

Breathing life into a social media program: Strategy, planning, and experimentation



*United Nations Statistical Commission and Economic Commission for Europe
Conference of European Statisticians
April 27, 2015 | Washington, DC*

*By
Dale Sweetnam*

Overview

- Introduction
- Creating a strategy, following a plan, focusing on content
 - The importance of developing a strategy
 - Creating a plan and sticking to it
 - Creating effective content for Twitter, Facebook, Flickr, LinkedIn
- The social media results
- Social media lessons learned
- Concluding remarks
- EIA social media links

Introduction

- The U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) established a social media presence in 2009 with the launch of its Twitter account
- EIA then introduced a Facebook page in 2012
- By the end of 2013, EIA had not yet tapped into additional social media audiences that could be reached with new social media platforms.
- In early 2014, EIA determined that it needed to jumpstart its social media program with a comprehensive social media strategy.



The importance of developing a strategy



U.S. Energy Information Administration social media assessment and strategy

- Basic Tweet:

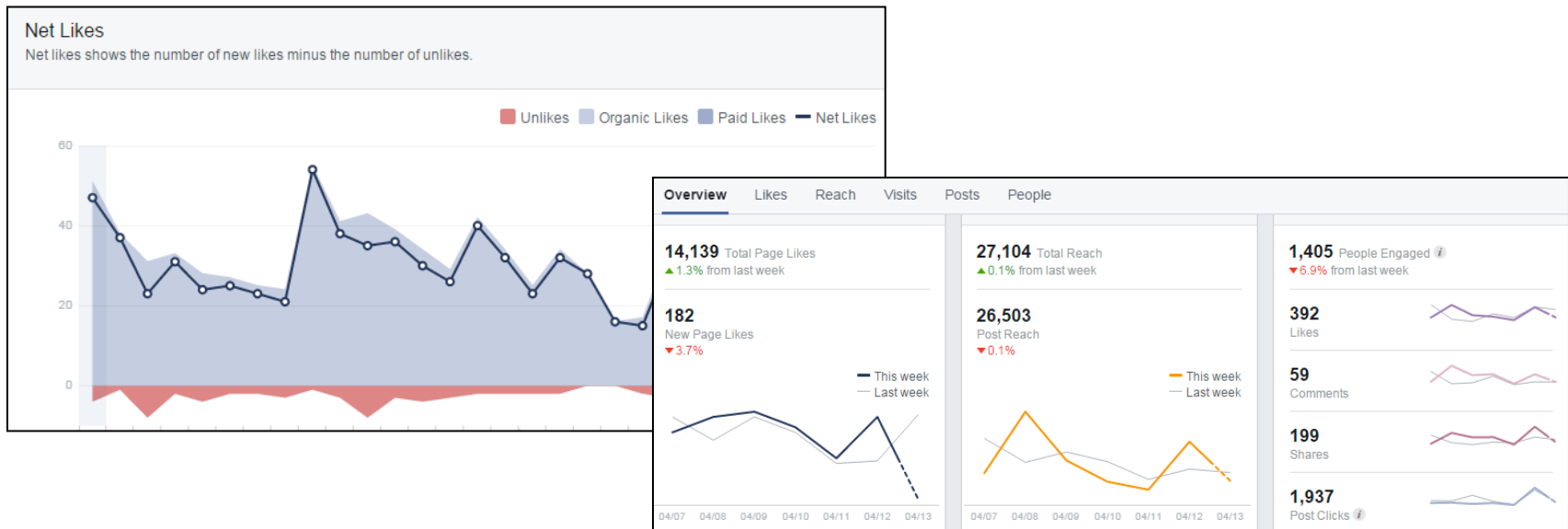


- **More compelling Tweet:** "Light it up! #SuperBowl stadium has 900+ LED fixtures powered by 1,350 solar panels <http://ow.ly/t9BRL> via @EIAgov

- The EIA social media strategy, drafted in early 2014
- EIA was committed to expanding its social media impact in 2014, and the step-by-step approach resulted in unprecedented growth
- EIA essentially doubled its social media influence in one year by committing to a strategy
- Developing a sound and detailed social media strategy helps determine what content works best on each platform.

