STORYTELLING TOOLKIT

Publishing Your Project

Smithsonian Institution

MUSEWEB FOUNDATION

This handbook will guide you in uploading your content to free and open platforms. There are many platforms to choose from, but in this handbook we are highlighting the most popular platforms for audio, video, and geolocated content. Popular platforms mean a larger potential audience for your content. Other platforms to think about uploading your content are WikiCommons, Tumblr, and Vimeo. There are many other free and open platforms, so if you have a favorite, upload your content there, too! And remember to upload your projects to the Museum on Main Street website as well (launching soon!).

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PUBLISHING YOUR PROJECT

Introduction

Whether you're an experienced storyteller or you're picking up a microphone for the first time, you may still have the same question, "Where do I post my story after I've created it?"

In conjunction with our Be Here projects about place-based storytelling, we've used and reviewed a number of free platforms where storytellers can post their content.

How-to Guides

We proide key tips how to use the platforms. However, the nature of online platforms is that they are ever changing. As a result, we encourage you to google online for how-to videos on each platform you are interrested in using. Often these online videos, pictures or guides can explain much more then we ever could in this toolkit, and can be more easily updated by the individual platforms. If we have found an online guide we particularly like, we have shared the link, but if it does not work for you, there most certainly will be others.

Project Parameters

MuseWeb's aim is to democratize cultural conent, giving everyone an opportunity to document a place, event, or experience that has significance–historically or even emotionally. We're helping people record and share stories about American places and traditions that are rooted in experience and accrued knowledge, not just facts and dates.

Based on those project parameters, we researched free, third-party platforms that will host these types of stories. All of the platforms could work well, depending on your content/audience goals. Nonetheless, with our project goals in mind, this is how we ranked the platforms:

1 **Ease of use–Is it techy?** Does it require advanced knowledge?

2 **Shareability** – Can you share directly to social media?

3 **User base** – Is there an audience? will your content will be seen?

4 **Searchability** – Can you find your content once you've post it?

5 **Story type** – Are there a variety of stories/content posted?

6 **Geolocation abilities** – Can you pin your story to a location?

7 **Accessibility** – Are there options for captioning, adding transcripts, does it work with the major accessibility programs, etc.?

8 **Longevity** – Do we expect the platform be around the next couple of years?

Read through the WHY of our ratings. All of these platforms have utility and may be perfect for individual or organizational storytellers, depending on short-term and long-term goals. The highest rating is 5 stars.

YouTube

(4.5 out of 5 stars)

If your project is a video, you can upload it to YouTube. YouTube is the largest and most popular online, free video sharing platform in the world. Once your video project is created, you can upload it to the site.

PROs:
- Easy for first-time users; No tech skills required
- Can share to major social platforms
- 1 BILLION active users
- Access to stats for free!
- Allows you to create playlists for various videos
- Offers additional videos for users when they play a similar video
- Works in tandem with Google's My Maps
- Ability to translate metadata into multiple languages
- Allows you to geolocate video location
- Very robust analytics
- No limits to number of videos you can upload
- Has withstood the test of time in the tech sense
- Allows for stories about everything!
- Has new geolocation abilities

CONs:
- Video Only
- Searchability–So many videos that yours can get lost unless the tags are very specific

Why pick this option?

You want to upload an unlimited amount of free video content, are interested in access to detailed analytics, and want maximum exposure. Ease of use is paramount to you. You have a vested interested in the accessibility of your stories.

Basic Steps of Uploading a Video

- Create a youtube or google account.
- Sign into your YouTube account (or google account).
- Click on "Upload" at the top of the page.
- Before you start, you can chose the video privacy settings.
- Select the video you'd like to upload from your computer.
- edit the basic title. Well-written titles can be the difference between someone watching and sharing your video, or scrolling right past it.
- Edit the description. You can think about the description as two parts - what viewers see before they click "Show more" and what they see after. Consider prioritizing the first few lines of your description to describe your video because it's what viewers will see first.
- Edit the advanced settings of the video. Consider adding keywords as tags that your audience will likely use when looking for the videos.
- Click Publish to finish uploading a public video to YouTube. If you set the video privacy setting to Private or Unlisted, just click "Done" to finish the upload or click Share to privately share your video
- Learn more: **https://creatoracademy.youtube.com**

SoundCloud

★★★★⯪ **(4.5 out of 5 stars)**

If your project is an audio project, you can upload it to SoundCloud. SoundCloud is the world's leading social sound platform where anyone can create sounds and share them everywhere.

