Social Media Guide

iGEM Team TU Darmstadt 2021

Introduction

Over the last years, social media became more and more important in our society. It is an effective and important tool to communicate with people all over the world. The ways in which you can communicate with people are more or less endless. Thus, making it a key element for science communication, finding potential teams for collaboration and the promotion of your project.

Colors and design

The way one presents information to be shared is just as important as the information itself. Therefore, the colors you choose and the design-style you go for should meet certain criteria.

Colors can evoke certain feelings and thoughts which are briefly talked about below: (Cherry 2020)

- Orange is usually perceived bright, happy and uplifting. However, it can also be described as overwhelming.
- Red is associated with many contradicting emotions. On the one hand, it stands for love, warmth and passion. On the other hand, it is linked to power, anger, aggression and dominance. It is also a common danger and warning color.
- Blue is a color that can be found in many places in nature. Many people describe it as calm and serene. Depending on the tone it can also come across as icy, distant and cold.
- Green is strongly associated with nature, safety and luck, but is also the color of envy.
- Yellow is a rather bright color and often used to draw attention to something which is why it is commonly used for warning signs. Yellow also stands for energy and it can come across as aggressive.
- Purple is often described as mysterious and associated with wealth, royalty, mystery and imagination.
- Pink is thought to be a more calming color with associations such as love, kindness and femininity. The calming effect of pink depends on the shade that is used.
- Brown is often perceived as a solid, earthy color with associations such as security, strength, nature but also isolation. Depending on the shade and usage it can also come across as dirty.
- White in contrast to brown is strongly associated with cleanliness but also innocence, emptiness and peacefulness.
- Black is related to unhappiness but also mystery, boldness and power.

When it comes to colors, it is important to choose them in a way, that they align not only good when combined but also that their associations harmonize with your project.

It is advisable to integrate about three different colors for your general design, including logo, website and flyers as well as social media posts. These colors will then become your trademark which will give you a good recognition factor.

Furthermore, you should choose a design style, which you continuously use. There are different styles you can aim for and even this decision can be made strategically. If you for example choose the track "New Application" for your project, it would make sense to choose a rather modern or futuristic design. For a project that has water quality as a main part, a more "flowy" or "wavy" design could make sense.

Choice of formats

Having one or more formats that are posted regularly over an extended amount of time, is a great way to either split bigger amounts of information or build up information towards a greater goal. One example for splitting up information is to introduce your team members by posting either one at a time or smaller groups of people. These could be research groups, human practices or modeling. This format could be called "Member-Monday" or "team Tuesday". This also ensures continuity during the time of your project. When it comes to building up information, a great example is to post general information about essential parts of your project. As we worked with *Bacillus subtilis*, phages and biofilms, giving general information about these aspects in separate posts is not only an easy way to produce content but also builds up to a larger goal, which is your project. You can combine these posts with your project promotion video and final presentation to create a consistent strategy behind your content.

Upload-Time and frequency

After choosing your formats for your social media page, it is important to think about your upload time and the frequency of your posts. For this it is helpful to make a timetable and choose fixed times when to upload which category.

One option is to have fixed days such as "Member-Monday" or "Team-Plant-Tuesday". Thereby, it is clear which posts are posted on which days and there is a week in between each upload in which the next post can be prepared. We chose to upload about two posts a week.

Another aspect you can integrate in your planning is the order of your posts. To achieve a uniform and clean looking Instagram page, we chose to always alternate a team introduction post and another post.

To reach as many people as possible with your posts Instagram offers the feature of "insights".

Figure 1: Screenshot from our Instagram account

Beside other information, you can see which time during the day the majority of your followers is online and will see your post. Most of the time this is the afternoon or evening.

Figure 2: Screenshot from our Instagram insights

Stories, for example from the lab, can be posted during the whole day. They can also be more frequent than posts.

Our overall strategy

Our main goal of this year's social media strategy was to promote our project and to bring iGEM teams together. Taking part and creating new challenges was a good approach in uniting not only our team, but also teams from all around the world. We decided to introduce our team by drawing each member in comic book style and adding their answers on some questions about themselves. So that "Member-Monday" was born. Also, we created posts that were supposed to educate and introduce the main focus of our project.

