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Curating the Agenda: A Review of the Tenement Museum's Twitter

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Abstract

Most museums have established strong online presences, due in part to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. To stay relevant in the social media sphere, museums must keep up with the speed at which the internet operates. One way of doing this is to follow the current trends and events that are already piquing the interest of those on the internet. However, is it the museum account that follows the current events, or are current events influenced by the museum's presence? By examining the Tenement Museum's Twitter account through the agenda-setting and agenda-melding theories, this paper seeks to answer the following research questions: who sets the agenda for discussion on museum social media sites? What subjects or issues are discussed on these sites? This paper is situated at the intersection of museology and communication theory.

After collecting and analyzing data from March 2020 to March 2022, it was found that the Museum was significantly more likely to post than users. In addition, the Museum was significantly more likely to generate responses, supporting the agenda-setting theory. In a world where "truth" is an ever-changing subjectivity, museums can fill the gap to set the agenda and bring their institutional perspective to current events. By setting the agenda for their community, a museum can influence the way that community talks about and perceives the world around them. When all is said and done, the employees at the Tenement Museum do more than curate the Museum's exhibitions, they curate the agenda.

Keywords: agenda-setting theory, agenda-melding theory, museology, Twitter

Curating the Agenda: A Review of the Tenement Museum's Twitter Account

Since their inception, the purpose of museums has always been to serve as a font of information to the public. According to Mancino (2015), historical practices of museums include “collection-centered practices (i.e., preservation and interpretation) and visitor-centered practices (i.e., education and engagement)” (p. 258). As society has changed, museums have had to keep up with the times and today, in 2022, museum visitors have myriad diverse objects and stories from which to learn. The field of museology is dedicated to studying these changes over time. While a gross simplification, even throughout all the changes, museums exist to do three of the same main activities they always have: collect and preserve objects, educate and entertain the public, and keep the public mentally and financially engaged enough to continue serving their communities in perpetuity.

As the world becomes more digital and interconnected, museums have integrated this new technology into every aspect of their operations. Exhibits have touch screens and interactive activities, archival materials have been meticulously catalogued in digital databases, and marketing efforts focus on emails and posts instead of physical mailings and brochures. Fifty years ago, a museum would primarily concentrate on serving the people who lived and worked in the same geographical area as the museum. Presently, anyone with an internet connection, access to a 3-D printer, and sufficient motivation could download and print a replica of Amelia Earhart's flight suit from the Smithsonian (Solly, n.d.). With technology breaking down the limits of the four walls of a museum, the idea of who the museum is meant to serve and who the community a museum supports have each expanded.

If a museum's community is larger than the location it occupies, the marketing and reach of the museum should be just as large. Museums, like people or commercial brands, can use

social media to interact with and engage people around the world. Now that most museums have established strong online presences, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, they can reach audiences around the world. Museums can disseminate information related to their area of expertise and current events as they unfold through their websites and social media.

To stay relevant in the social media sphere, museums must keep up with the speed at which the internet operates. One way of doing this is to follow the current trends and events that are already piquing the interest of those on the internet. Studies conducted over several decades have consistently shown that over 80% of the population finds museums to be trustworthy sources of information (Dichtl, 2021). Followers of museums on social media view museums as experts who present relevant and truthful information about current world events. Museums can offer a view of current events through their institutional lens, framing the present through the larger context of history and providing insight or reassurance when it seems as though unprecedented developments are never ending. Capturing audiences who are already interested in current events and providing valuable insight to the ongoing online discourse can keep people engaged with both the museum and their surroundings. Adding to the already present discourse in a meaningful way can help museums fulfill larger ideas of their missions: to entertain, educate, and engage the public. Promoting the museum online can increase brand awareness, develop its donor base, and help it expand.

