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Art tweets: a content analysis of social media activity among six top art museums in the U.S.A.

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ART TWEETS: A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVITY
AMONG SIX TOP ART MUSEUMS IN THE U.S.A.

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ABSTRACT

This study presents a content analysis of Twitter posts tagged with one of six institutions to establish uses and gratifications with this medium and the art museum industry. Due to industry norms, copyright law, museums traditionally do not permit photography and therefore may limit the advancement of their mission through misuse of the social media. This study establishes a baseline by seeking to understand how museums and individual account holders engage on Twitter within the art museum space as well as begin to unearth whether museums are misusing this media outlet and limiting their potential to educate the public while providing access to objects and information entrusted with their institution.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

This study presents a content analysis of Twitter posts tagged with one of the six institutions to establish uses and gratifications associated with this medium and the art museum industry. In May 2013, *ARTnews* published a piece by Journalist Carolina Miranda titled, “Why Can’t We Take Pictures in Art Museums?” The article reported a conflict currently in discussion among art museum management across the United States as it pertains to personal photography within galleries. Historically photography in museum galleries has been off-limits due to light restrictions as shown in Figure 1. However with advancements in technology and the ubiquity of camera-equipped cell phones among visitors, Miranda reported that some major institutions have removed on premise photography restrictions in relation to that institution’s permanent collection galleries. All the while, these same museums continue to enforce “no photography” policies for specific works and exhibitions on loan from private lenders or other institutions citing copyright restrictions for digital images.

Figure 1. “No photography” sign posted at the entrance of a major museum.

Julie Ahrens, a lawyer who specializes in issues of copyright and fair use at the Center for Internet and Society at Stanford University, explained that a museum's biggest hurdle to wide-open photo policies is that a photograph of an artwork can be considered a "derivative work and a potential violation of the copyright holder" (Miranda, 2013). Assuming that the work in question is even under copyright and not within public domain, this statement by Ahrens further assumes that the photographer is seeking to profit from their image. However, as Miranda points out (but does not source), what if the majority of museum visitors simply want to take a picture for their social media outlet of choice, which has no direct profit measure? This confusing message comes at a time when, according to the vice president of public engagement at Los Angeles County Museum of Art, "the vast majority of visitors want to simply snap a pic for their Facebook album." The article also discusses how the message becomes further complicated when museums themselves continue to make images available through their institution's social media page as well as their web sites, but visitors cannot. Miranda reported that museums must respect their relationships with lenders against the technological and consumer shifts due to copyright restrictions established in lending contracts and related documents and that is why some galleries are off limits for photography while other spaces are open to photography.

Overall this article suggests a significant shift from industry norms. Miranda implies that museums do not permit photography by visitors and that six have moved to relaxed policies in relation to objects in their permanent collection, which raises some of the following questions: how will visitors respond to this access? Of what will they take photos? Will the photos taken by visitors infringe on copyright? Are museums using social media to their best advantage? This study presents a content analysis of Twitter posts tagged with one of the six institutions referenced in Caroline Miranda's article - The Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York); The J. Paul Getty Museum (Los Angeles); Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Indianapolis Museum of Art, The National Gallery of Art (Washington, D.C.); and The Art Institute of Chicago - to establish uses and gratifications associated with this medium and the art museum industry. Coders quantify "tweets" with and without images, as well as message content as it relates to copyright law and industry standards. Furthermore coders analyze those posts that include images to establish an inventory of user-generated photography associated with a museum.

Miranda's claim centered on her report that six institutions had lifted restrictions associated with visitor photography related to their permanent collection. This evolution appears to proactively allow museums to meet their mission through the efforts of visitors as they choose to take photos with their personal camera-enabled mobile device and post them to their social media outlet (Miranda, 2013). Even so, museums continue to grapple with the issue of permissions related to user-generated photography as referenced in later articles in two additional mainstream media outlets during the months following Miranda's article (Bernstein, 2013; Petrie, 2013). Museums cite copyright law and the permissions of lenders as the two major reasons to restrict user-generated photography within their galleries.

CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Brief Overview of Copyright Law

In Great Britain, the introduction of the printing press brought with it the potential for dissemination of ideas, as such the British government looked to control content (Buskirk, 1992). The Licensing Act of 1662 established that “stationers” or publishers had exclusive right to print books, which enabled the Crown to control what was printed. That law expired and yet continued to be upheld in the judicial systems until a time when foreign book imports decreased publisher profits. This competition spurred the Statute of Anne in 1710, which gave authors or “proprietors” an exclusive right to print their book (Lessig, 2004). The Statute gave a 14-year period of protection renewable for a second 14-year term upon application and approval (Buskirk, 1992). Authorship became an important context of written discourse (Foucalt, 1977) and yet, rights still in practice remained largely with the publisher over the author (Feather, 1989). The copyright laws were in essence the granting of “exclusive rights” to publish certain works, or as Lessig put it, “a right to use a particular machine to replicate a particular work.” In the case of 1710, replication was limited to printing presses (Lessig, 2004).

Article 1 of the United States Constitution includes language known as the “Copyright Clause (Kelley, 2011)” to protect authors and inventors thus encouraging advancement in science and the “useful Arts.” This concept was further solidified when in 1790 Congress enacted a copyright statute modeled after the Statute of Anne, which emphasized the author over the work. In 1976 American copyright law came to revolve around the life of the author with the passage of the copyright revisions (Buskirk, 1992). This legislation also granted those rights only to a surviving spouse and/or children without the right to transfer ownership of the intellectual property, just the transfer of the original terms established by the author's death (Reese, 1995). Today the term of copyright is eighty-four years for corporate authors and the life of the author plus seventy years for natural authors (Lessig, 2004).

In order to understand the validity of the copyright marking on a work, one must investigate the status of the author or creator (Buskirk, 1992). This position where author is central to the copyright laws came late for the US, who resisted entering into a global copyright agreement known as the Berne Convention. It wasn't until 1988 when pressures from those economically connected to recording and film industries sought to limit pirate exports that the US joined the International Copyright Convention. The World Intellectual Property Organizations states that the two purposes of copyright and related rights are to "encourage a dynamic creative culture, while returning value to creators so that they can lead a dignified economic existence, and to provide widespread, affordable access to content for the public (Kelley, 2011)." Copyright grants the author exclusive right to copy, exclusive right to distribute, and the exclusive right to perform, and so on (Lessig, 2004). However the rise of the Internet has given way to a previously unforeseen method of content distribution and as such the burden of copyright law now vastly outweighs any originally intended benefit. The law now serves not to support creativity and the generation of new work by authors but instead, according to Lessig, "serves to protect the interests of industries against competition" (2004). In this vein art museums often enforce limitations, such as photography or digital image distribution, for reasons of "copyright law" even when the work legally falls within the public domain in order to preserve their own social norms, economic interests, positions of power among peer institutions, or relationship with another institution or art collector who owns that particular art object.

Art Museums & Copyright Law

Industry norms run deep among art museums through hierarchal structures between organizations and financial insecurities. Many art museums and libraries operate by photographing the original work of art within their collection and then copyrighting that photograph or digital image in an effort to drive revenue to the museum or library (Kelley, 2011) as well as ensure high quality reproductions in the market place (Allan, 2007). Museum holdings extend beyond the physical art objects within that institution's collection to intellectual property for licensing, which is proving to be an extremely lucrative line item in museum budgets (Carmichael, 2005). The institution both charges for the use of a photograph in merchandise, publishing, and promotional use as well as controls the distribution through restricted access to the work both inside and outside the museum walls (Kelley, 2011).

