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Description and Access of Social Media Content: Learning from Archival Practices

Information systems rely on description of content to render content visible. Archives employ standards of description in order to ensure accessibility to users. In today's increasing digital and social media dominated age, social media platforms use of description is growing exponentially, though its form of description is often not standardized and originates from individual users. Archival standards are quite rigid in presentation of description and access points. Within the context of social media, description of content has the possibility of providing access to content to new audiences. Archives rely on finding aids created with standards such as the output neutral *Describing Archives: A Content Standard* (DACS) to offer individuals a summary of their content. DACS achieves this by making use of mandatory fields of information such as dates and language as well as optional notes regarding aspects of the material. Social media must make do with just individual description and algorithms to bring content to individuals' attention. If social media platforms which already utilize description and access in the form of tagging were to adopt practices from archival science, it would allow for greater connection to audiences. Perhaps there is a future where social media platforms implement more authority control for description and access to content. This could allow for a more connected form of social media connection where users are able to search and collect posts that are related. Instagram's features borrow from archival practice and functions as a personal archive in the social media age. Engagement with the format of material in various ways (liking, saving, tagging, creating own archive) boosts Instagram's interaction with users as it adds more time and commitment to posts. Social media give users multiple avenues for pursuing content, allowing for dynamic exploration of information and content.

Description is key to the archival practice as description and authority control provide access points to collections. This description is found within the collection's finding aid. Similarly, social media makes use of tags as description to function as access points to different forms of content. In fact, social media platforms that utilize more description are seemingly more

popular. [metric for popularity snap versus Instagram, Pinterest, Tumblr etc.] Description functions as engagement with content and as greater connection with the platform. With the rise of social media in the last fifteen years, platforms for connection have come and gone. A common feature of these longer standing platforms is the component of description. Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook all allow users to categorize their posts with hashtags, geo tags, and tagging other users. These descriptors function as access points to content. Furthermore, these descriptors allow for interaction with the user and the platform as well as user and user interaction.



Figure 1 Instagram allows for users to geotag their posts.

Instagram connects content with various methods described below. Instagram from *Hashtag of Instagram: From Folksonomy to Complex Network* “allows users to add captions, hashtags using the # symbol to describe photos or videos, or to mention other users using the @ symbol (the @ symbol creates an actual link among the accounts).”¹ As Instagram is not a formal archive, the connections between material do not function hierarchically. Still, these descriptors offer access to content to new followers. These descriptors would have even more power to accurately describe content with they also made use of authority control.

Instagram’s history is very short when considered in relation to the history and evolution of archives. *Conversational Documentarianism in Instagram: Multidimensional Interface and Interactivity*) describes Instagram as a system that ‘proposes a ludic use of its platform for sharing images online in a socially interactive network with collaborative possibilities, in which the user creates a profile and follows other users while being followed by others to create a *time line* in the same fashion as Twitter and Facebook with text comments and hashtags. However, its originality lies in the platform’s use in sharing

¹Ibba et Al., “Hashtag of Instagram From Folksonomy to Complex Network”. DOI: 10.5220/0005613502790284

photographic images and videos and its design as an application to be used via mobile phones.”² *Beliefs about the Use of Instagram: An Exploratory Study* provides background, “Instagram was founded in 2010. Being mainly a photo-sharing application, Instagram has excelled as an effective communication and marketing tool to display products with visual descriptions. Hence, it becomes a useful social networking platform instantly to individuals and companies. Moreover, the acquisition of Instagram by Facebook has potentially made the application more attractive and appealing to millions of users.”³ Instagram’s history as a visual tool serves to illuminate how it can be thought of as a personal archive with material never leaving a profile until a user decides to do so.

As social media is a very recent development, there isn’t an extensive academic discourse on the topic. As social media continues its life, the discourse will evolve. A lot of best practices regarding the architecture and format of platforms originate from companies and therefore is internal information. Historically, research on the topic of Instagram and tagging is focused in the domain of Human Computer Interaction and User Experience Design. In contrast, archival history is much broader subject, though this paper is primarily concerned with the archival practice of providing a standardized format and as well as access points for users. Archival description has a rich past and emerged more so with the use of authority name and subject control. The subject of authority control and unique resource identifiers also extends beyond social media and archives. The increased move towards standardization is seen in wide ranging aspects of life from bar codes to software regulating work flow. Social media and archives do share some similarity in the frequently personal nature of their content.

