Project Vox

Outreach & Assessment Manual
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Forward

Since 2016 Project Vox has worked to build and connect a broad community centered around reforming philosophy instruction: it has seen both clear engagement from that audience as well as positive responses from scholars, students, and the public. Had we not had an individual team member dedicated to this community-building work, we would not have been so successful in promoting newly published content, building social media networks, responding to public and educator interest, and helping promote the people and projects that form the growing community of support for new narratives in philosophy.

Outreach and assessment are essential to any digital humanities project. Like many projects that occur within the bounds of the academic calendar, there are many new students each year, so we created this manual to maintain consistency as our team changes. Since this manual is written as a guide for Project Vox, it may not apply to all digital humanities projects, but we hope that it provides a sense of how to do this work.

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About the Outreach & Assessment Team

Mission Statement:
To contribute to and support Project Vox's (PV) overall mission of changing the philosophy canon through the instruction and digital publishing of philosophical texts.

The Outreach & Assessment (O&A) team offers support by:

- **Increasing exposure** of PV, its mission, its resources, especially for audiences who are teachers and students of Philosophy at a general level; and by working to reach latent audiences
- **Tracking the reach** of PV to already extant audiences, and **improving** these **users' experiences** through PV's website and resources
- **Promoting PV** website and resources on various media (e.g. social media, blogs, buttons etc.)
- **Maintaining the Blog series**, those which are constructed by members of our advisory board and scholars in our audience

Roles:
Named roles are distinct from one another in the publishing workflow. There are three titles roles of the O&A Team: Outreach & Assessment Coordinator, Assessment Analyst, and Social Media Manager. Unless otherwise noted, one team member can perform multiple roles as is necessary. Historically, all roles have historically been performed locally. However, these roles could be managed remotely so long as (1) the remote team member(s) has/have good working knowledge of the Project and of philosophy more generally; (2) the remote team member(s) has/have consistent virtual access to team meetings and O&A meetings, and (3) the remote team member(s) routinely communicate(s) with the Project Manager and/or Lead Researcher.

Role Descriptions:
The **Outreach and Assessment Coordinator** is the manager of the O&A Team. The Coordinator is responsible for keeping lines of communication open between the O&A team's members and the rest of the Vox's teams. The Coordinator meets routinely with the O&A team, usually in addition to attending the weekly PV team meetings. The Coordinator is an active participant in the recruitment and training of O&A team members. Early each in the year or semester, the Coordinator works with both the O&A team and the PV team to set goals and agendas for the upcoming semester(s). Throughout the year, the Coordinator ensures that the agreed upon deliverables and milestones are completed. The O&A Coordinator also communicates the goals, agendas, and milestones to the Administrative Team at least monthly. The O&A Coordinator is also in charge of maintaining and developing the site's blog.

The **Assessment Analyst's** primary responsibilities are the collection of user data, such as breadth of audience, and the analysis of user experiences on the website. The Assessment Analyst creates, distributes, and interprets surveys about user experience in coordination with the Coordinator and the Administrative Team. The Analyst also routinely monitors and interprets Google Analytics to interpret user reach and frequency of user visits. The Analyst is also responsible for assessing social media and outreach campaigns by tracking the desired outcomes (usually website visits or user engagement) before, during, and after a campaign. The Analyst also provides recommendations for the PV team based on their findings, and provides analytics for the PV annual report.

The Social Media Manager is responsible for researching, developing, and recalibrating social media strategies, with the express purposes of (1) promoting the PV website and its mission and (2) increasing readership and interactivity of PV community of users. The Manager researches, develops, and implements social media campaigns, especially around the launch of new content. The Manager decides on the particular modalities of social media outreach, including platform(s), content, and frequency. The Manager also creates content for specific platforms for each new campaign, and work closely with the Assessment Analyst and O&A Coordinator to assess and recalibrate campaigns.

