Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum Social Media Visit

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Thursday 22nd March 2018

Our visit to Tuol Sleng Genocide was arranged in collaboration with colleagues of the American University of Phnom Penh, Steve Graham and Dr Theresa De Langis, who facilitated our introduction with Sophara Heng, the director of education at the museum.

In our initial overview discussion session John and I wanted to establish the parameters and expectations of the museum support teams experience working with social media, and to explain the context of our use of social media, and how it is embedded in our taught curriculum with undergraduate students at De Montfort University. [Online resources for our teaching content is available via: https://wiki.our.dmu.ac.uk/w/index.php/Main_Page#Media.2C_Design_and_Production].

Initial discussion identified concerns about:

- Fake Facebook pages.
- Facilitating an audience that is engaged.
- The relationship between theories and concepts of social media use, and the practice of social media engagement.
- Linking with students from the UK as part of the DMU Global schemes as embedded academic practices in our curricula.
- Facilitating and supporting social media activity within the scope of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, which is a priority for DMU.
- Identifying suitable case studies, research methodologies and funding calls in collaborations with Dr De Langis of AUPP.
- Working within the agreed MOU between Tuol Sleng Museum and AUPP to support and assist with communication issues.

John identified a framework of engagement that encompasses the use of media in different forms:

Story	
Film	Photography
Audio	New Media

The categorisation of these media forms is dynamic and changing, and are best comprehended as an interactive set of processes rather than as discreate and separate platforms or practices. They are identified in the context of social exchange and social practice that defines media by a different set of process than those commonly understood in mass-media communications theories, but demonstrate how social interaction has regained currency as a mode of engagement, i.e. sharing and likes, rather than broadcasting and advertising.

John also identified an educational model of engagement that is drawn from his professional practice as a facilitator of community media engagement activities, and the organiser of the Leicester Documentary Media festival [https://docmediacentre.wordpress.com/].

John identified the context of this model in relation to peace education, and how it is important to understand the role that media plays in the steps towards conflict and oppression.

John's shared his experience with developing engagement activities via social media platforms when he was actively promoting and running Citizens Eye in Leicester [https://citizenseyeleicester.wordpress.com/]. John has worked across a range of educational levels, from schools, colleges and universities, as well a professional support and development for charities and social engagement projects.

The model above therefore indicates that a structure of engagement can be developed that steps through the levels of engagement, both directly and indirectly:

- **Awareness:** identify what knowledge and understanding people have of the topic being discussed.
- **Understanding:** developing a sense of how this topic facilitates engagement.
- **Action:** making changes based on the acquisition of new awareness and understanding.

In this sense it is important to facilitate a wider understanding of what people bring with them to an engagement session or activity. What are participants prepared to talk about, and what will they

remain silent about? What do participants have time to reflect on, and what are they simultaneously processing as priorities in their social engagements?

Often parents don't want to tell stories about bad things to their children as a way of instinctively protecting them from difficult social issues and relationships. But is this based simply on a protective instinct, or is it the culmination of a response to fear and the perception of fearful challenges? The role of education, therefore, is to facilitate mutual awareness and understanding of problematic issues so that they can be resolved and assuaged.

Understanding the context of social change is therefore important in comprehending how we retain or lose our appetite for social engagement, and as we now have online digital tools that facilitate social engagement we have to be attentive to the social mechanisms that drive that engagement.

In a world in which we are fighting for the attention of our young people, we should offer plausible alternatives to the commercial and mass media communication processes that are exploited for profit or political gain, and instead think about how social engagement through shared and collaborative forms of media will lead to greater awareness, understanding and reciprocations, building social trust, dispelling embedded myths, and facilitating greater understanding through the use of shared stories that go beyond the official locations and sites from which we are based.

After a tour of the museum with Hang Nisay as our guide, we spent some time observing visitors and watching how people use the spaces and the different areas of the site. Nisay graciously allowed us to record his account as we toured the museum and to share the files for education purposes:
http://robwatsonmedia.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Tuol-Sleng-Tour-RWATSON-JCOSTER-001-22-03-2018.mp3
http://robwatsonmedia.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Tuol-Sleng-Tour-RWATSON-JCOSTER-002-22-03-2018.mp3

In the afternoon session we had a productive session with colleagues who support the education projects and the IT support. What we wanted to find out was to what extent staff at the museum are aware of how people find out about the museum, and to what extent they perceive the role of the museum through social media, and then what they do when they participate in a visit and tour to the museum?

We related a quick set of observations about our immediate perceptions as first-time visitors to the museum, and how other visitors might similarly perceive the symbolic space that the museum represents. It is important to keep engaging in the process of putting yourself in the shoes of the visitor, anticipating what their perspective might be, both in practice and in relation to social media.

