HootSuite
www.hootsuite.com
Reviewed by Ashley Taylor, University of Pittsburgh

HootSuite is a social media management tool that synchronizes and manages multiple social media accounts from one centralized location. In the archival world, such a tool is useful for brand management, collaborative projects within organizations, and managing limited resources in a "one-stop-shop" type of environment. HootSuite allows users to import information from seven main partners, including Twitter and Facebook, and the ability to choose from dozens of applications for tools such as Tumblr and Youtube.[1] Users can customize the information they see from each social media tool, as well as schedule posts to automatically upload to whichever outlet they want, including across platforms. It also provides analytics, the ability to organize teams or collaborate with others within an organization, and a huge level of support, both for HootSuite itself and for those looking to learn more about social media outreach in general.

The main focus of HootSuite is the dashboard, which is accessible via desktop, laptop, and apps available for iPhone, iPad, and Android. Users can set up tabs, or pages, as they wish, perhaps organized by social media site or outreach type. Within each tab, the user creates streams of information relevant to his or her needs. For example, a user can set up a Facebook tab with one stream that shows wall posts, another stream for any mentions their page has gotten, and another for private inbox messages. The Publisher feature allows users to write posts and schedule them to be uploaded to whichever outlets he or she chooses. This allows the user to post to multiple sites without having to visit each separate account; it also allows posts to be written and scheduled in advance, which is helpful for archivists who only have limited time to dedicate to social media in addition to other job duties. Users can also access Analytics through the dashboard, including insights about reach through each outlet and statistics on links clicked.

HootSuite's usefulness for archivists comes from its customizability, its extensive support system, and its concentration of multiple outreach efforts in one application. Scalability is one of its greatest strengths; there are multiple levels of accounts that allow archivists to determine just how much they want to utilize HootSuite's extensive list of services. A free account allows the member to manage up to 5 separate social media accounts, run basic analytics reports, and access hundreds of free articles and social media tips. A Pro account, starting at $8.99 a

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[1] "App Directory: A Social Content Platform in the HootSuite Directory," accessed January 10, 2014, https://hootsuite.com/app-directory

month, allows users to manage up to 50 accounts, run more detailed analytics, begin to add team members, and start working on collaborative projects. A third tier Enterprise account allows unlimited accounts, reports, and team members, but is heavily geared towards large corporations and governments.[2]

The application of HootSuite, then, can be tailored across the wide range of archival job positions. For the lone arranger or an archivist in a department who has sole control over social media outreach, the basic level would be perfectly acceptable. On the other hand, an archivist who has limited time to manage a large number of accounts, or who represents their archives on a social media team at a historical society with many different departments trying to coordinate their outreach efforts, a Pro account could provide a convenient way to manage people and time. HootSuite also offers a discount of 20% for nonprofit institutions; however, the discount has to be applied for, and the company "differentiate[s] between non-profit organizations (NPOs) with significant marketing/communications budgets and grassroots groups with limited funds" when granting the discounts.[3]

One of HootSuite's largest drawbacks is the fact that the best functionality comes at a price. The free account would be ideal for a single user, but it does not allow the user to add team members to facilitate collaboration, or establish an approval workflow from senior staff members. Similarly, the free account only provides access to basic analytics reports that are easily generated elsewhere. In the case of Facebook, for example, HootSuite simply generates the same "Insights" that a user can get from managing a Facebook page directly. While the cost for upgrading to a Pro account starts low, it rises with the addition of extra team members and the increase of reports generated. Users should approach HootSuite knowing their budgetary constraints and ready to decide what functionality matters most to them.

HootSuite markets itself as a solution for all types of organizations and all levels of social media programs. As part of a section of case studies, the HootSuite team highlights success stories of the site being used, everywhere from local government emergency response teams to the New York Public Library.[4] In the case of the NYPL, HootSuite was helpful in coordinating social media efforts across branch libraries, reporting an over 350% increase in traffic being directed to the library's website from Twitter from the previous year.[5] This example gives an idea of the usefulness

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[2] "Schedule. Manage. Measure: Get the #1 Social Relationship Platform," accessed January 10, 2014, https://hootsuite.com/plans
[3] "Does HootSuite offer discounts for non-profit organizations?" accessed January 10, 2014, https://help.hootsuite.com/entries/22309478-Does-HootSuite-offer-discounts-for-non-profit-organizations-
[4] "HootSource: Case Studies," accessed January 10, 2014, http://blog.hootsuite.com/category/resources/case-study-resources/
[5] "HootSuite Case Study: New York Public Library," accessed January 10, 2014, http://www.slideshare.net/hootsuite/hootsuite-in-the-library?ref=http://blog.hootsuite.com/nypl-case/

of the tool, and the ways in which it can be used to achieve results. Given the limited time and resources many archivists have to dedicate to social media, but also recognizing the importance of a digital presence, HootSuite allows users to streamline and customize their experience to their needs, while providing support, tips, and a pleasant user experience.