Introduction

This document has been created to review the Department of Archaeology’s current use of social media and to suggest how the Department might utilise websites such as Facebook and Twitter in the future. The intended outcome of this review will be to promote the use of Facebook in an official Departmental capacity. This should be supported with the possibility of creating a permanent position within the Department for a social media representative, as well as setting up a Twitter account and extending policy to encompass all social media used by the Department in an official capacity. This will allow the Department to deploy a medium which is increasingly being used by businesses and organisations to reach a larger demographic, as well as reconnecting with staff and students who may have lost contact with the Department. Using social media will enable the Department to communicate activities, achievements and events of the department to a wider audience, through a medium which is easy to use and manage. It may also provide an interesting opportunity for the Department to reach new audiences. Using Facebook to communicate research and research activities may help to break down some of the barriers between academic researchers and public users interested in archaeology, and provides the department with a fascinating opportunity.

This document does not intend to discuss the theoretical implications of the relationship of social media and academic research, but does acknowledge that these are issues which should not be ignored. It is suggested that as this project develops, those members of the Department who are actively involved in developing the Department’s social media should be open to peer review in taking this project further. This document will therefore focus on outlining some of the potential uses and associated problems which may be encountered during this process.
Glossary

A glossary has been provided for readers who have some familiarity with social media, but who may need to use the glossary as a reference tool.

Facebook terminology

**Event**: Event pages are set up by individual members to provide details such as times, locations and information about upcoming events. These can be posted on Pages and will then appear in the notifications for these pages. Invites can also be sent to individuals or lists of individuals from the event page.

**Friend**: A friend is someone who has access to your page. In the case of an individual this is your personal profile page. For organisations, once your page has been liked, that individual is effectively a friend. Friend’s will receive any of your activity on Facebook within their News Feed (unless they choose to Hide posts from you).

**Group**: Many group pages are currently being archived by Facebook, as pages are now replacing the role that groups used to provide. Groups were set up by groups of individuals who might wish to keep in contact for example, to share information about a specific project or as a group of alumni. These could be made public, or private by invite by the administrator/creator of the group only.

**Lists**: Lists can be created by individuals to organise the contacts they have. This allows group messages to be sent more efficiently and effectively are used the same way as an email list.

**Message**: Facebook messages provide individual users and organisations a means by which to communicate privately. These arrive, and can be sent from, your Facebook inbox, just like emails. These provide an additional way of communicating to writing on the walls of specific pages or individual profile pages.

**News Feed**: This is the page which first appears when you log into Facebook. As long as an individual is logged in, this feed will continually update with activity from friend’s pages. Individual users can choose to Hide posts, or delete individual posts from this page.

**Page**: A page is usually created by a business, organisation or group and has come to replace the Group pages which existed before changes were made to Facebook in 2011. These pages can be Liked by members of Facebook. In Liking a page, members will then receive notifications of any updates to the group. These are public pages which can be accessed by any members of Facebook and will appear on search results.

**Profile**: An individual’s page is called a profile. This will display an individual’s wall, info, photos and notes, to tell you more about the individual. Privacy settings can mean that very little is displayed, except to chosen friends.

**Wall**: A Facebook wall is the space on a page (either belonging to an organisation or an individual profile page) where messages can be written, and links, pictures and videos can be posted. These are public for all friends of this page to see.
Current departmental use of Facebook

Recently, the department has set up a Facebook page which is currently liked by 202 individuals on Facebook [http://www.facebook.com/pages/University-of-York-Department-of-Archaeology/175332779165059](http://www.facebook.com/pages/University-of-York-Department-of-Archaeology/175332779165059). As yet, there is no real activity on this page, but initial information has been completed. This is the page which the department will use for future development. The University of York, Department of Archaeology also currently has a Facebook group which was set up by Lisa-Marie Shillito on December 16th, 2010 [http://www.facebook.com/groups/119620658104667/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/119620658104667/). This was set up before pages became widely used (with pages now beginning to replace groups) on Facebook. This group page currently has 13 members and is set as a secret group, and so may only be accessed by invited members. This group was set up to receive some initial feedback from postgraduate students, to gauge how the department might wish to use Facebook. This group page has not been used since 29th March 2011 and focus should be transferred to developing the University of York, Department of Archaeology page.

As well as these official pages there are also a number of other group pages which exist which have links to the Department of Archaeology at York. Most significantly perhaps is the Arch Soc group page which currently has 247 members [http://www.facebook.com/groups/2204196597/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/2204196597/). This group page is an open group which can be accessed by any individual on Facebook. Members of the Facebook group are not necessarily members of Arch Soc, but can join this group to keep updated with its activities. The group is updated on an almost daily basis and is used by the Arch Soc committee to provide group members with a range of information including details of upcoming social events, events within the department, fieldwork opportunities and links to pages which may be of general interest to students of archaeology at York. It has also become a social forum where members can post pictures of Arch Soc events, and discuss events or articles they have attended or seen. The group is administered by nine Arch Soc committee members to ensure all content is monitored.