PROs:
- Easy for first-time users; No tech skills required
- Can share to most major social platforms (Many social media platforms don't allow direct upload of audio files)
- 175 million monthly listeners
- Allows you to hear the latest posts from people you follow
- Great searchability for tags
- Unlimited description field for posting transcriptions of your audio content
- Allows you to make your content available via Creative Commons licensing
- Access to stats for free!
- Allows you to create playlists for various stories
- Accepts multiple file types, including .mp3, .wav. You can even upload a video file and it will extract the audio
- Has withstood the test of time in the tech sense
- Allows for stories about everything!

CONs:
- Audio Only
- Can only upload 180 minutes of content for free. Pro account starts at $7 per month

- No geolocation capabilitiesvery specific

Why pick this option?

You want to upload a limited amount of free content and get the maximum amount of exposure for it. Ease of use is paramount to you. You're interested in quickly retrieving and showing off your content.

Basic Steps of Uploading a Audio File

- Create a user account. Soundcloud allows using your email address, google+ or facebook to create an account.
- Sign into your Souncloud account.
- Click on "Upload" at the top of the page.
- On the Upload page, you can either click 'Choose file to upload' or drag and drop the file into the screen.
- Once you have selected your audio file, it will immediately start uploading and SoundCloud will transcode it to be streamable.
- While your track is uploading, you can add any additional track information, privacy settings, and sharing settings.
  Think about adding album artwork as image (max 2mb) an original track title (up to 100 caracters), tags (to help identify what kind of sound your track is, and makes it easier to find.
- Learn more: **http://help.soundcloud.com**

Clio App and Website

★★★★ **(4 out of 5 stars)**

If your project is rooted in history, and want to make it locateable on a website as well as an app, you can upload it to Clio. Though it has a small userbase, it is rooted in academia, and allows you to connect your content to other acedemically and professionally vetted content and locations.

PROs:

- Easy to use without advanced knowledge
- Ability to share stories on multiple platforms
- Allows for upload of images, audio, video, text
- Presents geolocated point on embedded Google map
- Allows user to search for different types of locations and by distance from your current location
- Can be used to create connected walking or collections tours
- Content about a location or site can be edited or improved, much like Wikipedia model
- Includes a citation generator for help with crediting
- Mobile app available for exploring content on site

CONs:

- Fairly small usage compared to other platforms, but platform is growing with content available in many cities across the U.S.
- Content must be reviewed by developer before posting
- Stories more historical in nature–not necessarily about experience

Why pick this option?

You're telling stories about specific locations or historic sites. You believe in free and open content, and you'd like your content to be reused or used in study. Your content is about a building, natural resource, or historic site as opposed to a story about experiences, perceptions, memories. (Note: Those types of stories may be included as complementary content as it relates to a specific location.)

Basic Steps of Uploading a Cultural History

- Log-in or set up a new account in Clio. Click on the green "Login/Register button in the top right corner of the screen.
- Determine whether a museum, gallery, or historical landmark is already in Clio.
- If the location does not yet exist, click on the green "Submit Location" button. You must be logged in to see this button.
- After clicking on "Submit Location" we see this screen which allows us to enter the location of the historic site or museum.
- As a safeguard against duplication, you will be asked about nearby entries, and confirm they are not the same
- The next screen is where you enter all of the information. We recommend using a word processor to compose the more lengthy parts of your entry. You may also save your work periodically.
- This platform request all the sources you used to create the entry, photos, and links to relevant websites, articles, books, and media
- When you are done, click on the green "Create Entry" tab. That's it! New entries appear in draft mode until approved by an administrator.
- Learn more: **http://help.soundcloud.com**

Smithsonian Museum on Main Street Website

 (3.5 out of 5 stars)

If you want to preserve your project in a national collection, you can upload it to Smithsonan's Stories from Main Street Website. The Stories from Main Street Website is part of the Smithsonian Travelling Exhibition Service Museum on Main Street Program. It's goal is to collect stories throughout the United States.

