

Published on Axiom News (<https://axiomnews.com>)

Advance Strategic and Communication Goals with Curation

Leading social media expert Beth Kanter shares why curation is essential for organizations

The Internet is awash with information, but getting good, credible and timely information around a subject matter is not as simple as a Google search. It's for this reason and others that social media expert Beth Kanter says 2012 will be the year content curation goes from an unknown term to the mainstream.

Beth, who is the author of *Beth's Blog: How Nonprofits Can Use Social Media*, defines curation as the art of combing through copious amounts of information found on the Internet, picking the best, and presenting it in a way that helps your audience gain new understanding while also engaging them further in the subject matter.

It's a practice that can yield big results for organizations, furthering their communications strategy or other strategic goals, according to Beth.

"It's helpful for your audience and it can create expertise for your staff," says Beth. "I think it's a highly effective way of advocacy."

The information can be displayed on an organization's website, or in other formats like an e-book or print handout.

Beth points to First Focus, a U.S.-based organization dedicated to raising awareness of children's issues in federal politics, as doing a good job at curating. Its CEO uses his Twitter account to track issues related to child welfare, sharing news and resources while explaining why the information is important.

"He's developed a following because he's this go-to person if you want to know

about children's' welfare issues," says Beth.

Ultimately, Beth says the main reason organizations should look to curate their own content and others, is the ability to cut through the clutter of information, allowing staff, individually and collaboratively, to concentrate on what's important.

"That's what work is becoming about, the ability to synthesize and make sense of information. It's a really critical skill."

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