Other more general groups which have association with the department include:

- York Archaeology UGrad’s Forum [http://www.facebook.com/groups/140859229299370/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/140859229299370/) an open group which has 107 members. This group is predominantly used by current undergraduate students to arrange extra study sessions, by course reps to discuss issues about the department, and to promote events within the department.
- Harewood House and Gawthorpe Excavation Interest Group [http://www.facebook.com/groups/224703220891507/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/224703220891507/) was started as an open group during the first year training school in 2011 and has 36 members. This group is regularly updated to keep members up to date with continuing research at Gawthorpe. It is also hoped that this group will become more widely used by staff and volunteers at Harewood, as well as by students, in the coming months.
- The Post Hole [http://www.facebook.com/groups/224703220891507/#!groups/35023486885/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/224703220891507/#!groups/35023486885/) has 257 members and is an open group created and managed by the editorial team of The Post Hole, the department’s student run journal.
The wide range of groups and pages already available on Facebook demonstrates how easy it is to set up such pages. However, the relative success of these pages is highly dependent on how they are managed and administered. Keeping pages up to date with relevant information and monitoring the information displayed on these pages is a job which needs constant attention.

**Audiences**

Listed below is a summary of the groups which could potentially be reached through the *University of York, Department of Archaeology* page on Facebook.

**Current Students, Staff and Academic Colleagues**

Staff and students within the department already receive emails with weekly updates and newsletters regarding activity in the department. A Facebook page would encourage more communication between these groups, and allow current members of the department to demonstrate the success of archaeology at York to colleagues across departments and universities. It would also allow members of the department to share pictures and news of events, with colleagues of projects which they are involved with, in a public forum, encouraging collaboration and peer review within a relaxed online environment.

**Past Students and Alumni**

Many recently graduated students stay within York after graduating from the Department of Archaeology. A Facebook page could provide a link to the department which may help these students to continue to stay involved with archaeology while they are looking for full time employment. By advertising current events and opportunities connected to the department, past students will still feel connected to current developments and may continue to keep in touch with staff and students. Many old groups exist on Facebook, created by alumni for these purposes. These are just some examples of such groups; *Archaeology Alumni* [http://www.facebook.com/groups/224703220891507/#!/group.php?gid=2204207052], *York Archaeology Alumni* [http://www.facebook.com/groups/119620658104667/#!/group.php?gid=8666787817], *York Archaeologists Alumni 2008* [http://www.facebook.com/groups/2204196597/#!/group.php?gid=25680199571]. Messages can be sent to these members to encourage them to like the new Departmental page to keep updated with current activity at York.

**Prospective students**

Creating a vibrant online presence through Facebook would allow a place for prospective students to learn more about the Department. This would provide a slightly less formal introduction to some of the events, activities and people that make King’s Manor such a unique place to study archaeology. An example of how successful such pages can be, is demonstrated by a page called the University of York Archaeology Freshers 2011/2012 [http://www.facebook.com/groups/119620658104667/#!/groups/175618585844987/]. This page was liked by 3,424 fresher students this year. It was set up in August 2011 by the Arch Soc committee to allow incoming undergraduates to get to know each other, the Department, and provide a public forum in which
they could ask questions about the Department. Such pages can be useful in creating a friendly face to the department. Prospective students might be more likely to ask a question which may influence their application process over a public forum such as Facebook, rather than by phoning or emailing the Department. Questions asked on a Facebook page in this way may then receive answers from current undergraduates, Arch Soc committee members, postgraduate students or even staff. Having this kind of feedback may also provide information which could help the Department improve the application process for incoming students.

**Non Academic Users**

The Department of Archaeology at York is currently engaged in a number of public projects and partnerships with external, non-academic partners. Many of these interest groups and organisations have members who have a general interest in archaeology and the study of the past. Encouraging these groups to like the Department’s Facebook page would allow them to find out more about other projects that the Department is involved with. Providing a relaxed forum where community members and interested partners could ask questions about research at York could help to the Department aim some of its outreach commitments. It would also allow members of the public to find out about public events which the Department is involved with, which they might previously have felt were more exclusively for university users. A Facebook page would encourage a two-way dialogue with audiences which might otherwise be more difficult to reach.
How are other University Departments using Facebook?

The University of Sheffield

The Department of Archaeology at The University of Sheffield does not currently have an official departmental Facebook page linked from the Department’s website. However, at the bottom of the Department’s homepage, there is a small link to a general page for the university on Facebook (Fig. 1.).

