


*Social media and the transformation of  
brand communication in  
#highereducation*



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# Why'd We Do This?

- Student expectations have changed
  - A 2012 study noted student choose universities with social media clout. Survey of 7,000 high school students revealed that university social media accounts influenced their selections





# Why'd We Do This?

- It's competitive
- Universities are finding it harder to differentiate themselves
- Create an experience





# What Did We Do?

- Content analysis of 71 university Facebook and Twitter pages
- Two separate date ranges





## What'd We Ask?

1. What is the nature of content being posted on these sites?
2. What is the relationship between being responsive to consumers, engaging with the institution's audience, and posting content to keep consumers engaged?
3. What separates active, passive, and inactive social media interaction?



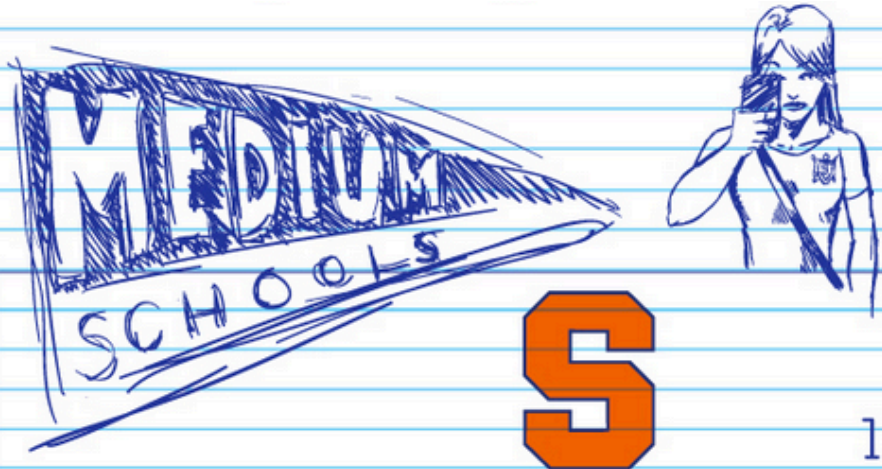
## What'd We Ask?

4. How do these concepts of content generation, engagingness, and responsiveness relate to the sample ranking?
5. Are there any differences in how institutions approach Twitter and Facebook?



\* Large schools = 20,000 or more undergraduates.





2                  3                  4				
5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19
21	22	23	24	25
27	28	29	30	31

\* Medium schools = 7,500 – 20,000 undergraduates.

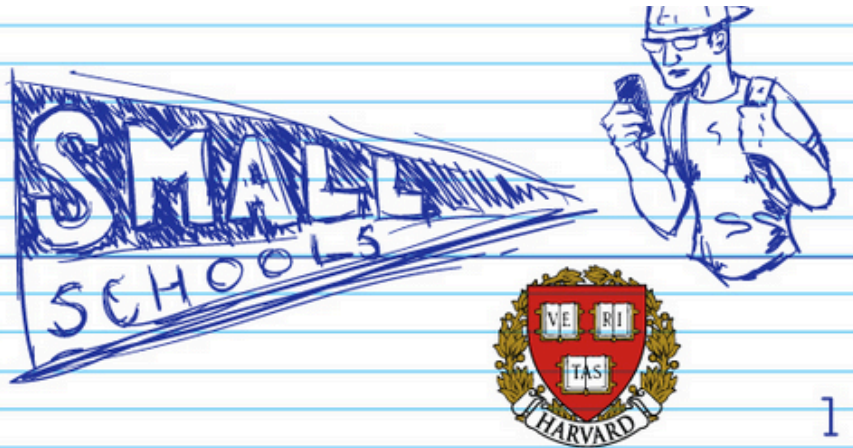


Average: 83



Average Influence: 779  
Average Reach: 5.7















					1
	2		3		4
	5		6		7
	10		11		12
	15		16		17
	20		21		22
	25		26		27
	30		31		32
	33		34		35

\* Small schools = 0 - 7,500 undergraduates.





