading venue for dance. His introduction to digital came when in 2001 when he worked for onlineclassics.com; one of the very first sites offering streamed video arts content via the web. When launched the site offered over three hundred hours of opera, dance and classical concerts online. He has also worked for the theatre and entertainment advertising agencies Dewynters, McCabes and M&H Communications for arts clients including the Royal Opera House, Birmingham Royal Ballet, the National Theatre and Hampstead Theatre. His blog on digital technology and the arts is at kingsleyjayasekera.blogspot.com

Jesse Ringham is Digital Communications Manager for Tate. He seeks to embed good practice across the organisation, whilst challenging the way Tate communicates with its audiences. Jesse has helped the organisation reach a far broader audience with his accessible style and two-way communication. Tate's strategy is based on provoking dialogue and opening up conversations between art, artists and visitors. The integrating of digital/offline marketing channels has been key for Tate in gaining maximum visibility for their exhibitions. Tate has currently 285,000 friends on Facebook and 430,000 followers on Twitter. Key to this success is recognition that social media websites are not just a new platform to advertise activities or promote the brand but rather an opportunity for interaction with audiences and, though this is proven to be labour intensive, the result is an engaged audience with whom Tate have a deep relationship.

Sam Scott Wood is marketing and development manager at Artsadmin and has worked with individual artists and smaller organisations for over ten years, including Forced Entertainment, Tim Etchells, Lemn Sissay, Station House Opera, Mem Morrison and Rosemary Lee. At Artsadmin she is responsible for delivering individual campaigns and guiding strategic development. By integrating its digital strategy into an overall marketing approach, Artsadmin has, over the past two years, re-imagined its website, developed social media presences, and devised digital campaigns for projects from an arts and environmental activism festival to a breeze block domino rally through East London.

This session explored how arts organisations can rise to the challenge of embedding emerging digital marketing techniques within already busy schedules. It took place in the morning and the afternoon, with this report being from the afternoon session.

Kingsley Jayasekera, Sadler's Wells

Building audiences and driving sales through digital

I will talk particularly about video because it has been especially influential at Sadler's Wells. To begin with, a few background points.

- We watch 11,000 years of video a month in UK
- YouTube is the 2nd largest search engine after Google. People go on and want to see how things are done not just being able to read about.
- Video sharing is growing rapidly in volume and speed especially on social media platforms like Facebook
- Mobile usage will overtake desktop usage by 2014 which is having an immediate effect on the sort of video that people are watching.

And a few background points about Sadler's Wells

- Average proportion of sales sold online: 75%
- Nearly 4 million visits a year to the website
- E-mail list of 180,000
- Typical video watched over 8,000 times
- Most popular video watched over 60,000 times (excluding YouTube views)
- Total video views 637,500
- *The Most Incredible Thing* video embedded on 58 other sites which seems to be an emerging trend where is used in other networks.

To give you a little more background here is a video of a piece we have put on here.

[Kingsley played a video of Compagnie Marie Chouinard' bODY_rEMIX / gOLDBERG_vARIATIONS]

It shows that not everything we put on is Swan Lake. Video is a very useful way of being able to show people what this work is like without struggling to write copy which we will rely on entirely.

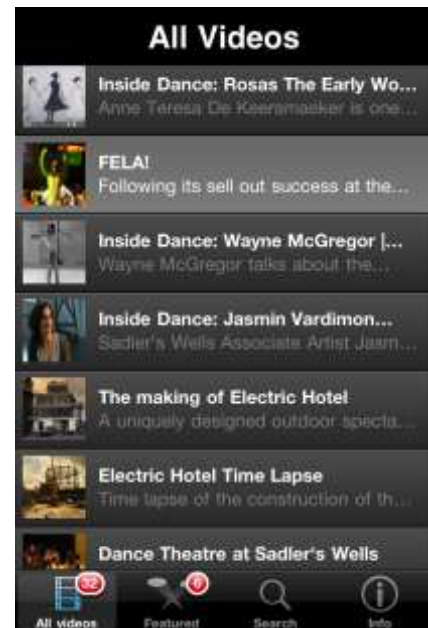
So video is very important for us. This content falls into three main areas:

- Short show clips
- Interviews with artists which we combine with rehearsal footage or existing footage then edit them with artists talking about the work. It's also worked well when we've worked with The Guardian or The Telegraph producing material for their sites.

- Creating a video which documents the process, taking it from the initial stages all the way through or following it on tour.

We stay focused on these things because 70% of our income comes through the box office, so there is a strong desire to encourage people to come along and try our shows. As we have short runs video is very useful for spreading word of mouth in advance. It's a way of managing risk for people. They might want to bring people with them so they have something to show them.

We also put everything up on YouTube which helps us to build our international brand very easily and cheaply. People make the association with us. Some of our shows go round the world too so people can follow it as it tours, bringing it back to the discussion of the original clip.