Archival description and access are a focus of research regarding archival methods. Much of this research was published in the late 1990s and the early 2000s and detail changes made to standards of archival description. Archival finding aids are also formatted with specified and required fields of information. Though finding aids are often only found in pdf form and rarely offer digital access to collections themselves. It is the authority name and subject headings that function as access points that is of primary concern when considered in relation to the archival

² Jacob Bañuelos, 2015. “Conversational Documentarianism in Instagram: Multidimensional Interface and Interactivity.” *Journalism and Mass Communication* 5 (February). <https://doi.org/10.17265/2160-6579/2015.02.002>.

³ Ting, Hiram, Winnie Wong Poh Ming, Ernest Cyril de Run. 2015 - International Journal of Business and Innovation. n.d. Accessed March 20, 2018. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Hiram_Ting/publication/272026006_Beliefs_about_the_Use_of_Instagram_An_Exploratory_Study/links/54d9749c0cf24647581e492e.pdf.

function of social media. Laura Millar in *On the Crest of a Wave: Transforming the Archival Future* poses the question to the archival field “how can we make sure that all the effort put into developing recordkeeping and archives management tools like document management systems or online descriptive databases is not swept away by the next technological wave?”⁴

Millar also grapples with the digital age and how archives will be able to adapt. “What once was one simple document that fit into an acid-free file folder might now be a hybrid, computer-generated, paper-supported information monster composed of dozens of different and sometimes conflicting file types. Just when records professionals figure out how to capture one technical element – PDF/A versus PDF for instance – someone changes the technology. Archivists have to rethink fundamentally our understanding of how to capture the nature of evidence. This is the wave we surf, and we are struggling to stay upright.”⁵ Social media grapples with the same constant evolution though social media often has more shaping power than archives.

There is a bridge between the traditional archive that is often used for research and social media platform that shares similar features. The academic research background on the issue of description and access to social media is mainly grounded in Human Computer Interaction, User experience design of the platforms, and analytics about social behavior. The subject as a whole is waiting to be explored in further detail as the platforms continue to cement their places in peoples’ lives. Research regarding archives is undergo less more fleshed out as it is a long-standing profession and format for material. Archives are also more static in their format than social media. Overall, social media platforms have come to dominate digital life. *It is not just a picture: Revealing some user practices in Instagram* provides background to the use of social media and its encompassing features. “The everyday use of smartphones with high quality built-in cameras combined with the online social networks, such as Facebook, Youtube, Twitter, Flickr and Instagram, have led to a new way of sharing and reacting to life events.”⁶ The life events component of social media allows for it to be thought of in terms of a personal archive of content. From the HCI and User Experience Literature regarding Instagram and other social media platforms there begins to be a discussion about the metadata and formatting of description associated with these social media platforms. *Folksonomies - Cooperative Classification and*

⁴ Laura Millar, “On the Crest of a Wave: Transforming the Archival Future.” *Archives and Manuscripts* 45 (2): 59–76. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01576895.2017.1328696>.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ C. S. Araújo, L. P. D. Corrêa, A. P. C. d Silva, R. O. Prates, and W. Meira, “It Is Not Just a Picture: Revealing Some User Practices in Instagram.” In *2014 9th Latin American Web Congress*, 19–23. <https://doi.org/10.1109/LAWeb.2014.12>.

Communication Through Shared Metadata discusses this issue. “The overall costs for users of the system in terms of time and effort are far lower than systems that rely on complex hierarchical classification and categorization schemes. In addition to this structural difference, the context of the use in these systems is not just one of personal organization, but of communication and sharing.”⁷ Though *Folksonomies - Cooperative Classification and Communication Through Shared Metadata* was authored in 2004, before the rise of Facebook, Instagram, and twitter, the connection between archives and social media is still drawn. “Metadata - data about data - allows systems to collocate related information, and helps users find relevant information. The creation of metadata has generally been approached in two ways: professional creation and author creation. In libraries and other organizations, creating metadata, primarily in the form of catalog records, has traditionally been the domain of dedicated professionals working with complex, detailed rule sets and vocabularies. A second approach is for metadata to be created by authors. The movement towards creator described documents was heralded by SGML, the WWW, and the Dublin Core Metadata Initiative. [There is also] a third approach: user-created metadata, where users of the documents and media create metadata for their own individual use that is also shared throughout a community.”⁸ Social media is a new opening for individual users to shape content description. Archives rest on professional practice, but spaces like Instagram allow for individuals to shape the narration of content by the users in opposition to description created by dedicated individuals. “Traditionally metadata is created by dedicated professionals. Catalogers create metadata, often in the form of Machine-Readable Cataloging (MARC) records for books and other intellectual creations, and this is the basis of most Online Public Access Catalogs (OPAC) in libraries and other institutions. The library and information science field has developed elaborate rules and schemes for cataloging, categorization and classification that include classification schemes as well as large controlled vocabularies of terms for describing the subject of materials, such as the Library of Congress Subject Headings.”⁹ The chasm between the informality of social media and intense formality of archives can be bridged with the implementation of controlled vocabularies and access points by social media.

