

Susan E. Poulton

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

Most recently, Susan was the Chief Digital Officer of The Franklin Institute, where she conceived and developed a comprehensive digital strategy for the 8th largest science museum in the country. This strategy included website, social media, mobile app, virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), and artificial intelligence applications and focused on the creation of science content for a global audience to support the educational mission of the museum and transform them into a digital leader among visitors, the community, and cultural institutions.

She currently manages her own digital consulting firm, Door 44 Digital. In that role she develops digital strategies for multiple organizations in both the for profit and non-profit space and also conducts independent research on solutions to our current misinformation crisis and disaster communication tactics. Current roles include Director of Strategy and Communications for the Ocean Discovery League (formerly MIT Media Lab's Open Ocean project developing outreach strategies for equity in ocean exploration. Previous clients include managing digital and social media strategy and external media relations for Dr. Robert Ballard's Ocean Exploration Trust (OET) and the Exploration Vessel (E/V) *Nautilus*, implementing tactics for ocean science communication and storytelling resulting in thousands of viral media stories on ocean exploration and tens of millions of media hits.

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 and resulted in two Webby nominations. While at National Geographic, she spearheaded a personal project to document all remaining space shuttle launches from 2006-2011 and the decommissioning of the space shuttle program, interviewing many NASA team members. The resulting work was featured in *The Washington Post* and on blogs on National Geographic News.

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 online chat with the International Space Station, first online events with reporters in combat zones, and the Dalai Lama's first webcam event in 1999.

An avid traveler, photographer, and space enthusiast, Susan spends her spare time photographing rocket launches and volunteers to provide media and digital training to nonprofit organizations around the world, including as an instructor for National Geographic Photo Camp. She is a certified Advanced Emergency Medical Technical (AEMT) and a member of the Red Cross Disaster Action Team providing volunteer support locally as well as in refugee camps overseas. She is currently working on a project to document her attempt to summit the highest points in all 50 states in the United States.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

The Franklin Institute

**Chief Digital Officer &
Senior Vice President**
2015-2018

- Conceived and developed a comprehensive digital strategy for the 8th largest science museum in the country and the largest museum in PA, DE, and NJ with 800,000+ annual visitors. This strategy included website, social media, mobile app, virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), and artificial intelligence applications and focused on the creation of science content for a global adult audience to support the educational mission of the museum and build audience nationally and globally.
- Launched the largest virtual reality experience ever presented at a museum. Over 180,000 visitors experienced VR on the floor of the museum in 18 months with 61% stating it was their first time trying this technology.
- Grew social media audience by over 1000%, including Facebook growth from 51K followers to 623K followers in 24 months, positioning the Franklin Institute as the 9th largest museum in the world on Facebook.
- Grew total online audience reach by 2000% to reach 2.2 million people per week compared to 800,000+ annual visitors to the museum.
- Launched Science Stories, both a curated and user generated video and audio series interviewing scientists and the general public about the emotional side of science and discovery (fi.edu/sciencestories).
- Created digital science news articles, blogs, and content to further digital audience engagement and create avenues for engagement with broad-based national and international audiences.
- Designed and launched a geo-fenced mobile app with virtual reality content library, white label augmented reality experiences, artificial intelligence chatbots, 3D indoor wayfinding, and membership & customer service integration. Paired the mobile app with the distribution of 10,000 Google Cardboard VR devices to visitors and classrooms.
- Oversaw the development of interactive exhibition experiences including augmented reality Terracotta Warriors and the Empty Glass Case.
- Managed the day-to-day website and social media development and content teams.
- Secured \$900,000 in foundation grants over 24 months to fund new digital experiences and advancement.

Door 44 Digital **President & Founder** *2013-Present*

- President and founder of digital strategy consulting firm Door 44 Digital specializing in digital and content strategies and consumer experiences for multiple platforms including web, mobile, social media, and press.
- Managed digital content, social media strategy, and external media relations for Dr. Robert Ballard's Ocean Exploration Trust (OET) and the Exploration Vessel (E/V) Nautilus, implementing tactics for ocean science communication and storytelling. Developed and implemented strategic communications plan in 2014 resulting in 750 media placements for research and exploration initiatives and discoveries including CNN, National Geographic, FOX, BBC, The Atlantic, Scientific American, and more. Increased www.nautiluslive.org website traffic by 200% to 2.5 million page views, increased Facebook and Twitter audiences by 150% and increased YouTube video views from 48K to 5.1MM in two months.
- Other consulting clients and projects included: The Flying Classroom (Social media and digital marketing for STEM-based education expedition to 16 countries); National Geographic Books, Rowan Technology Solutions (Content strategy and audience assessment for West Point History of Warfare eBook), Corporate Executive Board (CEB), Experience Aviation, SOIL Haiti, Aquent, Chamber Magic, Explore Mars, Inc., and The Gates Foundation (Initial digital strategy in 2009).
- Led digital and social media strategic planning workshops, training, and mentoring specializing in science communication and online journalism.
- Oversaw content strategy and editorial production for National Geographic Digital Media reaching 20MM monthly unique visitors and 3.5 billion page views annually.

