



The
Pleasures and Perils
of Being an Author
(or Illustrator)
on **Social Media**

Presented by Marsh Myers

About Me:

- Author, artist, filmmaker based in Corvallis, Oregon
- Manager of Online Experiences for the Oregon Coast Aquarium
- Director of Education and Cruelty Prevention for Humane Society of Southern Arizona and PIO for the Animal Cruelty Taskforce of Southern Arizona, 1996-2010



- Created and chaired the Digital Media Working Group, OCAq
- Manage social media for the Oceanscape Network and LCIA
- Originated and managed social media, HSSA and ACT
- Personal social media
- Hootsuite “Certified Social Media Expert”
- Cumulative 15 years of working with social media.



Goals for Today:

1. Provide an overview to social media (and why it's like a spoiled child.)
2. Things to think about before you dive in.
3. Discuss current best practices.
4. Discuss how social media should fit in with your overall promotional strategy.
5. Provide suggestions to make your social media experience more beneficial.

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“Social Media” by Definition:

Social media is a collection of **websites** and **applications** that enable users to **create and share** content or to participate in **social** networking.



Did You Know?

- Social media is only 20 years old?
- MySpace (not Facebook) is considered the progenitor of modern social media, the first to reach 1 million users (2004).
- Half of the human population on Earth is online and most are using some kind of social media (3.5 billion people)
- New social media platforms can grow exponentially. TikTok was founded in 2016 and by mid-2018 it had half a billion users. It averaged 20 million new users PER MONTH.

Did You Know?

- Like a living organism, social media can grow, adapt and die. Remember MySpace, Google+, Vine and YikYak?
- The public's taste in social media can change rapidly. Younger people tend to experiment more with different platforms, while older people use fewer platforms and may be more faithful to their favorites.
- Originally, social media "success" was a numbers game. Now it's all about engagement.
- Social media's growth and reach is akin to a viral outbreak.

The “Up” Sides to Social Media:

- Social media can provide you access to a potentially HUGE audience with virtually no cost (other than time) to yourself.
- Social media can be a fantastic platform for free speech.
- Social media will help you connect with people who have similar interests as you.
- Social media can be a valuable tool for promoting good causes and helping others, such as COVID-19 social distancing and virtual outreach.

SCBWI Covid-19 Response:



Using online resources to provide kids, young adults, teachers and parents with resources to sustain learning and creativity.

<https://www.scbwi.org/scbwi-connects-teaching-guides/>

How to Survive Social Media Without Turning Into a Big Jerk



Before You Dive In, Ask Yourself:

- Why am I doing this? (“Because everyone else is” should not be an answer.)
- How much time do I have (and want) to commit to this?
- What are my main goals? (“To sell books” should not be an answer).
- How does social media fit into my promotional strategy as an author or illustrator?

Best Practices for Online Etiquette



- Be respectful, thoughtful and tolerant.
- Watch your language, use of ALL CAPS and punctuation.
- Know what internet abbreviations actually mean (LOL, IRL, etc.)
- Be careful of controversial topics, such as politics and social conditions.
- DO NOT TROLL!
- Grammar and spelling matter!
- Use emojis and other decor sparingly.
- Don't over share.
- Quality over quantity (engagement over followers).



Best Practices for Social Media Targeted to Young People

- Know your audience! (child, tween, YA)
- Generational differences DO matter.
- Are your social media posts targeting youth... or their parents?
- Are you on the correct social media platform?
- Be inclusive.
- Don't make everything (or anything) a sales pitch.
- Speak to them, not down to them.





- Be positive and encouraging.
- Share what you do.
- Describe technique, workspaces, inspirations, historical references, share fan mail, personal experiences, upcoming events, artistic methods, tools of your trade, etc.



- Writer interactions: post polls, “Ask the Author,” online book readings, raffles and contests, participate in larger online events such as World Book Day or Read to A Child Day.
- Illustrator interactions: post polls, do a live illustration on Instagram streaming, teach online art classes.
- Take your social media engagement to the “next level” when possible.

What Is “Next Level Engagement?”