The visual design of Instagram is iterative. Currently, Instagram is divided into five tabs. All of the tabs allow for different ways to search through material. The explore page combine

⁷ Adam Mathes, “Folksonomies – Cooperative Classification and Communication Through Shared Metadata [Online Report].” *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication - JCMC* 47 (January).

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

with the search bar allow users to search using specific access points. *Online Popularity and Topical Interests through the Lens of Instagram* describes the dynamics of Instagram tagging systems. “Instagram exhibits a mixture of features including social structure, social tagging and media sharing. The network of social interactions among users models various dynamics including follower/followee relations and users' communication by means of posts/comments. Users can upload and tag media such as photos and pictures, and they can *like* and comment each piece of information on the platform.”¹⁰ *Online Popularity and Topical Interests through the Lens of Instagram* describes hashtag behavior: “First, the tag usage mechanism seems to follow an information economy principle of least effort, that is that the majority of media are labeled with just a few tags, and larger sets of tags assigned to the same media are increasingly more unlikely to be observed.”¹¹ The article also delves into an analytic study of hashtag popularity. Specifically, “Second, although the mechanism describing the assignment of tags is not quite by preferential attachment, the outcome of the process, that is the overall tag popularity, follows a power law behavior. Similar findings have been observed in other popular systems, like Twitter, where popular (hash)tags emerge from individuals' adoption [45]. Limited attention of users and competition among (hash)tags have been hypothesized as explanation of the emergence of such broad distributions.”¹²

Instagram Hashtags as Image Annotation Metadata describes types of tagging that Instagram uses “Instagram hashtags, and especially those provided by the photo owner / creator, express more accurately the content of a photo compared to the tags assigned to a photo during explicit image annotation processes like crowdsourcing. In this context, we explore the descriptive power of hashtags by examining whether other users would use the same, with the owner, hashtags to annotate an image.”¹³

One user centered purpose of Instagram is to browse, but companies and individuals use user's attention to sell.” Figure 7 also shows that posts shared by worldwide brands (topshop, louisvuitton, gucci, disney, converse) receive a large number of likes. These posts may be shared either by the brands themselves or by their fans. It is well-known that brands use Instagram as a

¹⁰ Emilio Ferrara, Roberto Interdonato, and Andrea Tagarelli, “Online Popularity and Topical Interests Through the Lens of Instagram.” In *Proceedings of the 25th ACM Conference on Hypertext and Social Media*, 24–34. HT '14. New York, NY, USA: ACM. <https://doi.org/10.1145/2631775.2631808>.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Stamatios Giannoulakis, and Nicolas Tsapatsoulis, “Instagram Hashtags as Image Annotation Metadata.” In *Artificial Intelligence Applications and Innovations*, 206–20. IFIP Advances in Information and Communication Technology. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-23868-5_15

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Figure 2 Authority name and subject headings within the above finding aid allow for uniformity for researchers.

self-promotion media, attracting the public interested in their products. Moreover, worldwide brands are also promoted by bloggers that tend to have a large number of followers increasing the probability of attracting many likes.”¹⁴

Finally, there is the archival use of metadata and description literature. The following pieces of literature regarding archival use of

standards and authority control are not on the cutting edge of academic research. Archival standards and agile development for Silicon Valley Products are quite different. There is an established method that is currently at work within archives. There are numerous archival encoding and formatting standards. From *Archival Description Concepts, Principles, Methodologies* “description is a major function in the processing of archival materials, and the products of this function are finding aids of various sorts which give administrators control over their holdings and enable users and archivists to find information about particular topics.”¹⁵ “If the purpose of archival description is to provide access to materials, then archival description standards are mutually agreed-upon guidelines, rules, and specifications that prescribe methods of producing uniform and consistent results or products for use in providing access to primary source materials. These definitions are important because people should develop and embrace standards as strategies to further ends- in this case, improved access to archival materials. These definitions, however, are exceedingly broad. The creation of successful descriptive practice and standards to guide that practice requires archivists to articulate the objectives of description systems in measurable ways.”¹⁶

¹⁴ C. S. Araújo, L. P. D. Corrêa, A. P. C. d Silva, R. O. Prates, and W. Meira, “It Is Not Just a Picture: Revealing Some User Practices in Instagram.” In *2014 9th Latin American Web Congress*, 19–23. <https://doi.org/10.1109/LAWeb.2014.12>.