This paper is driven by the following research questions: Who sets the agenda for discussion on museum social media sites? What subjects or issues are discussed on these sites? This paper contains a literature review followed by a content analysis of tweets posted by the Tenement Museum, analysis, and discussion. The literature review aims to understand current scholarship focused on agenda-setting and agenda-melding theories, media literacy, and current

trends in museums. This paper is situated at the intersection of museology and communication theory. It is divided thematically into four sections: Agenda-Setting and Agenda-Melding Theories; Trustworthiness, Neutrality, and Media Literacy; Twitter and Museums: The Current State of the Field; Gaps and Limitations in the Literature.

This study will benefit the museum field in several ways. Since I will be recording and analyzing a snapshot of current museum Twitter usage, it can serve as a catalog of these trends which can be referred to for future research. It will also fill a gap in the literature by applying the agenda-setting and agenda-melding theories to museology.

Literature Review

Agenda-Setting and Agenda-Melding Theories

Agenda-setting theory can be simplified into the media drawing attention to an issue, which makes it seem more important in the eyes of the public (Severin, 2001, p. 219). One real-life example of this phenomenon can be seen in the United States federal government's "war on drugs" campaign. The agenda, reducing drug use and criminalizing possession of drugs, was "declared" by the White House and the campaign was fueled by the mass media. After consistent messaging, the public believed that drug use was one of the biggest issues facing the country in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, even as actual levels of drug use and drug-related arrests steadily declined (Severin, 2001).

In contrast, the agenda-melding model postulates that different groups of individuals, small and large, set the agendas for the world, rather than the top-down approach of agenda setting. This model postulates that individuals join groups based on the agenda of the groups (Shaw et al., 1999). In this way, one could consider groups to *be* agendas (Shaw et al., 1999, p. 3). Instead of learning about the agenda of groups from the top down, individuals learn from

other group members and, in time, start to steer the agenda themselves (McWhorter, 2020, p. 146). An agenda is set when a group is formed, but the “ongoing process of agenda setting is agenda melding” (Shaw et al., 1999, p. 7). The agenda melding is the logical next step of the agenda-setting theory, making it work with today’s discursive style of interactive media.

Agenda-melding theory is a more circular concept than agenda-setting theory: there is no one person or media source that controls the agenda for groups, but rather the agendas are created in tandem with all participants. While mass media can play a role in the agenda-melding process, they are “only one of many significant media” that creates agendas (Shaw et al., 1999, p. 3).

Other actors that contribute to the agenda-melding model include the agendas of specific individuals, formalized groups such as a church congregation or a scout troop, institutions like governmental agencies, businesses or corporations, and, of course, museums. Groups can be as small as an immediate family or as large as a “nation,” but all groups have an agenda and all group members must know the agenda for the group to function (Shaw et al., 1999).

Agenda-setting theory grew out of research applying it to political campaigns (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). While traditionally agenda setting focused on political campaigns, leaving little room for other applications of the theory, Ragas and Roberts argue that “[c]ompeting candidates in a political campaign may be thought of not only as objects, *but as competing brands in the marketplace*” (Ragas & Roberts, 2009, p. 48). In this way, agenda-setting theory and the agenda-melding model can be applied to any brand in the marketplace, museums included. Based on Ragas and Roberts’ conception of candidates as brands and on Shaw et al.’s concept of groups being the agendas they push, the present study considers the Tenement Museum’s Twitter account to be the brand and the people who follow and interact with their tweets to be the group.

People are driven to join groups because of the social rewards that derive from group participation (Shaw et al., 1999). Shaw et al. argue that the most basic group, the family, provides the “most basic” needs identified by the well-known Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs: food, love, shelter, emotional support (Shaw et al., 1999). As one grows up, higher needs can be fulfilled through participation in other groups. While these needs are less tangible and straightforward than something like food and shelter, the benefits are nonetheless important to the health and wellbeing of individuals. As groups one participates in grow larger, a greater need for intermediary media to connect the individual to the group itself develops. This is why coverage of national politics is so important to the political groups’ agendas. As stated previously, all group members must know the agenda for the group to function (Shaw et al., 1999).