In times of limited personnel, the distinct roles of O&A Team may be collapsed into one person, or may be distributed among the rest of the PV team.

Proposed Actions for the Outreach & Assessment Team

Priority (minimum viable team members=+/- 1):

- Maintain social media outreach campaigns, particularly as related to new content
    - Regularly check social media platforms in case users engage with the project, even when campaigns are not active
    - Likely candidates for this role include the Project Manager and/or the Lead Researcher
- Continue to query/survey users and potential users, with particular focus on
    - New content, as it becomes available
    - New website, use and design
    - Overall impact on Philosophy as discipline, including the women in Philosophy pipeline
- Send out annual newsletter (at time of new publication on website)
- Publish a monthly blog post

If resources allow (minimum viable team members=2+):

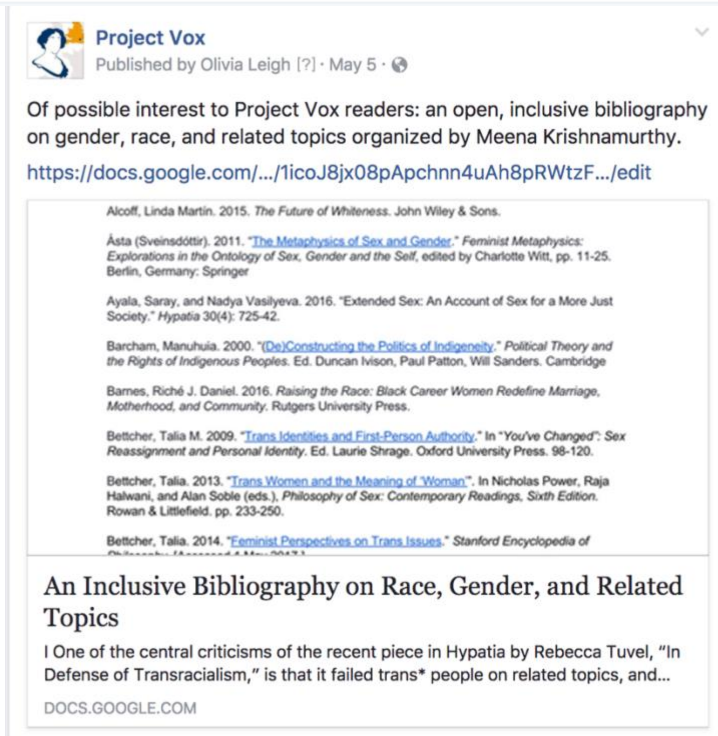
- Present at relevant conferences in Digital Humanities, Philosophy, and Gender & Women's Studies
    - Post about presentation on social media
- Present at local events (CDHI, TRLN)
- Develop further "swag" including stickers, t-shirts, etc.
- Complete analytical survey related to current questions from the team