¹⁵ Lisa B. Weber, “Archival Description Standards: Concepts, Principles, and Methodologies.” *The American Archivist* 52 (4): 504–13. 1989.

¹⁶ Ibid.

Summary Information

Repository	UCLA Library Special Collections
Creator	Roberts, L. G. (Lawrence G.)
Title	L. G. (Lawrence G.) Papers
Date [inclusive]	1962-2009
Extent	1.0 box
General Physical Description note	The original materials are in good condition.
Location note	Stored off-site at SRLF. Advance notice is required for access to the collection. Please contact the UCLA Library Special Collections for paging information.
Language	English
Abstract	The collection includes professional and research files of L.G. (Lawrence G.) Roberts dating from 1962 to 2009 and includes: publications; notes

Figure 3 The summary information of the finding aid is a concise description of the contents of the archival collection.

Within the archive, the archivist “Using this descriptive data, chooses and formulates access points, such as the name of the author and the title of the work, for information retrieval. These access or entry points serves as index terms to the bibliographic description.”¹⁷ Furthermore, archival finding aids also make use of data structures which “to the format

or container in which we organize information. People connect data structures to computer database designs, but data structures exist in non-automated environments as well. For example, inventories and registers are data structures. Data structures provide a specific place and uniform format for pieces or categories of information. Examples of data structure standards include the International Standard Bibliographic Description (ISBD) and the Common Communications Format (CCF). The US- MARC (United States Machine-Readable Cataloging) format for Archival and Manuscripts Control (AMC) is a standard data structure that U.S. archivists have adopted primarily to exchange information about their holdings. Use of the USMARC AMC format allows archivists to integrate descriptions of archival materials with those of other kinds of research materials.”¹⁸ These formally formatted data structures exist within the context of archives to give access to individuals. Much of the archival literature, including the piece above, is lacking in terms of thoughts regarding interdisciplinary connections of themes.

Archival standards exist to ensure quality of access and the ability to transmit information. Formatting standards and description field standards were also created in order to exist within the digital world. The history of the structure of the archival finding aid is detailed in *Introduction—Encoded Archival Description: Context and Theory*. It began with “first, in selecting Standard Generalized Markup Language (SGML) as the metalanguage environment within which the EAD data structure (or Document Type Definition (DTD), in SGML parlance)

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

would be developed, Pitti made a deliberate decision to position his finding aid encoding scheme somewhat "ahead of the curve" in terms of existing library and archival software applications." Second, within the context of the revolution in access to all types of information that has been enabled by proliferation of the Web, librarians and other information professionals have sensed the potential of hierarchically structured finding aids for providing access to many such resources.”¹⁹ This piece explicitly calls out the purpose of finding aids as to offer insights into collections. These finding aids had to be integrated into the digital world, so the data structure choices were quite impactful decisions.

Overall, the historical research provides a basis for understanding the topic of digital description and access in the form of social media. However, social media is still a fledgling allowing for a future full of more in depth and specific research of this topic. The user experience and human computer interaction literature distills to how and why people use social media. From that basis, academics then run experiments on those people to capture that answer. There is certainly room for more interdisciplinary research regarding the format of social media and how it branches out in its functionality. Social media is used as a vehicle for so many activities it is difficult to separate them out from one another. A searcher's use of archives is often much more straightforward, and the literature reflects that purpose. Archival systems' information is static. The finding aids do not change based on the individual accessing them, but instead are designed to incorporate descriptive metadata fields. Digital finding aids utilize these features of access points for searchers and researchers. Finding aids utilize the EAD encoding form and follow distinct rules for fields that are necessary in order to properly describe any resource and collection. Similarly, this sort of description may benefit social media users.