Trustworthiness, Neutrality, and Media Literacy

In 2016, Oxford Dictionary declared “post-truth” its International Word of the Year (Naturale, 2017). But fake news and media literacy had both been identified as problematic long before 2016: the Center for Media Literacy grew out of a graduate school publication dating to 1977 (*About CML | Center for Media Literacy*, n.d.). With developments since the 1970s like the proliferation of deepfakes, sites mimicking credible sources, and photoshopping abilities inside handheld devices, it is getting harder still to tell real news from fake or credible sources. According to a 2019 Stanford report, 96% of high school students had difficulty determining how the origin of a source could affect the quality of information presented (Breakstone et al., 2019).

Decades of studies have consistently shown that over 80% of the general population finds museums to be trustworthy sources of information (Dichtl, 2021). Since most museums have

online presences, which have been bolstered especially during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, they can reach audiences around the world. Museums can share information in a timely manner through their websites and social media platforms related to their area of expertise, mission statement, and current events. Followers of museums on social media can look to them as opinion leaders for relevant and truthful information about current world events.

But what constitutes “truth” today? As new information comes to light and cultural norms shift, the historical truth is ever-changing. Foner said it well in his 2002 book, “[t]here are commonly accepted professional standards that enable us to distinguish good history from falsehoods like the denial of the Holocaust. Historical truth does exist, not in the scientific sense but as a reasonable approximation of the past” (p. xvii). Historians, and museums by extension, have a responsibility to reinterpret the past using the latest scholarship and standards. For example, today’s historical truth includes stories of Black communities and working-class people and stories of women and non-white immigrants, just to name a few. Foner (a white male himself) says that when studying at Columbia in the 1960s, he learned exclusively from white male professors, something that would be “virtually impossible” in the year 2002, even more so 20 years later (p. x). As the people examining history become more reflective of the society we live in, so too does the scholarship and historical truths they produce.

It should also be noted that the historical truth chosen by museums is not a neutral topic. Every choice that goes into one historical truth is just that, a choice. The way the past is interpreted today is different from the way past generations interpreted the same events, due to a variety of factors: who is in the room, the current political climate, and shifting cultural norms. Even what gets placed in the museum and what gets donated or thrown away is a choice with consequences. It used to be thought that curators and museum staff should do their best to be

neutral and present “the facts” without bias. However, recent scholars have pushed back against this. Suay Aksoy, president of the International Council of Museums, focused her keynote speech at the 2019 International Committee for Museums and Collections of Modern Art conference on the argument that “museums are not neutral” (*“Museums Do Not Need to Be Neutral, They Need to Be Independent,”* n.d.).

To continue to be considered among the most trustworthy sources of information, museums must be transparent about the shifting narratives about the historical truth. As Aksoy said, “[c]hoosing not to address climate change is not neutrality. Choosing not to talk about colonization is not neutrality. Choosing not to advocate for equality is not neutrality. Those are choices, and we can make better ones” (*“Museums Do Not Need to Be Neutral, They Need to Be Independent,”* para. 5). This argument can be applied in this study: choosing not to address fake news and misinformation is not neutrality, but a choice, and it is the wrong choice.

One way that agenda-melding can be used to promote media literacy is through analyzing who is joining groups and agendas and seeing how media literate they are. McWhorter’s 2020 study surveyed a group of young adults aged 18 to 25 about their participation in groups and levels of media literacy. Her results indicated that “participation in the agenda-melding process is associated with increases in levels of news media literacy” (McWhorter, p. 154). People who actively seek out groups where they discuss current events in an interactive setting, like online, can “retain information more fully and for a greater length of time” (McWhorter, p. 154). While there are certainly limitations of this study, including small sample size and the way that responses were solicited, this is a promising indicator that promoting a two-way discussion of current events in a group, such as on a Twitter page, can also promote media literacy.