One object rights holder fought to protect their claim over photographic reproductions of original artworks. Bridgeman Art Library is a leading source of high quality art images of fine art from art museums, galleries, and private collections (Bridgeman, 2013). Bridgeman licenses many of the images used in publications acting as an agent for a museum who owns the physical object. In 1998 Bridgeman Art Library sued Corel Corporation, a Canadian computer software company, for producing and selling a CD-ROM containing digital images of works within public domain on the premise that they believed Corel used Bridgeman transparencies to generate their digital images. Bridgeman argued that they owned the rights to the photographic reproductions of those art works (Kelley, 2011).

The ruling in Bridgeman Art Library, Limited versus Corel Corporation (Bridgeman, 1999) set a precedent that established reproductive images of two dimensional artworks as not copyrightable (Kelley, 2011) but said nothing about three dimensional images (Allan, 2007). This ruling put museums on notice in their quest to obtain copyright of digital reproductions of art objects within public domain (Carmichael, 2006). Judge Kaplan, who presided over this case, stated that there is not enough originality in the photographic reproductions and therefore they cannot be copyrighted. He used three criteria rooted in British law to define the originality of a photograph: "First, there may be originality in the production of the physical image, such as choosing the angle, lighting, or filters used. Second, originality can come from posting or arranging a scene. Third originality may stem from choosing a particular moment in time to capture so that all the elements in the image are not likely to realign in the same way ever again (Kelley, 2011)." Thus the transparencies created by Bridgeman were deemed photocopies of the work in public domain and, as such, were not copyrightable (Bridgeman v. Corel, 1999).

According to Kelley, art museums and libraries continue to "assert" copyright over photographic copies of works within public domain even after the 1998 ruling through undisputed industry norms. For example, a museum borrows an object for an exhibition. They can photograph the object themselves, which is costly and often does not meet timelines for promotion, publication, and presentations, or they can request a digital image from the object owner, who indicates in their lending agreement restriction for its use, which go undisputed due to the relationship between institution and lender. Bridgeman Art Library states under the terms and conditions section of its website, “All images supplied by the Bridgeman Art Library are copyrighted photographs. The Bridgeman Art Library either owns the copyright in the photograph or acts as the authorized agent of the copyright holder (Bridgeman, 2013).” Researchers cite economic gain as the main driver of the continued use of copyright claims. Museums and private collectors collect usage fees from art history textbook publishers, scholars, and other institutions promoting a show to include the work from their collection. Furthermore institutions create merchandise, which features work within public domain and copyright the photographic reproduction of the artwork rather than the merchandise itself (Allan, 2007). And yet no such claim is possible following Kaplan’s ruling in Bridgeman versus Corel (Kelley, 2011). However, fair use allows for a legal exception that covers the individual museum visitor for the purpose of photographing original works for noncommercial use (Allan, 2007).

The 1976 Copyright Act brought forth four instances where the reproduction of the work fell within “fair use” (Leval, 1990). “Fair use” is the ability to use copyright materials without the need for permission from or payment to the copyright holder (Lerner, 2005). According to section 107 of the copyright code, fair use of a copyrighted work is acceptable “for purposes such as criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching (including multiple copies for classroom use), scholarship, or research…In determining whether the use made of a work in any particular case is a fair use, the factors to be considered include – 1) the purpose and character of the use, including whether such use is of a commercial nature or is for non-profit educational purposes; 2) the nature of the copyrighted work; 3) the amount and substantiality of the portion used in relation to the copyrighted work as a whole; and 4) the effect of the use upon the potential market for or value of the copyrighted work (Allan, 2007)."

Circumstances and rulings associated with fair use litigation tend to vary widely (Buskirk, 1992) thus causing confusion among scholars and museum administrators alike (Metro, 1995). Art historians feel the financial constraints of copyright law and a lack of application of fair use in the visual arts. While written into the 1976 legislation, art historians find themselves trapped in an industry standard that ignores fair use at all costs, thus limiting the advancement of the arts. If a scholar intends to author a book for educational purposes, he must first consider whether their project can afford the high-priced reproduction fees associated with his area of study. As such art historians and book publishers may not publish a book on certain topics due to the low sales projections on the scholarly work and the expense of licensing each image for the project (Metro, 1997). As Lessig writes, "In theory, fair use means you need no permission. The theory therefore supports free culture and insulates against a permission culture. But in practice, fair use functions very differently...the law has the right aim; practice has defeated the aim. (Lessig, 2004)." The industry norm of timidity among gatekeepers perpetuates uncertainty in the creative marketplace (Decherney, 2013) and therefore can result in devastating effects on the environment of creativity (Lessig, 2004). In an age of digitization, other professionals in the same business enforce social norms. "The key to any profession is the relation of its members to one another" (Shirky, 2008). Advancements in technology such as the Internet and camera-enabled smartphones have shifted the tides of publishing and as such perception of control over digital images. The “mass amateurization” of publishing undoes limitations inherent in having a small number of traditional outlets (Shirky, 2008). Museums address these shifts in their industry from the perspective of the museum only.

Museums and Digital Images

According to their web site, the American Alliance for Museums (AAM) supports 21,000 member institutions by “developing standards and best practices, providing resources and career development, and advocating museums to thrive,” (“About Us,” 2013). Furthermore, art museums seek to educate the public and provide access to art objects through their exhibits, programs, and collections. Since the expansion into digital images, museums demonstrated a limitation to that mission by restricting access to electronic images of artworks through both the circulation of scanned images as well as personal photography within the confines of exhibitions. In many cases they sought to raise additional funds through image licensing. As such, institutions have adopted “no photography” policies to control the quality and distribution of art object images.

Research centered on museums in the areas of digital technology and copyright law does not adequately address the recent developments of user-generated content within social media applications. A search of resources and articles posted to association members within in the “Resource Library” of the American Alliance of Museums using the term “digital images” yields two findings, while a search using the term “photography” yields one. The term “photography” links to resources associated with documentation and cataloging collections of works or the museum’s business of managing their own objects for display and study. There is no reference to an industry standard associated with personal photography during museum visits.

The search on “digital images” yields sections on “digitization” and “intellectual property” does not offer an industry-wide guideline for visitor photography within the museum, only b*y* the museum (Resources, n.d.). The sections on digitization and intellectual property center on how museums make art objects available to their publics through the stewardship of the museum’s collection and objects. Specifically, the AAM focuses their resources on issues related to digital images and copyright law within two major arenas: 1) use of digital technology to provide access to the collection, and 2) restrictions to digital images based on the requests and roles of lenders/donors (Resources, n.d.). In an article posted to the AAM website in 2010, author Chris Norris urges museums to digitize every object in their collection and then place that digital image in a searchable database to create access pursuant to a museum’s role in society (Norris, 2010). In another report posted by the Getty Foundation to the AAM web site, industry leaders comment on lessons learned from the Getty’s electronics cataloging initiative where objects in a variety of collections throughout Los Angeles were photographed by the museum producing electronic files for the museums’ use online. The report’s table of contents, titled “Why Do It At All,” lists increasing access, expanding audiences, and supporting teaching and learning as three of the six areas covered in the report. One museum director states that online collections information is central to their institutional mission, which provides for both access to and preservation of the museum collection. Also cited in the same report, a second leader indicates that through providing online access to collections information, students, scholars, teachers, and the general public “can learn to appreciate works of important but lesser-known artists,” thus fulfilling their organizational mission (Getty, 2007).