In general, we wanted to have a mixture of scientific content but also content that is supposed to be more personal and creative. We wanted to not only share our project itself but also the many different things we experience during this project.
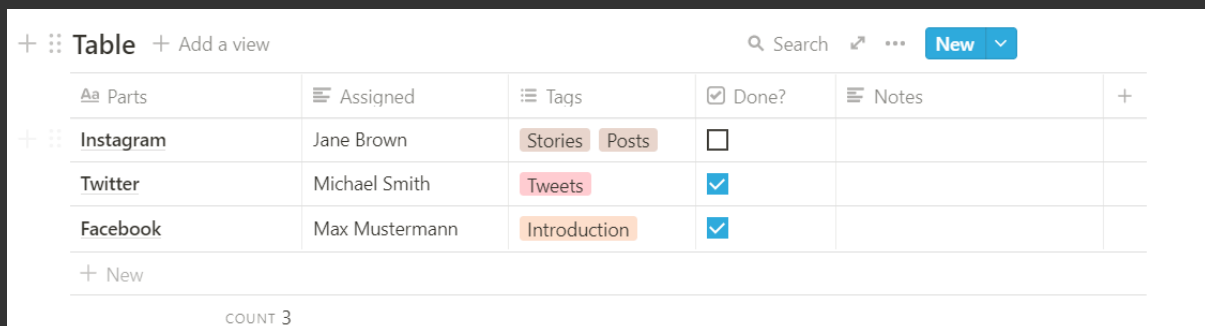
Organization

To keep track of our formats and projects on social media as well as which member of our social media team is responsible for which posts, having an effective organization system is extremely important.

Regarding organization, Notion is an extremely useful software. It can be accessed as a website or downloaded as an application for your desktop and phone.

In common use, it is similar to a website and can be structured freely to suit one's needs. A project such as iGEM can be shared with team members which can edit the pages. Notion tracks each member's changes and saves the page history which can be looked up for later reference.

Aside from being able to create pages and subpages, there is a variety of tools at your disposal to organize tasks and assign members.

A table can be used in a multitude of ways, for example to assign different social media platforms to members. Tags can be used to filter the table as needed, for example to find a specific format or host organism. Checkmarks, notes and other categories can be added as well.
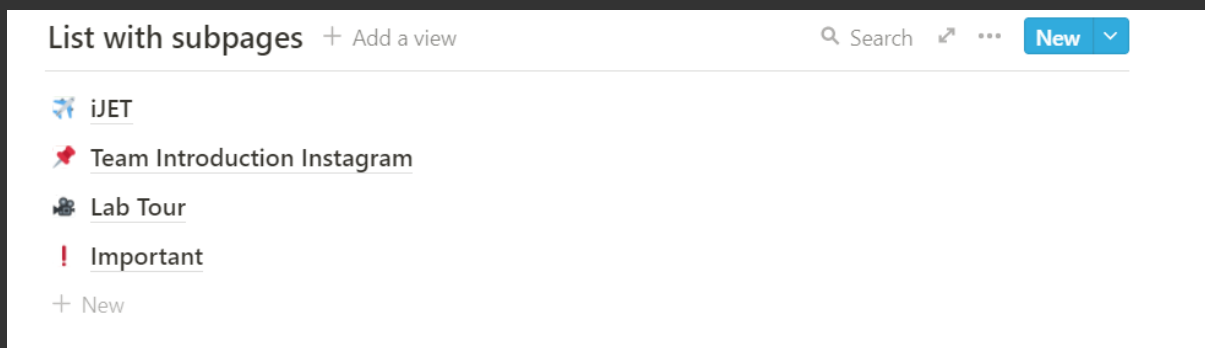

Figure 3: Example of a table created with notion

For an easy overview, a list with subpages can be created where each subpage can be filled with content. Check out our video collaboration iJET with many teams around the world, our hand-drawn team introduction on Instagram or a lab tour we filmed during our work.

Pages can also carry little icons for easy navigation or to indicate urgency.