There is a large audience and user population for social media sites. Utilization of authority or DOI or URI could allow for a more streamlined and connected social media platform. "Instagram Application Programming Interface (API) allows to research tags placed by users and provides complete information on images and videos. Through the API, for each photograph it is possible to find an univocal identifier (id) and the link to two versions of the same image (low resolution and standard resolution), the metadata that describe user name, date and time of image creation, the location where the picture was taken, the caption entered by the author, comments, tags associated to the image, number of likes and names of the users that gave

¹⁹ Jackie M. Dooley, "Introduction—Encoded Archival Description: Context and Theory." *The American Archivist* 60 (3): 264–65. 1997.

their like. Other than the metadata associated to images, metadata associated to each user that has posted a picture can be extracted. These metadata allow to find number of followers and following, email address, number of posts and a brief biography.”²⁰

Currently there are informal standards for how certain people, businesses or institutions share content. With more standardization of description, this content will be capable of reaching larger audiences. This engagement with material in various ways (liking, saving, tagging, creating own archive) boosts Instagram’s interactive experience as it takes more than taking a

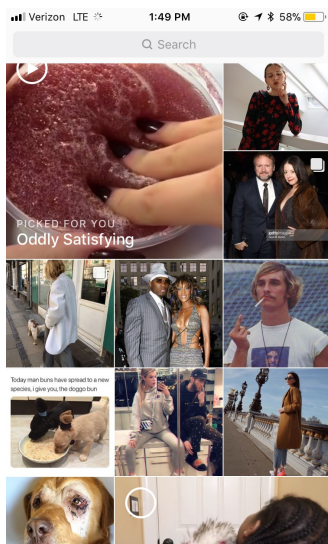


photo and posting to generate descriptive content. There are different pages, feed of people followed, an explore page to search in various ways, feed of what followers have liked, feed of a user’s interaction with others, personal page, can view that in different ways, can save other people’s posts (can categorize others posts based on an individual’s own system) and can remove your old posts, and stories feature. can move through the site in various ways as opposed to other social media where experience is more dictated. Rise of marketing via Instagram i.e. influencers, brands Instagram’s accounts.

Figure 4 Instagram's explore page

Instagram’s design allows for flexibility of content’s description by a user. Hashtags as search and retrieval/tagging within pictures, caption, and comment. Explore page/window of Instagram allows to search via hashtag or “tag”. Archive function within Instagram—can remove a photo from an individual’s feed and put in in a place where only the user can see it. If trying to cultivate a certain “mood” and photo no longer fits. Use of feature building own “collection” within Instagram. An individual account can save other’s photos to build a new collection. Though there is not necessarily an aspect of research that is often prevalent in formal archives, this function within Instagram utilizes similar ideas of collection and curation.

²⁰ Ibba et Al., “Hashtag of Instagram From Folksonomy to Complex Network”. DOI: 10.5220/0005613502790284

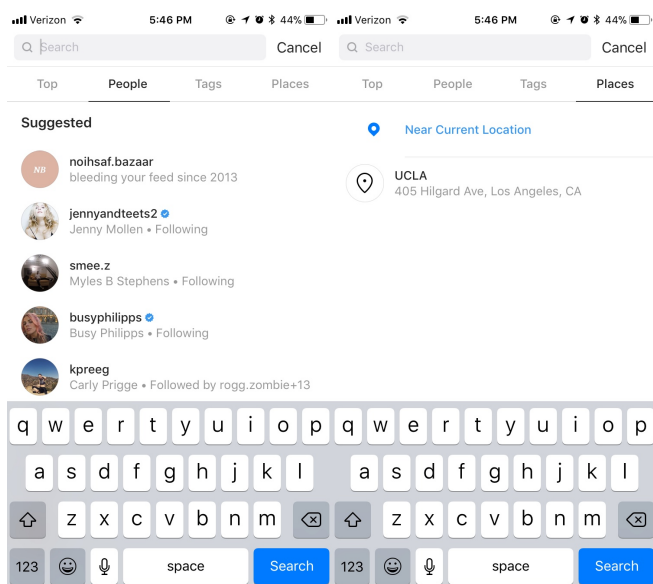


Figure 5 Various ways to search content. Top, people, tags, places

Branching from the ideas of description of content from archival practices, social media's content can be better described in a more authoritative manner. Description allows for greater access to content and therefore a more beneficial tool. Though the purpose of social media and the purpose of archives are most frequently different, the formatting of the two have commonalities. Instagram's integration of archival like features make the social media platform a personal archive for many users. Instagram's use of user generated description. As opposed to