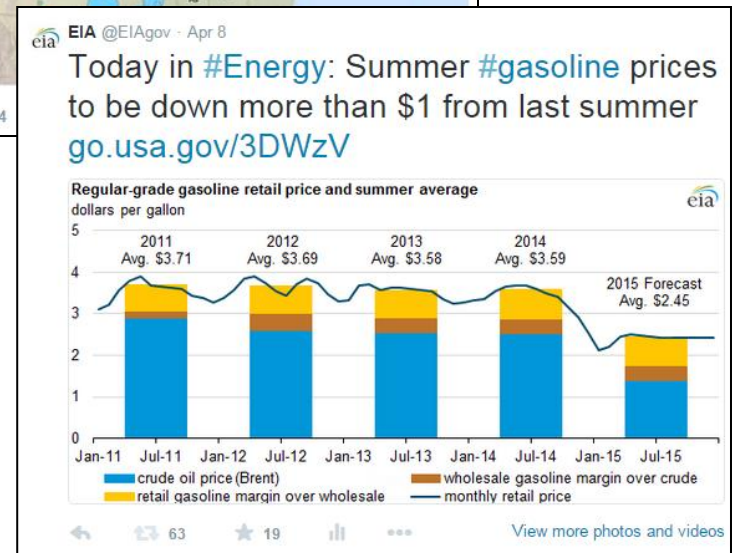
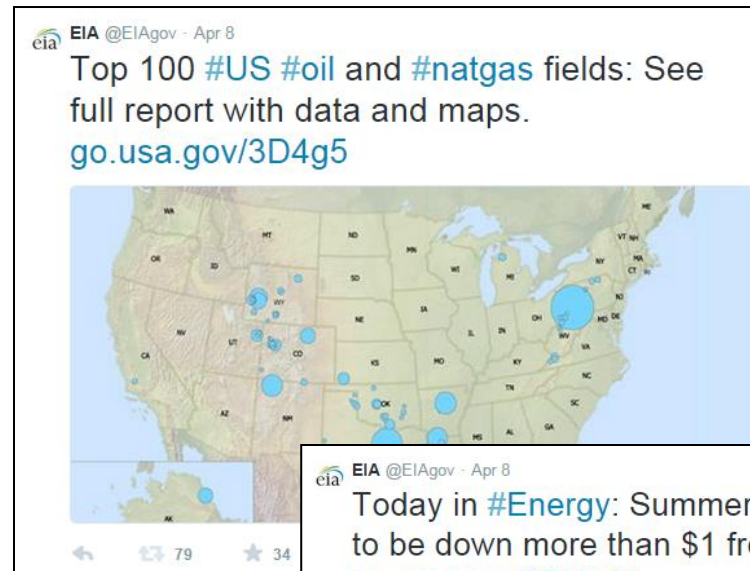
Creating a plan and sticking to it

- EIA researched and analyzed several aspects of its social media program before drafting the social media strategy
- Once EIA had an understanding of its social media potential, the agency was able to draft a social media strategy
- Using the EIA social media strategy as a foundation, EIA took a systematic approach to increase the size of its social media audience