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

- Grew nationalgeographic.com's audience by over 900% through the creation of core content areas and increasing production of timely content and breaking news stories.
- Managed the digital experiences for all internal National Geographic divisions including Films, Television, Book, Museum, Events & Exhibits, Development Office, and supported National Geographic Channel digital efforts.
- Worked with National Geographic Magazine team to develop organizational and content strategies to integrate print and digital offerings.
- Created web-based and social media campaigns to meet metric driven mission-targeted strategies for various non-profit initiatives within the Society, including Big Cats, Freshwater, and Ocean campaigns.
- Developed and launched award-winning digital and crowdsourcing experiences including The Genographic Project, the Search for Genghis Khan's Tomb, and James Cameron's DeepSea Challenge.
- Led digital journalism and social media and traditional media training for explorers, scientists, and other members of the Society to improve field reporting.
- Established and negotiated distribution partnerships with external organizations and news platforms to create a distributed audience and acquire new users to NG.com.
- 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.
- Assisted with the launch of entertainment news venture TMZ, 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

- 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).

Product Manager AOL Community
(2000-2004)

- 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.
- 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 interviews over four years. Designed experiences for the first live online interactions for crisis events, including the events of 9/11, Elian Gonzalez riots in Miami (2000), Columbine school shootings (1999), Kosovo War coverage (1999), and election coverage in 2000 and 2004.
- Conceived of and launched live event enhancements including companion webcam, streaming video and audio, and instant polling to experiment with live audience retention and behavior thresholds.

ADVISORY BOARDS & ORGANIZATIONS

Online News Association Philadelphia, Local Organizer, 2016-Present
Online News Association Digital Journalism Awards Judge, 2014-Present

■ RECENT PANELS & SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

Social Media as a Tool for Change, Southern California Marine Mammals Workshop, 2015-2019
MAVRIC, Mixed/Augmented/Virtual Reality Innovation Conference, UMD, 2018
Association of Science & Technology Centers (ASTC), Virtual Reality & Museums 2016 - 2018
Museums & the Web (MW), What Happened When We Filled Our Museum with Virtual Reality? 2016 - 2018
MIT Media Lab Oceans Conference 2018, Panel Speaker: Changing Minds: Museums and Advanced Technology
Museum Computer Network (MCN), Museums as Centers of Journalism, 2017
Philly Tech Week, Virtual Reality in the Community, 2018
Chief Digital Officer Summit, Panel Speaker, 2017
VR2020 Panel Speaker, VR in Cultural Institutions and Education, 2016
Social Media Day Philadelphia, How Museums Need to Think Differently About Social, 2016

■ RECENT MEDIA

-New York Times: "Arming China's Terracotta Warriors—With Your Phone," September 9, 2017, <https://nyti.ms/2hliE23>
-Philadelphia Inquirer: "Virtual reality has arrived at the Franklin Institute, and it will blow your mind," October 17, 2016
<https://bit.ly/2uJZTPH>

■ AWARDS

2017 W3 Awards, Gold Award, The Franklin Institute Science Museum VR App, Mobile Features: Experimental & Innovation
2017 Communicator Awards, Franklin Institute Science VR App, Excellence Award: Features - Integrated Mobile Experience
2017 Communicator Awards, Franklin Institute Website, Excellence Award: Websites - General Education
2017 Interactive Media Awards, Best in Class Award: Museum, The Franklin Institute Mobile App
2017 Interactive Media Awards, Best in Class Award: Science/Technology, The Franklin Institute Mobile App
2016 Webby Award Nominee, Science & Education (Channel), E/V Nautilus: Live Ocean
2013 Webby Award Nominee, Science, The Genographic Project: Geno 2.0
2013 Webby Award Honoree, Science, Nautilus Live
2013 Communicator Awards, Award of Excellence: Science, The Genographic Project: Geno 2.0
2013 Communicator Awards, Award of Excellence: Events & Animation, James Cameron's DeepSea Challenge
2011 Webby Award Honoree, Science, Expedition: Mongolia
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

■ EDUCATION

B.A in Communication, Virginia Tech, 1996. Concentration: Journalism, Minor: Sociology.
B.A in English, Virginia Tech, 1996. Minors: Biology, Music.