Instagram Guidebook: WPI Storying Climate Change

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Prague B22 Storying Climate Change Team

Introduction

      Welcome to the WPI Storying Climate Change Instagram Guidebook. During our time in Prague, the Prague B22 Storying Climate Change team created an Instagram account for the initiative to be used by future teams as a means to increase the visibility of climate stories and reach a greater audience. The team created this guidebook to teach students how to effectively use the @wpistoryingclimatechange Instagram account. The guide primarily focuses on topics such as formatting posts, scheduling posts, building connections with other climate-oriented figures on the internet, and promoting the Instagram account, but does not include details of general Instagram functionalities. The ultimate goal of this guidebook is to aid future groups in furthering the WPI Storying Climate Change initiative with the use of Instagram.

I. **ID2050 Preparation**

It is imperative that groups work to build their network as early as possible (during ID2050, preferably) to assist with acquiring potential interviewees for the data collection period of IQP.

- Develop a survey **during ID2050** to collect the information of potential interviewees and preliminary data
    - Survey should collect demographic information, a few general thoughts on climate change, and serve as a way to recruit interviewees
        - Allows the respondent to get a feel for what the team may ask in an interview
    - Promote the Instagram account in the survey
    - Send the survey to organizations or established contacts
- Reach out to organizations or established contacts at the project site location **during ID2050** and continue through the IQP project term
    - Our group saw more success reaching out via Instagram DMs than over email
    - Organizations can include, but are not limited to, universities or climate change activism organizations at or near the project site location
    - Include survey when reaching out to them – either in the introductory message or after receiving a response from them
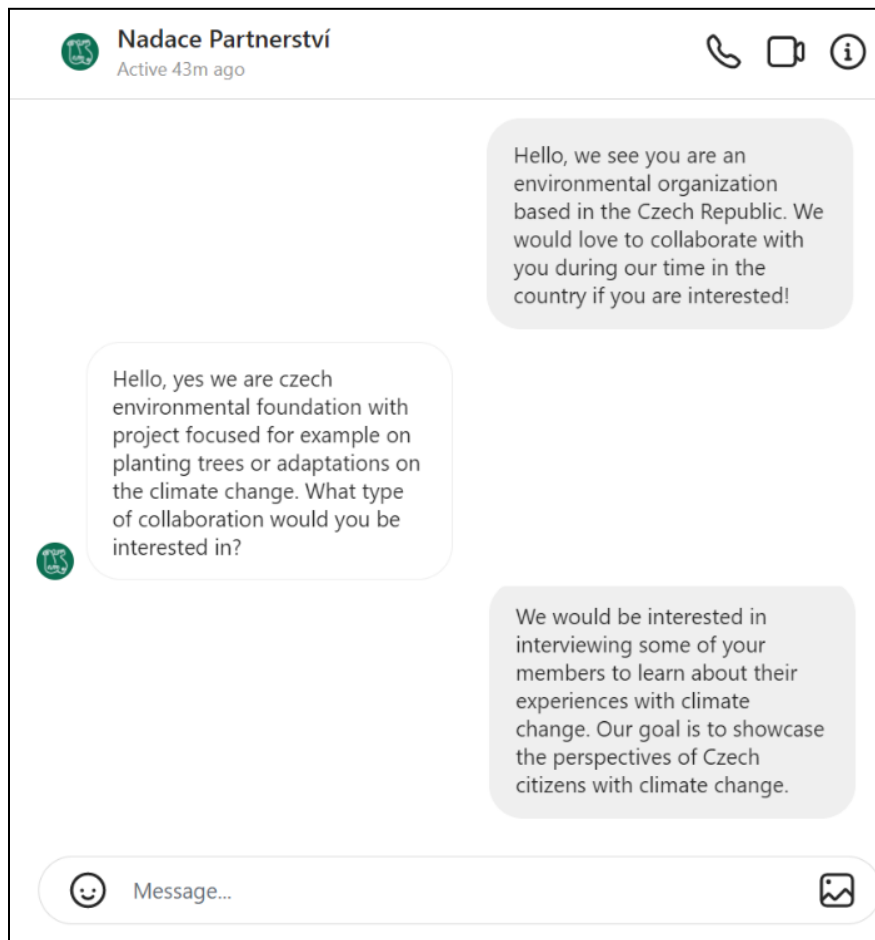   - Suggest that organizations distribute the survey to its members

II.   How to Reach Out to Others in the Same Space — Instagram & Beyond

Building a network is key for pushing the initiative and giving the climate stories the exposure that they deserve. Groups can develop connections with others in the climate change space by following other Instagram accounts and reaching out via Instagram direct-message (DM) or with an email.

