

Susan E. Poulton

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ABOUT

Susan Poulton has seventeen years of digital media strategy experience, working with organizations in both the for-profit and non-profit sectors to help them meet their content, outreach, and audience building goals. From science to entertainment, her passion is inspiring and awakening curiosity in any audience and moving them to action through digital experiences and storytelling.

Many organizations today follow a checklist approach to digital outreach instead of optimizing for their specific goals and audience. Susan guides groups through the process of defining the measurable outcomes they want from their online experiences and crafting creative content and operational solutions within a variety of budgets. Her areas of expertise include:

- Strategic goal setting, operational planning, team building, and media training;
- Comprehensive communication and outreach planning, including social media strategies;
- Creative digital content experiences for multiple platforms;
- Developing social media responsibility guidelines for individuals and organizations;
- Effective science communication strategies and crowdsourcing/citizen science experiences;
- Content and production strategy for online live event and large-scale convergent events;
- Online fundraising and audience building tactics for small non profits;
- Business model development and monetization tactics for digital content, product, and commercial strategies.

Before founding her current consulting firm, Door 44 Digital, Susan was Vice President of Digital Media for the National Geographic Society for seven years. In that role she oversaw the development of many of National Geographic's first online content verticals, resulting in dramatic growth for the Society's digital presence and monetization capabilities. She then focused on outreach and content strategies for the Society's non-profit and exploration initiatives including James Cameron's DeepSea Challenge, The Genographic Project, Big Cats, Freshwater, Oceans, and Explorers portal. Her work on the Genographic and Expedition: Genghis Khan projects developed success tactics for citizen science engagement.

Prior to joining National Geographic, Susan held various content positions over nine years at AOL. As the Director of Programming and Content Production, she was responsible for revamping AOL Time Warner's approach to celebrity content online, with a special focus on live event production. Susan used creative methods to build consumer engagement around high profile events in the news and entertainment space including the use of multi camera angle live video, interactives, polls, and chat for events including the 2000 and 2004 elections, Space Shuttle Return to Flight, XPRIZE, and Oscar and Golden Globe Award coverage. She was one of AOL's lead producers for Live 8 in 2005, the first digital experience to receive an Emmy Award and set the world record for concurrent online live event attendees. She produced the first inter-species chat with Koko the gorilla, first chat with the International Space Station, first online events with reporters in combat zones, and the Dalai Lama's first webcam event in 1999.

She has participated on numerous panels and advisory boards and was an Innovator in Residence at University of Nebraska, Lincoln lecturing on tactics for maximizing consumer engagement to create meaningful digital experiences.

An avid traveler, photographer, and space enthusiast, Susan spends her spare time photographing rocket launches and blogging about space exploration. When she's not looking skyward (or flying in zero gravity), she volunteers to provide media and digital training to non profit organizations around the world and works to empower young people through a variety of photographic and media projects, including as an instructor for National Geographic Photo Camp. She's currently working on a project to document her attempt to summit the highest points in all 50 states in the U.S. to share her personal journey of health and fitness.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Door 44 Digital

President & Founder
2013-Present

- Manages digital consulting firm, specializing in digital content experiences for multiple platforms including web, mobile, and social media. Conducts digital and communications planning workshops and presentations.
- Clients include: Dr. Robert Ballard's Ocean Exploration Trust (OET), Rowan Technology Solutions (West Point History of Warfare), Corporate Executive Board (CEB), Experience Aviation, The Flying Classroom, SOIL Haiti, Aquent, and National Geographic Books. Previous consulting projects include assisting the Gates Foundation with its initial digital and social media strategy development in 2009.

National Geographic Society

Vice President,
Digital Media
(2007-2013)
Director,
Feature Programming
(2006- 2007)

- Oversaw content strategy and editorial production for National Geographic Digital Media and nationalgeographic.com with an audience reach of 20 million unique visitors per month and 3.5 billion page views annually.
- Over seven years, grew nationalgeographic.com's audience by 700% through the creation of core content verticals (Animals, Environment, Travel, Photography, Video, etc.) and serial franchise programming (Places of a Lifetime, Survival Guide).
- Developed strategic distribution partnerships with internal and external organizations to create a distributed audience and acquire new users to NG.com.
- Created web-based and social media campaigns to meet metric driven mission-targeted strategies for various non-profit programs within the Society.
- Oversaw the product launch of the first video player and archive experience resulting in an 800% increase in video plays in less than one month.
- Grew traffic to National Geographic's award-winning home page by 50% in one year through targeted marketing and programming strategies.
- Assisted with development of new internal web processes for content management and workflow including a complete overhaul of online advertising processes resulting in a growth in ad revenue through significant production cost reduction.
- Managed teams ranging in size from 8-35 directors and content production staff.