While the AAM supports efforts for digitization in relation to access to an institution's collection, articles on their web site also acknowledge industry norms associated with loaned works and limits on photography related to those works. A report titled, "General Principles on the Administration of Loans and Exchange of Works of Art Between Institutions" that was originally issued in July 1995 by the Bizot Group, a group of museum directors from some of the largest museums in the world, offers little by way of photographic guidelines in the galleries where the loaned work is displayed. Paragraph 2.1 suggests that exhibition organizers may wish to photograph and film exhibitions and installations for record and educational purposes, and to allow the Press and TV to photograph and film them for publicity purposes and as such, lenders should grant these permissions with a provision that the borrower respect the "lender's conditions regarding lighting etc." (Bizot Group, 2002). This 18-year-old document does not directly state that lenders and borrowers should enter in an agreement with limitations on in-gallery photography for museum visitors and yet it assumes that such an agreement is already in place, by recommending a cause for exception when it comes to archival, educational, and media-related promotional purposes. Personal photography in gallery has not been directly addressed by the institutional norms for art museums, while areas like the use of digital images, reproductions, and copyright law between the museum and the lender have extensive guidelines (Association of Art Museum Directors, 2007).

Museums and Mobile Technology

Surveys from various industry sources show that museums consider mobile technology an important part of their communications toolbox and research to date on mobile technology addresses outbound or organization-generated content and does not take into consideration the potentially powerful inbound or "user-generated" content. According to the American Association of Museums, museums recognize that visitors own and use mobile devices in general and many have plans to create museum-generated content for personal use. Museums report a strong belief that mobile technology is "here to stay" (American Association of Museums, 2011) and yet few permit use of personal, camera-equipped mobile devices throughout the entirety of their institutions. Museum administrators who responded to the survey recognize the importance of creating content that uses mobile device technology as a platform for engagement and education among their visitors (American Association of Museums, 2011). The most (36%) institutions currently using mobile devices in their programming use the technology only for audio tours. Museums not using mobile technology within their institution overwhelmingly cite financial restraints –both human resource and budgetary restrictions- as the primary limitations to deploying mobile technology within their museum. Related to interacting with younger audiences, who demonstrate an adoption of mobile technology at a higher rate than older audiences, museums report that they believe mobile technology enables the museum to "reach out" to a younger demographic (American Association of Museums, 2011).

Likewise a January 2013 study release by the Pew Research Center on how arts organizations value and use digital technologies, respondents cited digital images, social media, and mobile platforms as valuable resources to engage and reach their audiences (Thomson, 2013). Specifically, "50% 'strongly agree' with the statement that the Internet 'has increased engagement with the arts by providing a public platform through which more people can share their work' (Thomson, 2013)." Specifically museums reported that the Internet is important to arts organizations to promote the arts (15%), increase audience engagement (18%), gather research and data for grant acquisition (25%), identifying sources of funding (27%), using organizations research more efficiently (29%), engaging in arts advocacy (29%), providing arts education to the public (37%), improving arts cataloging and collections management (16%), and improving arts curation (24%), which all represent museum- or organization-generated content. Only one potential answer revolved around user-generated content with 39% of respondents agreeing that the Internet is important to arts organizations for artistic creation and collaboration (Thomson, 2013). However, with the one-sidedness of the possible choices, one can argue that this statistic measured creation and collaboration between institutions and not between the museum and its publics.

In the same study, Thomson (2013) reported that arts organizations value social media as a way to interact with their audiences (82%) and yet the answers emphasized information that the museum pushed to the public rather than the institution listening to their audience via social media. Specifically, arts organizations use social media to promote an event through reminders or ticket sales. Institutions can reach an audience more expeditiously through social media and thus offer time-sensitive discounts or informational alerts about an event. Finally, social media enables the arts organization to benefit from a viral “buzz” surrounding an event as followers or fans promote an event on behalf of the institution. Furthermore, Thomson (2013) states that arts organizations most value social media in relation to promoting an institution’s public image and not for the purpose of public education or outreach.

This self-centered view of the Internet, mobile technology, and social media demonstrates that museums harness their mobile, social, or digital content through their own initiation with little consideration with content generated by their followers, fans, or visitors. Museum administrators cite financial limitations such as budget and human resources as what impedes museums from implementing more digital technology, including social media (Thomson, 2013). As such museums lag behind advancements in technology and platforms due to their closed-source approach to the Internet, mobile, and digital technologies, and social media; never considering what is or can be created in an open-source environment between their brick-and-mortar and online visitors if given the opportunity to create. The arts organization considers how mobile and digital technologies send *outbound* or museum-generated messages to visitors, users, and potential arts enthusiasts. No recent research has addressed the potential impact of *inbound* or user-generated content related to visual arts organizations.

Social Media

Researchers have looked into the nature of social media in the arenas of politics (Woollery, 2010; Shirky, 2008), education (Maznan and Usuel, 2010), and health communication (Chew & Eysenbach, 2010; Robillard, et al, 2013). Previous studies have focused on how users share information (Chew & Eysenbach, 2010; Curnutt, 2008), seek information (Robillard et al, 2013), and connect with larger brands or groups (Greer & Yan, 2011; Hambriuk et al 2010; Wooley et al, 2010). Additional research looks at what users share within social networks (Naaman et al, 2010). Narrowing to the nonprofit sector, research to date emphasizes adoption of social networks by the organizations and does not adequately address how organizations harness social media pursuant to their missions or identify best practices (Curtis et al, 2010; Waters et al, 2009).

With little research to date on social media among museums in general, let alone art museums, it will be helpful to understand how users engage with Twitter, what messages museums and users distribute, and what potential outcomes may arise as a result. It may be necessary to understand what communications or information exchanges are taking place through the online social networks. In a recent study, Hambrick et al (2010) first identified what was currently available and transmitted on Twitter so that researchers and practitioners could begin to assess and propose how the networks might more broadly and effectively be used over time.

Twitter is a popular social media outlet. Since launching in 2006, Twitter has quickly become one of the most widely used social media outlets with 190 million unique visitors each month and a total of over 550 million active, registered users worldwide (Statistic Brain, 2013). Twitter supports posting of 140-character microblogs via SMS, Web, mobile Web, and application-based services making Twitter available at any time or location for users. Furthermore, Twitter users can reference other users in posted messages by using the @ symbol, which creates a direct link from their message to the referenced user's account (Naaman et al, 2010). In addition, users can search Twitter making it possible for users to see posts that include their account or organizational name without the direct connection on behalf of the message sender. For example, both "Great day at the Met Museum!" and "Great day @metmuseum" will return on a search for "metmuseum" within the Twitter search function on the desktop application, which gives the Metropolitan Museum of Art two opportunities to understand how and when users are commenting about their institution. As Shirky (2008) wrote, “we are living in the middle of a remarkable increase in our ability to share, to cooperate with one another, and to take collective action, all outside the framework of traditional institutions and organizations.”

According to public relations practitioner, James Grunig (1992), an organization communicates with their publics through one-way or two-way communications models. In one-way communication, also known as public information model or press-agent model, the organization issues a statement or message of persuasion without expectation of receiving any feedback from the message recipient. However, in two-way communication, or the two-way symmetrical model, receivers return feedback and the cycle of communication continues in a circular fashion with messages being issued and received by both the organization and the publics. Taylor and Kent (1998) pioneered research of how organizations build relationships through the Internet with two-way communication channels. They established that through dialogic communication, such as comment forums and contact email forms, organizations allow input by and communications to publics. With the emergence of social networking sites, the principles related to two-way communication via Internet activity hold true however organizations do not take advantage of the opportunities available through two-way communication channels (Bortree & Seltzer, 2009).

