The use of Facebook in creating police identity

Conference or Workshop Item

How to cite:

For guidance on citations see FAQs.

© [not recorded]

Version: Poster

Copyright and Moral Rights for the articles on this site are retained by the individual authors and/or other copyright owners. For more information on Open Research Online’s data policy on reuse of materials please consult the policies page.
The use of Facebook in creating police identity
Zoe Walkington, Graham Pike, Ailsa Strathie, Catriona Havard, Hayley Ness & Gini Harrison

**Introduction**
Stories communicated on police-owned Facebook sites are a potential place in which identity can be created for forces. Unlike traditional media stories, social media stories are co-constructed by many individuals (i.e. they form a ‘networked narrative’, Page Harper and Frobenius, 2013). What work do these stories do for police identity?

**Method**
Narrative analysis of the most ‘engaged with’ story in a given week

**Police posting:**
- Only mentions the woman and the social media community as characters (not themselves)
- Neutral in tone
- Inclusive of the social media community

**Community re-positioning:**
- Introduce the police as characters, some credit them with case resolution, and others credit the social media campaign “The power of social media great news”
- Other suggest the police are nannying or have wasted resource on this case
- “cant even put ya self on the missing list for a day anymore without ya face being all over social media #Overreacting”

There is no follow up commenting by the police – so all repositioning is done by the public

**Conclusions:**
- Stories are now being told in a fragmented network by the community as well as the police
- New media is still being used by forces as if it were old media (i.e. static and not interactive)
- Dyadic interaction may be an important opportunity for police identity and community building

---

**Story Selected**

POLICE POSTING: “NAME has been found safe and well. Thank you everyone for sharing.”
This is the ending to a story of a woman (early 20’s) who was reported missing while attending a festival.

**Analysis considers**: How the story is told and how it shapes police identity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Police posting</th>
<th>Shares, reactions comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Woman found safe and well.</td>
<td>4181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCTV image of a man police wish to speak to</td>
<td>2051</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Images of a man the police would like to speak to</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>