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Social Rank	U.S. News & World Report Rank		
1	1		Harvard University
2	7		Stanford University
3	29		University of Michigan – Ann Arbor
4	6		Massachusetts Institute of Technology
5	59		Syracuse University
6	84		Indiana University – Bloomington
7	48		University of Texas – Austin
8	2		Princeton University
9	54		University of Florida
10	3		Yale University



# What'd We Look At?

- Content types
  - Events
  - Contests
  - Promotions
  - Brand related
  - Question
  - Participation request
  - Replies
  - Reposts/shares
- Content attributes
  - Text
  - Link
  - Image
  - Video
  - Character count
  - Comment count
  - Tag/mention count
  - Responsiveness
  - Share count
  - Replies
  - Image
  - Video



# What'd We Find?

*1. What is the nature of content being posted on these sites?*

- Average day: 3 posts and 16 tweets
- Events and “brand” related.
- ~45% contained a link, ~47% contained an image
- Only 4.39% of the posts used text and polls designed to encourage engagement.



## What'd We Find?

*2. What is the relationship between being responsive to consumers, engaging with the institution's audience, and posting content to keep consumers engaged?*

- strong, positive relationship between the Facebook wall post count and Twitter tweet count
- rather moderate, positive relationship between the % of engaged Facebook wall posts and the average participation for Facebook
- no significant relationships for responsiveness



## What'd We Find?

*3. What separates active, passive, and inactive social media interaction?*

- 5 inactive
- 17 passive
- 39 interactive
- 11 not included because they were responsive, though not engaging.



A screenshot of the Auburn University Facebook page. The page features a large cover photo of a brick clock tower. The profile picture is the Auburn University logo (AU). The page name is 'Auburn University' with a rating of 4.5 stars (1,359 ratings) and 291,598 likes. Below the name, it says '291,598 likes · 2,902 talking about this · 1,285 were here'. There are buttons for 'Like' and 'Follow'. A '291k' likes badge is visible. Navigation tabs include 'Photos', 'Map', and 'Events'. A 'Highlights' dropdown menu is open, showing an 'Invite Your Friends to Like This Page' section with a search bar and three friends listed: Beth Lancer, Sheila Plemich, and Erin Scala, each with an 'Invite' button. Below this, there is a 'Post' section with a text input field and a 'Post' button. A link post from Auburn University is visible, dated February 3, with the text 'Harold Franklin, Auburn's first African-American student, is featured in this week's Take 5!'. The link is titled 'Take 5 - Auburn University' and includes the URL 'www.auburn.edu'. A 'Reviews' section is partially visible at the bottom.

inactive



**Brown University**

**IMAGINE BROWN 250+**

**Brown University**  
★★★★★ (431 ratings)  
112,604 likes · 2,003 talking about this · 140,181 were here

College & University  
The official Brown University Facebook Page.  
"Like" to stay connected with Brown University.  
About - Suggest an Edit

Like 112k

Photos Likes Student Groups Map

Post

Be the first to write something on Brown University...

**Brown University** shared a link.  
January 28

Dear Members and Friends of the Brown Community,  
The celebration of Brown's 250th anniversary is about to begin! On March 7-8, 2014, Brown will launch 15 months of events and activities with an Opening Celebration on College Hill. Please j... See More

3 Friends  
Connected to Brown University

1 friend likes this

2 friends were here

Invite Your Friends to Like This Page  
Type a friend's name... See All

Olivia Accardo Invite

Paige Brennan Invite

passive



**Boston College**

Like Follow Message

**Boston College**  
★★★★★ (626 ratings)  
81,254 likes · 1,206 talking about this · 159,370 were here

College & University  
The official page of Boston College, a Jesuit Catholic university dedicated to uniting academic excellence with leadership and service to society.  
About - Suggest an Edit

81,254 Likes

BC Instagram YouTube

Highlights

2 Friends Visited Boston College

Invite Your Friends to Like This Page  
Type a friend's name...  
Chenaya Kirsen Devine Invite  
Neal Boswell Invite  
Bryan M. Roberts Invite

Boston College shared a link.  
16 hours ago

Alumna Ingrid Herrera-Yee '97 is in the running to be named the 2014 Military Spouse of the Year! A clinical psychologist, Ingrid is co-founder of the Military Spouse Mental Health Professionals Network and is currently on a team of researc... See More

Military Spouse of the Year  
View the Top 18  
www.militaryspouse.com

interactive



## What'd We Find?

4. *How do these concepts of content generation, engagingness, and responsiveness relate to the Huffington Post and US News and World ranking?*
- no relationship between the average of these three concepts and either the Huffington Post ranking or the US News and World ranking
  - the two social media rankings had very different foci of analysis