Social Media Resources & Workflow

<u>Overview:</u>

- Historical Conversations:
    - The team has had multiple discussions about how to balance the institutional angle of the project (I.e., its relationship to Duke and the libraries, which tend to be slow and deliberative about broadcasting views that might stir controversy) with its political angle (I.e., one which might conceivably stir controversy). As of 2017, the team has settled on handling this interplay by 'threading the needle' with a witty, conversational tone that stays on top of 'current events' (particularly in the world of academic philosophy) without making explicit political claims that might be divisive.
- Brand/How to Situate PV in media representations:
    - This relates to the above issues about adapting the idea of 'conversion' to suit PV's needs. Because of the brevity of the SM form, it is critical to have a sense of the project's brand so we can present it in a consistent manner.
    - PV's brand, for the purposes of SM, can be approximated by the tone described above: **witty, conversational, informed, and modern while maintaining a solidly *scholarly* perspective**. Social media campaigns must uphold the driving mission of the Project: to be a reputable, trustworthy, and scholarly source for early modern female philosophers.
    - Building a consistent brand, combined with a track record of sharing useful and interesting content, **will allow Vox to establish itself as an 'influencer' and a resource in the community**
- How to Manage Tone On SM:
    - See above: As of 2017, the team has settled on handling this interplay by 'threading the needle' with a witty, conversational tone that stays on top of 'current events' **without making explicit political claims** that might be divisive. Here are some examples:
        - **Option 1 – straightforwardly historical**
          Visit Duke's @rubensteinlib to view a first edition of John Norris and Mary Astell's Letters Concerning the Love of God! #rarebooks
        - **Option 2 – political**
          An early modern #subtweet at women writers? Read the original at Duke's @rubensteinlib! #ProjectVox #rarebooks
          [include digitization image of preface – "THE Letters here laid open to thy View are a late Correspondence between my self and a Gentlewoman, and to add to thy Wonder, a young Gentlewoman. Her Name I have not the Liberty to publish. For her Person, as her Modesty will not suffer me to say much of her, so the present Productions of her Pen make it utterly needless to say any thing, unless it be by way of Preſvention to obviate a Diffidence in some who from the surprizing Excellency of these Writings may be tempted to queſstion whether my Correspondent be really a Woman or no. To whom my Answer is, that indeed I did not see her write these Letters, but that I have all the moral and

reasonable Assurance that she did write them and is the true Author of them, that can be had in a thing of this Nature, And I hope my Credit may be good enough with those that know me to be believed upon my serious Word, where there is no other Satisfaction to be given.



- Maintaining a Consistent Voice across Media:
  - Language need not match perfectly across media—it almost certainly won't, since Facebook can lend itself to slightly longer posts while Twitter imposes a strict character limit—but to the extent that Vox social media seeks to communicate the project's brand, voice consistency can be very helpful. A tweet often acts as a succinct 'seed' from which a Facebook post can be developed.

Goals/Objectives:

Influencer:
Consistent, relevant, and well-curated social media posts will make PV an influencer in its network. This will, in turn, allow Vox to maintain a vibrant presence even when official site publications happen relatively infrequently. It will also help demonstrate (and help back up claims about) PV's vitality and lasting significance for funding applications and so forth.

Growth:
For the purposes of PV, social media 'marketing' centers around creating new fans of the project who might ultimately become users. Growth on social media expands the project's audience and increases the reach of the project's core output (published content of various kinds).

Reliability:
Reliability is necessary in order for both steady growth and the acquisition of influencer status. Reliability need not require strenuous flurries of posting; rather, the project should strive to update social media once every week to several times a month, if at all possible.

Maintaining Relevance (Beyond Controversy):
Sharing relevant, carefully curated posts is key to becoming an influential voice in our network. This sometimes means acknowledging controversies without getting in the thick of possibly vicious arguments. As per the team consensus mentioned above, PV aims to engage in political issues in a helpful but ultimately non-controversial way. See the sample post above about Meena Krishnamurthy's working bibliography on race and gender issues in philosophy, which was shared during the Hypatia controversy of 2017 as a way of acknowledging the issues raised by the debate without staking out a controversial position for the project.

Developing Identity:
Social media helps PV by providing a simple platform for the articulation of the project's identity. Although work on the project happens throughout the year, users may not know about the project's continued momentum between content releases. With the help of the above principles, Vox social media accounts make the project feel dynamic and accessible to users who might become indifferent after the initial excitement sparked by encountering our content. It is critical to maintain this sense of vibrancy; otherwise, the project will appear to have stalled out, which helps no one when the time comes to vouch for its continued relevance. At all times, social media posts should be vetted for consistency with the project's identity. When in doubt, talk to the team to make sure everyone is on the same page about how to define that identity. It never hurts to be open and clear about these things!