other social media that don't allow categorization within design. Search features delineate between people, tags, places. Users are most often describing their own content, but users can also tag peoples' photos via comments. These interactions lead to a greater sense of engagement. Users can also tag other users in posts they may think they may enjoy. Business and advertisements when better described/tagged posts are searchable, can reach a broader audience. This information most likely feeds into Instagram's algorithms. "An important aspect of a folksonomy is that is comprised of terms in a flat namespace: that is, there is no hierarchy, and no directly specified parent-child or sibling relationships between these terms. There are, however, automatically generated "related" tags, which cluster tags based on common URLs. This is unlike formal taxonomies and classification schemes where there are multiple kind of explicit relationships between terms. These relationships include things like broader, narrower, as well as related terms. These folksonomies are simply the set of terms that a group of users tagged content with, they are not a predetermined set of classification terms or labels."²¹

²¹ Adam Mathes, 2004. "Folksonomies – Cooperative Classification and Communication Through Shared Metadata [Online Report]." *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication - JCMC* 47 (January).

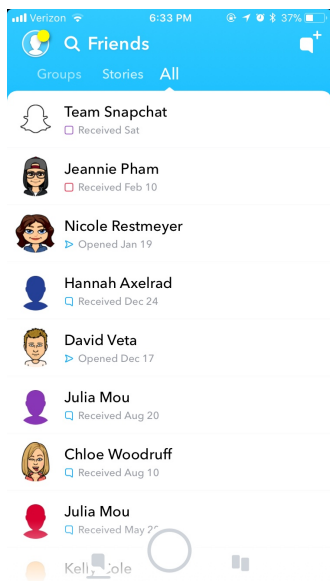


Figure 6 Snapchat does not utilize user generated description as seen in this interface. Users can only post videos or photos.

Even within the realm of social media, there are differences in the use of description even when they work with similar content formats such as text, photos, and videos. With Snapchat, the only description available to the user is who an account is friends with or follow. There is not a notion of lasting content and therefore not much of a connection to a personal archive as with Instagram. With Snapchat, a user can see their generated/created stories. The user cannot search places or tags, although there is now a search function. Twitter can use hashtags, pin tweets, save, retweet. Twitter users also have a timeline which cements their activity into a lasting repository. Hashtags allow for storage of an idea within an archive of related thoughts/images. As opposed to other social media that don't allow categorization within design. Links of tags to a

page. Instagram's formatted search features delineate between people, tags, places. These levels of search allow for more specific information to be provided and accessed.

Greater and more authoritative description of images could allow for algorithms to work more accurately when integrated into suggested posts such as Instagram's explore page as "the main purpose of social tagging is thus to facilitate visibility of information (visibility of images in Instagram's case) for the creation of recommendation systems."²² Combined with previous search history, the accuracy of description of content furthers the power of algorithms. This is especially notable as the explore page change has evolved since purchased by Facebook. It was once home to the overall most popular posts on the site, but it now a reflection of what other content may be most relevant to the individual user. How users browse, search and find resources is an issue of continuing interest especially to companies who provide platforms for various content. Though not necessarily public knowledge, perhaps there is a way these platforms will work more authority control and description into the structure of their sites. When discussing folksonomies, Adam Mathes succinctly writes that "while the controlled vocabulary issues discussed above may hamper findability, browsing the system and its interlinked related tag sets is wonderful for finding things unexpectedly in a general area."²³

²² Ibba et Al., "Hashtag of Instagram From Folksonomy to Complex Network". DOI: 10.5220/0005613502790284

²³ Adam Mathes, "Folksonomies – Cooperative Classification and Communication Through Shared Metadata [Online Report]." *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication - JCMC* 47 (January 2004).

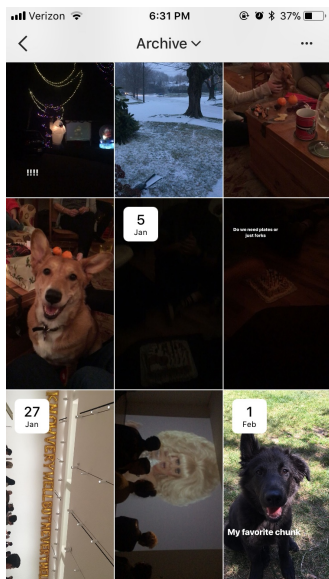


Figure 7 Archive function of Instagram where old posts can be placed away from view.