Twitter and Museums: The Current State of the Field

Twitter is a social media website, founded in 2006, that allows users to connect with friends, family, fans, and strangers by creating “tweets” which consist of text, images, or both (Twitter, Inc., n.d.). At the end of the 4th quarter of 2021, Twitter reported having approximately 214.7 million active users. Approximately 37.5 million of these users are active in the United States (Twitter, Inc., 2022). Twitter did not specify how many accounts are held for people as opposed to brands and companies. It is not known whether they have access to that kind of information.

Tweets are limited to 280 characters. They can be posted as individual messages, or the “reply” function can be utilized to create a “thread” of multiple tweets all about the same topic. Other users can use the reply function to add their thoughts on a specific tweet as well (Twitter, Inc., n.d.). Users may “like” or “retweet” tweets by other users that resonate with them. Likes and retweets are counted separately, a user can only like, only retweet, or both like and retweet a tweet that they enjoyed. When retweeting, a user can simply share the information or they can add their own thoughts about it to the original post, this is called “quote tweeting” (Twitter, Inc., n.d.).

The American Alliance of Museums has a list of resources for Alliance members on their website. One of these resources is a comprehensive list of ways that museums can use social media. This website lists ways to make museum social media pages more effective by choosing the right voice or tone, creating conversations, and using hashtags. However, the main conclusion is that museum social media usage should, above all, serve the mission statement of the museum (*How Museums Can Use Social Media?*, 2019). Mission statements vary between institutions, meaning that social media use will also vary between institutions. Therefore, it is difficult to make accurate generalizations about how museums should or should not use their

social media accounts. This literature review examines several ways museums are currently using communication strategies, if not social media, to fulfill their mission statements. If relevant, these techniques could be emulated to serve other museums' missions.

Tan and Raijmakers (2008) examined the shift from museums focusing on objects to visitors. By focusing on visitors, museums are starting to look "like a collection of places, some of them virtual, including a library, a place of worship and a club" (Tan et al., p. 107). This dates back to Stephen Weil's (1999) landmark text "From Being *about* Something to Being *for* Somebody" was published. Weil's American article and Tan et al.'s look at European museums both come to the same conclusion: museums today are considered, by the general public, as part of the entertainment industry and must attract visitors while facing competition from other parts of the industry (Tan et al.; Weil, 1999).

In 2012, Hausmann argued that social media sites, like Twitter, are one way that museums can leverage electronic word of mouth (eWOM). While traditional word of mouth (WOM) has a maximum reach of about 10 people, eWOM spreads "epidemically," allowing information to reach hundreds, if not thousands, of a user's friends, family, and followers (Hausmann, p. 33). Hausmann also points out that eWOM is not limited by geographical constraints in the same way that traditional WOM is limited. Positive WOM and eWOM can reduce uncertainty for potential visitors and may increase the amount of people interested and willing to visit a museum (Hausmann, 2012). In 2022, a museum "visit" may count as a look at the digital offerings of a museum, so just as eWOM can spread far beyond the traditional geographic boundaries of WOM, so too can visitors come from further away than traditionally conceptualized.

In 2014, Langa reviewed how museums used Twitter and came to several important conclusions. Museums mostly used Twitter to send out marketing information, as opposed to directly exchanging comments with the public. The way that a museum Twitter account interacted with its followers was somewhat dictated by the type of museum. Art museums expressed concerns about a loss of curatorial voice should they become too relaxed online, while science museums and planetariums have created crowd-sourced research from amateur scientists on topics like “identifying astrophysical material or long-term bird watching” (Langa, 2014, p. 486). Langa concluded that “Twitter does not help museums to engage with visitors,” but she does recognize that there were multiple limiting factors to the review (Langa, 2014, p. 492). The last important conclusion is that for museum accounts, “tweeting less frequently did not necessarily yield less engaging activity” (Langa, 2014, p. 493). Museum social media managers must post mindful and strategic content to maximize engagement and eWOM.

