UNCOVERING THE DIGITAL AUTHOR ABROAD

Dr. Ray Casserly, CIEE; Dr. Elsa Maxwell, CIEE; Hannah Milkie, Northern Michigan University
#caretoshare?

- Look to your phone and find a picture
- Pick one you have already posted online / will post online
- Make sure it is one you’re willing to discuss with the person next to you
- Think of a caption that applies to your image, but keep it to yourself (for now)
The Road to Mandalay?

- Kipling’s ‘East of Suez’ narrative
  - By the old Moulmein Pagoda, lookin' lazy at the sea, There's a Burma girl a-settin', and I know she thinks o' me; For the wind is in the palm-trees, and the temple-bells they say: "Come you back, you British soldier; come you back to Mandalay!" (Rudyard Kipling: 1890)
  - [https://youtu.be/OqLIm0HOvuQ](https://youtu.be/OqLIm0HOvuQ)

- The ‘Other’ Narrative
  - History or conflict / colonialism for 100 years
Unintentional Online Impact

- British backpacker Eleanor Hawkins, 24, arrested in Malaysia in June 2015 for posing nude on top of a sacred mountain with nine other travellers.
- ‘Abu Sin’ arrested in Riyadh for engaging in “unethical behaviour” in videos with Christina Crockett
The United States has a history of race-based discrimination, which can be traced back to the triumphs through slavery and Western Europe. The term "race" is used to describe a set of traits that are passed down through generations. However, the concept of race is a social construct that is not based on biological differences.

In the United States, the term "race" has been used to justify discrimination and segregation. This has led to the development of systemic racism, which has had a significant impact on the lives of people of color.

In conclusion, the concept of race is a social construct that is not based on biological differences. It is important to recognize the impact of race-based discrimination on the lives of people of color and to work towards creating a more equitable society.
“As we’ve dared to call the monkeys in the Zoo by Irish names, Erin’s sons, in wrath, declare us snobs and flunkies;
And demand that we withdraw them—nor should we ignore their claims—
For it’s really very hard—upon the monkeys.”
Managing Encounters

- Embracing the subjective position prior to engagement
- Setting rules / guidelines for interacting
- Facilitated encounters with extensive preparation
#INSTAGRAMMINGAFRICA: THE NARCISSISM OF GLOBAL VOLUNTOURISM

Voluntourism is ultimately about the fulfillment of the volunteers themselves, not necessarily what they bring to the communities they visit.

LAUREN KASCAK & SAYANTANI DASGUPTA · JUN 19, 2014
FOMO Gone Abroad

“It was the photographs posted by other students that inspired me to go on my first overseas medical mission. When classmates uploaded the experience of themselves wearing scrubs beside adorable children in developing countries, I believed I was missing out on a pivotal pre-med experience. I modeled those I had seen on Facebook and even pre-mediated photo opportunities to acquire the ‘perfect’ image that would receive the most Likes.”

—Lauren Kascak
3 Categories of Images

- The Suffering Other
- The Self-Directed Samaritan
- The Overseas Selfies
“In the end, the Africa we voluntourists photograph isn’t a real place at all. It is an imaginary geography whose landscapes are forged by colonialism, as well as a good deal of narcissism...

[If my fellow students do go,] it is my hope that they might think with some degree of narrative humility about how to de-center themselves from the Western savior narrative. Most importantly, I hope they leave their iPhones at home.”
The Reductive Seduction of Other People’s Problems

“If you’re young, privileged, and interested in creating a life of meaning, of course you’d be attracted to solving problems that seem urgent and readily solvable.”
➢ Do we need to ask permission? If so, is that enough?

➢ Are we taking the time to explain what permission means?

➢ Do we speak the same language, and if not, how do we obtain consent?

➢ What are the ethical implications of posting images like these?

➢ What else should we be asking ourselves and individuals in our images?
Contemporary (neo)colonial systems of representations
WHAT IS OUR ROLE AS EDUCATORS?
Change from Within

- Act as a model: reflect on your own social media/digital posting practices

- Evaluate the systems of representation implicit in your study abroad office, both physically and on the web
Supporting Student Awareness of Digital Representation

- Incorporate an activity in pre-departure or onsite orientation
  - Photo analysis and caption rotation
  - Reflection on current social media habits and how to might need to be adapted in host culture setting

- Facilitate a workshop for students to develop guidelines on photography/digital posting

- Connect students with locals to learn how they engage with social media
  - It’s not about prohibiting social media but rather leveraging it to foster cross cultural connections
Facilitate a critical discussion of a reading based on 4As Framework

- What does the author assume?
- What do you agree with?
- What would you argue?
- What would you aspire to after reading this?
Intentional Digital Storytelling

- Digital stories allow students to reflect on their experience, summarizing important events and the learnings engendered by them.

- When assigned as part of a course, invite opportunity to guide students in the creation of their story & incorporate questions of power, positionality and authorship.

- Script writing and digital story circles allow students to provide peer-to-peer feedback and prepare a high quality final product.
Resources


HANNAH MILKIE
DO YOU #CARETOSHARE?
Ask the person next to you to provide a caption for your image.

Provide a caption for their image.

Now contrast the captions your preferred for your images with the captions given to them by your peer.

Consider the following:

- How close were the two captions?
- How did you feel about the others caption on your image?
- How do you feel about the process of letting others write your story?
Stephanie and I don't normally do St. Valentine's Day. This year we tried. This was her gift to me. Next year there will be no Valentines. — with Stephanie Casserly.

Stephanie Cuserley: Love you! ... Stop hogging the duvet and perhaps I will read "No.1" next year! 😘 xxx

Oonagh Fairgrieve: Bahahahaahahaha!!

13 February 2013 at 19:23 · Like · 7
13 February 2013 at 19:42 · Like · 2
THANK YOU