**BAC COVID LOCKDOWN SESSION 3: BUSINESS ARCHIVES AND ONLINE USER ENGAGEMENT – WILL COVID-19 ACTUALLY CHANGE ANYTHING?**

17 members joined the session which was hosted by Mike Anson (BAC) and Caroline Catchpole (Digital Development Officer, The National Archives).

We started with a quick overview of the types of online engagement being undertaken by business archives prior to the coronavirus crisis. Many businesses were already using archive material on social media, For example, Sainsbury’s ran a great campaign for their 150th anniversary in 2019. However, this type of content can be seen as ‘safe’ engagement’. Should we be pushing the boundaries more?

Discussion then moved on to the challenges faced during lockdown and enforced working from home, including not having adequate digitised resources to answer enquiries and not enough digitised content for use on social media.

Caroline gave a short presentation about online engagement from her perspective and highlighted some of TNA’s initiatives and available resources particularly in relation to digital engagement and capacity (see links below).

In the discussion that followed, a number of points were raised:

* One archive had struggled with the logistics of not having a digital preservation solution up & running (it was just about to go live before lockdown). The situation had highlighted the importance of digital preservation and the problems of having to rely on numerous hard drives
* The critical issues of image rights for online content was also raised
* What do you digitise first? Straw poll taken on engaging users in what to digitise with consensus being archivists generally know what the most used collections are/the ones that could be of greatest benefit to be digitised
* There was a great deal of discussion around engagement of internal audiences in the business. For instance, inductions for new starters being done over video chat. This was felt to be an important area, and something that would need to be developed were working from home was going to be more prevalent
* Some archives has developed new projects for engagement, for instance asking staff to contribute ‘diaries’ of activities during lockdown. This contributed to helping staff feel more connected
* There was also some debate about the Black Lives Matter campaign and the fact that this represented an opportunity for businesses to use their archives as an asset rather than a liability in terms of openness and transparency

**TNA LINKS AND RESOURCES:**

Plugged In, Powered Up: <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archives-sector/projects-and-programmes/plugged-in-powered-up/> - Year One resources up online.

A digital engagement toolkit is being planned for this year. Leaflets for the advocacy campaign can be sent on request, contact caroline.catchpole@nationalarchives.gov.uk