NASA Social Media: Best Practices

To Post, Or Not to Post? Ask yourself:

- ➢ So what? Why does this matter to our audience? Let the answer tell you what the post's focus should be and what the call to action is.
- ➢ What's the hook?
- ➢ Are we pointing to a specific opportunity?
- ➢ What is interesting or special about their story?

Tagging & Hashtags

- ➢ Make sure the hashtag you use serves a purpose
- ➢ Hashtags should be integrated into the post language, not at the end (see #OpenSience example below).
- ➢ Cluttering posts with too many hashtags can make them visually unappealing and harder to read.
- ➢ Camel Case all hashtags – this means capitalizing the first letter of each word (ex. #NASAInterns, or #CommunityCollegeMonth).

Language Use

NASA Lingo
- ➢ Always assume readers don't know anything about NASA. Even if someone is following your account, it could be shared with someone who doesn't. Don't just assume that acronyms you and your team are well known (ex. Write "SLS, our new and powerful rocket," rather than just "SLS")

Does the post stand-alone?
- ➢ Have you explained any complex topics so that the average layman will be able to understand it without further explanation?
- ➢ What is the call-to-action? Every post needs a link or action for the user

Image Use & Aesthetics

Consider how your social media post will look in someone's feed independent of it appearing on your account. Preview the visuals both before the post goes out and immediately after it published for:

- ➢ Cropping – make sure the image appears in feed as you intended it to (do not cut off people's heads or text in a graphic).

Checklist for Writing Posts

- ❑ Is there a clear call to action?
- ❑ Does the link work and go where it should?
- ❑ Is it clear to the reader where the link will take them?
- ❑ Are the tags and hashtags limited and strategic?
- ❑ Have you explained any acronyms or NASA lingo?
- ❑ Does the post stand alone?
- ❑ Have you previewed the visuals? Do the images crop well (no cut off heads or text)?
- ❑ Are the images appropriate and engaging?
- ❑ Is the graphic text large enough with a legible font?
- ❑ Is there clear and descriptive ALT text accompanying visuals?

- ➤ Accessibility – text size must be easily readable on both a computer and phone screen so make sure it is large enough and the font is legible.
- ➤ Alt text – make sure to add alt text to each image. When posting graphics, break it down into two sections: Image Description and Text Description. Alt text should be detailed description of what the image is (see example to the right).
- ➤ Consider using a relevant image instead of a stiff smile & wave photo or headshot (ex. Aly is working on the SLS and her headshot won't crop well, share a dynamic picture of the rocket instead).

Image description

An astronaut in a spacesuit is at the forefront of this illustration. Their fingers are in front of them, palms facing us. The words "NASA's Curious Universe" are written on their helmet. In the background are a teal grid and line drawings of a rover and a satellite in the dark sky, along with a ribbonlike shape stretching across from left to right. Credit: NASA

Aligning Across Platforms & Strategic Engagement

Tone

- ➤ Across platforms your posts should convey the same tone – think of how you want your followers to see your account: professional? Approachable? Fun & exciting? This can all be conveyed by the language you use.

Diversifying Your Feed

- ➤ Keep followers engaged by sharing different types of content. Use different buckets to group your content: events, opportunity deadlines, success stories, etc. Then monitor the frequency of your posts for each of the buckets to ensure diversity in your feed.
- ➤ Reinforce this by accompanying each post with appropriate visuals that support the call to action.

Utilize Your Network

- ➤ Work with partners to share each other's content.
- ➤ Don't be afraid to reach out with links to your most recent posts and request an engagement of some kind.
- ➤ Act fast! The sooner you can let other accounts know content is coming, the more likely they'll be able to incorporate engagement into their content calendar.
- ➤ Bolster your relationship with your audience by opening two-way communication
  - ❑ Answer FAQs
  - ❑ Pose open-answered questions to hear back from your community
  - ❑ Reply to or share appropriate tagged posts