With this sort of formatted description, users can also categorize their own content and create individual access points. These individual access points have the opportunity to connect to greater communities. Though authority control is not always utilized. Businesses do often have preferred hashtags. Implementation of DOIs could be taken from either archives or internet resources. Delineating references of tags and hashtags could provide access points to users. Instagram's use of user generated description is the front-end version of description. Instagram's interface allows for implementation of the archival practice (that is also seen in similar form in the form of URIs) of access points and authority control. The interface currently consists of pages for feed, explore, posting, personal account and photos. Instagram, as a widely utilized

platform, contains features of an archive and some principles of authority control for description and access. Users can create their own archives use the archive feature. As these features are quite recent transitions for the platform, not much exists in the way of academic research. Instead, analysis of these features must be researched via technical news sites. One very relevant feature is the archive; "The feature further addresses the problem Instagram realized last year: people think it's only for the highlights of their life. To that end, Instagram copied Snapchat's Stories feature to add an ephemeral sharing option. But deleting permanent Instagrams was always a one-way street. Now if Instagrammers want to hide a post that didn't perform well, manicure the look of the top posts on their profile, or hide their creations for any other reason, the archive gives them the ability to bring them back from the dead later."²⁴ This digital archive within Instagram is an explicit call out to the formal archive. Though the entirety of Instagram, placed in the archive feature or not, functions often as an archive.

Many individuals and many communities make use of social media for various reasons. Different communities may also describe their content in different manners. A standardization for description of social media would need to take these differences into account as social media users is a very broad grouping. Particular groups of users, and their motivations, goals, and

²⁴ Josh Constone, "Instagram Deters Deletion with Reversible 'Archive' Option." 2017. *TechCrunch* (blog). May 23, 2017. <https://social.techcrunch.com/2017/05/22/instagram-archive/>.

expectations; companies versus individual. Public versus private. Archives' purpose is often that of specific information retrieval for various kinds of research. Users of social media have various motivations. If they are personal, users' goals may be to share content with friends. Companies use social media to connect with customers and promote their brands. Instagram as a platform allows for use by particular institutions with different missions which are reflected in their use of descriptors. These companies and institutions have flocked to social media as a form of advertising and as a way to connect with their customers and audience. "The main tool in the hands of a manager of an Instagram profile is hashtags: a suitable hashtag makes the content visible to all users interested in that specific topic, and also gives visibility to the profile, generating additional followers. Content with suitable hashtags generates likes and comments that make the account visible in the "Explore" tab, where new content of interest can be found."

²⁵ Connections between companies that use Instagram as a marketing tool and other users are formalized with the use of hashtags. These standardized tags function as the sort of authority control that may be implemented by other users. The standard company tags allow for customers or users to accurately connect with the brand via social media. The correct tags also allow for customers to appear on the company's tagged page. Company's use of standardized tagging offers a glimpse of the benefits of controlled vocabulary on social media.

Instagram is a reflection of particular collections of resources specifically personal photos and photos used for marketing. Within the realm of Instagram, "influencer marketing is growing tremendously, in report by Fashion and Beauty Monitor in association with Econsultancy (2016, 3) "A healthy majority of survey respondents, 57%, say they already have an Influencer Marketing programme underway. Currently a quarter are allocating between 30% and 75% of their marketing budget to Influencer Marketing." ²⁶ The purpose of this content is different than the commemorative purpose of personal content, but can still utilize the same standardization of tagging systems.

²⁵ Ibba et Al., "Hashtag of Instagram From Folksonomy to Complex Network". DOI: 10.5220/0005613502790284

²⁶ Veissi, Iman. "Influencer Marketing on Instagram." n.d. Accessed March 20, 2018.
https://www.theseus.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/135448/Iman_Veissi.pdf?sequence=1.

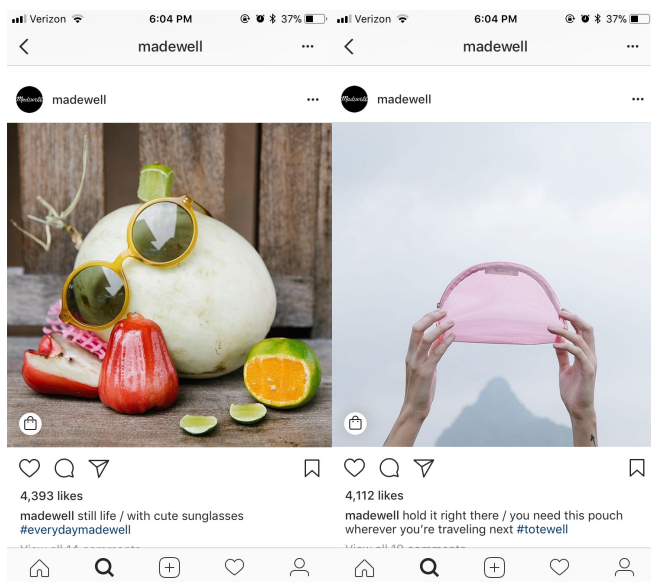


Figure 8 Madewell implementing a hashtag to brand their posts with. Often users will utilize the same hashtags when posting about the brand.