Sadler's Wells also did an app. It was an interesting process but if we did it again we probably wouldn't do it in the same way. It was also a little bit premature because it would have been better for us to develop our mobile site which is more valuable for a wider group of people. You need to ask, *what purpose does it serve?*

Apps are great for content which can be ring-fenced and updated or which has something that needs to be populated with new data like train times. For small organisations it doesn't seem to be an efficient use of resources, especially if it will go out of date quickly. Then, you also need to decide how you will market it. 26% of all apps are only used once. The ones that work fulfill a need and sell themselves. So my favourite app turns you into a zombie which is a really useful service.

So the lessons we have learned are:

- Communication not technology should be the driver. Just because you can do something doesn't mean you should. Let people understand the shows and be informed – video enables us to do this.
- Make sure your content is fit for purpose. A lot of companies supply us with material which we can't use; video diaries of choreographers moaning about how badly it is going don't help you to sell tickets. It might have a place somewhere but it's not great for marketing. Also, the trend towards to cinema style trailers doesn't always work, especially if you are leading people down the wrong road.
- Share your content widely and keep it on your site once the event has passed. For searches it has value.

- Be prepared to hold on loosely (or even let go sometimes). You can't control everything and it's probably best if you don't try to.
- Make video central to your social media strategy

The video I showed you from Compagnie Marie Chouinard copied to the video and re-posted it with a new title (see right). Within a couple of weeks it had had over a million views. It was done without any tagging and it has influenced the way that people search for things at Sadler's Wells.



Jesse Ringham, Tate: Social Media Strategy Integration and Analytics

I'm going to talk about how we rolled out our social media strategy at Tate. We have 315,000 Facebook likes now, an increase of 830% since 2010. The Facebook page includes an API that brings in films from our channel. We have 500,000 followers on Twitter, which involves multiple voices from throughout the gallery.

Those who are involved in social media include marketing, press, visitor information, Tate film, online, ecommerce, curators and artists. We have a social media working group which meets every Friday to discuss content and review what has worked well and ensuring we have a good balance.

Certain individuals from throughout the organisation bring different elements of content to the table.

Our digital content planner includes social media as an important part. We plan about a month in advance.

The big picture is a simple digital content strategy. We look at what content we've got, how we'll distribute it (website, digital comms, advertising, blogs and pr) and then we look at automated emailing. These are timely communications based on when they've been to the exhibition, comments on blogs etc. (taken from the information

we have from membership cards used, tickets bought etc) which in turn feeds reviews and comments through to the site. The curators host the blogs so we say ‘talk to the curator’ if you’d like to say something about the exhibition. This in turn feeds back into the social media and in the future to mobile and into online content.

The content which have been successful for us have been ‘*work of the week*’ which is featured on Twitter and Facebook highlighting a work on display in the Tate Collection, often with a focus on the marketing messages for the month, such as exhibition openings. Also popular is the ‘*weather forecast*’ we put up/out at the end of the week which uses a picture relating to the weather at the weekend. ‘*Tate Debate*’ takes place every Thursday afternoon which asks the audience what they think about a range of issues. It used to take place on Facebook and Twitter but we have now brought it on to the blog to carry through people on to the website.

‘*Ask the audience*’ is one of my favourite areas. Simple things like ‘guess the artist’ or ‘Tate votes’ – vote for your favourite artist, using phrases through social media such as ‘Good morning’ with people saying hello back. Then, getting personal with questions like *Tell us your art secret; Which artist would you walk around Tate with? What is your earliest memory of Tate? Have you found love at Tate? What artwork first made you cry?*

Partnerships with other organisations, brands and social networks are important. We did something recently on Blast / Bless with Creative Review and also have relationships with Twitter, YouTube (an exciting project together with BMW next year), Spotify and Facebook.

Importantly, we also make sure that we put other voices within the organisation (such as the curators) into social media, working alongside them to help them to get a feel for it if necessary.

We use stickers around the galleries to promote our social media through visual awareness; two million were distributed in the last year. It’s about £250 for a million stickers.



Messages about social media are also put out on our lobby plasma screens – pointing people to Facebook and Twitter.

1	http://www.tate.org.uk/about-us/press/2011/01/2011-01-20-01	764
2	http://www.tate.org.uk/about-us/press/2011/01/2011-01-20-02	624
3	http://www.tate.org.uk/about-us/press/2011/01/2011-01-20-03	535
4	http://www.tate.org.uk/about-us/press/2011/01/2011-01-20-04	520
5	http://www.tate.org.uk/about-us/press/2011/01/2011-01-20-05	479
6	http://www.tate.org.uk/about-us/press/2011/01/2011-01-20-06	461
7	http://www.tate.org.uk/about-us/press/2011/01/2011-01-20-07	383
8	http://www.tate.org.uk/about-us/press/2011/01/2011-01-20-08	342
9	http://www.tate.org.uk/about-us/press/2011/01/2011-01-20-09	308

In terms of measurement, we re-evaluate everything we are doing each month using Google Analytics especially. We look at demographics, events, traffic coming through to the website, impact on ticket sales. We constantly optimise our messages by looking at things like best performing Tweets or Facebook posts, using a mixture of Google Analytics and

HootSuite.

