

Chapter 13

Communicating Archaeology in a Social World: Social Media, Blogs, Websites, and Best Practices

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ABSTRACT

The chapter analyzes, through case history, the evolution of online communication in the cultural sector, which has been increasingly developing in recent years. The numerous online platforms available allow a potentially enormous diffusion of cultural contents and allow reaching a very wide audience. Even the archaeological sector has adapted to the new media, but creating a good strategy is often not a simple thing. The blogging platforms, associated with a good use of social media, allow you to practice the right communication of archaeological sites, museums, and places of culture, improving the knowledge and participation of the public, and above all countering the diffusion of fake news.

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INTRODUCTION

According to the most recent data revealed by the international communication agency We Are Social and the Canadian company Hootsuite's latest collection of Global Digital 2019 reports¹, internet users are growing by 8.6 per cent over the 2018, with 350 million new users contributing to an overall total of 4.437 billion by the start of April 2019. Social media user numbers have also registered solid growth, reaching almost 3.5 billion of people in the same period.

The evolution of the use of the Internet in Italy follows the same type of growth: in the first quarter of 2019, almost 55 million Italians have access to the Internet (over 9 out of 10) and 35 million are social platform users (31 million people active on these platforms from mobile devices)².

Particularly in Italy, the increasing achievement of the daily use of advanced social media apps, together with the ever-developing ease-of-use of content management systems (CMS), has facilitated the increase, in a relatively short span of time, of a multitude of new digital cultural communication projects mainly handled by professionals and passionates about archaeology.

These projects are generally dedicated to the dissemination of archaeological information, popularization of discoveries (recently made or dating back in time), historical insights, and have over time generated solid target communities. The chapter aims to analyze some peculiar Italian experiences of communication of archaeological and monumental heritage using social platforms, trying therefore to define the set of good practices that determine the validity of a communication experience of this type, outlining the strengths that characterize curating successful websites and social media accounts.

(A.D'E.)

COMMUNICATION ON AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION IN PROGRESS: AQUINUM SITE

About 120 km south of Rome, in the middle of the Liri valley, stood the ancient city of Aquinum, which was a municipium in Cicero's time and a colony in Marco Antonio's and Lepido's time (1st Century BC).

Nowadays the site has been of historical interest since the beginning of the twentieth century. The area in which stood the city, covering most of the municipal territory of Castrocielo, is characterized by a low level of urbanization and an agricultural tradition. On the one hand this has allowed that conspicuous monumental remains pertaining the urban area were preserved (the theater, amphitheater – literally cut in two halves due to the construction of the A14 motorway -, the *capitolium*, the apsidal building, the square tower, the “Porta Romana”), but on the other hand it has encouraged a continued removal of remains, artifacts, architectural fragments belonging to the ancient Roman city. Some artifacts are exposed in the Archaeological Museum of Aquino, while most of the fragments have been incorporated in historical buildings and modern constructions.

During the years, such a strong presence of archaeological remains has involved several historians and archaeologists. Among them, Giuseppe Ceraudo, archaeologist and professor at the University of Salento, enables the launch of the “Ager Aquinas Project” in 1998, a cooperation between Salento's Atheneum and Lazio's Authority for the Archaeological Heritage with the support of the municipalities of Aquino and Castrocielo (FR), in order to examine the area by means of systematic surface investigations (topographical and geophysical) to increase in depth the knowledge of the site.

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