



No Request Too Big, No Town Too Small:

How Duck, N.C. used social media archiving to respond to a public records request

The small town of Duck—the newest town in North Carolina’s picturesque Outer Banks—could conceivably be called a one-road town.

“There’s one way in and one way out,” says Denise Walsh, the town’s Public Information Officer. But Duck isn’t a place that will let its landmass (which happens to be less than three square miles) dictate the size of its community. Despite its small size, Duck’s year-round population of less than 400 full-time residents swells to over 20,000 in the summer months.

With such a fluctuation in population, social media has become a key factor in Denise’s strategy for engaging all the town’s residents.

“Our social media’s very active,” she says, emphasizing that she keeps Duck’s social media feeds fresh by promoting local events, sharing community photos, and, during storm season, providing regular weather updates.

As the PIO responsible for stewardship of the town’s social media records, it’s vital for Denise to be in compliance with North Carolina’s state records regulations.

“You want to be responsible,” she says, “It’s crucial to have access to the town’s social media history and all the town’s records, to make sure you have all the information and that you’re able to use it.”

Because Denise knows her town's social media content is public record, and that all of her records need to be available in the event of a public records request, she encouraged the town to sign on with ArchiveSocial, whose platform allows Duck to capture and archive records of its social media activity in near real-time.



Denise Walsh, Public Information Officer, Duck, NC

Responding to a Public Records Request from the Southern Environmental Law Center

In the fall of 2017, Duck got the chance to put its social media record keeping strategy to the test.

The situation was this: The Southern Environmental Law Center (SELC) was looking to gather public records relating to a proposed bridge (called the Mid-Currituck Bridge) that had been controversial county-wide.

When the SELC issued Duck a public records request for all records related to the bridge, Denise and her team were easily able to produce them.

"The SELC was looking for any kind of discussion, comment, or feedback that had ever been discussed with regards to the plans for the Mid-Currituck Bridge," Denise said. It was a request that, without a social media archive, could have been difficult (if not impossible) for her to fill.

With ArchiveSocial, however, Denise was able to fulfill the SELC's request within a matter of minutes. "I did a quick search in ArchiveSocial of different potential keywords and got a lot of information that

was very easy to export and share," she said.

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With just a few clicks, Denise was able to put together a complete record of social media posts and comments relating to the Mid-Currituck Bridge from all of Duck's social media platforms.

The entire process took less than an hour, and—for a small town with a small staff—such quick and easy access was a big deal.

"We do so much on social media that to try to hand search for anything over the last five years would have been a chore," says Denise. "I'm grateful to have ArchiveSocial—it gives me complete peace of mind."

ArchiveSocial's effortless functionality made it easy for the town of Duck to capture, search for, and reconstruct its social media posts—and, by retrieving the historical records available on Duck's social media platforms, Denise was able to build an in-depth record of its social media engagement in response to a critical public records request.

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The Anatomy of a Social Media Public Records Request

Where: Duck, N.C.

Population: 400

Records Requester: The Southern Environmental Law Center

What They Requested: All records, comments, and feedback related to the proposed Mid-Currituck Bridge

The Results: With ArchiveSocial, PIO Denise Walsh was able to search for specific keywords related to the bridge and export all social media posts and comments in a PDF document in minutes.

Sample an archive of your own social media at archivesocial.com

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