- Follow climate-related accounts and hashtags
    - Research climate activism accounts in the specific project city or country and look for their Instagram accounts
    - Follow climate-related hashtags to locate climate accounts
        - #climatechange, #climateactivism, etc.
            - If languages other than English are spoken at the project site location, following these hashtags in the local language(s) may also be useful
    - Follow local hashtags to discover accounts prominent in the project location
- DM accounts of organizations & activists on Instagram
    - Look for local organizations — can be anything from environmental groups to climate activists to national parks & zoos
        - Seek groups that are very active on Instagram or have less followers as response rate is much higher for these groups
    - Write as succinctly as possible and use simpler English if not located in a predominantly English-speaking area
        - Introduce the team
        - Speak briefly about the initiative
        - Mention something fairly specific to their organization and request that they fill out a survey
    - Write respectfully and enthusiastically to avoid coming off as banal or unprofessional, especially in DMs
        - Be careful not to appear superficial in an attempt to act enthusiastic
            - Do not overdo it with exclamation points
            - Do not use emojis unless they respond with emojis

○ An example DM:

Nadace Partnerství
Active 43m ago

> Hello, we see you are an environmental organization based in the Czech Republic. We would love to collaborate with you during our time in the country if you are interested!

Hello, yes we are czech environmental foundation with project focused for example on planting trees or adaptations on the climate change. What type of collaboration would you be interested in?

> We would be interested in interviewing some of your members to learn about their experiences with climate change. Our goal is to showcase the perspectives of Czech citizens with climate change.

Message...

- Email organizations
  - Similar to the DM on Instagram, but more formal
    - Ask for interviews, but also include consent form ideas (will not post content without consent, interviewees can remain anonymous, etc.)
    - Utilize direct-message structure in emails, but use a more formal approach
    - Include a link to the survey to collect contacts and preliminary data
      - Briefly describe the purpose of the survey

○ An example email:

WPI Storying Climate Change

Herberich, Chase <caherberich@wpi.edu>

Tue 11/8/2022 2:25 PM

To: amnesty@amnesty.cz <amnesty@amnesty.cz>

Cc: **gr-Climate-B22 <gr-climate-b22@wpi.edu>**

Hello,

We are a group of undergraduate students at an American university completing a project on the effects climate change in the Czech Republic. We are interviewing Czech natives and members of Czech environmental organizations to gain insight into what climate change means to people in the country and eventually create a repository of climate change narratives for a university-wide initiative.

Seeing that your organization works to fight against injustice, would any of your staff be interested in participating in an interview with us about climate change in the Czech Republic? One of the topics we are covering is climate injustice, and we feel Amnesty members may provide a unique perspective on the matter. Our interview material is used in our Instagram account (which is linked below in the email signature), along with supplemental material that would serve to educate our followers on different aspects climate change and environmental studies.

Best regards,

Chase Herberich
Isaac Krieger
Timothy Lee
Terrence McFarland

Worcester Polytechnic Institute

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/wpistoryingclimatechange/

III.   <u>Story Collection</u>

Before the storytelling begins, it is important to consider the technical aspects of recording stories to make high-quality, professional Instagram posts and Reels. This will require more than just your cellphones.

- A Canon DSLR camera owned by a team member was used by the Prague B22 team to record video
    - Renting a similar camera from WPI is recommended
- A microphone that the interviewee can clip to an article of clothing and includes a muffler is recommended
- Audacity is a free audio software that was used for the Prague B22 project
    - Allows users to easily import audio and chop audio clips
    - Includes effects to remove background noise
- iMovie is Apple's free video editing software that was used for the Prague B22 project
    - Video clips and music can easily be imported
    - Makes splicing together footage easy

IV.   <u>Instagram Post Format</u>

In terms of formatting Instagram posts, one must consider which content best suits each post type, what makes a post engaging, and how each post type grows the account — along with the initiative — in its own way.

- General post formatting
    - Develop a consistent color scheme that is visually appealing and unique to the specific project site
        - For example, the Prague B22 team used colors from the Czech Republic's flag:
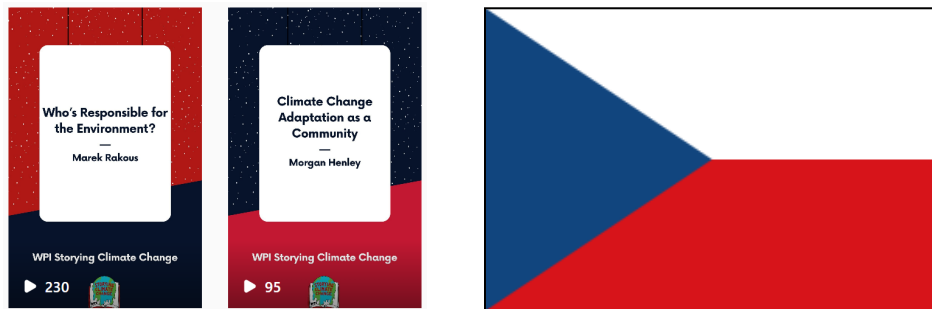
- Educational/Informative posts
    - [Canva](#) is a good tool for making Instagram slides
        - Easy-to-use and free slide templates catered to Instagram post formats
        - Free creative graphics to complement templates
        - Collaboration between users
    - Draw from background section to situate the project's social problem in posts
   - While the first post can be a "meet the team" post:

■ Others should serve to raise awareness about the underlying problems behind climate change:
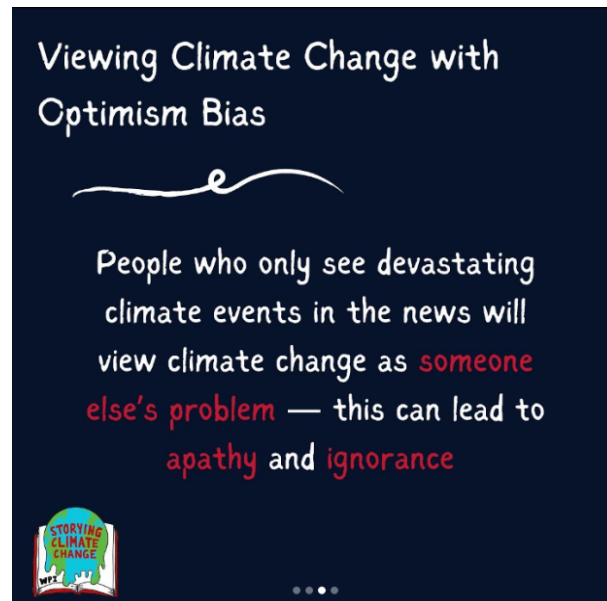
○ Structure
  ■ Cover slide - image, title, and the logo in the bottom corner
  ■ Content slides - short bullets or long sentences (that would take up the whole slide), with smaller supporting images and the logo in the bottom corner or center:

- Stories — The most casual form of content to be posted
  - Groups can experiment with the following story posts that our group wishes we incorporated into our posting strategy
    - A picture of an on-site interview the team has conducted with a caption
    - An example of climate change effects or injustice
    - Showing the project team's progress
    - Promoting the @wpistoryingclimatechange account itself
      - Promotion can include pushing the project account's own posts to its followers via story posts (adding a new post to the account's story):
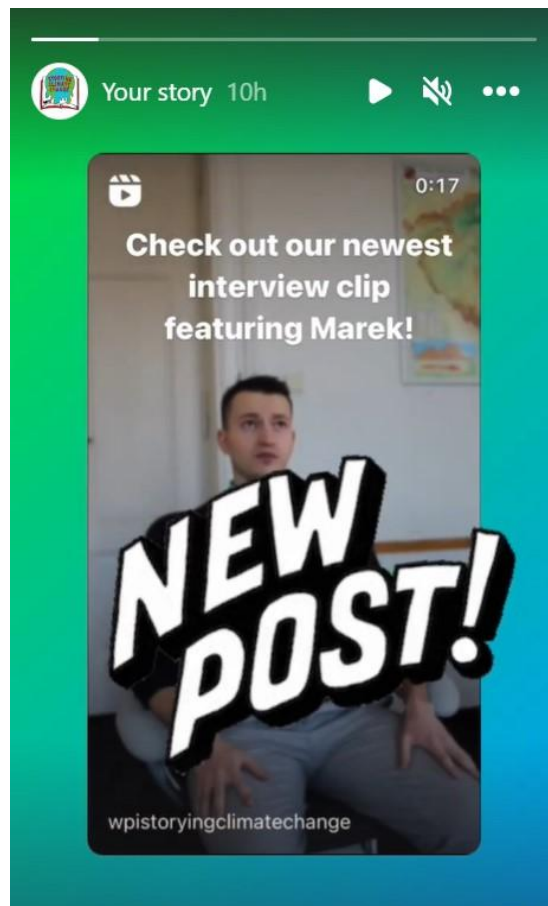
  - Reposting other climate organizations' posts on the project account's story can also be beneficial for building a network with other Instagram accounts in the same space
  - Make a Story Highlight for the project site at the end of the term
    - Title the Highlight with the location of the IQP
    - Include all story posts that the team made so that users can view the more casual content alongside posts and Reels

- Reels
  - Interview clips
    - Edit footage from recorded interviews
      - Audio should be processed and then synced with video to create high quality interview clips
      - Provide subtitles at the bottom of the video for clarity
    - Include a thumbnail for the reel (Canva is recommended so that the same template as all other posts can easily be replicated)
    - Caption should attempt to relate the interviewee's comments to important topics from the background chapter that show up in the informative slide posts:

> **wpistoryingclimatechange** In our second clip with Morgan, we talk about how individuals and communities can take action to adapt to climate change and limit emissions. Change requires both individuals and the institutions that serve and organize our communities.
>
> #climate #climatechange #climateaction #climatejustice #environment #green #greencities #climatestories #wpistoryingclimatechange #wpi #prague #czechrepublic #czechia
>
> November 14

  - Other clips
    - Filler shots to showcase local climate change effects and climate action or activism at the project location
      - Damage from natural disasters and climate events, activism, or practices that individuals/corporations are doing to combat climate change (recycling, green space on office buildings, etc.)

○ An example of climate activism for filler content may include graffiti or signs from a protest:

- ■ Caption should describe the area(s) in the shots
  - ● Provide context as to how the area(s) may have been affected by climate change

V.   <u>Utilizing a "Test" Instagram Account</u>

A "test" account exists to allow groups to check how posts will look in the feed before posting them to the main account.

- There is an alternate Instagram groups to conduct a trial run of posts before going public with them on the main account to avoid any potential formatting issues that may arise when uploading video content to Instagram and confirm that the caption has no errors
- It is recommended that groups utilize this account, especially for posts involving video content
    - Make sure that the quality, aspect ratio, and thumbnail are all to the group's liking
        - The post can then be replicated on the main account to go live with the official post

VI. <u>Order of Content on Instagram</u>

It is important to consider how often to post and what kinds of posts to make in order to maximize the effectiveness of the Instagram account. Preparation of content ahead of time and following a posting schedule are two ways that will make management of the Instagram account easier during the project term.

- Build up a large collection of content (Reels, informational posts, etc.) before the halfway point of the project term to continue to use once data collection ends
  - This will allow for consistent posting as the writing portion of the IQP project increases during the final weeks
  - Frequency of posts is also important; posting often will increase the amount of users that see the stories
- Create a 7-week outline using a GANTT Chart as in the following based on the team's findings:

Post Category	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7		
Introduction Posts	✓								
Informative (Educational) Posts	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Nature Reels		✓		✓		✓			
Interview Reels		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Update Story Posts	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Promotional Content	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Wrap-up & Thank You Posts						✓	✓		
									KEY
								Must-do:	Optional:
								✓	✓

VII.   How to Promote an Instagram Account

The main purpose of the account is to give exposure to the initiative and allow climate stories to be heard. Thus being able to promote the account effectively is of great importance. Contacting WPI-based organizations, subtle promotion when communicating with others, and utilizing Instagram's hashtags are some of the ways that promotion can be done.

- Contact faculty in the EVE/Sustainability department, the Green Team club, or other sustainable organizations/clubs at WPI to promote the account
- Use a set of hashtags in every post underneath the main caption:
    - #climate
    - #climatechange
    - #environment
    - #green
    - #climateaction
    - #climateactionnow
    - #storytelling
    - #nature
    - #conservation
    - #wpi
    - #wpistoryingclimatechange
        - Use **#wpistoryingclimatechange** in EVERY post, this is a unique hashtag created for our initiative
- Other hashtags that are more specific to the post may be utilized — it is up to the project team to decide which other hashtags are appropriate
- Promote the Instagram in email signatures (seen above in the example email)
    - Logo picture
    - Link to the project account
- *If* WPI makes funding available or if the team decides to invest money in advertising, it may be beneficial to look into promoting individual posts on the account by using the "Boost post" feature that Instagram provides

<u>References</u>

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