Fig.1. The University of Sheffield, Department of Archaeology homepage with Facebook link outlined within red box.

The Facebook page linked from the Archaeology Department’s website is a general page which is concerned more with the promotion of the University of Sheffield as a whole [http://www.facebook.com/theuniversityofsheffield](http://www.facebook.com/theuniversityofsheffield). It does not contain information for current or prospective students about the Department of Archaeology, but instead promotes events and activities of the University as a whole (Fig.2.).

Fig.2. The University of Sheffield facebook page
Social media and the Department of Archaeology

Emily Rayner

With 13,598 likes, this page is extremely popular and demonstrates how successful a page can be at communicating events such as open days, current research and events. The main outcome of this document should be to create a page which can harness the successful elements of a page like this, but for the sole use of the Department of Archaeology, rather than the university as a whole. The Archaeology Department at Sheffield does not have any other Facebook pages directly linked to the department except for the Archaeology Society page, which is very similar to York’s Arch Soc page.

Durham University

Durham University has a Facebook page for Archaeology Freshers and Undergraduates

http://www.facebook.com/pages/Durham-University-Archaeology-Freshers-Undergraduates/221379817907111 linked from their undergraduate webpage, and similarly a Postgraduate Facebook page linked from their postgraduate webpage. These pages are listed under ‘Related Links’ and are not immediately obvious to first time visitors to these webpages (Fig.3.).

Fig.3. Durham University Archaeology Undergraduate webpage, with Facebook link highlighted by red box
The Facebook page linked from the undergraduate webpage lists seminars which the students might be interested in attending but does not have any input from students on the page at all. The photos uploaded on the undergraduate Facebook page are all publicity shots. There is no sense of this page being a public forum for the department to encourage discussion, debate and communication within the Department, it is instead being used as a tool to communicate upcoming events to its members. This page has 79 likes and the postgraduate page has 187 likes.

**University of Exeter**

The University of Exeter, like the University of Sheffield links archaeology students directly to the university’s Facebook page which has 13,037 likes (Fig.4.).

Fig.4. The University of Exeter Archaeology Undergraduate webpage, with link to Facebook highlighted by red box

However, Exeter’s Archaeology Department do have a Facebook page which was set up in October this year and is currently liked by 17 people [http://www.facebook.com/pages/Archaeology-University-of-Exeter/288866724459421](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Archaeology-University-of-Exeter/288866724459421). This page reflects an active Department, with photos of research, events advertised and links to related websites. As yet though, this page does not have much student or public input and all the posts are exclusively by the Department itself.
Suggested future action
This document has highlighted the vast, and dynamic, nature of Facebook. Keeping a Facebook page up to date, moderated and active, presents a real challenge for those administering these pages to achieve this delicate balance. It is for this reason that it is suggested that at least one member of the Department should be made an official Facebook Representative. The departmental page will have to be monitored at least on a daily basis to ensure that all content is appropriate and reflects the Department in an appropriate manner.

The role of the Facebook Representative should initially concentrate on attracting members to like the departmental page.

- This will require sending messages from existing Facebook groups to inform them of the new page.
- A short piece should also be included in the departmental newsletter informing current students of the new page.
- The departmental website (http://www.york.ac.uk/archaeology/) should also make it clear to prospective students that there is a Facebook page. This can be done very simply by adding a button on the departmental page, above or below the news feed to take students directly to the page.

  Buttons like this, are easily accessible on the internet for organisations and individuals to promote their Facebook pages. These are instantly recognisable and should be prominently placed to attract visitors to the departmental website to like the Facebook page.

- The Facebook representative will be responsible for making all staff and students aware of the departmental Facebook page and should encourage any members with external partners and colleagues to also like this page to encourage wider use.

Once these initial steps have been taken, the Facebook representative should start updating the page with upcoming events, photos of some of the departments recent achievements and most significantly to encourage others to upload information onto the page. Postgraduate students particularly, should be encouraged to put photos and information about their work, and to encourage any students they are teaching to start being involved with posts on the page, whilst also reminding them of the public nature of this page.

Under the Facebook Group system, RSS feeds could be incorporated into a group’s note pages. However, under the newer page system this is currently not possible. The Facebook representative should continue to investigate whether there is a way of allowing the RSS feeds detailing events and news of the Department to be automatically updated on the Facebook page. This will save the Facebook representative time, as they will not have to copy and paste information from the departmental website over to the Facebook page.

The Facebook representative should also explore the possibilities of using twitter, particularly in the form of a real time narrative of departmental events for example, once the Department is happy and confident with the output from the Facebook page.