In a more recent publication on social media, Grunig (2013) addresses the paradigm shift facing many organizations that operate on a one-way communication model stating “practitioners tend to have an illusion of control over messaging.” Social media disrupts this illusion of control or it is overlooked as traditional communication styles continue within social media. Whereas Grunig states that if social media is embraced to its fullest potential, then social media generated by the institution will offer more interactivity and embrace an attitude of dialogue among followers and users (2013). Most research to date centers on the interpersonal implications of social networking sites; however, the few studies that look into organizational impact indicate a variance in how users and organizations engage with social media (Lovejoy, et al, 2010). Recent research finds that organizations simply push one-way communication via social media outlets (Bortree & Seltzer, 2009) and do not harness the powerful potential social media enables. Lovejoy et al (2010) found that regardless of tools available within the social networking site, Twitter, nonprofit organizations demonstrate a continuation of traditional one-way communication models. Recent research by museums suggests that their social media platform centers on what the museum can provide to the followers and not what the followers will do with the platform (American Association of Museums, 2011; Pew, 2013).

Uses and Gratifications Theory

Additional studies have looked at uses and gratifications theory in relation to social media. From the field of mass communications, Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) looks at how users engage with different media and their motives for doing so (Ruggiero, 2000). Media differ in their abilities to accommodate users needs. The theory has three basic assumption: users actively engage with media; users select media for intentional communication objectives and their behaviors within said media channel are goal-directed; and users understand their personal motivations for selecting one communication medium over another. Previously applied to traditional media outlets, such as newspapers, television, radio, etc., UGT becomes more powerful within the context of social media as users can quickly and easily shift from one medium to the next while actively engaging in their own media consumption becoming, in essence, part of the channel themselves (Xu, C. et al, 2012). Ruggeiro (2000) identified three key benefits to online or Internet use: interactivity, demassification, and asynchroneity. Interactivity is the act of giving users the ability to respond to other users, share information, and form relationships. Demassification offers users the opportunity to choose which activities interest them and with whom they choose to interact. Asynchroneity enables users to have flexibility within their communications by reading, posting, and responding to messages when it is most convenient for them. People must be more selective with the high volume of media outlets available to users and UGT assumes that that individual is actively engaged in the decision to engage or disengage with a particular social network, web site, or news station (Ruggeiro, 2000).

Researchers have identified a variety of motives to explain online engagement, including: to assess information and gain knowledge (Raacke & Bonds-Raacke, 2008; Ruggiero, 2000), find entertainment and diversion (Ruggiero, 2000), and communicate with like-minded users (Raacke & Bonds-Raacke, 2008). The theory has been used to expand into the motives for participating in social media. Ku, et al (2013) applied UGT to social networking sites and discovered four determinants – perceived critical mass, subjective norms, received gratifications, and privacy concerns, which influence social networking site users continuous engagement within their outlet of choice. When users receive relevant information from their social network site host, they are more likely to maintain engagement with said site. Furthermore, the perception of critical mass directly relates to direct engagement between an organization or social network site host and a user suggesting that organizations need to embrace a strong two-way communication model for social networking site member retention. Xu et al (2012) identified that through immediate access to friends via social networking sites, the abilities to organize social activities dispense news provided gratification and implied continued engagement. Additionally, they found four gratifications that individuals seek from social networking sites: coordination, immediate access, affection, and leisure. When combined, this research casts a profound picture on a two-way communication model for organizations engaged with their publics on social networking sites.

The question becomes whether these same motives apply to museums. However, before social networking site usage motives can be assessed in this industry, it may be necessary to first understand what communications and exchanges are taking place by whom through this online social network (Hambrick et al, 2010) within the museum sector.

CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND METHODOLOGY

Research Questions

Social media cannot be limited to public information theory with one-way communication but instead it transforms the World Wide Web to a platform that facilitates information exchange between users. Participants on social media applications have the desire to actively engage and to serve as both producers and consumers of information (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). As Clay Shirky addresses in his 2008 book, *Here Comes Everybody*, social tools remove older obstacles to public expression and thus remove the bottlenecks that characterized mass media resulting in the "mass amateurization" of efforts previously reserved for professionals (Shirky, 2008). As Miranda (2013) points out in her article, despite museums and despite copyright law, visitors are bringing their mobile device into the museum. Museums need to understand what users will create when given the opportunity to bypass no photography policies and document museum visits through their social media accounts. This presents an opportunity to review user-generated content for the purpose of better understanding how inbound social media content might impact an institution.

The rationale to date on blocking photography in museums has centered on issues of copyright law, suggesting that visitors will take high-resolution images of the art objects and print posters or T-shirts without permission, thus limiting the potential earnings of the artist, object owner, or museum itself. With advancements in mobile technology and media outlets, such as social media, industry norms are shifting. Shirky (2008) wrote "journalists aren't journalists unless they work for publishers, and publishers aren't publishers unless they own the means of production. However now, anyone can publish anytime, and the instant that it is published, it is globally available and readily findable." If anyone can be a publisher, can anyone receive the fair use exception to copyright law as it relates to photography posted to personal social media accounts of art museum content? This study conducts an inventory of how museums, followers, and other institutions use Twitter in relation to six museums that allow photography in at least their permanent collection galleries.

Historically, museums have not permitted personal photography in art museums due to light restrictions, copyright law, and the requests of lenders. With advancements in technology, including mobile devices, like camera-enabled cell phones, museums have begun to reverse these limitations on visitors in relation to their permanent collections (Miranda, 2013). Furthermore, museum administrators understand the potential value and reach of social media albeit limited to content created by their organization (Pew, 2013) and as such have begun to embrace more digital images and social media (American Association of Museums, 2010). However to date the museum industry has not developed a strong understanding of how user-generated social media messaging and photography works with their museum brand in a two-way communication model.

RQ1: How are users using social media in relation to art museums?

RQ2: Are museums using social media correctly?

Methodology

This study examined the Twitter posts related to six institutions identified by Carolina Miranda in her May 2013 article: the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, NY), the

Art Institute of Chicago (Chicago, IL), the National Gallery of Art (Washington D.C.), the Indianapolis Museum of Art (Indianapolis, IN), the J. Paul Getty Museum (Los Angeles, CA), and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (Los Angeles, CA). Through an initial query using topsy.com, I discovered a field of over 42,000 tweets over a six-month period between all six institutions. By comparison, Lovejoy et al (2012) conducted an analysis of tweets generated by 73 nonprofit organizations over a four-week period and ended with a database of 4,655 tweets. With no access to computer software programs designed to capture and randomize the field of data, I established a period of six weeks as a manageable range for coding. Using the general search function in Twitter, the coder searched under the following terms without the "@" or hashtag (#) symbols to ensure that all tweets returned in the search, not just those addressed to the institution but also those tweets about the museum as well: metmuseum, artinstitutechi, ngadc, imamuseum, gettymuseum, and lacma for the purpose of content analysis.

Content analysis is defined as a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data (Krippendorff, 1989). Anything, that occurs in sufficient numbers and has reasonably stable meanings for a specific group of people, may be subjected to content analysis (Krippendorff, 1989). Researchers have used content analysis to better understand messaging as it relates to politics (Wooley, 2010; Shirky, 2008), education (Maznan and Usuel, 2010), and health communication (Chew & Eysenbach, 2010; Robillard, et al, 2013). In a 2010 study on H1N1, researchers assessed the public's general knowledge of the disease as well as how they qualified the information, whether through humor, concern, or frustration, in order to better understand how press releases would best communicate a sense of urgency or relief related to this public health threat

(Chew & Eysenbach, 2010). In another study, researchers used content analysis to assess how newspapers of various sizes leverage, or did not leverage, digital technologies for message dissemination by reviewing their cross-platform messaging (Greer & Yan, 2011). Content analysis assures that all units of analysis receive equal treatment, whether they are entered at the beginning or the end of an analysis; it doesn't matter who conducts the analysis making it possible to analyze large amounts of data and provide aggregate accounts of inferences thus revealing trends, patterns, and differences no longer obvious to the untrained individual (Krippendorff, 1989).