Best Practices:
- Set up Google Scholar Alerts for "Project Vox," "Cavendish," etc.
- Develop content routinely (see below)

How to find and sift through possible content:

- Publish content promoting Duke/PV about 1 time per week, replacing with newsworthy content as needed. When creating original content using Canva or other design tools, link to larger events (especially World Philosophy Day, International Women's Day, the school year [e.g. syllabus creation period], etc.) to make it more engaging and relatable.
    - Develop a calendar of all relevant dates ahead of time.
- For best visibility, publish Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, at times with high visibility
- Publishing content that promotes DH stuff or links the project to the DH world – it's good if this content is about philosophy; it's better yet if it's about women in philosophy/expanding philosophy (philosophy and dance, poetry, etc.); and is better yet if it's also about Duke/Vox (though in truth, it's ideal to have a balance of all of the above)
- Absent anything relevant in the DH-verse, look for articles and opinions about expansive ways of approaching philosophy or the humanities; promote philosophy/feminism/digital humanities in the Triangle area/for Vox partners; get creative with what counts as philosophy, digital humanities, etc. The idea here is to spread the word about projects that share something of Vox's academic and political spirit, both to build up marketing goodwill and to present ourselves as influencers and content curators.
- If philosophy is in "the news," it's a good idea to mention that as well
- While retweets and shares are fine, the project's SM presence will feel more robust if we at least occasionally create original posts about the above. If it feels appropriate, it can be a good idea to give a "hat tip" (credit) to an original source, such as The Daily Nous.
- The goal is to provide balanced content that:
    - 1) promotes our project and the institutions that allow it to exist (Duke, Duke Libraries, etc.);
    - 2) helps develop our brand as politically sensitive/situated in contemporary, expansive philosophical & historical scholarship; and
    - 3) shows how philosophy can participate in larger cultural narratives, including DH in particular.

Retweeting:

Develop a list of Twitter accounts that have the same mission and goals as PV. This list should be re-examined every few months.

Resources:

- List of influencers:
    - Daily Nous, OUPblog, LARB, Arts & Letters Daily, the Atlantic, Philosopher's Cocoon, APA blog; google 'philosophy' and look under news tab; etc. Times Higher Education and The Chronicle of Higher Education often have interesting content, but it is paywalled. *Be mindful of whether or not you are sharing restricted content. Since PV is an open-access site, only retweet or share items that are also free.*
- Tools for finding relevant news

- Google Alerts [philosophers, "Project Vox," conference announcements, calls for papers, etc.]; hang out on blogs that frequently post content, such as Daily Nous and Philosopher's Cocoon. Periodically check The Stone and The Guardian's philosophy pages, for example, to see if there are any relevant pieces there.

- Templates for sharing branded images on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn:
  - Canva provides numerous templates that can be edited easily to suit the project's brand and message.
- Setting up posts in advance:
  - On Facebook, it is easy to schedule posts within the basic posting dialog box.
  - On Twitter, use our Tweet Deck account.

Assessment Workflow

<u>Overview:</u>

- In 2016–2017 assessment involved looking almost exclusively at undergraduate philosophy professors. Additionally, these were all people who were already using PV and sympathized with our goals. It is important to improve upon the aspects that our users mentioned and to create more content, while also seeking feedback from audiences we know less about (grad students, undergraduates, other philosophers).
- In 2019 we assessed an undergraduate philosophy class to identify how students use the PV website, whether they found the site reputable, and how they would cite information found on the website.
- In 2019–2020 the goals of the assessment were to (1) track usage over time via Google Analytics, and (2) determine how scholars in university classrooms engage with the site. Collecting analytics information through Google involved the comparison of current-year output with anticipated projections and analytics data from years past. Assessing teaching scholars' site use instead requires the construction of a Qualtrics survey to comprehensively analyze submitted data from a pool of participants.
- Social media is one outlet for measuring and gauging interest from latent and potential users, which will require setting goals for interactions.