## What'd We Find?

*5. Are there any differences in how institutions approach Twitter and Facebook?*

- Significant differences:
  - % of engaged posts and tweets
  - Number of posts and tweets
  - Number of likes and followers
  - Response rate (24 hours)
- The medium is the message



# What Social Media Looks Like at IC

- One full time position
- “street team” of students
- No formal strategy statement yet





# Content Types

- The goal is to engage
  - Clicks, likes, comments, mentions
- Photos, photos, and more photos
  - Showing the campus
  - Nostalgia
  - Tie in Instagram
- News
- Questions (on a news event)
- Contest-ish



A large graphic featuring a heart shape outlined in blue, filled with a collage of various student photos and social media posts. The collage includes images of students smiling, holding signs, and in various social settings. One sign in the collage says 'I love my college'. The background of the graphic is dark blue with lighter blue heart shapes.


**I**

**#IHeartIC**

**IC**



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 **Matt Avara**  
@LittleLionMatt Follow

The view from the top of this hill on campus at IC is incredible

2:22 PM - 13 Aug 2012

← ↻ ★

 **Matt Avara**  
@LittleLionMatt Follow

I like Ithaca College and Cornell University equally, for entirely different reasons

4:44 PM - 13 Aug 2012

← ↻ ★



 **Matt Avara**  
@LittleLionMatt Follow

Ithaca College and Cayuga Lake

3:16 PM - 13 Aug 2012

2 FAVORITES

← ↻ ★

 **Ithaca College**  
@ithacacollege Follow

@LittleLionMatt We guess that's okay. Just don't forget we're on a higher hill! #FakeSmackTalk

4:54 PM - 13 Aug 2012

1 RETWEET 1 FAVORITE

← ↻ ★

 **Matt Avara**  
@LittleLionMatt Follow

@ithacacollege and the view from the top of your hill is unarguably superior

6:40 PM - 13 Aug 2012

← ↻ ★




 **Matt Avara**  
@LittleLionMatt Follow

Syracuse University is probably one of my top choice favorites now!

2:15 PM - 14 Aug 2012

← ↻ ★

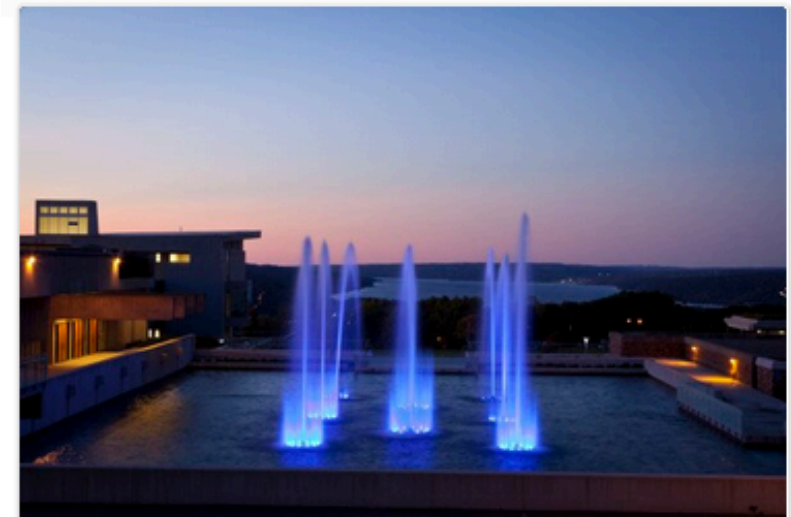
 **Syracuse University**  
@SyracuseU Follow


@ithacacollege @LittleLionMatt Ithaca -- Imma let you finish, but SU has one of the best college hills of all time. #FakeSmackTalk

2:35 PM - 14 Aug 2012

6 RETWEETS 3 FAVORITES

← ↻ ★



 **Ithaca College**  
@ithacacollege Follow

@SyracuseU @LittleLionMatt We're just gonna leave this view right here. [twitpic.com/ajfpk4](http://twitpic.com/ajfpk4) #FakeSmackTalk

3:23 PM - 14 Aug 2012

1 RETWEET 4 FAVORITES

← ↻ ★

 **Matt Avara**  
@LittleLionMatt Follow

So.. I started an argument between SU and Ithaca about their hills.. if y'all are gonna argue, feel free to throw out financial aid packages

3:28 PM - 14 Aug 2012

4 FAVORITES

← ↻ ★




 **Syracuse University**   
@SyracuseU 

[@ithacacollege](#) [@LittleLionMatt](#) Truce?