Furthermore, for the objectives related to this study, content analysis enables message trends as well as applies relevant theory to a new area of research. "If categories are obtained from the very material being analyzed, findings are not generalizable much beyond the given data. If they are derived from general theory, findings tend to ignore much of the symbolic richness and uniqueness of the data in hand (Krippendorff, 1989)," suggesting a hybrid approach through content analysis will work best.

Using an initial set of 84 tweets over two tests containing search terms, I conducted a pilot analysis and established broad categories to form a coding guide using an emergent coding strategy. I revised the coding sheet into its final form through discussion during intercoder reliability testing and developed the coding to capture the thematic features of the sample with a focus on the relevant information established during the initial phases of the testing. I applied individual codes to each complete tweet as the unit of analysis. Two independent coders coded the tweets in a rich coding strategy; I allowed multiple categorizations for each tweet (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). The final coding guide included the following major categories, as applicable: 1) type of account (individual, referenced museum, other museum/organization); 2) image visible in Twitter feed (Yes, No); 3) image type (none, art object only, art object with people, museum interior with people, museum exterior with people, museum interior without people, museum exterior without people); 4) message type (none, locator, educational, commentary, promotional, interactive, other). The category "message type" derived from previous studies associated with uses and gratifications among online and social media (Ruggiero, 2000; Hambrick et al, 2010) combined with the language most consistent with industry norms among museums (American Association of Museums, 2010) as well as terminology closely related to copyright law and fair use (Lerner, 2005; Allan 2007).

CHAPTER 4 RESULTS

Results

I used descriptive statistics were used to characterize the configuration of the sample. Two coders analyzed 388 tweets with an inter-coder reliability (ICR) score of 80% on message and image type and 95% ICR score on the other areas of coding, which indicated a moderate to high level of inter-rater reliability (Kassarjian, 1977). Intercoder reliability is the widely used term for the extent to which independent coders evaluate a characteristic of a message or artifact and reach the same conclusion. Intercoder agreement is necessary because it measures "the extent to which the different raters tend to assign exactly the same rating for each object" (Krippendorf, 1989).

As seen in Figure 2, promotional messages, which I defined as one that invites or encourages the reader to take offline action such as attending an exhibition, or purchasing a ticket, led the message type (41.24%) with messages that contain commentary, defined as offering the opinion of the user to the followers, at nine points behind (32.73%). Educational messages, defined as those that offer a fact through identification or background, only accounted for one-fifth of the messages (22.68%). However when I isolate the tweets initiated by the museums (60) from those posted by an individual (218, or 59%, of the tweets), educational rises to 43% of the messages and promotional messages make up 50% of the messages posted by museums. Only 12% or seven of the 60 messages posted by museums directly related to interactive content. Of the 218 tweets by individuals, the majority posted commentary (39%) and promotional (29%). 13% of individuals used their tweet to tell their followers that they were located at a particular museum, only one percent higher than individuals posting educational content to their followers (12%). Organizations, defined as other museums, news outlets, associations, etc., produced most of their tweets around promotional messages (40%) with educational messages a distant second place (25%) and commentary only representing 17% of the message types posted.

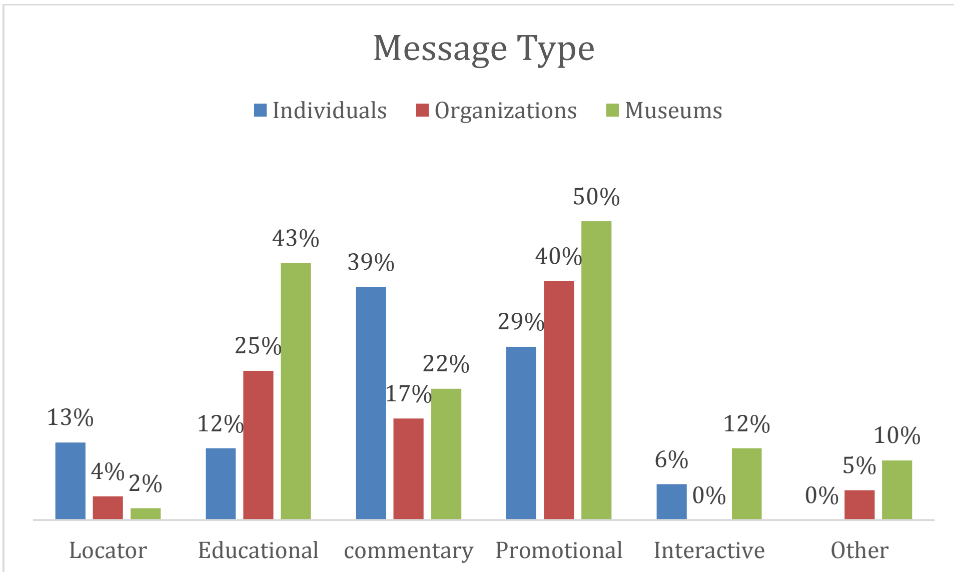

Figure 2. Tweet message type by account type.

When an image was visible in the Twitter feed and did not require a link to view, the coders identified which category best fit the type of image tweeted. Only one-third of the tweets reviewed included images. Of those 127 tweets to include images (see Figure 3), 38% included an image of the art object only, while 19% represented an image of the museum interior with people, which could include a gallery or an event (see Figure 3). The other categories were negligible at only 2-6% of the remaining images reflected. Of those tweets that contained images, individuals (19) were more likely to post art objects with the museum second (9). Likewise individuals posted other images more frequently. Examples of “other” images included events held at the museum like galas, lectures, or weddings.

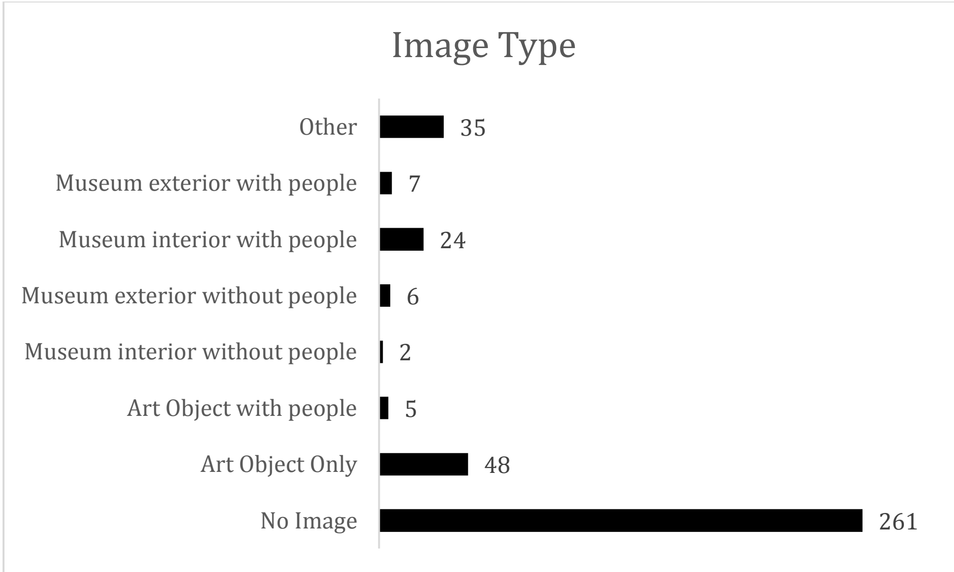

Figure 3. Image Type by Tweet

All tweets that contained images also included a message to establish context for the image (see Figure 4). The art objects were most frequently paired with educational (27%) and/or commentary (20%). For example, “this beautiful 17th century painting was created in Italy.” In this example, the term “beautiful” offers the author’s opinion on the work while the time period and country of origin demonstrate educational information made available through the tweet. Promotional messages were most likely to correspond with an image of something other than the institution or art (18%), more often than not this was an image of a special event taking place at the museum or an entertainer or lecturer promoting their future appearance at the museum in question.

