



## **ARTISTS' TOOLKIT**

**THE BUSINESS OF ART**

### **Summary of “What’s Your Story?” -- Enhancing Your Digital Presence with Dave Ortega and Christina Balch**

Connect with the Speakers

**Christina Balch:** Go to [christinabalch.com/artist-website-consultations](https://christinabalch.com/artist-website-consultations) and use promo code **SOS23** for 40% off.

Web: [christinabalch.com/](https://christinabalch.com/) LinkedIn: [/in/christinabalch](https://www.linkedin.com/in/christinabalch)

Instagram: [@christinabalchstudio](https://www.instagram.com/christinabalchstudio)

Email address: [studio@christinabalch.com](mailto:studio@christinabalch.com)

#### **Dave Ortega**

[daveortegadraws@gmail.com](mailto:daveortegadraws@gmail.com)

<https://www.daveortegadraws.com/>

#### ***What’s your artistic narrative?***

By nature, artists wear multiple hats– not only do they have to be creative in their studios, but creative in how they present their work to the world.

Through the many advancements in technology, there seems to be no shortage of ways to promote your work digitally. The question is what story do you want to tell and how do you tell that story in a compelling way to engage your audience? While there are many social media and marketing platforms such as: Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, Patreon, Twitter, Tumblr, and MailChimp (newsletters) as well as your own website, our Digital Marketing presenters compiled a comprehensive overall of how to market your work via Instagram and your website.

### **Instagram for Artists, Small Businesses, and Nonprofits Compiled by Dave Ortega IG @daveortegadraws**

#### **What is Instagram?**

“Instagram is a business that runs a social media platform for visual media.” The terms business, social, and visual are key to understanding how to work with Instagram.

- Instagram makes money off of ads. This is integral to its business.
- Social behavior on Instagram encourages people to stay on the app longer. The longer people stay on the app, the more ads they see.
- Compelling visual media is what people respond to more on the app and tend to encourage more social behavior.

Keep these points in mind when strategizing for how to utilize Instagram better for your business.

#### **Switching from a Personal Account to a Professional Account**

In order to have access to features like account and post insights, promoting posts, setting up a store,

additional message features, and swipe up links in stories you must first switch your personal account to a professional account.

### **Links on Instagram**

You only get one link in Instagram on your bio. You can't add links to your posts within the app.

- Keep the link in your bio consistently relevant.
- If you need to link to multiple places regularly try a service like LinkTree, which will setup a page with multiple links for people to follow.

### **Instagram Posting Strategies**

- Focus on quality images, videos or graphics.
- Think about setting a regular posting schedule. Something that is sustainable for you.
- Consistency is key. If you post everything you have in a few days and nothing for weeks, then you'll slip down people's feeds.
- Use 3rd party scheduling tools like Later or Buffer to schedule for weeks or months out.
- Hashtags: Just like a Google search, users use hashtags to find what they're looking for. 1) You can have up to 30 on a post, but you don't have to! 2) Relevance is more important than quantity.

### **Other Instagram Features**

It is always a good idea to experiment with new Instagram features as they're introduced as Instagram favors showing these to your followers (and beyond!) in order to promote the new feature. Beyond the core Instagram features of Feed Posts, Stories, and Interaction there are some others worth investigating to see if they are relevant or useful for you:

- Reels (Stories): Can create short videos like Tik-Tok with many options such as video speed, layout, filters, music, and interaction.
- Reels (Posts): Long or short videos. These include videos that can be made up of photos.
- Live: Great for events, Q&A, demos (not advised until you have more followers or unless you have a special event such as a demo).
- Store: (New feature) Pro accounts can set up a store with the ability to sell through IG profile. Potentially powerful tool to sync sales with posts and metrics.

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## **Make your Website work for you- Christina Balch**

### **Helpful tips when developing both your brand and website**

- Your website is your digital persona. It's the easiest way to control your presence on the internet.
- You're not perfect. Your website will never be perfect.
- Websites take time and/or money to build and maintain.
- Break up your website project into small, manageable tasks.

### **Use your website to tell your own unique story**

- In about 1 or 2 sentences introduce yourself to your audience and what sets you apart.
- Have a brief bio/artist statement as a way of telling your story
- Give yourself the opportunity to shine. Highlight and showcase your most important work first in your navigation menu
- If your main goal is to sell work, make that obvious on your website. Either make your store a focal point or make sure it's obvious that work is available and for sale.

- If you sell services or want to be hired for something, make that obvious on your website with a Services page or “Hire Me” button linking to a contact form

### **Website Tips**

- It doesn't matter which website platform you choose as long as you can update your site.
- Make sure your site is mobile-friendly. Approx. 25-75% of your website users will be on a mobile device.
- Use buttons for major actions and an underline for text hyperlinks
- Make sure all text is legible. The higher the color contrast the better. The simpler the font the better. Black on white is popular for a reason.
- Use compressed images. All images should be less than 1MB, less than 250KB is best.
- Use embedded videos and audio when possible. Embedded YouTube videos are great because they're already compressed. If you upload and host your own video file on your website, make sure the video file size is as small as possible without losing resolution quality. (This is not always easy)
- Don't add a Blog to your site unless you are committed to updating it at least once a month, once a week is preferable

### **Website Options**

- Squarespace - I prefer Squarespace. It's mobile-friendly and well-designed. More about why I like it [here](#).
- Wix - Tends to be easier for less tech-savvy people, but the design is not as good.
- Cargo Collective - my favorite smaller, artist-focused option. Somewhat limiting.
- Other People's Pixels - basic, clean, limited, but works well for most artists
- Wordpress - great option for people willing to hire a designer/developer to build a custom website. Best for a lot of art that you want to categorize and/or if you want to include a robust shop.

### **SOS website tips**

- Give people something to take that has a link to your website on it (business card, postcard)
- Make sure people know how to get to your studio by adding directions and parking info on your website
- Market yourself! Send emails, post on social media, etc
- Your website will not be perfect. Don't sweat it too much

Somerville Open Studios has a variety of resources available for the day-of the event

<https://www.somervilleopenstudios.org/for-artists/promotional-materials/>

### **About the Series**

Artists' Toolkit: The Business of Art is a mini-professional development series presented by the Somerville Arts Council and the Somerville Museum. In collaboration with Somerville Open Studios, this program provides useful resources to the Somerville cultural community to elevate their artistic practice.