<u>Goals/Objectives:</u>

- Find ways to get more student evaluations of PV.
- Follow up with existing users (e.g., undergraduate philosophy professors) about PV (ideally this would be done after much more content is posted on the website).
- Develop a systematic baseline for Google Analytics measurements.
- Determine the impact of publishing new content and user engagement.
- Expand PV's reach by finding ways to incorporate our resources into more traditional scholarly materials (i.e. bibliographies, databases, syllabi, etc.).
- Record data in reports for use in funding applications.

<u>Best Practices:</u>

- Google Analytics:
    - Use GA to test assumptions and answer questions about visitors.
    - The baseline is always a moving target, but try to make comparisons to similar times during the year (e.g., August 2016 vs. August 2017).
    - Mark important events and causes of traffic spikes.
    - Note that GA social media data only captures visits to the PV website itself. Social media information should be captured from the social media platforms as well.
    - Track events as an alternative measure of visitors. Events can offer a better understanding of what people are doing on the website.
    - Set actual goals (something we did not do) to automatically track conversions, especially during special events.

  - Check search keywords more frequently for strategizing on new directions (Acquisition > Campaigns > Organic Keywords).
- Surveys:
  - Get feedback about questions and talk to the team about the information that you are really interested in learning. Surveys use social capital and it is not something that you can do a lot of. Think of it as your only chance to get this information from this specific group.
  - Test the survey. People have a lot of opinions about surveys, but test it many times with many different people for flow, grammar, choice options, aesthetics, etc. If possible, send the survey to someone in the User Experiences Department at Duke Libraries.
  - Finding people to survey for a resource like this, usually means finding people who already like PV. That means surveys cannot tell you everything about how to improve the site, but it can tell you what your core users want and need.
  - Surveys are also an opportune time to obtain soundbites on why people like the website, which can be useful for promotional purposes or for applying for funding.
  - Think about your audience and how to best get them to respond (i.e. at a conference it might be best to do in person surveys).
  - Use embedded data to make the survey more streamlined for participants and to capture other relevant information (i.e. geographic location or source of the survey).
- Interviews:
  - Interviews require more social capital than surveys and cannot be done very often.
  - Using qualitative analysis software can be helpful, but is not always necessary depending on the scope of the project.

Resources:

- Qualtrics (Duke Supported)
- Google Analytics (https://support.google.com/analytics/)
- User Experiences Department at Duke Libraries
- Analytics available through WordPress

Milestones:

- Google Analytics:
  - Check data points like users, pageviews, new users, returning users, referrals, and various events to measure progress over previous years (hopefully around similar times of the year).
  - Use data to develop a strategy with overall O&A team for extending the reach of PV.
  - Set official Google Analytics goals for conversions.
- Surveys:
  - Providing data on new voices not yet captured, especially students.
  - Repeated survey instruments to provide a large enough sample to make generalizations about our users.
  - Surveys should lead to changes and improvements in PV's practices and resources.

Newsletter Workflow

Goals/Object:

- The goal of the newsletter is to efficiently and sustainably reach out to interested parties with news and updates related to the Project.

Best Practices:

- Frequency
  - In 2017, the PV team deliberated the frequency of newsletters, expressing concern primarily about sustainability. Ultimately, the team decided that the best route forward was to issue a newsletter whenever there was significant news to be shared—a significant release of material.
- Content
  - Like all O&A content, newsletter content should bring positive attention to the Project;
  - it should be interesting and varied; and
  - should call attention to recent happenings/new materials related to the Project
- Newsletter Software/Service/Platform
  - We use the MailChimp platform to build newsletters, manage subscribers, and send newsletters to the subscriber. MailChimp is functional and intuitive, with pre-prepared campaigns and drag and drop templates (see Sample Newsletters for More)
- Audience-Focus
  - People must elect to receive our newsletters, and they must sign up for them (usually through the PV website landing page)
  - As a result, the audience is likely to be users or would-be users of PV who are interested in receiving periodic updates
  - This tends to be a very specific user and because of the restrictions on MailChimp, you are not allowed to sign specific people up for the service without their consent.