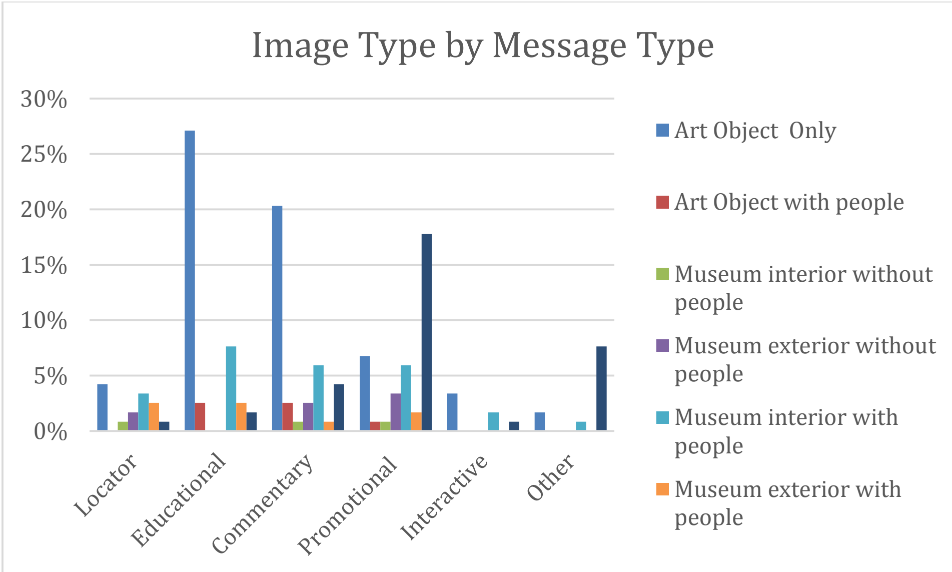

Figure 4. Image Type by Message Type

During this six-week time period, the number of tweets by institution varied greatly with the Metropolitan Museum of Art and Indianapolis Museum of Art combining to total 65% of the data set (see Figure 5). Of the museums in the study, the Metropolitan Museum of Art had the most followers with 648,269 followers at the time of the study; while Indianapolis Museum of Art reported the fewest number of followers among the museums in this study at 14,304 (see Figure 6). However the Indianapolis Museum of Art led the total number of tweets coded for this study at 36% of the 388. A coder attributed this discrepancy to the fact that the Indianapolis Museum of Art opened an exhibition on the well-known artist Henri Matisse during the six-week window that corresponded with the timing of this study. The popularity of this artist and this exhibition may have skewed the volume of tweets in favor of the Indianapolis Museum of Art.

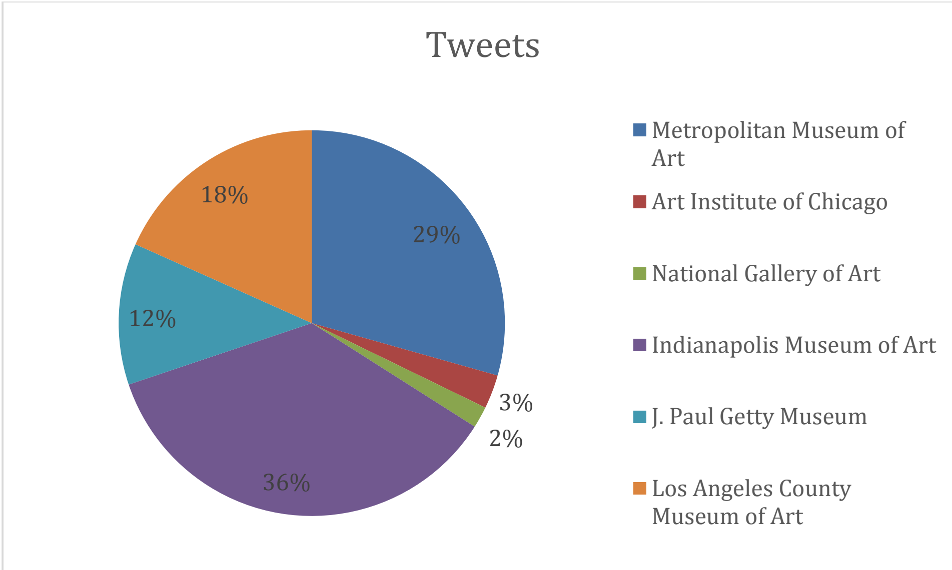

Figure 5. Percentage of tweets coded by museum.

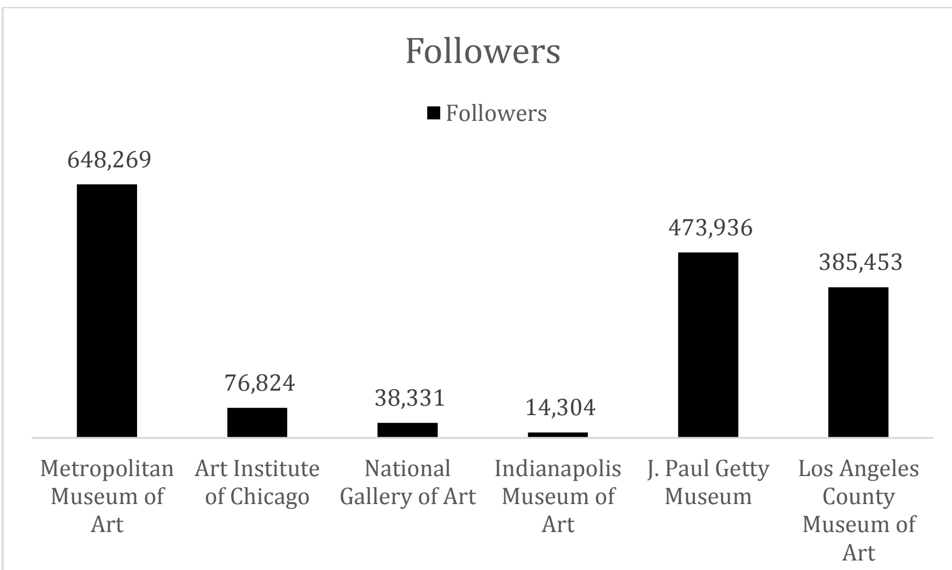

Figure 6. Number of followers for each museum account as of Dec. 16, 2013.

Discussion

Miranda (2013) reported that museums send conflicting messages by limiting personal photography among visitors in-gallery citing copyright law and requests of their lenders as the primary reasons for these restrictions, and yet they openly share digital images through their own digital technologies. Personal photography in museums, copyright law, lender restrictions, and social media engagement covers a wide range of issues facing museum administration and this study merely begins the discussion. This study provides some valuable insight into the types of images and messages posted by museums and individuals related to a few institutions through social media. Museums have reported that mobile technology and social media are important to the future of their organizations (American Association of Museums, 2011; Pew 2013) and yet little evidence exists to suggest that organizations take advantage of the two-way communication of social networking sites (Waters & Jamal, 2011; Briones et al, 2011). This study suggests similar findings by way of which messages and images emerge most frequently from museum handles.