To finish, these are our key goals:

Through increased activity on social media and social networking websites, Tate aims to:

- Engage current audiences in new ways and build online communities
- Communicate through many new voices from across the organisation
- Distribute our content where audiences are active online
- Drive traffic to the Tate website
- Drive footfall to the four Tate galleries
- Integrate our social media channels, seamlessly into our marketing campaigns
- Generate sales across our income streams £££
- Encourage fans to act as advocates for Tate
- Build developmental audiences
- To increase awareness of Tate's strategic key messages
- Use partnership as a way of growing our following

facebook.com/tategallery twitter @tate

twitter @jesseringham jesse.ringham@tate.org.uk

Sam Scott Wood, Arts Admin: small is beautiful

We are an arts producing organisation based in East London working mainly with independent artists and small companies, primarily artists making new work in performance and installation. There is a staff of 25 so we're working on a different scale to these two. We're mainly producers, but also run mentoring and development programmes for artists and look after the Toynbee Studios which is a rehearsal studio and office space.

I'm going to talk about the way we have integrated social media into what we do. We don't do anything radical but we do make the most of the resources that we have. In some ways, small organisations are lucky because they can move quickly and do things without lengthy approval processes, but we don't have the money or the time.

We're running on small budgets and there aren't many of us. I'm two thirds of the marketing department. There is someone else but she has to do other things, she can't just be half a person. I help out with development, box office and occasionally work in IT too.



Content is not a bad place to start. A couple of years ago we started redesigning our website and we looked at the kind of content we were generating. We realised that we were generating a lot in different ways hidden in different places – in our site, on YouTube etc. So we decided to consolidate this content together in 'ArtsOnline'. You could call it a blog, a channel, a section of our site. It was basically a place where we could house all this stuff. The audience knows where it is, we can highlight new stuff, make connections between different types of content. It also means that we have a better idea of how people are using this. We now know that about 5-10% of visitors to the site are engaging with this which is kind of low. We have about 10,000 visitors a month so there was a certain section of people - about 500 - who were engaging regularly on a deep level.

After we launched it we wanted to try and be more strategic as it was still a little bit as and when.

Two Degrees is a festival which we hold in June every year and it was about five months after ArtsOnline had started. The curators started coming to me to tell me that they wanted to use ArtsOnline to promote the festival which was great because it was the first time it had happened.

We talked about the sort of things we might use the site for – this included using video excerpts, in depth text or pieces about specific projects and we talked about the sort of voices we wanted. Importantly we also discussed how we were going to manage this content because this was a big problem because there was a huge list and a small project team. We also looked at other sites which we might use so it was inseparable from our press strategy.

Some of the ideas we came up with for managing this process included generating online content internally (as we normally did), commissioned content (this was the only area where we spent money), partnerships with blogs and material generated by audiences.

In order to deliver it with a small amount of resources we had to have a carefully put together plan and schedule. This was the first time we had done this, but we used a flat plan on paper which connected everything together.

We also decided to find some ways to automate things. Automation is sometimes frowned on in social media because it seems like we are cheating and are just a marketing automaton. However, by scheduling and integrating we were able to do a great deal more than we would have done otherwise. So some material was prepared in advance, emails were pre-written and scheduled. All of this was done through free or already existing software and technology like our existing CRM

system. For Twitter we used CoTweet which allows several people to manage the same account.

As a small organisation we can't do everything so we have to pick and choose what we do. For Two Degrees, this included blog coverage. We couldn't cover everything so we had to choose a couple of areas – climate change blogs and food blogs.

There are some things which haven't worked. A couple of years we had a domino rally going through East London – lines of breeze block size dominoes falling over. There were lots of pictures taken and put up on Flickr. For Two Degrees we thought we would try this again with Cycle Sunday and we got nothing at all. In retrospect, if you are standing around waiting for a domino line to fall you have more time than if people are whizzing round on a bicycle. We learnt our lesson – and its okay to fail – because we had enough other things that did work.

Questions and discussion (from the afternoon session)

Tom Hunter, London Calling: From Sam's presentation – choose your focus – totally agree with that - but at the same time as marketers we're always being given new things to try. We always want to play with new toys but how do we choose what we work with – what are your criteria?

SSW: For us it comes back to whether it is relevant to our audience. We have cross-discipline teams who want to try out different things but as the marketing person on the team I can bring it back to the audience for this project, artist event etc.