America Online

Director,
Content Development
(2004-2006)

- As part of the AOL Content & Editorial team, was responsible for editorial and production for high profile AOL events and experiences across multiple category verticals, including entertainment, science, finance, and health.
- Oversaw an initiative to streamline the production of chaptered video series experiences for use by all content areas of AOL. Implemented live video experiences for major events including live concerts, sporting events, and breaking news.
- Assisted with the launch of entertainment news venture, TMZ.com, including web site strategy and the establishment of workflow and publishing processes.
- Location produced AOL's multi-camera angle coverage of the Space Shuttle Return to Flight, resulting in the third largest streaming event in AOL history.
- Produced three European sites for the Live 8 global concert, live and on demand.

Senior Manager
AOL Entertainment
(2003-2004)

- Revamped AOL's celebrity and expert interview format to transition from a live to an on demand experience, increasing audience and reducing event production costs.
- Developed, monetized, and marketed new Entertainment Channel features and series including Celeb Candid's (photos taken by celebrities).
- Supported key AOL partnerships and celebrity content integration with various charities including Rock the Vote and DATA (Debt, AIDS, Trade, Africa).
- Produced and developed AOL's XPrize coverage resulting in an exclusive multi-camera angle presentation of the historic space launches and the largest on demand video experience on AOL at that time.

Product Manager
AOL Community
(2000-2002)

- Managed the strategy for AOL's editorial polling product in the Community Products group, including new product features, sales strategy and content integration.
- Grew AOL polling traffic from a 40K pageview per month product to a service-wide staple producing 40MM pageviews per month in three months.

Producer
AOL Live
(1997-2000)

- Produced both online and location live interactive chat and video events, including breaking news, political coverage, and entertainment. Hosted, booked, and produced over 1,000 celebrity interviews over four years. Conceived and launched live event enhancements including companion webcam, streaming video and audio, and instant polling to experiment with live audience retention and behavior thresholds.

EDUCATION

B.A in Communication, Virginia Tech, 1996. Concentration: Journalism, Minor: Sociology.

B.A in English Literature, Virginia Tech, 1996. Minors: Biology, Music.

Diploma with Honors, Cranbrook Kingswood, 1992.

ADVISORY BOARDS

West Point History of Warfare Advisory Board, 2012-Present

Gigapan Photographic Advisory Board, 2013-Present

Associate Member, Webby Awards & Webby Awards Judge, 2008-2013

National Geographic Expedition Council Grant Committee, 2008 - 2013

National Geographic Young Explorers Grant Committee, 2008 – 2013

Smithsonian Ocean Portal Digital Advisory Board, 2009-2010

PANELS, WORKSHOPS, TEACHING

Guest Lecturer, Online Journalism and Storytelling, Mobile Strategies, University of Nebraska, 2011 – present.

Ocean Exploration Trust Science Communication Workshop, March 2014

American Astronomical Society (AAS) Digital Strategy for Scientists Workshop, January 2014

Nautilus Educators Training Workshop: Digital Media Storytelling Workshop & Media Training, May 2013

Storytelling in a Digital World, Banff Mountain Film Festival, Presentation & Workshop, November 2012

Developing Effective Citizen Science Experiences, Turing Festival, Panel & Workshop, Scotland, September 2012

Digital Media Storytelling, Nautilus Educators Training Workshop, June 2012

Pushing the Boundaries of Storytelling: Activating Your Online Project, Banff Film Festival Panel, November 2011

DCWEEK 2011, Media in a Digital World Panel, November 2011

Innovator in Residence, University of Nebraska School of Journalism, September 2011

Communicating in a Digital World, NASA Astrobiology Media Training NASA Fame Lab Judge, 2011

National Geographic Young Explorers Workshop Mentor: University of Montana, UC San Diego, University of Virginia

National Geographic Photo Camp, Photography Mentor and Teaching Assistant 2007 - present

Guest Lecturer, American University College of Journalism, 2007

AWARDS

2013 Webby Award Nominee, Science, “The Genographic Project: Geno 2.0”

2013 Webby Award Honoree, Science, “Nautilus Live”

2011 Webby Award Honoree, Science, “Expedition: Mongolia”

2013 Communicator Awards, Award of Excellence: Science, “The Genographic Project: Geno 2.0”

2013 Communicator Awards, Award of Excellence: Visual Appeal, “The Genographic Project: Geno 2.0”

2013 Communicator Awards, Award of Excellence: Events & Animation, “DeepSea Challenge”

2013 Interactive Media Award, Science/Technology, “Best in Class”: The Genographic Project: Geno 2.0”

2013 Interactive Media Award, Nonprofit, “Best in Class”: The Genographic Project: Geno 2.0

2008, Webby Award People’s Choice Winner, Best Home Page, “National Geographic”

2007, Webby Award Nominee, Music, “National Geographic World Music”

2005 Emmy Award (AOL team), Live Interactive Experience, “Live 8 Global Concerts”

ASSOCIATIONS & MEMBERSHIPS

Online Publishers Association (OPA), 2007-Present

Online News Association (ONA), 2012-Present

Women in Film and Video (WIFV), 2002-Present

Advanced Underwater Diver (PADI)