In 2018, Light et al. looked at the role of digital media inside the four walls of the museum. Interactive kiosks were installed in two locations of the Imperial War Museum, located in England. These kiosks had questions for visitors to answer about the museum and specific objects or exhibits, and they offered an opportunity to ask the museum a question (Light et al., 2018). From this study, the authors learned that visitors specifically wanted to see the comments of those with first-hand experience of the topic (primary sources), the comments of experts such as historians or archivists, and the views presented by the museum itself. Most people had little interest in reading the comments of fellow visitors that had no prior connection to the topic (Light et al.).

Kydros and Vrana analyzed the extensive network of European museums on Twitter in 2021. Looking at the top 25 museums to visit in Europe according to Trip Advisor, they

determined that there is “no real correlation between rank of the museum and its tweeting volume” (Kydros & Vrana, 2021, p. 577). Interestingly, most of the interaction on a museum’s tweet came from other official accounts, meaning that museum tweets “fail to engage plain people into discussions” (Kydros & Vrana, 2021, p. 581). This still resulted in a lively discussion between different museums but did fall short of swaying the conversation of the general public. One major limitation of this study was that the varying locales included created a language barrier: “Museum” is “museo” in Spanish, and some in languages like Greek or Russian, there is no way to translate the native characters into the English alphabet. This may have skewed the initial data collection. However, the authors suggest using their dataset for future research on the topic, since the data they collected is so widespread and diverse.

Gaps and Limitations in the Literature

There are several gaps in the literature. Through the research conducted for this study, I have not found any instances of agenda-setting and/or agenda-melding being applied to the museum field. It seems that, up to this point, there have been few (if any) studies applying communication theory to museum research. I believe that if museums were to apply communication theories to their outgoing messages, they would be more effective and successful at reaching the desired audiences. However, I do recognize that many museums operate on limited budgets and are thus unable to have staff dedicated solely to managing their digital presence. My hope for this project is to show that communication theories can assist museums in expanding their reach, whether their budget allows for a dedicated social media manager or not. At the very least, this paper will help to fill in the gap of applying agenda-setting or melding to the museum field.

This study seeks to add to the existing literature through a thorough examination of current practices of the Tenement Museum, a leading institution in the subjects of American history and the immigration experience. This will inform other museum professionals who may be seeking to create a Twitter account for their institution or other professionals who do not employ Twitter as effectively as possible. Finally, this paper will inform museum professionals about the concepts from the agenda-setting and agenda-melding theories and how they can apply to museums.

From the review of literature, two research questions were constructed. Research question 1 (RQ1): Who sets the agenda for discussion on museum social media sites? Tweets will be coded as either posted by the museum or by a participant. This will determine who sets the agenda for subjects and issues. Tweets will also be coded for the number of responses generated. This will be used to determine who generated the most responses and therefore set or melded the agenda.

Research question 2 (RQ2): What subjects or issues are discussed on these sites? Subjects will be coded into the following categories: immigration, education, health, race/ethnicity, poverty, political extremism, foreign affairs, LGBTQ+, election security, climate change, food, religion, feminism/household management, census, virtual tours and walking tours, and museum operations.

Methods

This study is a quantitative analysis. The Tenement Museum's tweets from March 1st, 2020 to March 1st, 2022 were content analyzed. Web Data Research Assistant, created by Leslie Carr, was used to download the tweets for analysis. The timeframe was chosen because during these two years the COVID-19 pandemic started, there was a presidential election, the explosion

of Black Lives Matter protests, the continuation of the #MeToo movement and the rise of the anti-abortion movement, the January 6th, 2022 uprising, an increase of natural disasters due to climate change, and many other events that had unfathomable effects on people across the country and across the world. Based on my personal interest in history, and the fact that the past is an ever-present influence on the present day, I decided to focus this project on history museums.

To choose the museum to analyze, I started with the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) website. I used their list of museums and filtered it by accredited museums that are in the United States (Accredited Museums, n.d.). To be accredited by AAM, museums must meet Core Standards through a self-study and peer-review process. AAM accreditation is renewed every 10 years (“Accreditation,” 2018). There are 1081 of these museums.

