Instagram in an Independent Research Library:

RBMS, Iowa City

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Follow AAS on Instagram @americanantiquarian
How Did AAS Get to 31,000+ Followers???

- Slow and steady posting.
- Responsive interaction with followers.
- Collaborations with other institutions (i.e. challenges).
- Striking the right tone, finding the institutional voice.
- Faithful followers who pass on their enthusiasm – the snowball effect.
- Come on … we have really COOL stuff!
Do It Once!

Our institutional social media platforms are interwoven. A social media policy spells out expectations and guidelines.
How does it Work, Really?

Editor’s Workflow

Images gathered during the workday, either by smart phone, via staff Dropbox -- other staff send images to the editor regularly -- or by pulling from AAS Digital Archive (which houses over 100,000 images).

Editor spends 20-30 minutes daily (over coffee!) to post two images, write captions, and manage resulting comments. Hosting a “challenge” increases this time. Posts range from 60 to 100 words each.
Did I Post that Already?

Indexing using #######

AAS-centric tags keep track of postings, help avoid duplication, and aide curatorial and reference staff. List of index headings maintained by editor.
Librarians Love Numbers, Who Knew?

Keeping the Stats for the Boss

- AAS has a Instagram Business account
- Analytics from Instagram & squarelovin.com
- Add about 500 followers/month, reach 14,000-16,000 unique viewers/week, have about 500,000 views/month.
Social Media Benefits to Special Collections

• Raise awareness of organization for low initial costs (caveat: be aware of staff time).

• Promote activities and events.

• Connect with new audiences, including the next generation of special collections users.

• Connect with donors, members, book dealers, and past fellows, as well as like-institutions.

• Highlight the collection.
Successful Strategies for AAS

• Focus on the collection & use those curatorial chops.
• Find the AAS IG voice.
• Focus on core constituencies but not exclusively.
• Don’t replicate work.
• Connect material to today.
• Collaborate! Collaborate!