

2018 Regional Member Services Conference - April 19

Communications Roundtable Discussion: My Favorite Apps

Moderated by April Lollar, Coastal Electric Cooperative, notes by Melissa Gay

Favorite apps for editing photos:

- Canva: allows you to choose the type of media (Facebook, website, Twitter, etc.) and the program designs in the right size. Great for flyers, email messages, social media, internal tv for members with Marlin or Enlightenment
- Ripple: animates still images
- Studio: similar to Canva, but you do more yourself
- SparkPost: edit videos, resize everything. Is available in Adobe Creative Cloud and the end result is like a fancy slideshow.
- SparkVideo: has free music for videos and Adobe subscribers can remove the Spark logo from the bottom corner. Editing videos is easier than iMovie but has less features.
- Watermark Lite: allows you to put your cooperative logo on photos that are published so you always maintain your brand. Great for posting photos to social media in the field during outages or community events without losing your branding.

Social media channels:

- Facebook: Facebook is pushing straight text up to the top of the feed these days and pushing videos down. It was noted that Facebook likes native content and prefers that users upload the actual video rather than add a YouTube link.
- Instagram: It was noted that Instagram was used on Youth Tour, but the rule for the teenagers who participate is that they can only post AFTER they leave for the next location. This rule helps keep them safe so followers can't find the group while they are on the road. One cooperative gives each Youth Tour participant a social media guidelines packet so they are clear on all of the rules before they head out.
- YouTube
- SnapChat: useful at an employee event where the cooperative created a filter to put on all of the photos and allow folks to follow along. SnapChat has good analytics. One cooperative hopes to create a filter and use it at their Annual Meeting.

Favorite apps for videos:

- Animoto: makes slideshows out of still photos and sets music to it.
- Splice: very popular app with the group
- Majesto: has come a long way with updates. Looks like iMovie. User can add text and pick colors. Use the app on your phone in the field and pick up where you left off on your desktop back at the office.

- Videolicious: take video and do voiceovers. Use it to advertise your mobile app for members to report outages and show how outages that are reported show in the dispatch room. Can also make the video look like a news broadcast.
- Videoshop: good effects, text and music. Used for lineman videos.

Favorite apps for collages:

- PicCollage
- Picflow: has music feature as well
- Spark: can build as many collages as you want

Favorite tools:

- Facebook Insights: helpful for including social media stats in Board reports.
- Twitter & Instagram analytics: they are getting better
- Google Alerts: set them up for mentions about your cooperative, Executive Team, Board Members, Management team and you will receive emails each time they are mentioned online. Be sure to add many combinations and abbreviations to capture the best results.
- Search your cooperative online often to see what shows in the search.

Content Management apps:

- Hootsuite: manage social media posts. If interested in Hootsuite, they have a 30 day free trial. If you start and stop the trial, they will invite you for a free 90 day trial to get you to come back. Hootsuite now also links to Instagram to schedule posts.
- Buffer: easier to use than Hootsuite and cheaper but not as many bells and whistles. Allows you to add "alt text" for Facebook which is helpful to members with special needs.
- SproutSocial: content management system that sends messages from Facebook, Instagram and Twitter to come to one inbox. Each time your cooperative is tagged, it will appear in this one box. Very helpful tool during an outage or big event to allow you to look at all your social media and respond to inquiries.
- Google Message: is getting a lot of traffic. Is used more than Facebook messenger by the attendees in the room. If you add chatbots in messenger, the bots will begin the conversation for you.
- ChatFuel: as soon as a member begins typing in messenger, a box appears that asks them to type their question.

Managing Social Media:

- Need to enable a pop-up that states outages should not be reported on social media
- Participants stated that they their teams rotate responsibility to monitor Facebook and messages received

- Must set boundaries for times the page will be monitored.
- Some participants have had to escalate threats received online to police and share with employees if it could impact their safety at work.

Text:

- Some cooperatives enable members to pay their bills from text using SEDC.
- Google allows a member to text a landline number that is forwarded to a cooperative staff members' phone.

Favorite apps for Crisis Communication Needs:

- Dropbox: store the crisis plan, prepared statements and any other pertinent documents there so you can retrieve them from your phone.
- Rockdove Solutions: allows user to have files on their phone and to send documents to others to assign jobs during the crisis event.
- Trello: similar to Rockdove and allows you to assign job functions for different teammates.
- Slack: can send a text to groups (already built – executive team, field, office, etc.) with critical information

Other helpful apps to have on your phone:

- Co-op Connections
- Legislative App so you know who your reps are
- FEMA
- Local weather
- EOCs