Social media focused marketing has taken off in recent years and Instagram is a very popular site for this new form of advertising. Social media advertising is in part a result of “the ever-growing number of adblock users (Barker 2016). According to the Adblock report published by Pagefair (2017, 5), the number of Ad-block users with mobile and desktop users has grown by “142 million between Dec 2015- Dec 2016”. Because of this, marketers can’t rely on the fact that traditional advertising will reach consumers. Also getting people to

mention your brand on social media can lead to a higher search engine ranking (Barker 2016.)”²⁷ By integrating marketing of products into the browsing of social media, companies are able to reach new consumers. These same companies also often create unique hashtags to categorize their postings.

Social media and archives are both particular kinds of repositories. Archival finding aids can be compared to the features with social media platforms especially Instagram, Twitter, and Snapchat. Instagram is designed to allow for a multitude of ways to explore within the site. Users have multiple access points to various content and this adaptability is seemingly a factor in its longevity. The categorization of photos with self-made tags is another level of interaction with content that other social media (i.e. Snapchat) do not offer in the same robust manner. Twitter is another popular social media site that makes use of different forms of description. The movements through content on Twitter have evolved over time; a feature similar to other social media sites. “For Twitter, while retweets and replies can be measured and connections between users identified through following relationships and @mentions, there are several practices that imply connections without necessarily creating a formal, structural link. Tufekci (2014) outlines some of these practices, including sub-tweeting (discussing others without explicit mention of

²⁷ Ibid.

their name or Twitter handle) and screencapping (including screenshots of comments in tweets).”²⁸ Formalized description of material and users evolved with usage of the social media platform as “when Twitter was initially launched in 2006, there was no technical or social convention for replying to another user, for organising tweets together, or for indicating that a tweet was part of a broader topic. All of these affordances emerged from the social uses of Twitter’s early users, with the ‘@’ reply convention, retweeting, and, hashtags all becoming technically formalised in Twitter’s architecture (Halavais, 2013). The use of the hash (or sometimes called the pound or number sign) character before certain terms indicated a desire to group tweets socially, or as Halavais explains, these are ‘... a way of indicating textually keywords or phrases especially worth indexing ... by using the # character to mark particular keywords, Twitter users communicate a desire to share particular keywords folksonomically”²⁹ Both Twitter and Instagram give an introduction to material via description that could be made even stronger if authority controls were to be implemented.

Given the prevalence of tags in some social media apps combined with those apps’ sustained popularity, future social media apps will incorporate this functionality. Academic research seems to be burgeoning. Algorithms are a subject that scholars are exploring. Metadata and data about content is especially valuable to companies as they try to boost engagement. Their metrics are proprietary, but a good portion of this research exists to explore what this data means. Social media platforms can utilize practices of authority control and access points from archival methods. Though the format of social media is notably different than the static archival finding aid, authority control is utilized across fields. Unique identifiers and controlled name and subject headings allow users to correctly connect with posts. This could allow for a more connected form of social media connection where users are able to search and collect posts that are related.

Instagram is not necessarily a search and retrieval tool and its purpose is much more adaptable than the traditional archive. Furthermore, there is not an ideal or prescribed way to search through content. However, the format of Instagram and other social media platforms leaves an opening for greater use of description of content. The format of Instagram currently allows users to have feeds with posts they have intended to follow as well as options of browsing through general, people, tags, location. These descriptors function as access points to various

²⁸ Tim Highfield, and Tama Leaver, “A Methodology for Mapping Instagram Hashtags.” *First Monday* 20 (1) 2014. <http://www.firstmonday.dk/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/5563>.

²⁹ Ibid.

categories of content within the platform. All the areas people can tag and subsequently, these aspects of the interface have the opportunity for standardized description and access. In a similar sense, archives utilize similar access points. Archives possess much more of a search and retrieval function as they are more often used for professional purposes.

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