John outlined a diagram that can be used to map the different levels of perceived engagement through social media:
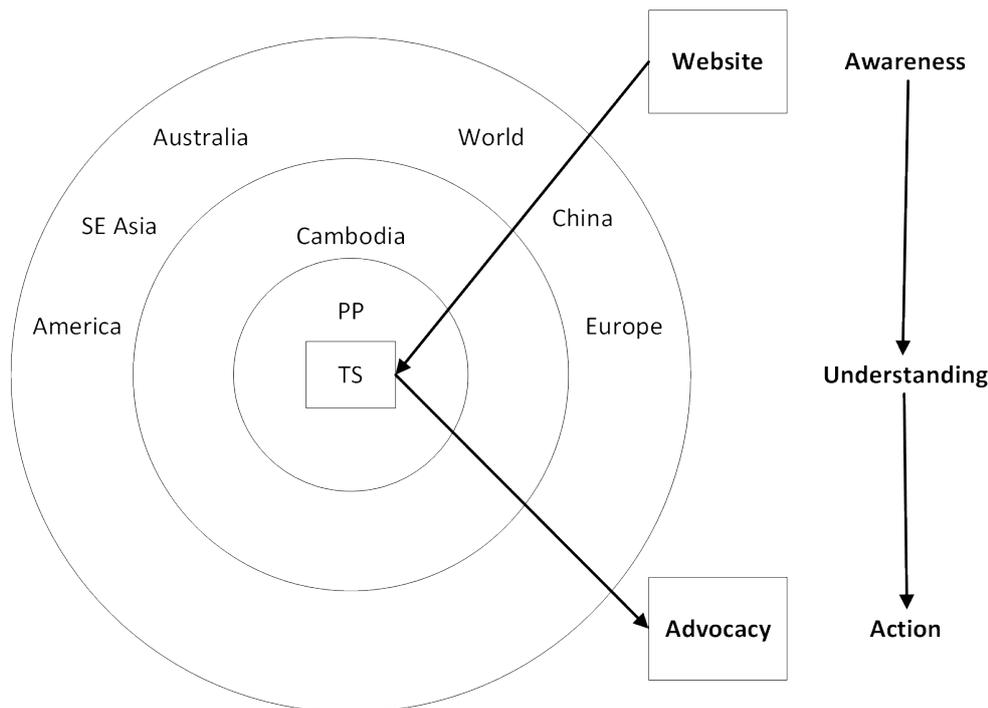
- The website is used for information (i.e. general awareness).
- At which points, then, are different forms of social media relevant and important?
- When does a visitor look at a PC and when do the look at a phone?
- What is the motivation for visitors to 'check-in' using Facebook, for example, and what facilitates the ease with which they feel that a 'check-in' is relevant?
- At what point should visitors be encouraged to 'check-in'?
- What visual images facilitate and support the cues and prompts that visitors need to enable social media actions, especially in a multi-lingual environment?

From our brief observations we can make some immediate recommendations:
- Stop being concerned with sites and social media pages that you can't control, and focus instead on the social media platforms that you do have control over.

- Recognise that your visitors are your strongest supporters and advocates, so use them to tell their families, friends and networks about their visit to Tuol Sleng.
- Produce a small leaflet or flier that you give to each of visitor that asks them to 'check-in' on social media.
- As more check-ins happen, then the difference between the non-official sites will be apparent, and will reinforce your social media presence.
- Use the same banner and icons on your flier and your social media feeds so that they are consistent, and that they match the experience of the visitor.
- Show the entrance to the museum so that when a visitor steps towards the museum they already recognise where they are, and can respond accordingly from this visual cue.
- At the entrance the social media poster needs to be redesigned so that the social media icons are more prominent, and that the text is less dominant.
- Put the social media accounts and the hashtags at the top of the poster.
- Work on the principle that it is better to _show_ than _tell_, and that it is better to _do_ than _show_.
- Look at different examples of 'infographics' that demonstrate how visual forms of action-oriented communication can be used in multi-cultural situations.
- Don't be afraid to ask people to 'please check-in' when they arrive. You are asking people to show their support for a topic.
- Remember that visitors have specifically chosen to visit the museum, they are not attending casually or on a whim, so you already have their support.
- To verify your Facebook page revisit the instructions given by Facebook and action them with verifiable documentation. If you have trouble with this ask Facebook to help. They will.
- Only consider 'boosting' your Facebook page if you have a specific event or activity that you wish to promote.
- Once a visitor has been they are unlikely to return, except for an event, screening, book launch, and so on.
- Thinking with a 'mass-communications' mindset will be problematic, rather foster a social mindset in which you build relationships with your social media supporters and visitors.
- When people arrive and when they finish a tour or leave, ask them if they have 'check-in' to show their support.
- Development of an app needs to utilise RSS feeds to the different social media accounts.
- If you are unsure of what an RSS feed is, you will struggle to develop an appropriate app.
- Look at similar museums for ideas.

