

RISING STAR: TORY STARR, DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL MEDIA AT



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Social media matters.

It's pretty indisputable at this point. Your favorite celebrity has it, your uncle has it and your neighbor's pet Chihuahua probably has it. You may not realize it, but even your favorite publishers have it. It's where you go to see what time the next Great British Baking Show is airing, to see where the star actor is eating dinner and it's where you go when you want to see what people think about your favorite documentary. But who is in charge of all this content that's pushed out on multiple platforms, a hundred times a day, from various channels?

At [WGBH](#) this person is one of News Media Alliance's [Rising Stars](#), Tory Starr. As Director of Social Media, Tory is the one that deals with the "big picture" of social

media at her organization.

"I look into how social media can play a larger strategic role here," Tory explains.

Her job requires her to be involved in the multiple different stages of production. On a daily basis, Tory works with multiple production units on forward thinking. She works to keep social media content as close to the editorial content as possible.

"A lot of what I do is seeing how social platforms will fit in with each production," Tory says. "For each idea presented we have to figure out the answer to the following question: how can we tell the story from a social media platform?"

With over 200 social media accounts being managed at WGBH, Tory and the social media account managers get by with a little help from [Sprinklr](#), a social media-managing platform. The platform provides a way to centralize the content published; with reports and metrics.

Tory seemed to really connect with WGBH's mission statement. "WGBH enriches people's lives through programs and services that educate, inspire, and entertain, fostering citizenship and culture, the joy of learning, and the power of diverse

important.”

Tory is glad she works for an organization that isn't tied to commercial interest. This gives her the opportunity to advocate for tomorrow's public media viewers. She believes it is up to her and others in the social media industry to steer the ship the right direction.

Her appreciation of WGBH shone through as she talked about her extensive career with the company. At 29 years old, Tory has spent her entire career at WGBH. Initially wanting to be a filmmaker, Tory started with WGBH as an intern at [American Experience](#), a history documentary series. After graduating from Colby College, she joined the company as a production assistant on the same series.

The epiphany that led her to her social media career was a result of her experience as a part of an outreach project around a film called "[Freedom Riders](#)." The film involved 40 college students replicating the ride of the 1961 Freedom Riders who participated in nonviolent activism to test and challenge segregation enforced by Jim Crow laws.

At a time when social media was just gaining traction, it surprised Tory to hear that many people followed the journey through Twitter. This resulted in her "a-ha moment."

Tory realized that "social media platforms are storytelling mechanisms," and that this was what she wanted to do.

From here, she went back to school part-time for a journalism degree so she could acquire an editorial background. Doing so would give her a better understanding of fact-based storytelling. Then she joined [PRI's The World](#) as a social media producer. Here, she focused on helping traditional radio journalists use social media to find, source and share stories to new audiences.

Two years later, Tory stepped into the newly created position of Director of Social Media.

While in this position, she has been a part of many different projects. One of her favorites has been the identification of Facebook Live as a connecting platform.

"Facebook Live provides a higher level of access for the super passionate fan base of shows like Downton Abbey and [Victoria](#)," says Tory.

Tory believes the 250+ Facebook Live events WGBH has done in the last year and a half (a few of her favorites [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#)) deepen the relationship between a production's talent and fans.

Similarly, she sees Facebook Live and other similar platforms becoming integral in the future of news media.

like *Downton Abbey*, the younger demographic is doing so less and less. So, Tory poses the question “how do we reach these audiences?”

“You have to hit them on the feeds that they are on. These productions start to come to the viewer instead of the viewer searching for it. Long-form television may no longer take place on television...it may be on Facebook or Snapchat.”

Tory believes social media could help to restore some of the trust in media. Connecting journalists to readers will open doors for transparency, which she believes is necessary now more than ever.

“It’s just a really interesting time to be in media.”

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