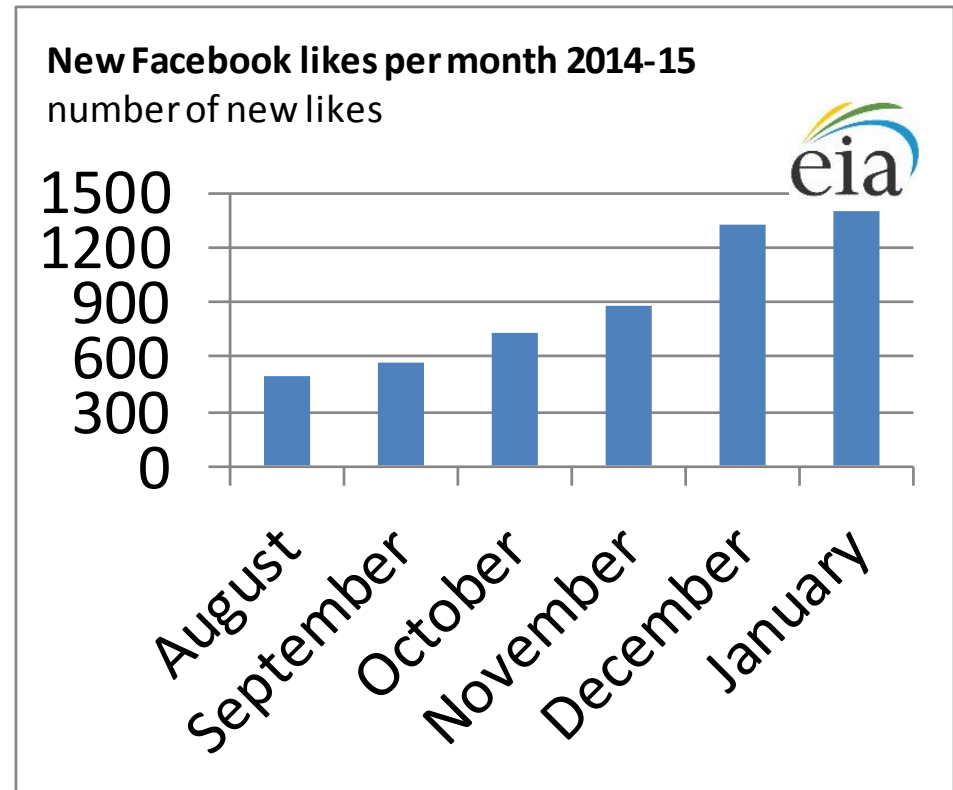
Creating effective content: Twitter

- Twitter is EIA's most influential social media presence
- EIA's Twitter account has the second-largest group of followers among all principal statistical agencies in the U.S. federal government
- In 2014, EIA made a few Twitter content and management changes, and EIA has continued to improve its efforts on Twitter in 2015.



Creating effective content: Facebook

- Like all organizations currently using Facebook, EIA had to determine how to respond to the platform's declining organic reach
- EIA refused to accept that the falling organic reach trend was irreversible
- EIA put in place several measures that helped reverse the trend of falling organic reach



Creating effective content: Flickr



- EIA's Flickr page was launched in May 2014. The Flickr page provides users with an avenue to view graphs, charts, maps, and other images produced using EIA's data and analysis

- As of April 2015, there are more than 400 images on the Flickr page, including many graphs and maps from *Today in Energy* articles

Creating effective content: LinkedIn

- EIA's LinkedIn page is designed to communicate EIA's mission, highlight EIA employee culture, advertise EIA products, highlight EIA employees, and announce open positions
- The LinkedIn page demonstrates EIA's desire to vary the content it features on its social media platforms.

U.S. Energy Information Administration Looking for a career in energy? Have you checked out EIA's job openings lately? EIA is looking for energy professionals to fill several positions. Submit your application today.



Career Opportunities

eia.gov • Join our team of professionals who provide comprehensive, reliable data, analysis, and forecasts to industry, government, media, academia, and the American public.

Like (7) • Comment • Share • 2 months ago

U.S. Energy Information Administration During October, a select number of EIA employees were chosen to participate in George Mason University's (GMU) Leadership Action Certificate Program. The course used many different exercises and techniques to help the participants master the... more