When a user makes a special or sustained interaction with a social media post because it engaged them on an emotional level.

Next Level Engagement:



- Cat riding a Roomba = 5000 👍 but superficial engagement
- Cat riding new, improved Roomba now on sale with a link = 300 👍 but niche market engagement
- Cat rescued from an animal shelter riding a Roomba, donation link to the shelter = 2500 👍 plus donations = high quality engagement

Next Level Engagement:



- Cat riding a Roomba down a busy highway = viral post with 50,000 👍 100,000 👎 3,000 calls to the ASPCA with trial featured on CNN = extremely high (negative) engagement
- LESSON: High engagement isn't always a good thing (especially if you're horrible)

How Do I Create Effective Social Media?



- Have a clear and cohesive strategy for self promotion.
- “Brand” yourself.
- Stay on message.
- Keep your personal and work social media separate.
- Be consistent and disciplined about your posts (how often and how much will you post?)
- Have a place to send your users beyond the post (like your author’s or artist’s website) to build next level engagement.



Websites and Social Media:

- A website is a platform that you completely control.
- A website is an excellent way to promote your “brand.”
- Websites give you a place to expand on your social media topics and thereby create the potential for next level engagement.

Don't Underestimate the Power of Images



Images and Engagement

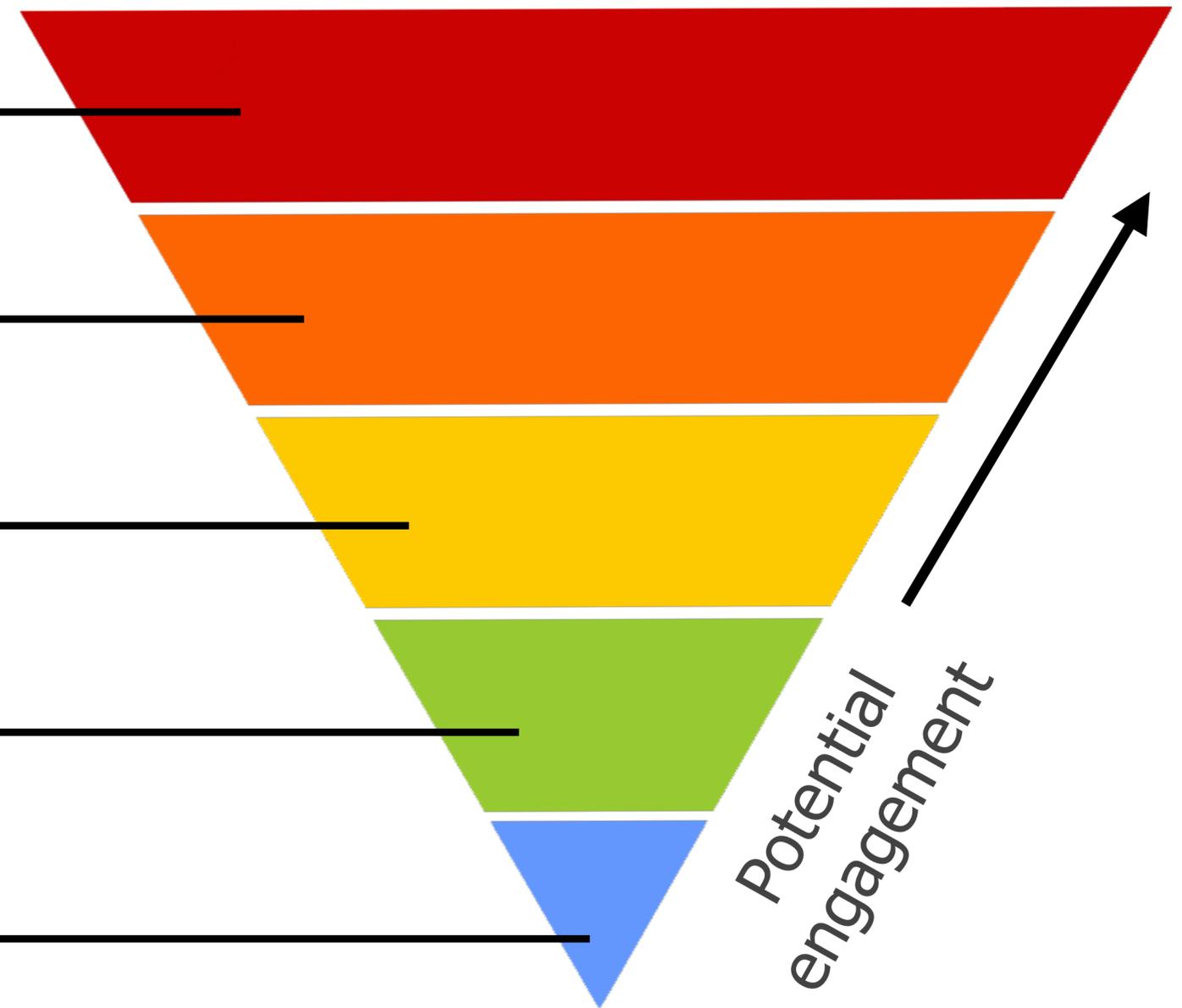
Live video and interaction.

