

**MODULE 23**

ESTABLISHING  
ARCHIVAL  
CONNECTIONS  
THROUGH ONLINE  
ENGAGEMENT

DINA KELLAMS AND JENNIE THOMAS



**SOCIETY OF  
American  
Archivists**

---

- **Use props.** While artifacts and images from archival collections are the focus, white gloves used when handling certain materials and an “Archivist”-embroidered baseball cap have become signals that something special is about to happen.
- **Remember that if you mess up, you can delete and refile the take.** Sometimes, the archivist’s tongue can get tied trying to communicate interesting yet accurate information in only ten seconds. These slipups become less frequent with more practice!
- **Have fun!** First and foremost, engaging with the archives is supposed to be fun, so use stickers, drawings, and other content to help make that connection for viewers. For a Story on dance cards, the archivist danced her way off the screen in the final clip.

The archives plans to continue with the weekly feature. Because Theta has roughly 5,000 new members each year, several of the topics already covered can be repeated with fresh material from the collection and tie-ins to new fraternity programs. Instagram Stories can be downloaded and saved, and sometimes that content can even be republished on networks like YouTube to give it additional longevity. A regular social media presence has proven to help young members connect to the fraternity’s social media channel and establish a stronger connection with the fraternity’s history and archives. The possibilities for future content are truly endless!

### **Seeing Glass in a New Light on Wikipedia**

---

*By Rebecca Hopman, Outreach Librarian, The Corning Museum of Glass*

#### **Background**

The Corning Museum of Glass’s mission is to “inspire people to see glass in a new light.” Located in the Finger Lakes region of upstate New York, the Museum has an annual visitation of nearly half a million guests, and many more use the website and follow us on social media. The Rakow Research Library, a branch of the Museum, offers services and programming that highlight our unique collections.

Our institution reaches many people worldwide, but there are many more who will never encounter us. When these people have a question about glass, they probably search for an answer online, and

while they may come across one of our articles or Q&A sets, they are more likely to encounter the largest general reference resource on the web: Wikipedia. With more than 40 million articles in over 300 languages, Wikipedia receives millions of page views per day. The site has a reach with which no cultural institution can compete.

For close to a decade, galleries, libraries, archives, and museums (GLAM), along with other cultural heritage institutions, have collaborated with experienced Wikipedia editors to share their resources with the site's immense audience through the GLAM-Wiki Initiative. These collaborations have led to a richer encyclopedia and greater use of cultural institutions' collections.<sup>41</sup>

At the Rakow Library, we have increased our impact and the awareness of our collections through several Wikipedia projects and programs. These efforts tie into our institutional mission; into Library and Museum goals; and into our organization's diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives.

## Goals

The major goals for our Wikipedia inreach and outreach are to:

- Improve Wikipedia's coverage of glass.
- Increase the use and awareness of Museum and Library collections.
- Improve staff understanding of Wikipedia's purpose and best practices.

## Progress

Since 2014, staff at the Rakow Library have trained dozens of Museum staff members and more than one hundred event attendees to create and edit Wikipedia articles, most for the first time. We have held edit-a-thons for local cultural professionals, teens, and others interested in learning about Wikipedia and glass. Most recently, we hosted two Art+Feminism edit-a-thons aimed at improving coverage of women and nonbinary people who work with glass. We hold monthly editing sessions for staff and have increased internal knowledge of Wikipedia best practices regarding the site's conflict of interest guidelines.

---

<sup>41</sup> For links to resources for GLAM-Wiki initiatives, information on how to contribute your expertise, tips for adding images to GLAM articles, model projects and case studies, advice for evaluating projects, and more, see "Wikipedia:GLAM," *Wikipedia*, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:GLAM>.

During these trainings and events, we have created new articles about glass topics, edited existing articles, uploaded images from our collections to Wikimedia Commons, and added references back to our website and collections where appropriate. These references include links to finding aids and digitized Library materials, Museum object records, and articles on our website.

Our efforts have been recognized by Museum leadership, and their support has allowed us to continue the initiative and explore new ways of engaging with Wikipedia and its sister projects.

### **Challenges**

The two main challenges we have faced during this process have been working with staff to move beyond annual or biannual Wikipedia contributions and determining how best to invest our time and resources in Wikipedia initiatives.

We are fortunate that a wide cross section of staff members has participated in our Wikipedia programs. Whether they provide us with suggestions for new articles, help with events, or edit articles, staff members across the Museum have supported our efforts. The challenge we face is that most staff members do not see contributing to Wikipedia as something they can or should incorporate into their regular duties. This is understandable, given the many demands on staff time, and it can be difficult to justify adding one more task to the pile. But if efforts were made, for example, to improve articles related to special exhibition topics, or to add references to new resources as they are published, we could have a greater impact on Wikipedia.

The second challenge is perhaps more pressing. Those of us who lead the Museum's Wikipedia projects and programming have struggled to determine what efforts will be most fruitful. Like other cultural heritage professionals, we each wear many hats and need to maximize our impact with the projects we undertake. Do we try to increase staff engagement with Wikipedia? Focus on holding local events? Initiate collaborations with other interested glass organizations? Reach out to the Wikipedia community to share our collections data and online resources? We are having ongoing conversations about the benefits of each of these options and will hopefully find a solution that incorporates the activities that best help us achieve our goals.

## **Moving Forward**

Library staff are committed to continuing our internal and external editing events and to building a dedicated and knowledgeable group of Wikipedia editors on the Museum staff. We also hope to explore community partnerships to strengthen our group of core editors and increase our impact during events like the Art+Feminism edit-a-thons, while extending educational and cultural opportunities outside of our walls. In collaboration with a member of the Museum's digital team, we plan to leverage collections data to improve glass topics on Wikipedia on a larger scale and investigate how we can contribute to Wikimedia Commons. Overall, we are pleased with the results so far and look forward to continuing our efforts.

## **Testing Facebook Live at the University of Iowa Special Collections**

*By Colleen Theisen, Chief Curator of Exhibitions, Programs, and Education, Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University Libraries (previously Outreach and Engagement Librarian, University of Iowa)*

### **History with Livestreaming**

The University of Iowa Special Collections hosted their first livestream in 2014, a two-hour, Shakespeare-themed Q&A session with a Shakespeare scholar from the University of Iowa and a librarian from Special Collections. The pair solicited questions about Shakespeare on Twitter and via the livestream and then spent the two hours answering those questions and showing Shakespeare-related items from Special Collections. At the time, YouTube was the available choice for livestreaming, accessed via Google Hangouts On Air. During the session, 122 people tuned in for an average of twenty-nine minutes each. (For a recording of the session, see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zVceEwlIFJs>.)

### **Why Facebook Live?**

Before streaming on YouTube, a live event has to be created and advertised widely on all of our social media sites to draw an audience to the YouTube link. Though the University of Iowa Special Collections has over 500 subscribers, use of YouTube as a social media site, and the ability to message users there, is limited. Instead of trying to drive