I downloaded the list and cross-referenced it with the Institute of Museum and Library Sciences (IMLS) Museum Data Files, a comprehensive list of United States museums sorted by discipline (Museum Data Files, 2018). The disciplines, as assigned by IMLS’s Museum Data Files, were as follows: art museums; arboretums, botanic gardens, nature centers; children’s museums; history museums; natural history and natural science museums; science and technology museums and planetariums; zoos, aquariums, and wildlife; uncategorized or general; historical societies or historic preservation (Museum Data Files, 2018). I chose to look at history museums only, excluding natural history and historical preservation from this study. However, future research could apply my method to a different category of museum.

After selecting only the AAM accredited museums from the IMLS list of history museums there were a total of 48 museums. Of these 48, nine did not have Twitter accounts, and five museums shared Twitter accounts with other museums in the area or with the local

municipality. They were excluded from the data set, leaving 34 museums. From these 34 museums, I chose the Tenement Museum to focus on.

The Tenement Museum was founded in 1988 when two women, Ruth Abram and Anita Jacobson, found traces of the working-class, immigrant families who lived in a tenement house at 97 Orchard Street in the Lower East Side of Manhattan between the 1860s and the 1930s. The building suffered from abandonment for 50 years, but it was slowly restored and renovated to house the museum today. Each room is stylized the way a specific family used to decorate it during their time there. Through guided tours, visitors can explore these recreated rooms and take a journey into the past to “explore identity, public policy, urban development, architecture, and other themes through the true stories of the ordinary families who lived in these iconic buildings and the people in the neighborhood” (“About Us,” n.d.). The basement of the tenement building houses the lobby and gift shop. Since its founding, the Tenement Museum has expanded to include 103 Orchard Street, walking tours, and classroom space.

I chose the Tenement Museum based on several factors. It has an active Twitter account that posts several times a week – frequently enough to capture current events without flooding the feed with excess tweets. Since the United States is a country with a long and significant history of immigration, and the news cycle during 2020-2022 heavily included immigration, anti-immigrant rhetoric, and xenophobia, the Tenement Museum would have ample opportunity to contribute to the discourse. I also liked that they focus on working-class, everyday people. This was a museum focused on average people and I thought it would be important to them to use this lens to weigh in on relevant current events.

I used my knowledge of the 2020, 2021, and 2022 news cycles, my second coder and Pew Research (Schaeffer, 2022) to come up with additional categories to create the coding sheet.

The topic categories that were in the coding sheet were: immigration, education, health, race and ethnicity, poverty, political extremism, foreign affairs, LGBTQ+, elections and election security, climate change, food, religion and religious holidays, feminism and household management, music, book talks, miscellaneous. Based on what my second coder and I found as “miscellaneous” after our first-time coding we then created an additional three categories that were unanticipated but necessary to code accurately and well: census, virtual tours and walking tours, and museum operations. We also coded who posted each tweet into one of four author categories: posts by the Museum, posts in response to the Museum, posts initiated by users, and posts in response to users. At the end of the coding process each tweet fell into one of the topic categories and one of the author categories.

Since the Tenement Museum is about immigrants and the immigrant experience, almost all of their tweets could have been categorized into the “immigration” topic category. However, I wanted to take the coding one step further to provide a more complete analysis of the tweets. Tweets were only coded as “immigration” if there were no other topics discussed in the tweet. For example, tweets about how an immigrant family celebrated its first Hannukah in the Tenement after they traveled to the United States would be categorized under “religion & religious holidays.” The “health” category included all COVID-19 information. Judaism and the Jewish-American experience were coded under “religion & religious holidays,” though I recognize that many of those tweets could have been under “race & ethnicity.” The “feminism and household management” category was created to capture all the ways in which women contributed to the society across the timeframe the museum interprets, from the 1860s to the 1980s, even though for much of that time women lacked many of the rights they have today.