Resources:

- MailChimp (https://mailchimp.com)
- Graphics (http://canva.com)

Sample Newsletters:

- Previous newsletters can be found by logging in to MailChimp and clicking on "Campaigns"
- The 2017 March Astell newsletter included the following categories:
  - #AstellArrives: image and information about the Astell content launch
  - Team Member Spotlight (image)
  - News (PV travels to SEWSA)
  - Featured Syllabus (related to Astell, with outbound links)
  - Thanks for Subscribing/About PV
- The 2017 November *Optics Essai* newsletter included the following information:

- Images of Du Châtelet and the *Essai*
- Brief statement by contributor who transcribed the *Essai*
- Links to our site, the transcription, and social media

Markers of Success:

- MailChimp has its own analytics service which provides good insight into
    - Audience size/growth
    - Delivery rates to those subscribed
    - Whether or not the email was opened, and at what frequency
    - How many people clicked links embedded within the newsletter

Blogging on WordPress

When the website was transferred to the new WordPress site in 2017, we wanted to have current updates on the splash page. It was our first opportunity to post messages and stories on our site rather than relying on social media. This evolved into the creation of several blog themes in order to organize the posts and have some coherence. These series helped the O&A Coordinator organize the posts and maintain a consistent message. There should be at least one blog post per month in order to maintain a presence online. Remember to always complete the metadata for each post.

<u>Blog Themes/Categories as of Summer 2020:</u>

- Behind the Scenes (look into the team members and their specific projects completed as team members)
- Revealing Voices (see Revealing Voices section below)
- Announcements
- Where are they now? (ask team alums to reflect on how their experiences with PV impacted their growth in their careers)

<u>Blogging Metadata:</u>

Metadata captures information to classify each post. This metadata is searchable and provides attribution information.

- Creator: Project Vox Team
- Subject: Blog theme/category (ex. Revealing Voices)
- Title: Full title that appears in title of blog (ex. Revealing Voices: Contributor Name)
- Description: Repeat title above (ex. Revealing Voices: Contributor Name)
- Publisher: Duke University Libraries
- Rights: Creative Commons Attribution
- Language: eng

<u>Revealing Voices:</u>

This is the primary series to solicit posts from scholars outside of Duke. We chose to name the series *Revealing Voices* because we are revealing the voices of these formerly forgotten women philosophers and we want to reveal the scholarly voices of those in the field.

<u>Contacting Contributors:</u>

Below are sample emails to send to contributors. There are two series of emails that first gauge the interest of the writer and then give a more specific statement on what we need from them. Remember to set deadlines with them, but be flexible. Stay in touch with that person if they've committed to the post, but just give them friendly reminders. For example, say "I would like to check in with you about the blog post that you agreed to write for Project Vox." Remember that you are asking them to do extra work, but most of the people appreciate the space to write an essay for the blog.

Initial Email:

Dear [Contributor],

I am the Outreach & Assessment Coordinator for Project Vox and I am working on our most popular blog series, Revealing Voices, that features scholars who work on early modern women philosophers. Are you interested in writing something for our blog about your research? We can talk about ideas for the post, but I want to gauge your interest first. Here are some examples of what other scholars have chosen to write: [example] and [example].

I look forward to hearing from you.

Best,
[Your Name]

Follow-Up Email:

Dear [Contributor],

Great news! I would like to leave the topic up to you, but if you need some suggestions, I am happy to help. It can be something more personal (How did you become interested in early modern women philosophers?) or something from your research. We recommend writing something under 1000 words since it's a blog. You are welcome to use images alongside the text. These can be your own or you can look in our image gallery and find something that you might want to include. We would also like for you to submit a photo of yourself and a brief biography (2-3 sentences). We do not have a rigid schedule, so just let me know when you think that you would like to submit the post and I can check back with you then. Please let me know if you have any questions!