Video, preferably original

Text with original image

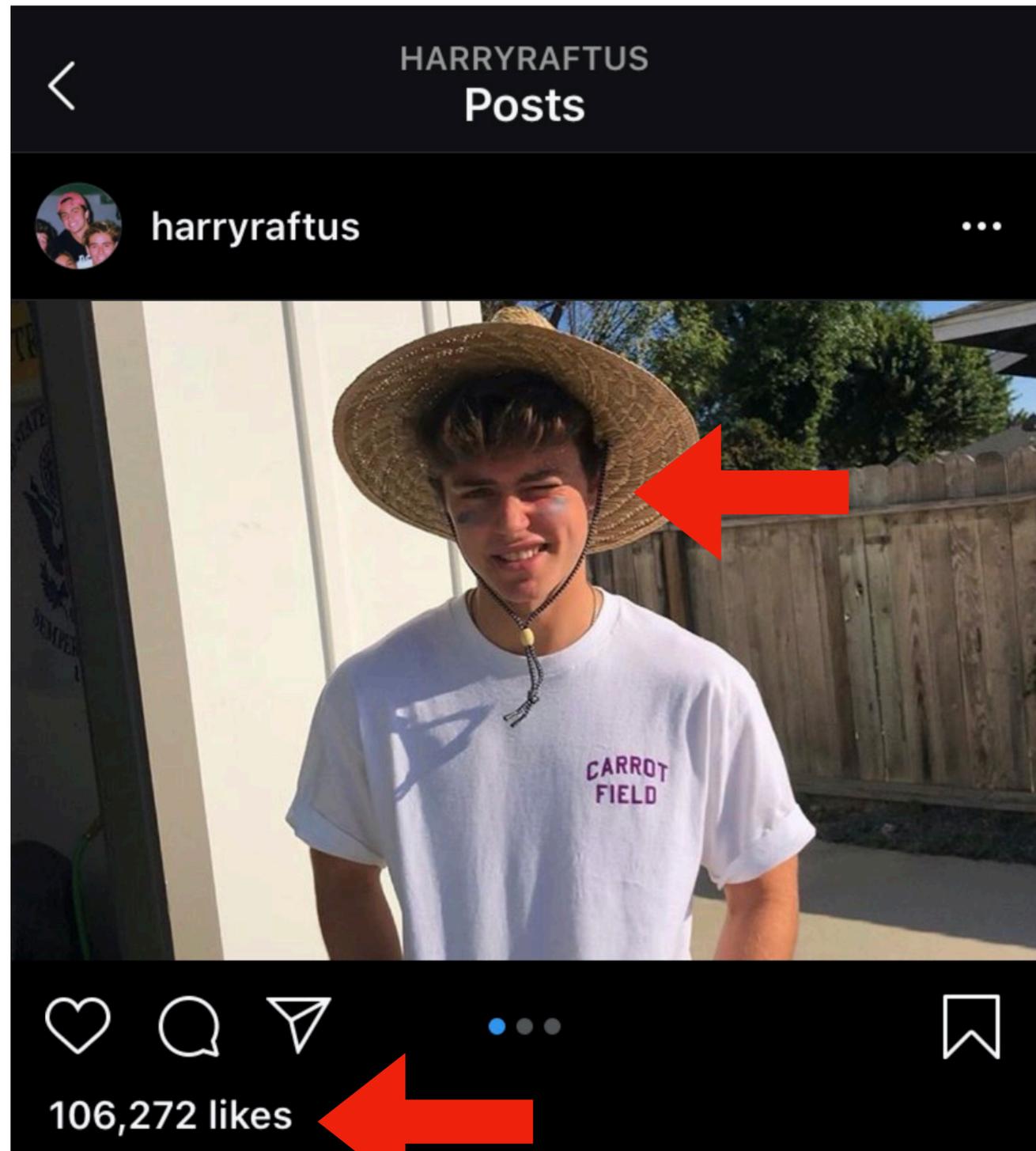
Text with stock image

Text only, no image



Fact: social media posts with relevant and compelling images rack up 94% more views than posts without images.

Fact: post images
that show faces
get 38% more
views than others.



- The power of images and video have made image sharing platforms the powerhouses of social media (YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, etc.)
- Live-streaming is the next step in this evolution.
- The rise of social media “celebs and influencers.”
- High engagement... but is it “next level” engagement?

BEING FAMOUS ON SOCIAL MEDIA



**IS LIKE BEING RICH IN
MONOPOLY. IT'S NOT REAL...
SO CALM DOWN!**

How To Get Started:



1: Create Your Strategy

- Create a strategy to promote yourself and your work.

You can pay for these services but you'll pay a lot and chances are these things you can do for yourself anyway.

Traditional Publishing Myth: The Publisher Provides Lots of Marketing Support

By on 07/11/2012 with [Comments 3](#)

Many new authors expect that a traditional publisher is going to promote the heck out of their books. Unfortunately, this is rarely the case. Most publishers have thin marketing budgets and the majority of their marketing spend is allocated to celebrity authors. New authors are forced to prove themselves by promoting books on their own.