3:32 PM - 14 Aug 2012

1 RETWEET 1 FAVORITE   

 **Erin Donaghy**  
@ErinDonaghy1 

[@ithacacollege](#) [@SyracuseU](#) [@LittleLionMatt](#) Love this convo going on between the school I graduated from (IC) and the one I grew up with (SU)

3:59 PM - 14 Aug 2012

 **Julie Sharkey**  
@joolzie09 

Loved this! RT [@jdross](#): When Central NY Universities Go To War on Twitter, featuring [@ithacacollege](#) and [@SyracuseU](#) - [bit.ly/RMtiOB](http://bit.ly/RMtiOB)

4:05 PM - 14 Aug 2012

 **Ithaca College**  
@ithacacollege 

[@SyracuseU](#) Truce. You're welcome to visit South Hill anytime - [@LittleLionMatt](#) seemed to enjoy it.

3:45 PM - 14 Aug 2012

1 RETWEET 1 FAVORITE   



# Frequency



- Up to 3 per day
- Longer shelf life
- More interaction
- Tie in instagram



- Up to 1 per hour
- Shelf life of 30 mins
- Live tweeting =  
more frequency =  
loss of followers



This time of year we reflect on the things that we're thankful for at [#IthacaCollege](#) and we're continuously thankful for the amazing students and alumni who have made us what we are. Tomorrow we'd love to hear what you're thankful for at IC. Post a public status update on Facebook, tweet it on Twitter, or show us with a pic on Instagram and tag your post with [#ICThanks](#). We'll be retweeting and regramming your posts all day tomorrow. Have a wonderful Thanksgiving everyone!!



**Emily Haff**  
@PrincessEhaff1

Follow

Thank you [@ithacacollege](#) for giving me a second home full of friends and loved ones. These past four years have been amazing [#ICThanks](#)

9:22 AM - 28 Nov 2013

1 RETWEET 6 FAVORITES



**Rob Engelsman**  
@rcengelsman

Follow

Hey [@ithacacollege](#), thanks for the education, the jumpstart to my career, and the life-long friendships. [#ICThanks](#)

9:29 AM - 28 Nov 2013

1 RETWEET 10 FAVORITES



**Colleen O'Meara**  
@colleenomeara

Follow

Thankful for the incredible & ambitious people I've crossed paths with at [@ithacacollege](#), and always grateful that I'm a Parkie! [#ICThanks](#)