Like (7) • Comment (1) • Share • 4 months ago

The social media results

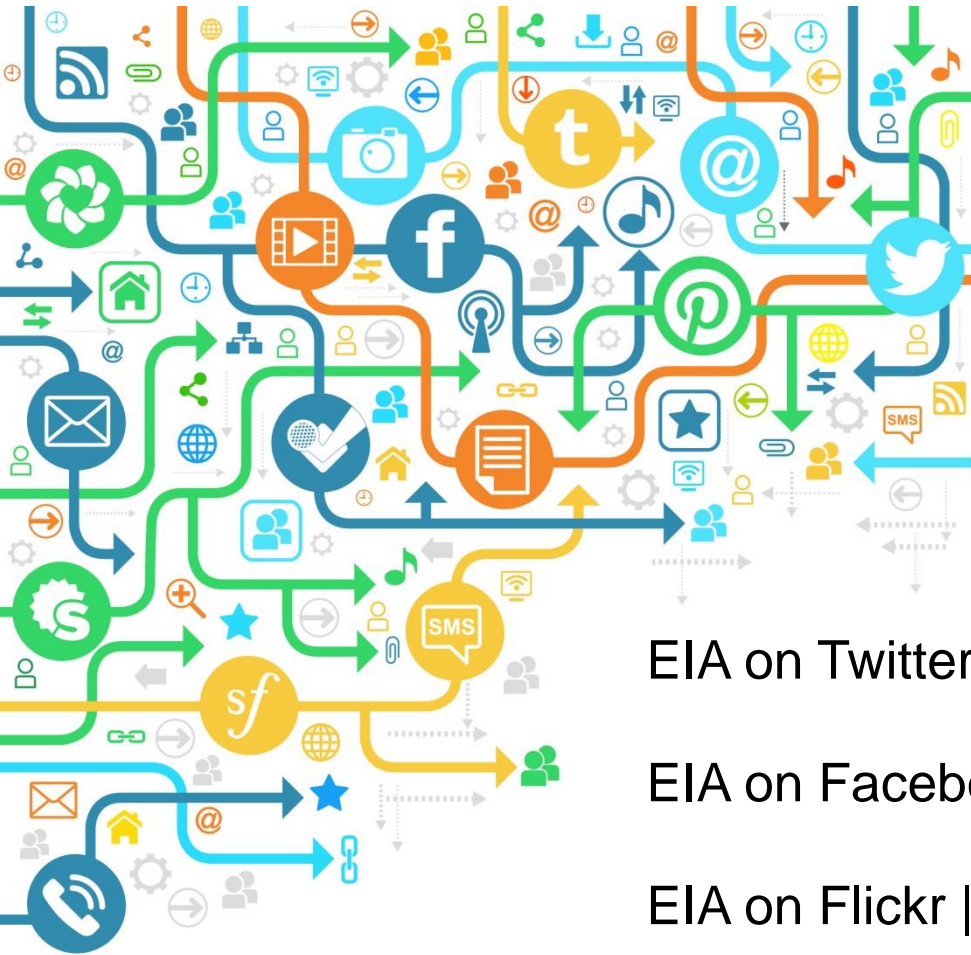
- EIA's Facebook account that had struggled to gain footing in an environment of falling organic reach (627 new likes in 2012, and 3,603 new likes in 2013) grew by 151% in 2014 (6,415 new likes)
- EIA's commitment to Twitter best practices resulted in 70% growth in 2014
- In January 2014, EIA Facebook posts seldom resulted in more than 900 impressions, by March 2015 posts frequently topped 4,000 impressions
- EIA now regularly tops 2,000 new Twitter followers a month and should hit 60,000 followers by August 2015
- At the current pace, EIA expects to hit 1 million Flickr image views by early 2016



Social media lessons learned

- EIA's social media audience responds positively to educational content
- Knowing your social media audience and adapting to their needs is essential
- Strong visuals are essential
- Maintaining a balance when featuring content about energy sources can be challenging
- Social media programs can't go dark on the weekends
- Meeting with social media managers in other agencies helps expand social media exposure
- Setting social media goals is essential, but it's an imperfect process
- Social media adaptation is vital to social media success
- Hiring or designating a staff person to serve as your social media manager is critical

EIA's social media links



EIA on Twitter | www.twitter.com/EIAGov

EIA on Facebook | www.facebook.com/eiagov

EIA on Flickr | www.flickr.com/photos/eiagov

EIA on YouTube | www.youtube.com/user/EIAGov