Figure 4: Example of list of pages created with notion

A more visual alternative to the list is a gallery which can either show the content such as Page 1 or show a cover picture such as our iJET logo.
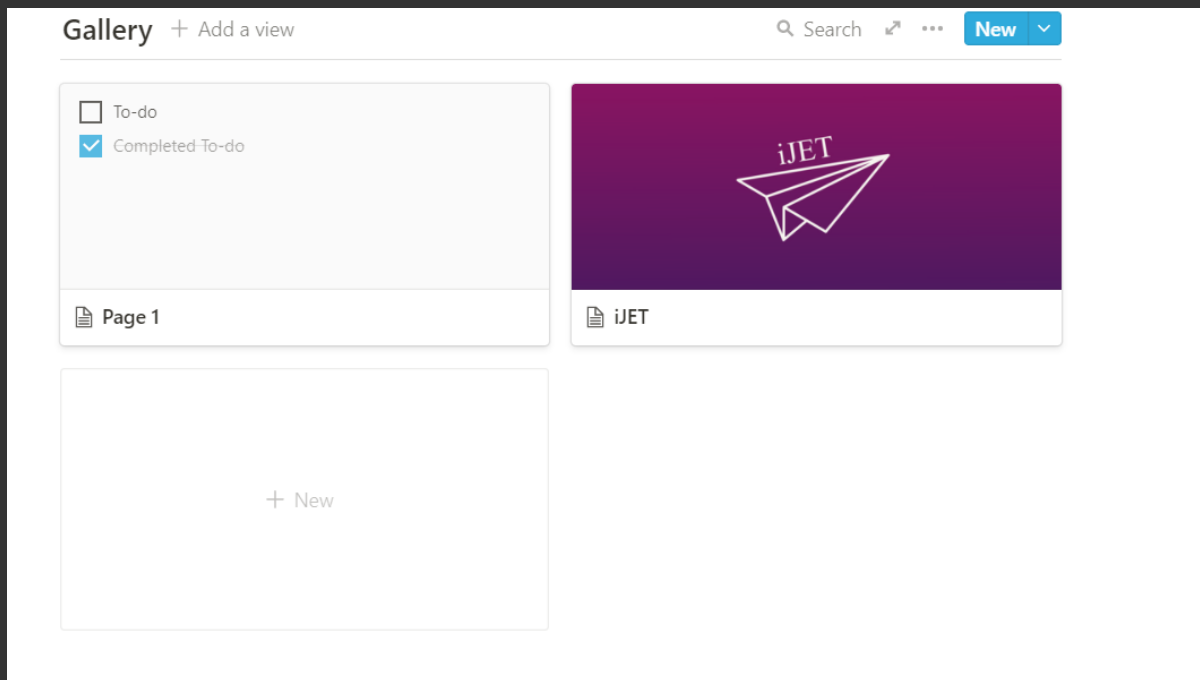

Figure 5: Example of gallery created with notion

Boards consist of so-called cards which can be sorted into different categories, for example status of progress or to assemble task forces and establish timelines. These cards are subpages of their own and can also be assigned to members to complete or indicate their responsibilities.
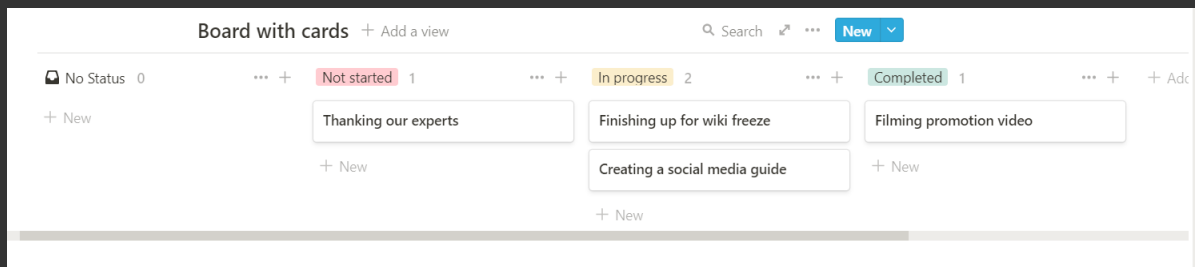

Figure 6: Example of board created with notion

To-do lists with checkmarks, bullet points and numbered points are just one of the many minor aspects of organizing content. You can also embed images, bookmark webpages or highlight important text. Notion offers a lot of possibilities for almost any project to share information, edit pages simultaneously, structure and divide tasks. It is suitable to organize iGEM teams of any size, especially on as large as ours with 24 members.
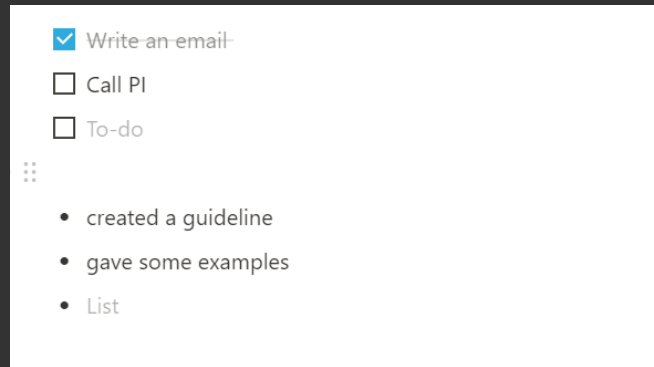

Figure 7: Example of To-do lists created with notion

References

Cherry K. 2020. Color Psychology: Does it affect how you feel?: How colors impact moods, feelings, and behaviors. [place unknown]: verywellmind; [updated 2020 May 28; accessed 2021 Sep 22]. https://www.verywellmind.com/color-psychology-2795824.