9:59 AM - 28 Nov 2013 from Washingtonville, NY, United States

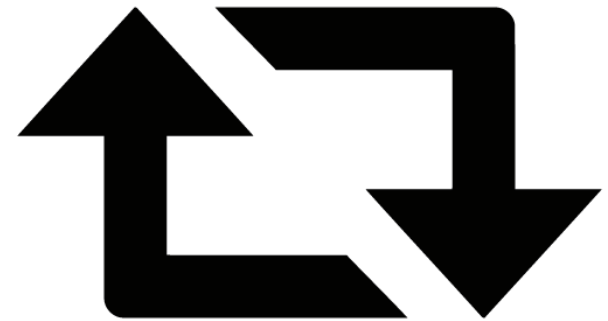
6 RETWEETS 11 FAVORITES

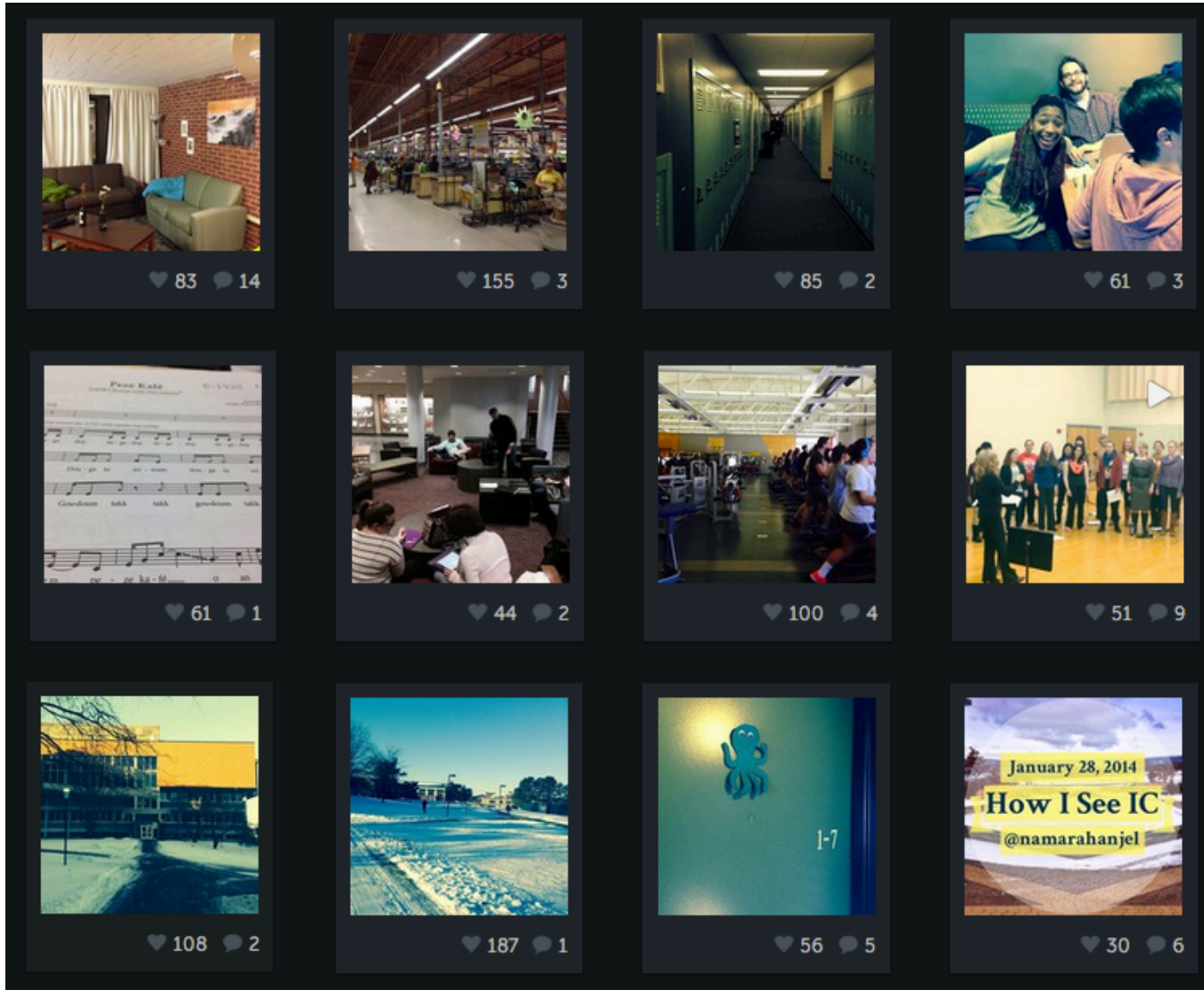




## What Does IC Re-share?

- Anything that puts the school in a positive light
- Unique, interesting to entire audience
  - Prospective students, current, alumni, parents
- Curating content from audience





“Take Over Tuesdays”

How I See IC





# Measuring

- Analytics once a week, then once a month
  - A variety of analytics tools
- Engagement statistics
  - Clicks
  - Shares
  - Comments
  - Retweets
  - Followers
  - Reach
  - Viewing vs. Engaging
- “Like weighing yourself”



# Challenges

- Social media platform changes
  - Facebook changes its algorithm
  - 16% reach to 3%
  - 20,000 impressions to 10,000
  - Facebook wants more promoted posts = \$\$\$





# Social media and the transformation of brand communication in #highereducation



## ITHACA COLLEGE'S #ICLIFE

Ten disposable cameras. Five locations. One authentic view of a day at Ithaca College.

This project comes from Ithaca's student social media team, run by the Office of Marketing Communications. For more information, email [socialmedia@ithaca.edu](mailto:socialmedia@ithaca.edu).

[Learn More About #IClife](#)

[See the Video](#)

[Visit Ithaca College](#)

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o-1\\_brmVmPM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o-1_brmVmPM)



## To Conclude

- Important for institutions to stay interactive to meet expectations
- Promote trusting and loyal relationship
- Rich medium alone not sufficient to carry an active, thriving brand community
- Understand the medium in which they wish to communicate



# Thank You

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aperuta@ithaca.edu