Best,
[Your Name]

Blog Featured Images:
All of the images and the featured images were created through Canva. Before publication of blog posts, create images for all of these frame sizes:

- Image for Blog (use the same size image for Facebook)
- Image for Facebook announcement
- Image for Twitter announcement
- Image for LinkedIn announcement

Annual Timeline

Beginning of Semester or Academic Year:

- At the beginning of the year, in collaboration with the PV team, decide upon goals and milestones for outreach and assessment. These goals should be informed by:
  - prior work done by O&A
  - overall goals of the Project
  - number of team members
  - the O&A mission statement
- Decide upon O&A roles and recruit team members if necessary. Ideally, the O&A team will consist of at least three members, to fill the roles described above. In times when personnel is limited, however, other team members may elect to take on the roles of one or more of the positions described above.
- Check and record "baseline" numbers such as
  - Number of followers on social media (presently, Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn)
  - Frequency and quality of engagement on social media (using platform analytics or other tool)
  - Google Analytics data (including number of users, duration of users, locations of users.)
  - Encourage team members to join our LinkedIn network
- Begin routine maintenance
  - Team page updates
  - Blog updates

Beginning of Campaign:

- When new content becomes available (as in the launch of Astell content, or the Optics *Essai*), the role of O&A is to promote the new content and evaluate the effectivity of the promotion
- Check and record "baseline" numbers such as
  - Number of followers on social media (presently, Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn)
  - Frequency and quality of engagement on social media (using platform analytics or other tool)
  - Google Analytics data (including number, duration, and locations of users.)
- Decide upon the beginning and ending of the campaign. In campaigns past, the duration of concentrated, higher-frequency outreach was approximately one month.
- Decide whether or not to survey users pre- or post-campaign, if the metrics described above provide an incomplete picture of users/user engagement
- Decide upon modalities of communication, which may include:
  - Newsletters
  - Social media
  - Duke News
  - Philosophy news outlets should be contacted manually

  - Other Duke Intuitions:
    - Duke Libraries
    - Duke Graduate School
    - Duke Magazine
  - PV website itself
- Structure a sustained, moderate roll-out plan of communication, using Best Practices described above. At this point, frequency of communication is likely to be higher than other times.
- Consider structuring communication to "Preview-Launch-Review"
  - At the beginning of the O&A campaign, prior to content launch, begin to preview content, including "sneak peaks" of the new content. (For instance, post 1-2 weeks out, then a few days out, then the day before.)
  - Launch, with some fanfare, the new content. Consider using graphics (Canva)
  - After Launch, review the content, making sure to review and highlight any external press attention garnered. (1-2 weeks, as necessary.)

<u>End of Campaign:</u>

- At the end of the campaign, the O&A team should assess the effectivity of their campaign, comparing baseline analytics to post-campaign analytics. If a survey was implemented, results should be gathered and analyzed.
- The Assessment Analyst should lead the analysis of the campaign, and, in consultation with the Coordinator and Social Media Manager, report the findings, to include recommendations for future Outreach Campaigns.
- Frequency and intensity of communication is likely to decline significantly at this point. The O&A team, however, should follow up on any reverberation from the campaign, as external agents may learn of new content some weeks or even months after the initial campaign.

<u>End of Semester or Academic Year:</u>

- At the end of the year, the O&A team should assess the effectively of their outreach, comparing beginning baseline analytics to year-end analytics.
- Review of goals

<u>Routine Maintenance:</u>

- Checking Google Alerts to see if/when/how the Project is mentioned
- Checking Google Alerts to see if relevant content to be shared/retweeted
- Updating social media on regular basis
- Checking social media engagement (especially if users have questions and reach out on social media, as encouraged on Facebook)
- Checking if the “team” page reflects the current roster
- Checking if the credits page reflects the up-to-date workload of the team members and contributions
- Routine technical maintenance

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