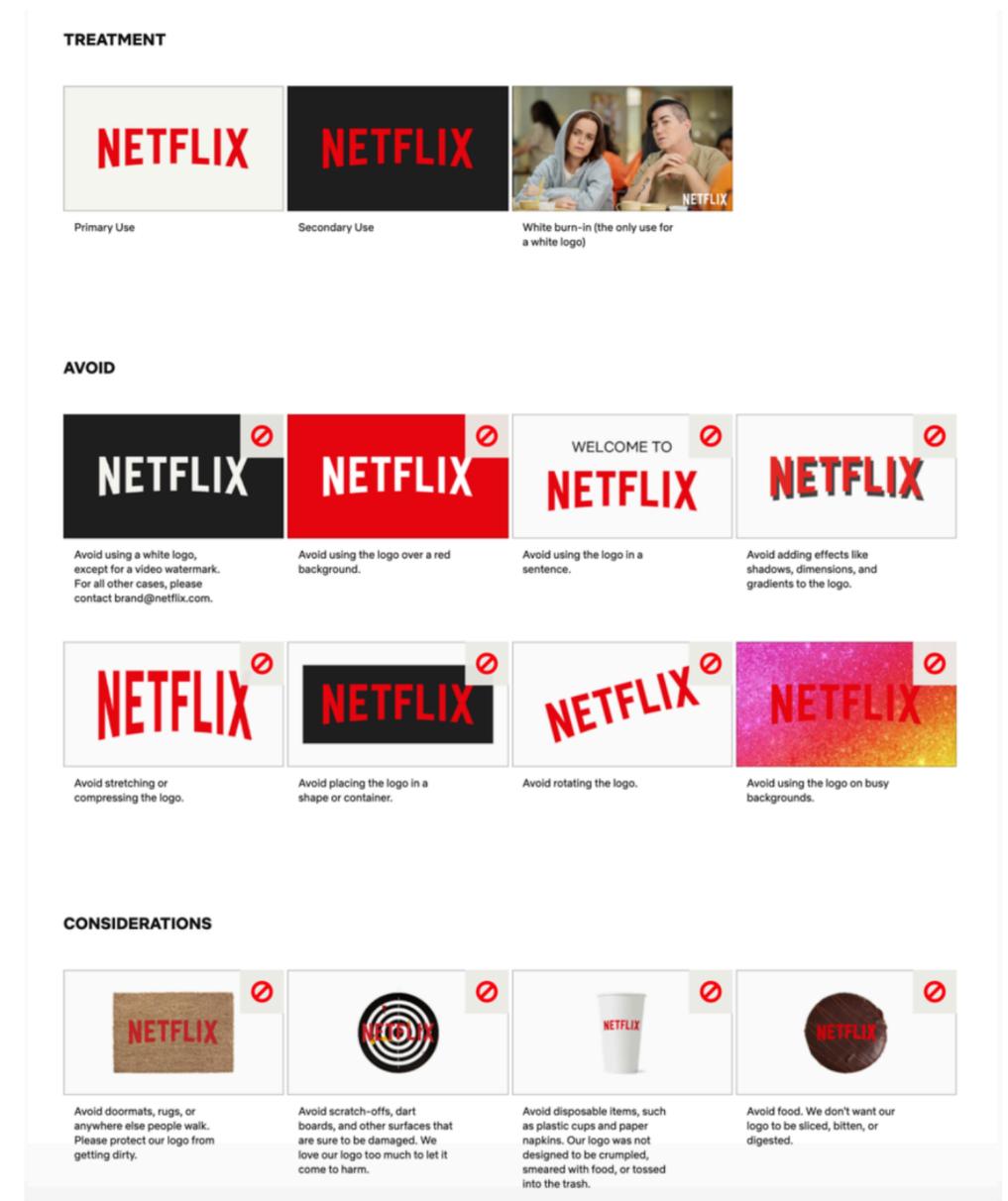
The publisher will list your book in their catalog and promotional mailings to libraries and other book-buying sources, but that's where the fun usually ends. And yes, most will get your book placed in bookstores. But that isn't marketing and the reality is that the majority of book sales today happen online. Bookstore placement is not a guarantee for major sales. In fact, I would argue that bookstores are one of the worst places to sell books. They typically stock just one or two copies of each title and if the books don't sell within a few months, they are returned to the publisher for a full refund. There is simply too much demand for shelf space.

Speaking of bookstores, the promotional end-caps are based on a pay-to-play model. The publishers bid to feature their books in store displays, and once again publishers rarely take a chance on new authors and instead stick to promoting authors with a proven sales history.



2: Create A Style Guide

- A style guide is a document which details how your personal “brand” is to be used on social media, your website, and elsewhere.



3: Research

- Who is your audience?
- What social media do they use?
- How will you track your analytics?

4: Plan Your Visual Elements

- How will you produce these?
- Stock images are better than nothing, but original images are best.
- How about video? If you can't do it well, don't do it.

5: Get Out There and Try

- Use hashtags! A hashtag is word or phrase preceded by a hash sign (#), used on social media websites and applications, especially Twitter, to identify messages on a specific topic.
- Watch for relevant “trending” topics that you can comment on.
- Be aware of social media “special days,” such as “Throwback Thursdays” and “Self-Promotion Saturdays.” Most of these happen weekly.
- Participate in social media holidays. Most of these happen once a year.

5: Get Out There and Try

- Follow and follow-back.
- Repost, like and forward other people's content.
- Tag others to invite them into your conversation.
- Curate your content from other sources (75% / 25% split)
- Comment, but be constructive and respectful.
- Participate in "author lift" events or other cooperative promotional ventures with fellow artists.
- Change your web page / social media look regularly.
- Be prepared to change your strategy because...



Social media is like a spoiled child...



Downloads additional resources
related to this presentation:
marshmyers.com/downloads.html