The “book talk,” “virtual tours and walking tours,” and “museum operations” were to capture the myriad tweets that shared information about events and happenings at the museum itself. Due to the nature of book talks and tours, it was very difficult to glean information about these events without doing a deep dive into the content, and in the case of ephemeral events like walking tours, it was impossible. Thus, even though many of these could have been coded into other categories, my second coder and I just took the tweets at face value and coded them based on only what was explicitly stated in the tweet. The “museum operations” category includes information about board members, the gift shop, adjusted hours, fundraising asks, and changes in museum leadership. Naturally these types of tweets are important for sharing institutional happenings with a wider audience; however, they were not relevant to this project.

Any museum that I could have chosen for this project, the Tenement Museum included, is limited by the relevance of current events to their scope of expertise. For events such as the global COVID-19 pandemic, most institutions would post about limited hours, virtual options, and public health information like “wear a mask” or “wash your hands.” However, for smaller events, the museum would only add to the online conversation if it was relevant to them and their social media strategy. I would not expect the Tenement Museum to comment on political tensions between foreign governments. However, I would expect the Tenement Museum to be involved in the discourse if these political tensions resulted in increased immigration and/or refugees coming to the United States. For this reason, the coding sheet included several categories that might be relevant to the Tenement Museum.

Data Analysis

Between March 1st, 2020 and March 1st, 2022 the Tenement Museum recorded 650 posts or “tweets.” The Web Data Research Assistant Chrome extension was used to download these

650 tweets into an Excel document. Columns were created for each of the author and topic categories. Each tweet was coded into one of the author categories and one of the topic categories. My second coder and I coded 10% of the tweets, 65 each, together to test for intercoder reliability. Cohen's Kappa was used to determine reliability among the variables. Table 1 shows that for all but 3 categories kappa equaled or exceeded .633, which is considered substantial. The categories of immigration, religion, and education required retraining of the coders. Upon recoding, there was 100% agreement on all three issues. We then divided the tweets in half and coded all 650 tweets over the course of several weeks.

Once the 650 tweets were coded initially, we met again and recoded the tweets that fell into the miscellaneous category and created three additional categories. Kappa was found to be .946 for the census, .819 for virtual tours and walking tours, and .798 for museum operations.

Results

The sample size was 650 (N=650). Table 2 shows that 426 of the posts were by the museum, 138 were in response to the museum, 68 were initiated by users, and 18 were posted by the museum in response to users. Table 3 shows that 105 tweets were primarily about museum operation, 96 tweets were about race and ethnicity, 94 tweets promoted book talks, 57 tweets were solely about immigration, 55 tweets promoted virtual tours or walking tours, 52 tweets were about feminism or household management, 44 were about religion, 38 about food, 32 about health, 18 tweets were miscellaneous, 13 were about poverty, 12 were about education, 10 were about music, 7 were about elections or election security, 6 were about the census, 3 were about LGBTQ+ issues and individuals, and 1 tweet was about climate change. There were no tweets about political extremism or foreign affairs.

A chi square test was used to determine significance. Museums were significantly more likely to post than users ($X^2 = 144.4$, $df = 1$, $p = .001$), and significantly more likely to generate responses ($X^2 = 4.9$, $df = 1$, $p = .013$). The data show that the Tenement Museum tweeted the most out of all four author categories ($N = 426$) at 65.5%. This supports the agenda-setting theory over agenda-melding. The Tenement Museum was deciding what to tweet about and users responded based on the topics chosen by the Museum. A larger sample may show that the agenda was set by the museum industry, or by larger forces like the media or the government. However, just by looking at the tweets the Tenement Museum interacted with, the data shows that the museum was setting the agenda. This answers RQ1, who sets the agenda for discussion on museum social media sites?