PROs:
- Longevity and security–story becomes part of a Smithsonian archive
- Easy to use and upload–no tech experience necessary
- Allows for all types of stories, both historical, personal and experiential
- Allows users to upload text, images, audio, and video
- Easy to navigate share function–Easily locate your content after upload
- Story narratives and transcription options increases accessibility

CONs:
- Cannot share stories directly onto social media
- Must upload consent forms for minors if included in stories
- Doesn't include robust geolocation feature
- Website only, no current app in use
- Limited user base (website has only been live since November 2016)
- Stories are moderated and will be reviewed before posting

Note: The Smithsonian partners with MuseWeb on the production of this toolkit as well as other digital cultural storytelling projects. Their website is still actively growing and improving, and functionality may be added over time.

Why pick this option?

If you want to add your story to be preserved in a long term archive and enter it into a Smithsonian collection, this is the website for you. You do not need to worry what form of storytelling you do, as the website accepts all kinds of forms: audio, video, text etc.

Basic Steps of Uploading a Story

- Register and Login
- Once registered, you go to the Share Your Story Screen
- Fill out the form describing your materials
- Begin to upload your media and story. Up to 500 words describing your story narrative and up to 5 media files of images, video, or audio.
- If materials include minors an additional release form needs to be uploaded.
- Review your submission and agree to the terms of sevice
- Receive an email indicating that you've submitted your story and it is being reviewed.
- Once story has been approved by staff, you receive an email saying "congratulations" with a link to your story.
- Learn more: **https://museumonmainstreet.org/stories**

Google's My Maps

★ ★ ★   **(3 out of 5 stars)**

If your project -at its core- is related to points on a map, you can use google's My Maps. Using google's powerful mapping software, you are able to create your own points of Interrest, and even link them to some of the other platforms mentioned in this toolkit.

PROs:
- Allows you geolocate your story; draw lines; add photos to a map point
- Google's usage is ubiquitous. Users are comfortable with the interface
- Can be shared to Facebook, Twitter, Google +, email
- As a Google product, it has a higher probability of long-term sustainability
- Ability to import Google images into pins
- Since it's only a link, the story link can be about anything

CONs:
- Not as easy for first-time users. No tech skills required, but platform not entirely intuitive
- Cannot add audio files to pins–only videos or links to YouTube
- While everyone uses Google Maps, YOUR pins and YOUR map content doesn't come up in the general search. The idea here is that you'd create a map to locate your story and then share the link to your map.
- Not as accessible as other platforms, though description fields are available for annotations

Why pick this option?

You want to visually show content on a map. You already have content on YouTube and want to easily connect the two. You want to upload an unlimited amount of free content. You are already tied into everything Google.

Basic Steps of creating a My Map

- Create Gmail or Google+ account
- go to **mymaps.google.com** and login with your google account
- Click Create a new map.
- In the left panel you can name your map, add layers, change your map icons and more.
- using the location marker button, You can create points on the map using gps coordinates, addresses or simply scrolling around the google map and dropping a pin.
- Once you dropped the pin, you can add pictues, youtube videos, or links to other platforms like soundcloud. you are also able to add a discription.
- After you finish creating the point of interrests on your map, you can share the map and chance the map settings from "private" to "public" and share with anyone or embed it on a website.
- Learn more: **https://www.google.com/maps**

Wikimedia Commons

★ ★ ★   **(3 out of 5 stars)**

If your projects goal is to create a creative commons archive anyone can access, use and reuse. Wikimedia Commons, known for of course Wikipedia, is world's largest crowd sourced encyclopedia of information. Due to its mission, large userbase and goals, it is also a platform with certain longevity.

PROs:
- As a branch of Wikipedia, this platform has staying power
- Includes options for an infinite amount of metadata
- If tagged correctly, search function works well
- Geolocation capabilities
- Over 30 million files uploaded
- Easily allows you to make your content available via Creative Commons licensing
- Feels more like a "traditional" database for archiving content
- Accepts video, images, and audio and allows for unlimited descriptions
- Stories can be about anything!

CONs:
- More techy than other platforms noted
- Category tagging is complex
- Only accepts .wav audio files
- Isn't a direct share on social media but does generate shareable links

Why pick this option?