RQ1 sought to understand how organizations and individuals interact with and about museums through Twitter as it relates to the overarching mission of the museums, according to the American Alliance of Museums. While RQ2 focused on interpreting those findings to make a determination on whether museums leveraged social media through a two-way communication model. Museums seek to educate the public and provide access to art through their exhibitions, programs and collections. The findings from my content analysis support that museums do use their twitter feed to support this mission but may miss the broader opportunities for their Twitter account. With 93% of all messages containing educational and promotional messages and only 12% of tweets including an interactive impetus, museums appear to push one-way communication to constituents as they would with a press release or advertisement. In the case of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the interactive messages all pooled into one day of tweets promoting an "Ask A Curator" promotion. In other, over 45 days, the Met only asked for feedback from followers on one day. While not conclusive, this finding suggests that museums use social media to project messages into the public rather than listen to their publics. Just as museums report using mobile technology inside their museums through pre-recorded, unidirectional audio tours (American Association of Museums, 2011), so goes social media as a platform for message projection not interactivity.

Additionally, this study found that only a small percentage of the overall tweets includes images and of that small sampling, the majority represented posting images of events and functions held at the museums. I suggest that these images of events and people attending events at the institution amount to press releases or promotional messages on behalf of the institution and do not suggest interactivity with said individuals. According to the findings of this study, museums post images of art objects at a similar rate to in-gallery images featuring people, as well as "other" images, which may include events, galas, or newspaper headlines where images are visible in the Twitter feed. This report suggests support to Miranda's (2013) claim that museums offer conflicting messages to the public by limiting access to digital images and personal photography but openly sharing images themselves through social media outlets. Only nine of the images categorized through this study represent art objects pursuant to the educational aspect of their mission. Furthermore, posting images of objects from the museum's collection enable an institution to meet their mission by creating access. However these one-way posts offer facts about the object, artist or acquisition and do not stimulate interactivity among users suggesting that museums are not leveraging social media to their best advantage.

Individual account holders likewise did not spur interactivity via their museum-related posts. Only six percent of the posts from individual user accounts established the opportunity for interactivity among users. This difference likely had something to do with the small number of individual account holders tagging museums in their post. Like museums, individuals posted a larger percentage of promotional messages as compared to other message types. The largest category of message types among individual account holders offered commentary. Individuals posted more images museums via Twitter according to these findings (see Figure 7). The majority of those images fell into the "Art Objects" categories. When I couple the most frequently used message type and image type together, this study suggests that individuals photographing art objects within the museum setting will do so within fair use guidelines. As reported earlier in the literature review, the 1976 Copyright Act brought forth "fair use" where the reproduction of the work qualified as an acceptable instance for the purposes of nonprofit promotion, educational, and commentary of criticism (Allan, 2007). I suggest that through the nature of social media networks as well as these findings that report individuals share images of art objects and messages of commentary, museums have an opportunity to harness visitors to make their messages, collection, and programs more accessible via social media.

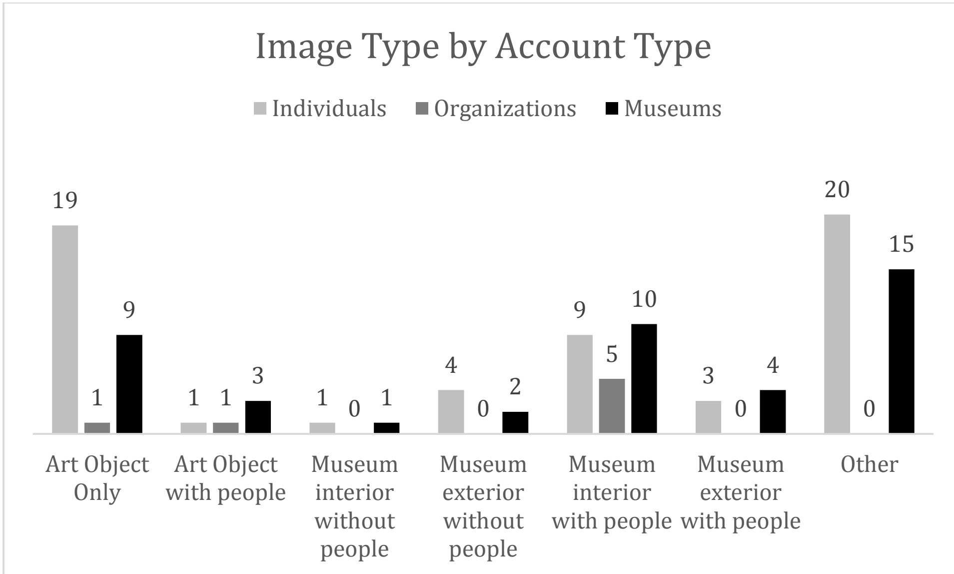

Figure 7. Of those tweets that contain images, image type by account type.

CHAPTER 5 LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

There are many limitations to this study. First of all, due to disagreement among coders, this study eliminated all non-Twitter images narrowing the scope of the images to less than one-third of the overall messages coded for this study. Since only those images that were visible in the Twitter feed were coded, no images generated by a link were included, which limits other social media applications like Instagram as well as smart phone camera applications that share images using a link instead of loading the image directly into the feed. This limitation prevents this study from offering a holistic sample for tabulation as many other social media platforms offer users the ability to post images through to Twitter. With Facebook, Google+, and Instagram each sharing a significant portion of the social media marketplace with each reporting the highest volume of monthly users along with Twitter, it is important that future research allows for coders to properly analyze photos generated by links.

While museums often have exhibition openings and special events, this study is limited by coding tweets during a six-week window rather than randomly selected tweets over the course of six months or on year. Museums often change exhibitions every three to six months making openings a regular part of museum messaging strategy. Similarly museums consistently host galas, fundraising events, celebrity appearances, and lectures. Peaks and valleys across institutions in Twitter post volume can be minimized by aggregating random tweets over a longer period of time. The Matisse opening at the Indianapolis Museum of Art directly impacted the volume and type of data coming from the smallest institution, relatively. Future studies should use additional coders and measure a longer period of time in order to minimize these effects.

At the conclusion of the coding phase of this study, the researcher became aware that only a portion of the tweets generated from the search were ultimately coded for the six-week time period. When using the search function in Twitter, results of the search will return as "TOP" tweets first. The user must click on the "ALL" option adjacent "TOP" in order to reveal all of the tweets generated under that search moniker [Appendix Two]. Twitter defines "top tweets" as, those tweets that are found using an algorithm after they have caught the attention of other users. Top Tweets will refresh automatically and are surfaced for popularity-retweeted subjects based on this algorithm. The company does not hand-select Top Tweets (Help Center, 2013). Since the tweets coded are based on popularity through sharing, this limits the ability to make assumptions about which types of images users post when visiting a museum and whether or not they fall within the definition of "fair use" as it relates to The Copyright Act of 1976. Many tweets by lesser-known museum visitors were undoubtedly excluded from this study as they did not qualify as "Top Tweets" and yet they might have been accurate representations of museum visitors documenting an in-gallery experience.

A last-minute change in coders represented the final challenge for this work. Two coders were originally trained and involved in the development of the final code sheet through a series of three tests and multiple discussions. One coder quit prior to coding any data for the study and the second coder delayed coding by a period of two weeks from the last training. As such, the discussions resulted in a clarification to click ALL when conducting the search for each museum; however the final coder assigned to this project did not get such instructions translating to one half of the data was coded using only Top Tweets (Figure 8), which directed the rest of the coding to follow suit. With several limitations to these findings, adjustments will need to be made before embarking on future research.