- If your social media feeds have very little original content then people will have no reason to follow or engage with you.
- Consider non-cost solutions and practices first, for example http://dearphotograph.com/
- Link your YouTube to other playlists for similar and related media content.
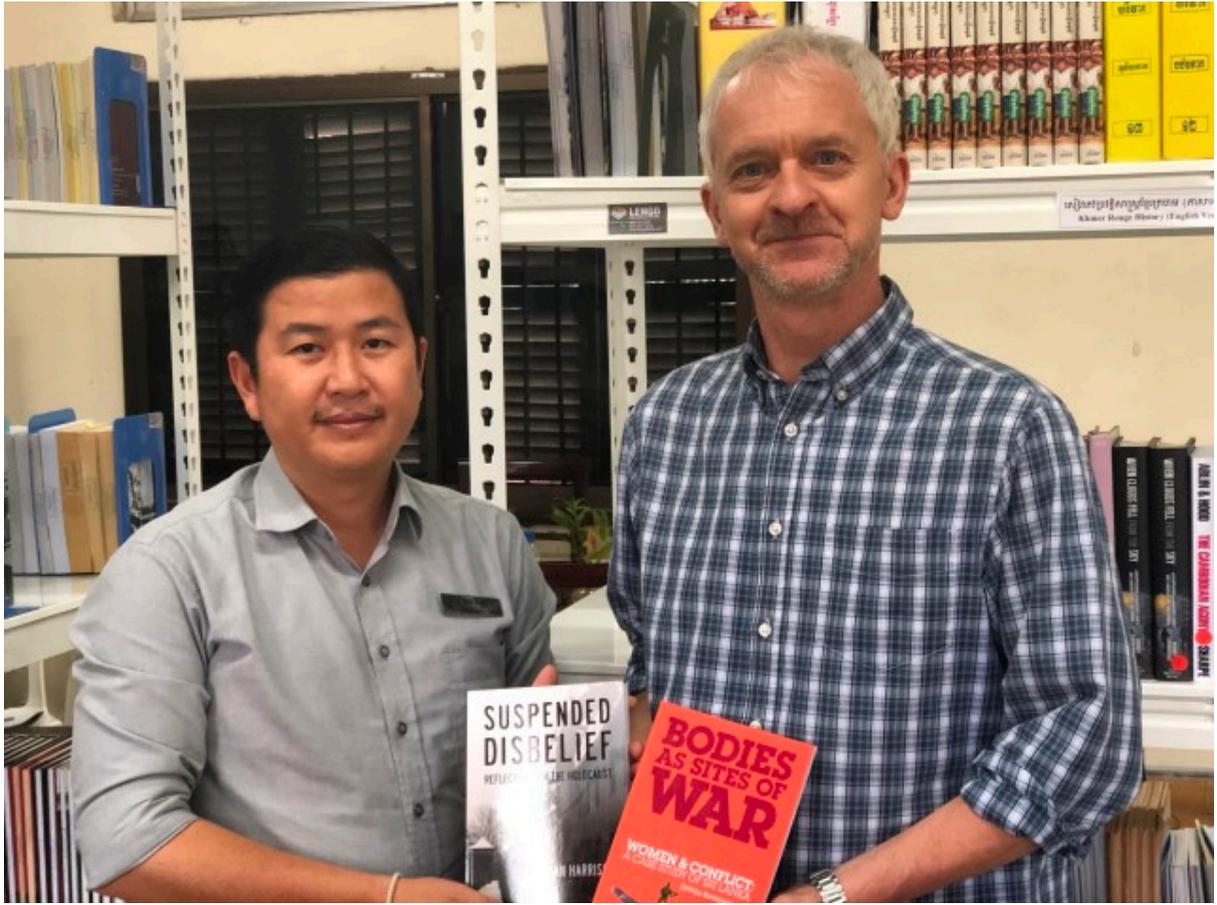
Summary:

For John and Rob being invited to talk to you about social media was a great honour, and we appreciate the trust that was placed in us. We are also grateful to colleagues at AUPP in facilitating this visit, and for integrating this with our wider research-led development activities. We will be returning to Phnom Penh at the end of May, and so will make arrangements to spend more time with you, and to further develop our understanding of your needs and the potential collaborative opportunities for our students at DMU to link with students at AUPP to support your most important work. We are happy to share any media content that we have produced in its original format under Creative Commons Licence https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/

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(Watson, 2018)

Watson, R. (2018). *Report to Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum - Social Media Development*. Retrieved from Leicester: