

The National Great Rivers
Research & Education Center



Update on NGRREC Social Media

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Introduction

Social media is an essential part of today's increasingly digital world. Not only can it be used to communicate with those around you but it can also influence lifestyle choices, purchases, who you surround yourself with, and what companies or organizations you become involved in. NGRREC is a highly regarded Research Center located in Southern Illinois. We aim to enhance our visibility and engage with a wider audience through our various social media platforms. Demonstrating our active presence across all platforms, we hope to carefully select and curate content that best represents NGRREC on each specific platform.

Social Media Starting Points

As of November 2023, NGRREC has four social media accounts, of which three are currently active. These social media accounts include Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and though not currently in use YouTube. Each account has had varying levels of success in this past year with the most successful (solely based on followers) being Facebook with 2506 followers and the least successful (of the active accounts) being Twitter with 514 Followers.

Facebook - @National Great Rivers Research and Education Center
Instagram - @TheNGRREC
Twitter - @NGRREC
Youtube - @NGRRECOfficial

Demographics

Each social media platform has a unique audience tailored to it. While there are some general similarities in each demographic range these differences are essential to keep in mind while managing an organization's social media accounts. By tailoring content to each platform, audiences may become more engaged over time.

Anticipated vs. Actual Age Groups

Facebook Typical: 25-34 (31.5%)² NGRREC: 35-44 (26%)
Instagram Typical: 25-34 (31.2%)² NGRREC: 35-44 (31.4%)
Twitter Typical: 25-34 (31.5%)² NGRREC: NA

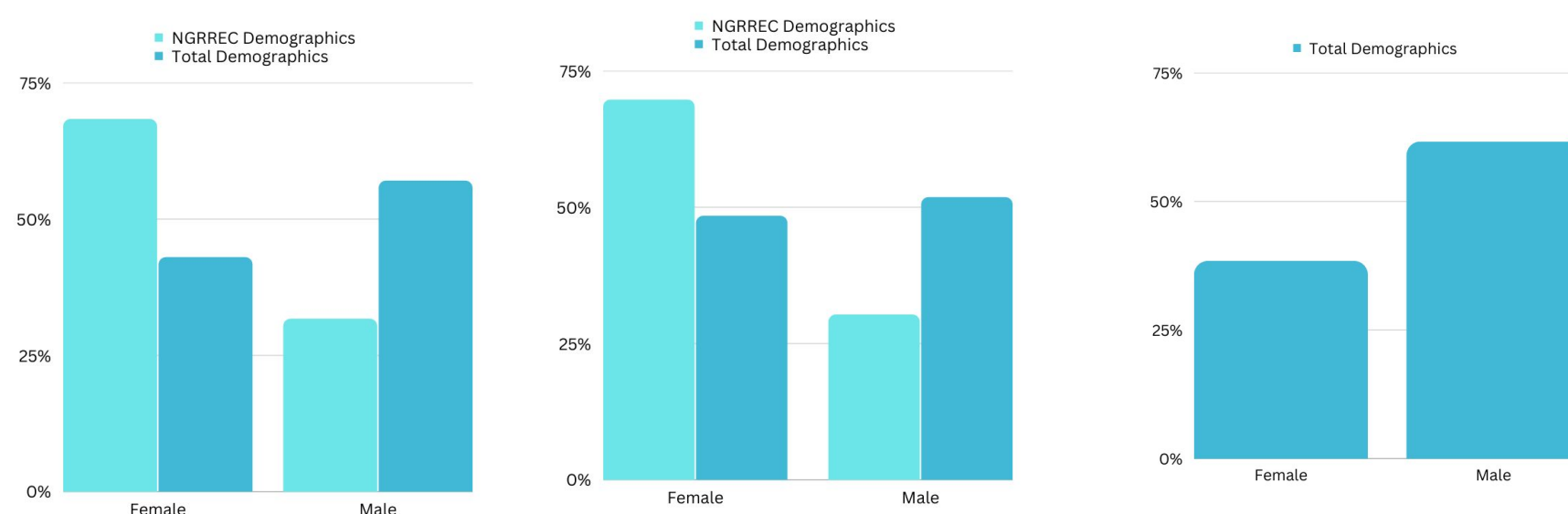
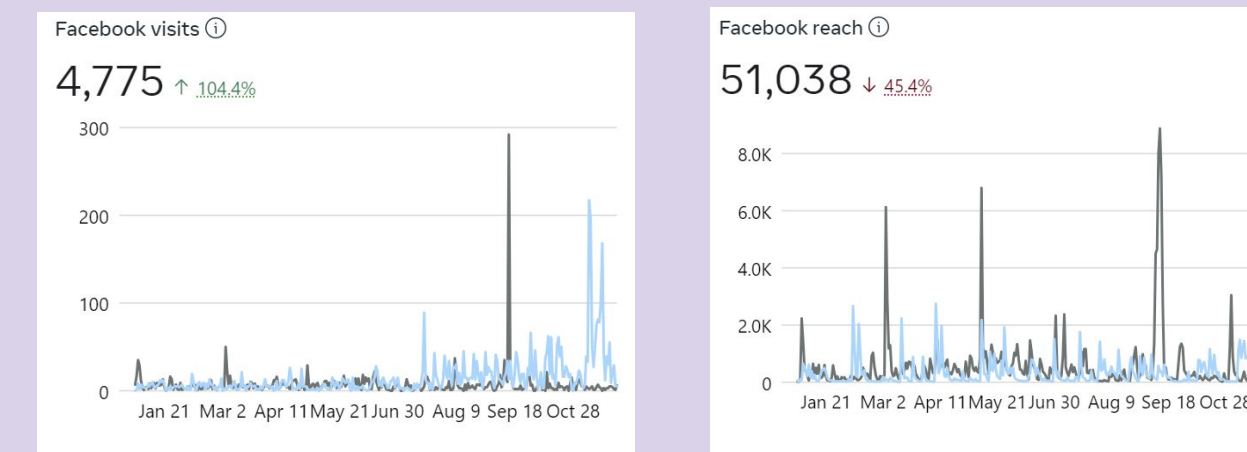


Figure 1. (Facebook) Figure 2. (Instagram) Figure 3. (Twitter) These graphs show the comparison between anticipated user gender distribution for each social media and NGRREC user gender distribution.

Facebook

Created: April 2011
Monthly Users : 2.91 billion²
Followers: 2,506
Followers as of Fall 2022: 2,361
NGRREC Age Group: 35-44 [26.00%]
Reach (Since January 2023) : 51,038
Reach (January-November 2022): 90,400

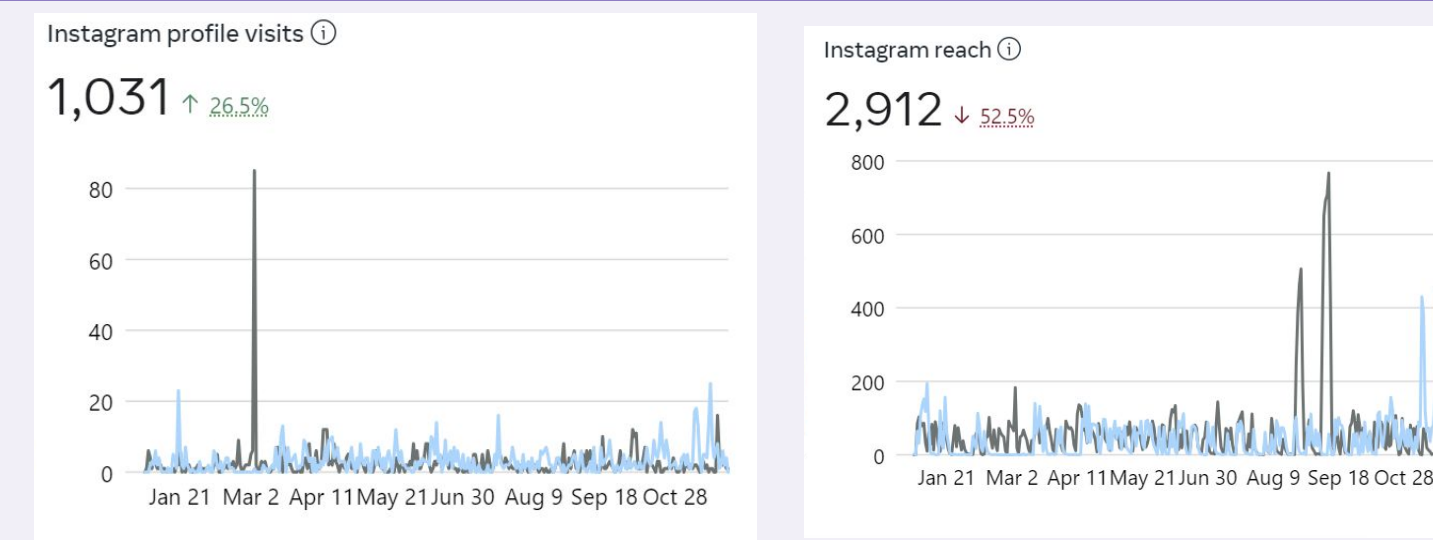


According to figure 5, provided by Meta analytics, NGRREC has seen a 45.4% decrease in reach when comparing January 2023 to January 2022 from November 2023. This may be explained by NGRREC's lack of utilization when it comes to paid Advertising in the 2023 social year. In comparison, NGRREC has seen a 104.4% increase in visits with steady spikes beginning July 2023 and continuing to late November 2023.

Figures 4 and 5 (Meta). In each figure the blue represents 2023 and grey represents 2022. In the grey we can see large spikes around September of 2022, where NGRREC invested in a paid ad campaign. In comparison 2023 sees spikes in late October to early November

Instagram

First post: November 17
Monthly Users: 2 Billion²
Followers: 636
Followers as of Fall 2022 : 439
NGRREC Age Group: 35-44 [31.40%]
Reach (Since January 2023) : 2,912
Reach (January-November 2022) : 5.690



According to the provided data, the NGRREC Instagram profile visits have seen a substantial increase of 227.8% compared to last year. This growth is attributed to the positive impact of heightened Instagram content posting, with a notable surge in Instagram content interactions by 239.4%. Instagram still is struggling unlike its counter part Facebook but has seen the most increase in percentage.

Figures 6 and 7 (Meta). In each figure the blue represents 2023 and grey represents 2022. In the grey we can see large spikes around September of 2022, where NGRREC invested in a paid ad campaign.

Twitter or X.... Threads??

Over the last year, Twitter has consistently been in the spotlight within the realm of social media, often for reasons that weren't necessarily positive. In 2022, Elon Musk acquired the platform, and it has since been referred to as X. Since the takeover, X has experienced a decline of approximately 32 million users⁴. Presently, Elon Musk's behavior on Twitter is not characterized by a professional demeanor. He has reposted tweets that may be interpreted as having antisemitic or racist undertones.

NGRREC manages two social media platforms within Meta. Additionally, Meta has introduced a new platform named Threads. Threads, as a platform, exhibit a friendlier atmosphere compared to X, displaying a heightened sensitivity to censoring inappropriate content. As of now, Threads does not feature any in-app advertising promotions; however, it is linked to the user's primary Instagram account⁵.

X Account Information

Account Created: July 2009
Monthly Users 2022: 211 Million²
Monthly Users 2023: 56 million
Followers: 514 (up from 510 Fall 2022)
Following: 287 (up from 258 Fall 2022)
Reach (Since July 2022) : 5,132

Threads Account Possibility

Account Created: November 2023
Monthly Users 2023: 100 million
Followers: 0
Following: 0

References

- Barnhart, B. (2022, April 19). *41 of the most important social media marketing statistics for 2022*. Sprout Social. Retrieved November 13, 2022, from <https://sproutsocial.com/insights/social-media-statistics/>
- Barnhart, B. (2022, October 27). *Social media demographics to inform your Brand's strategy in 2022*. Sprout Social. Retrieved November 13, 2022, from <https://sproutsocial.com/insights/new-social-media-demographics/#facebook-demographics>

Results (Strengths/Weaknesses)

Based on the reach and engagement, all social media accounts received moderate to low engagement during the year, with a few spikes about once a quarter.

Strengths

- Our Brand Messaging comes across very clearly in our posts - especially our dedication to unbiased research and education about our freshwater systems
- We have seen an increase in followers since Fall 2022
- On most platforms, our page is the first search result for the phrases "NGRREC" and/or "National Great Rivers Research and Education Center"
- Almost every post in the past 3 months has reached at least 100 people and had 20+ engagements
- The boosted post from November 17th has already reached around 8500 people
- Improvement when responding to comments

Weaknesses

- There is an inconsistent use of hashtags, some posts are overloaded while some have none
- Inconsistent usernames can make it hard to find each one of our pages
- There is no clickable link to our other pages on most platforms
- One-sided interactions with our audience
- No clear posting schedule
- We have yet to utilize any of Facebook's short video features
- Youtube has posted content in the past year, however it has not been advertised

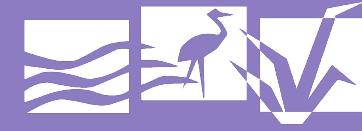
Looking Forward

In the future, we aspire to boost activity across all of NGRREC social media accounts, recognizing that heightened engagement correlates with increased visibility. By fostering more interactions, we anticipate a surge in views and likes, promising positive data in the upcoming term.

- Emphasizing the utilization of ads on Meta platforms is encouraged, as it has proven to enhance profile visits based on the results from the last term.
- Prioritizing easy-to-access content involves incorporating concise and relevant captions on each post, while also utilizing hashtags strategically to enhance discoverability.
- Avoiding unnecessarily lengthy descriptions ensures a streamlined and engaging user experience.

Acknowledgements

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Future Plans

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What are the series we want to create?

This upcoming semester we plan to create 3 unique series of shorts that will introduce our audience to the work that NGRREC does. These series will be released 1 to 2 times a week and will be on a regular rotating schedule.

The first series we will be releasing is currently titled “Welcome to NGRREC” this series will focus on showing our audience around the NGRREC facilities and giving them a brief introduction to the space that NGRREC calls home. This series will be a collaboration between Makhia and Kaz.

The next series, currently titled “Wild Misconceptions” will focus on exploring some of the misconceptions surrounding species that NGRREC staff and interns have or are working with such as Bats, Tree frogs, and Bees. This series will be a sole project animated and created by Kaz.

The final series “Final Thought” will focus on introducing our audience to the policies surrounding NGRREC and our work with them. This series will prioritize creating an unbiased environment for our audience and encourage them, to explore more of the policies that affect their world. This series will be a sole project created by Makhia,

Why do we want to explore this route

One of the biggest issues that NGRREC has faced with its social media is a lack of consistent posting that our audience can look forward to. By creating a consistent schedule you encourage your followers to revisit your page but also show your audience that your team is committed to maintaining your social media presence and wish to connect with your audience. However, with recent staff changes, NGRREC has been unable to dedicate the manpower to focus on areas such as this.

Goals for series

1. Creating a Regular Posting Schedule

As mentioned before one of the biggest recommendations when it comes to maintaining a social media fan base is to have a consistent posting schedule. However, because of the nature of NGRREC posting that is often hard to achieve. In order to combat this we want to begin releasing a series of videos/content every Tuesday and Thursday so our audience knows what to look forward to.

2. Demystifying NGRREC and Our Work

One of the biggest issues science faces when it is shared with the public is the idea that scientists are the bourgeois in comparison to the public. In order to combat this we want to find a way to make science entertaining to watch, easy to digest, and diverse.

3. Forming Bonds With Our Audience

Another important point when it comes to maintaining a social media presence is the ability for one to form a bond or relationship with one's audience. Through these videos, we hope to give our audience a chance to interact and provide input on our content

4. Expanding Our Audience

One of the main goals when exploring this short-form content is the possibility of reaching a broader audience. As a team, we plan on prioritizing the accessibility of these videos by making them easy to understand for a large age range and making assistance such as captions readily available.

5. Combating Misinformation

One of the biggest struggles in the age of technology is the prevalence of misinformation and the volume it is available at. We hope that by creating these videos we help fight against that.

Wild Misconceptions - Kaz

Wild Misconceptions will focus on introducing species that NGRREC scientists and interns have previously worked with to our online audience. In these videos our primary goal will be to bridge the gap between NGRREC, the species we work with and our audience by demystifying and breaking down common misconceptions.

Each species section will consist of 2 parts. The first will take a look at some of the most common misconceptions surrounding each species. The second will look at how our audience can make a difference in the care and protection of these species and their habitats.

Parts of Each Video

Part 1 - Info about the species and common misconceptions
Part 2 - Ways to help these

Species to Cover

Species 1 - Bats
Species 2 - Tree frogs
Species 3 - Salamanders
Species 4 - Bees
Species 5 - Fish
Species 6 - Snakes
Species 7 - Turkeys
Species 8 - Turkey Vultures
Species 9 - Coyotes

Welcome to NGRREC - Kaz and Makhia

Tour Sections

1. The Lobby
2. Education
 - a. The classroom
 - b. The riverview room
 - c. The Garage
3. Labs
 - a. Wet Labs
 - b. Dry Labs
 - c. Mobile Labs (Garage)
4. The Roof
5. The Nature Walk
6. The Ponds
7. The River

This series will focus on showing the NGRREC field station to our audience through bite sized clips that they can look forward to every week. In this series we will utilize and expand upon the scripts that the SIUE CODES interns wrote to create 2-3 minutes video segments highlighting some of the most unique sections of the field station.

These videos will not replace the future full length tour series, instead they will act as teasers encouraging our audience to explore the later series as they come out.

Final Thought -Makhia

This segment purposefully embraces a non patronizing perspective when reling into the realm of environmental politics. The series, known as Final Thought, is committed to providing a wide understanding by presenting both sides of any given argument within the environmental discourse. The overarching goals of Final Thought extend beyond mere information dissemination; they desire to cultivate an informed audience by sharing insights into the slight landscape of environmental politics. Final Thought aims to contribute to a more informed and engaged public discussion on crucial environmental issues

As of now, my series is currently focusing on the Sackett v. EPA case. I want to develop this series as a season. This first season will focus on Sackett v. EPA and through this season.

1. What is the Clean Water Act
2. Success and Challenges
3. How does this affect you
4. Sackett vs. EPA
5. What does this mean?

References

³ Geysler, W. (2023, November 17). Comparing X (twitter) and threads to understand the difference. Influencer Marketing Hub. <https://influencermarketinghub.com/x-twitter-threads/>

⁴ Says, E., & says, M. W. (2023, September 20). Twitter user statistics 2023: What happened after “x” rebranding? SearchLogistics. [https://www.searchlogistics.com/learn/statistics/twitter-user-statistics/#:-:text=This%20section%20provides%20a%20snapshot,users%20\(mDAU\)%20on%20Twitter](https://www.searchlogistics.com/learn/statistics/twitter-user-statistics/#:-:text=This%20section%20provides%20a%20snapshot,users%20(mDAU)%20on%20Twitter)

Obstacles

- Filming Restrictions
- Finding usable stock or NGRREC owned footage for the videos
- Video editing
- Staying impartial even during topics we are passionate about including political or racial subjects
- Finding credible sources
- Having proper recording equipment/being able to get high quality photos and videos
- Finding proper sound effect or background music
- Learning how to create high quality short format animations

Posting Plans

With these series we would ideally like to create and post 2 videos a week. On Tuesdays we plan on alternating weekly who's individual content will be posted and then on Thursdays we plan on collaborating to create the “Welcome to NGRREC”

Posting Schedule

| | | |
|---------------------|------------------|---------------------------|
| Wild Misconceptions | Every Other Week | Every 1st and 3rd Tuesday |
| Welcome To NGRREC | Every Week | Every Thursday |
| Final Thought | Every Other Week | Every 2nd and 4th Tuesday |

Looking Forward

We hope that our efforts in terms of these videos will show promise for the future of NGRREC social media. We hope to see an increase of traffic on NGRREC's page and help NGRREC expand their audience.

End of Spring Semester Goals:

- 2000 Unique Accounts Reached Through These Videos
- 100 New Followers
- 100 Page Visits



Acknowledgements

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