JR: I agree. You have to make sure it is relevant to that particular audience and what you want to get out of it. Is it awareness, ticket sales?

KJ: You need a firm hand. Often it's limited by budget. Sometimes I say 'you can have anything you want' as long as you pay for it. Then they say – 'okay maybe not then'. We have certain values and things we want to pursue. You don't always want everyone being involved in everything. Some parts need to be ring fenced. I changed my job title to Director of Digital Strategy and that stopped us having to discuss this all the time. You have to try and own parts of it otherwise it becomes a free for all. I don't want to pay people to pursue their hobby.

Stuart Robarts, Fact, Liverpool: We're involved in a project of the Arts Council's which in its simplest terms is like a YouTube for the arts. We've had lots of discussion internally about what it's for and its value. The funding is there to promote the sector as a whole. Do you have any thoughts about what would features would be good to see or how it can be directed to make it worthwhile?

KJ: One of the challenges that comes with Digital is that some of the people who offer you money know the least about it. There is lots already out there which we can use. There are problems about putting everything on YouTube. If you free associate

through dance you get to some strange areas quite quickly but it does open you up to a wide audience. You don't want to make a closed area that's very limiting. In terms of technology it could also become redundant very quickly and there's also problem of how will you promote it and make it work? We need to throw it all out there rather than creating walled gardens of content. It ties up a lot of time and energy which could be spent on creating good content.

SSW: I agree, though you mention free association taking you into some weird areas. That could be the value in the arts – making the connections within the art world more easily. That might be where the value is.

[unidentified questioner]. In terms of internal investment, how much pressure are you three under to get a return on the investment which is put in?

JR: I used to be an online marketing manager for Marks and Spencer and we were under pressure to come back with revenue from social media when we started. We had to educate certain directors about how it actually worked and that the ROI doesn't happen in the same way or as quickly. Mobile will probably play a strong role for us [at Tate] in generating revenue through social media. Most people that use Twitter are on mobiles so it makes sense to transfer from social media through to the site and then ecommerce.

KJ: I try not to get too hung up on the figures. Where videos are really helpful for us is in the challenging work anyway – if they've seen a clip then they are more informed than they were. Where it's really paid off for us is in some of the challenging work such as what we might be showing in the Lillian Baylis Studio and some of these would be very difficult to describe to an audience otherwise.

Matthew Lawton, National Theatre Wales: I have a question for the Tate. You're working with some big media partners. I wondered – is this a more bespoke approach?

JR: Yes, we want to position ourselves alongside some of these partners and people like Storify also want to be associated with Tate. Aligning ourselves with these partners helps us to expand our base really quickly.

Caroline Schreiber, Theatre Centre: Is there a danger of spreading ourselves too thin when we have limited resources? And if we are working in a process of trial and error are we in danger of losing all our Facebook friends by not doing enough – not keeping them engaged because we don't have enough time?

JR: It might be just a question of asking them what they want from you? We do regular surveys and the first time we did it it trended because they had so many requests.

SSW: It's something we have thought about though people tend not to un-friend you or stop following you because there's not much activity – it's more likely to be because you're really annoying them. If you disappear all together they might wonder where you've gone but if it goes quiet for a bit it's okay.

KJ: Yes, I agree with that. Social media is based around friendships. If you have a good friend and they go away for a while you aren't going to hate them. On the other hand if they bombard you with pointless emails every week that might be another story. It's a good idea to pick out a couple of things that are important to you and concentrate on that.

JR: You don't have to talk about your organisation. Facebook and Twitter are third party sites so you can jump into other conversations.

Kate Carter, Audiences London: I was wondering how much segmentation you do and how you go about doing that?

KJ: I actually do very little. A lot of the research we used to do was proving things after the fact. The problem with segmenting is that you end up giving people a lot of what they think they want. My job is to give them new things and to throw it open. I'm often working on the idea of building trust.

SSW: That's reassuring because we don't do it at all. We don't have the time.

JR: Well, I'm a big fan of segmentation. I think it's very important to know your audience. We have someone who looks at what's happening in the gallery, knowing who our online audience is versus the offline and where the crossover is. We'd like to look at the crossovers between who is using Twitter, Facebook and making a donation (for example). It's also about making the content as relevant for them as possible, making the website as personal to them as possible too. It also helps us to stop spamming people.

Sarah Magee, Impact: For the video content, do you just chuck it all out there and then re-direct people to it when ticket sales aren't good or do you hold back some juicy bits to use later?

KJ: It would be nice if we could be that structured but in reality we can't. It's hard with the turnover of shows we have and ideally we want the content out there 4-6 weeks before it happens.

Tim Wood, The Place: What sort of safeguards do you put in place in case something disastrous happens?

KJ: We've been playing it by ear, but it is an issue for some large organisations. Also, how do you deal with personal blogs? Where is the line drawn if they are being very controversial?