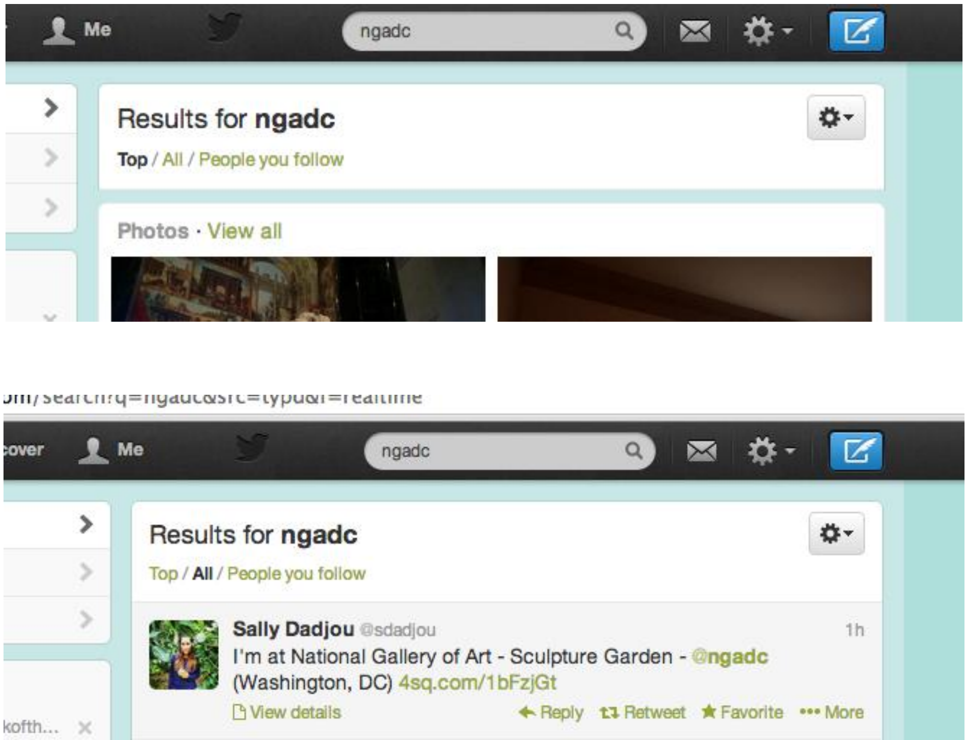

Figure 8. Results featuring all tweets vs. top tweets as returned by search.

Future studies should address more than Top Tweets to gain a better understanding of the overall posts by museums and not which emerged as most popular algorithmically. Individuals posted a proportional number of art object images to the museums. With limitations created by the Top Tweets issue, it becomes difficult to make assumptions around which types of images individuals are more likely to post. However this study suggests that when an image of an art object is posted by either a museum or an individual, the message will offer educational or comment about that object, which may fall within the fair use exception. By analyzing the content through the lens of fair use, this study begins the discussion toward better understanding industry norms among museum administration and lenders in relation to personal photography within the galleries. By looking into how individuals engage with the art object before, during or after their in gallery visit offers significant insight on behalf of museum missions, as established by the American Alliance of Museums (n.d.).

Future research should address the limitations in this study in order to gain a quantifiable perspective on how images are presented in the context of social media. This study begins that work by establishing limitations and establishing definitions not previously explored in the context of mass communication theory within the museum industry.

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APPENDIX A. CODE SHEET

[ONCE RELIABILITY TESTING IS COMPLETE] Search Terms:
Coders will use the following search terms without the @ or # symbols:

- Metmuseum
- artinstitutechi
- ngadc
- imamuseum
- gettymuseum
- lacma

Date of Coding
The date when the coder coded the data.
Date coder entered the data (mm/dd/yyyy)

Date of Post
The date the post was posted by the user.
Date post recorded by source (mm/dd/yyyy)

Time of Post
When looking at the original post time, identify which of the following three buckets best match the time when the post was first posted to Twitter.

Before Open (2 a.m. - 9:59 a.m.)	1
Museum Hours (10 a.m. – 4:59 p.m.)	2
After Hours (5 p.m. – 1:59 a.m.)	3

Institution
Identify which institution is tagged in the post. The data file was pulled based on having one of these six institutions tagged by the post or as the originator of the post.

None	0
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, "The Met" (@metmuseum)	1
The Art Institute of Chicago (@artinstitutechi)	2
The National Gallery of Art (@ngadc)	3
Indianapolis Museum of Art (@imamuseum)	4
The Getty Museum (@GettyMuseum)	5
Los Angeles County Museum of Art, "LACMA" (@LACMA)	6

Posting Account Type
From where did the post originate? Identify which type of user originated the post.. Was the original post generated from same institution that was tagged in the post? Or was the original post generated from an individual account holder? Or was the post generated by another organization or institution?

Individual user account	1
Museum account	2
Other institution/organization	3

Image Included

Identify whether an image was included with the post. Be careful to note that some Twitter posts automatically expand the images into the news feed and others will not. Look for links to file names and be sure to click on each one to see if a photo is included with the post. Links with “pic.twitter” and “instagram” included will have images attached but click through to be sure before coding the image.

No Image	0
Yes - Twitter	1

Message Type

Identify which of the following represents the message direction for each post, check all that apply. Museums strive to engage visitors with material for the purpose of generating inquiry around an object or topic. Understanding how users and institutions use twitter in regards to this –and other- museum objectives will enable researchers to begin a dialogue around how this medium is serving visitors.

No Message	0
Locator	1
Educational	2
Commentary	3
Promotional	4
Interactive	5
Other	6

Message type	Definition	Example	
No Message	Image Only		0
Locator	States user is currently located at the museum in question	“Checking out the Met”	1
Educational	Offers a fact or identification of an art object that may or may not educate the followers of that user’s feed	“3rd Century Egyptian Mask.” “Degas painted ‘Starry Night’ while staying in an asylum.”	2
Commentary	Offers user’s opinion or observation about the work or museum	“The Met rocks!” “Starry Night is my favorite.” “I love this artist’s use of color.”	3
Promotional	Invites or encourages the user’s followers to take action.	“You’ve got to visit the Met.” “Who wants to join me for this program?”	4

Interactive	Seeks engagement from followers in the way of a question or discussion-starter	"Ask a curator – Send your questions for our curatorial team!" "Tell us about your favorite work of art." "Which piece is your favorite?	5
Other	Does not fit into any of the above categories (0-4)		6

Image Type

Identify which of the following represents the context of the image included in the post. These images will be visible within the Twitter Feed or above-the-fold through one-click. No scrolling is required to see the image. Any other images no either visible on the twitter feed or through one-click will not be measured.

No Image	0
Art Object Only	1
Art Object with people	2
Museum interior without people	3
Museum exterior without people	4
Museum interior with people	5
Museum exterior with people	6
Other	7

Image Type	Definition	Example	
No Image			0
Art Object Only	The art object is photographed to fill the frame and does not include any location or human context.		1

			
Art Object with people	User photographed an art object with people other than the user in the shot; no eye contact with or posing for the camera.	  	2

		 	
Museum interior without people	User photographed museum interior in which no particular art object is featured or many art objects may be featured in the context of background over foreground; no people or an empty gallery		3
Museum exterior without people	User photographed the museum exterior or grounds; no people in the image		4

Museum interior with people	User photographed museum interior in which no particular art object is featured or many art objects may be featured in the context of background over foreground with people in the gallery	   	5

Museum exterior with people	User photographed the museum exterior or grounds with people in the shot	   	6
Other			7

VITA

Patricia Ann Milford-Hoyt, a native of North Kingsville, Ohio, received her bachelor's degree at Kent State University in 1996. Thereafter she enjoyed a successful 15-year career as a leader in advertising and public relations firms across the Americas. Milford-Hoyt made the decision to pursue a Master's degree in Mass Communication at Louisiana State University, while simultaneously serving as Director of Marketing within LSU University Relations. She will receive her master's degree in May 2014 and will return to her full-time role as Director of Communications for a major museum in Tulsa, Okla.