The data show that the Tenement Museum does not primarily share information about topics concerning the Museum's day-to-day operations: museum operations, book talks, and virtual tours and walking tours account for 39% of all tweets. Over half of the subjects discussed, 59.8% of tweets (excluding miscellaneous), fall into one of the current event topic categories. The most discussed topic was race and ethnicity ($N=96$). During the time analyzed the Museum committed to a new anti-racist policy in response to the Black Lives Matter protests throughout the summer of 2020. Many of the tweets concerning race and ethnicity were about the anti-racist efforts of the Museum. This period also included tweets by the museum that were clearly trying to combat the influx of anti-Asian sentiment following the COVID-19 outbreak. This answers RQ2, what subjects or issues are discussed on these sites?

This study is limited by only looking at one museum's tweets. Due to only looking at one museum and the nature of the content analysis method, these results are not generalizable to larger populations or to museums of other disciplines. That being said, the categories I used to

code my data could be used as a starting point for future content analyses. Other limitations include the typical subjectiveness associated with content analysis, the inability to see tweets about the Tenement Museum that the Museum chose not to interact with (e.g., bad reviews), and the content the Tenement Museum chooses to interpret. Future research should focus on other museums, including museums interpreting subjects other than history.

Discussion

I was not able to easily find a social media policy for the Tenement Museum. I was also unable to find who their social media manager is. I purposely did not seek this information out by contacting the Museum to prevent any biases that may come from the Museum during the data collection and coding phases of this project. Most people who interact with the Tenement Museum's tweets are likely not digging for contact and policies, even if they become curious about it, and I wanted to be in a similar position as I completed the work. Choosing who runs the account, like everything else a museum does, is a choice, and that choice has consequences as to how the account interacts with other accounts and with the content they're promoting. In the spirit of transparency and trustworthiness I believe that contact information for the social media manager and their social media policy should be online and easily accessible.

In a digital, post-pandemic world, museums, like other brands, have had to turn to social media to promote their content to audiences across the world. In a world where "truth" is an ever-changing subjectivity, museums can fill the gap to set the agenda and bring their institutional perspective to current events. By setting the agenda for their community, a museum can influence the way that community talks about and perceives the world around them. People can look to the museum as an authoritative source of accurate information. The museum can increase the reach of their influence and their mission. As seen in this case study of the Tenement

Museum's tweets, the Museum posted significantly more than users did and posted more about current events than about day-to-day museum operations. When all is said and done, the employees at the Tenement Museum do more than curate the Museum's exhibitions, they curate the agenda.

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Tables

I. Table 1:

Category	K=	After re-coding K=
Health	1	1
LGBTQ+	1	1
Climate change	1	1
Book talk	1	1
Music	1	1
Food	0.88	0.88
Race/ethnicity	0.743	0.743
Feminism/household management	0.733	0.733
Post initiated by Museum	0.695	0.695
Post in response to Museum	0.689	0.689
Post in response to users	0.652	0.652
Poverty	0.652	0.652
Post initiated by users	0.633	0.633
Immigration	0.58	1
Religion	0.551	1
Education	0.212	1
Census		0.946
Virtual tours/walking tours		0.819
Museum operations		0.798
Elections/election security	Constant	Constant
Foreign affairs	Constant	Constant
Political extremism	Constant	Constant

II. Table 2:

Author category (N=650)	N	%
Post initiated by Museum	426	65.5
Post in response to Museum	138	21.2
Post initiated by users	68	10.5
Post in response to users	18	2.8

III. Table 3:

Topic category (N=650)	N	%
Museum operations	105	16
Race/ethnicity	96	14.8
Book talk	94	14.5
Immigration	57	8.8
Virtual tours/walking tours	55	8.5
Feminism/household management	52	8
Religion	44	6.8
Food	38	5.8
Health	33	5
Poverty	13	2
Education	12	1.8
Music	10	1.5
Miscellaneous	8	1.2
Elections/election security	7	1
Census	6	1
LGBTQ+	3	0.5
Climate change	1	0
Political extremism	0	0
Foreign affairs	0	0