You're already familiar with Wikimedia in all its forms, or have an interrest to learn more about it, and willing to spend the time to learn the techy environment.

You believe in free and open content, and you'd like your content to be reused or used in study. You're interested in posting content for the long haul.

Basic Steps of Uploading a Story

- Create a user account. You need an account on Wikipedia or Wikimedia Commons to upload files.
- Images that you upload to Wikimedia Commons have to be educational and freely licensed.
- Go to the Upload Wizard on Wikimedia Commons. There is an upload file link in the menu on the left of the page.
- Click Select media files to share and find the image or images you want to upload on your computer.
- Click Continue and select the options that apply to your upload, as prompted. When you are done, click Next
- Organizing and describing your upload
- Enter a title for the image. Use plain, descriptive language. Then enter a description of the image and the date it was created.
- Help organize Wikimedia Commons by assigning categories to your file. When you are done, click Next.
- After this, your upload will be published and complete.
- Learn more: **https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Commons:First_steps/Uploading_files**

Historypin

★★★ **(3 out of 5 stars)**

If your project is an audio project, you can upload it to Historypinn.
SoundCloud is the world's leading social sound platform where anyone can create sounds and share them everywhere.

PROs:
- Robust map search function allows you to select pins on the map to view
- Is a very social platform: Allows posting directly into social platforms; Like Pinterest, allows users to repin content; Can favorite content
- Large user base: 85,730 members are working on 27,844 collections and have made 33,536 comments
- Platform has been around for a while and seems to have staying power
- Allows users to create collections
- Content about a location or site can be edited or improved by community

CONs:
- ANot as user friendly as Clio. Though visually stunning, the user interface is a bit confusing
- This is a more visual platform–making the best use of text and image. If pinning audio or video, you must do so through YouTube. (If pinning audio, YouTube requires you to convert the files to a slideshow.)
- Because of its focus on the visual, is not as accessible a platform.
- Stories more historical in nature–not necessarily about experience
- From their FAQ site: "We only "pin" things that have a specific date and location as this makes things easy to find and more useful for users."
- A desktop experience: No mobile app currently in use
- Keyword or tag function often yields no results

Why pick this option?

Why pick this option? You want to upload a collection - or multiple collections- of historical content that and it important to view on a map. it has a reasonable large user base, and appears to be a stable platform that will not dissapear overnight.

Basic Steps of Uploading a Story

- Create a user account. On any page of thewebsite, click 'Join'.
- If you have a Google account, use you account and password to login. If not, click 'Register now'. This will open a new tab where you can go through the process of setting up a new Google accout.
- To pin content, from anywhere on thesite, click 'Pin'.
- Decide to upload photos, video, or audio, and click the approrpiate icon.
- Click 'Add File' or alternatively simply drag files into the box.s
- When you see a green tick, your content has uploaded. you can then Pin to Map, to add information to your content. or Pin Later, to simply save content to your profile.
- You can then add a description, information about the license you would like your content to have, and add information about who created the content, and link if it is stored elsewhere.
- Also, here add a Date, or tick the box "I am not sure". You will be asked to give an estimate.
- there are also options to add your photograph to streetview.
- Learn more: **https://www.historypin.org/how-to/**

Adding Your Project to the Community

At the end of your audio piece, your video, or your tour, please include a way for others to connect your stories to many others that are part of a larger storytelling initiative.

The following line can be read or written into your content:

This [tour, video, or whichever format] was made for Be Here: Main Street, a program created by the MuseWeb Foundation, in collaboration with the Smithonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES).

It's also a great idea to include the hashtag, **#bHereMainSt** in your description, keywords, or tags. This is a way for anyone to explore the richness of the stories submitted on various platforms, whether they are on YouTube, SoundCloud, Facebook, or izi.Travel. Please add the hashtag (**#bHereMainSt**) in your content, perhaps as the last frame in your video and in the textual description. From a practical point of view, including the hashtag is an important way for you to track your own content, related content, and to respond to what others may be saying about your story on social media.

If you'd like to alert Museum on Main Street and MuseWeb about your fantastic, newly posted content, please add our handles to your social media content, and be sure to use the **#bHereMainSt** hashtag.

Facebook

https://www.facebook.com/museumonmainstreet
https://www.facebook.com/museweb

Twitter

@museumonmainst
@museweb