Being an intern at Allegra Lab: An epilogue

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May, 2017

Before my internship at Allegra Lab, I was unaware of most of the online platforms for anthropology. I had heard of sites such as [Savage Minds](), but I did not read them regularly. Through this internship, I became exposed to the flexibility and potential of sites such as Allegra Lab. I saw how quickly anthropological knowledge and ideas could be disseminated through online platforms compared to traditional scholarly publications. As I consider my own path in the field of anthropology, it is easy for me to see how these online

platforms will continue to be relevant and influential in the field.

For students of anthropology, I find such online platforms to be especially useful in connecting coursework to current world events.

Through these websites, I saw how anthropological ideas and theories were being used to challenge conventions, analyse societal problems, and induce change. I believe that knowing about these types of scholarly and creative outlets will be highly beneficial to my future work as an anthropologist. From reading about the experiences of [those who blog academically](#), I felt inspired to create my own fieldwork blog in the future.

As the Internet becomes more embedded in our society, the potential of these online platforms grow. Through these platforms, anthropologists can engage with world events as they unfold. In contrast, with the publication of an academic book, it may be years before the research is presented to the public. By that time, the relevance of the information would have diminished. Allegra Lab's thematic threads and articles on trending topics such as [#Brexit](#) allow for an immediate reaction and discussion to take place. Through managing the [Twitter](#), I have connected trending world events with content on the website. These tactics make the field of anthropology more relevant to both academics and the larger community, and it provides scholars with new ways to use their expertise.

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The power of the social media to spread information became most clear to me with the popularity of a tweet about Allegra's top 30 essential books in anthropology. When writing that tweet, I never expected it to get the amount of popularity that it did. However, the post ended up attracting the attention of many in the online anthropological community. According to the Twitter statistics, 6,575 people saw the post in their timeline, 214 people clicked on the link, and 40 people retweeted it. It was a topic of conversation and debate and showed that there was a lot of potential in engaging with the online anthropological community. The online discussion led to the publication of two new posts. One addressed reader criticism of the original list, and the other was a list of the 70 or so essential anthropology books assembled from the suggestions of the readers. Through the sharing of the original post on social media, a space was created in which criticisms and suggestions could be communicated and responded to.

Another lesson I've learned while working on Allegra's Twitter account is the time commitment that managing social media takes. While each individual tweet in itself is not that time consuming, checking for notifications and creating a

presence on the account ends up taking a lot of time. Twitter is so fast-paced that being able to reply, like, and retweet instantly is very important in building up momentum. Multiply that with other social media platforms such as [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#), and it becomes a very time consuming endeavour to manage well.

Throughout my internship, I have been able to explore public anthropology through Allegra's online platform for scholarly and public discussion. I recently read an article from the American Anthropologist about public anthropology, and it mentioned sites in the anthropological blogosphere such as [Savage Minds](#) and [Somatosphere](#). I think the article described Allegra Lab perfectly as well in saying that these platforms are trying to forge new avenues of creativity and contestation outside of standard academic channels. These platforms also help to improve the public image of the discipline and the perceived value it has. Personally, the idea of engaging the public and bringing anthropological understandings to topics sounds very exciting and is something I want to work more with in the future.

My last project with the [#Anthroadvice thematic thread](#) brought me much insight into the inner workings of Allegra. From deciding on the week's posts to creating a social media marketing strategy, it was a challenging yet rewarding process. I think that the amount of freedom I was given really allowed me to take the thematic thread in the direction that I wanted. With [#Anthroadvice on Twitter](#), we received many great tips from current anthropologists. I hope that the social media presence of anthropological platforms will continue to grow to create a deeper and more extensive online community of anthropologists.

This internship challenged my traditional notions of the impact, reach, and presentation of anthropological ideas. Allegra Lab and other online platforms have created a new way to engage with anthropology that could greatly benefit both the anthropological community and the general public.

References:

Benson, P. (2014). Year in Review, Public Anthropology, 2013: Webs of Meaning, Critical Interventions. *American Anthropologist,116*(2), 379-389. doi:10.1111/aman.12100