



ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT CASE STUDY

How The Duke of York's Royal Military School preserved their history and used it to increase alumni engagement with SocialArchive®.

SocialArchive supported The Duke of York's Royal Military School in creating their first SocialArchive®, enabling them to save their history, safely and securely, then use it to better engage their alumni community.

BACKGROUND

The Duke of York's Royal Military School (DOYRMS) is a co-educational boarding school based in Dover, UK. The school has an illustrious history which can be traced back to its founding in 1803. As would be expected for an institution of such an age, the school has large amounts of historical material.

This material was simply stored on site, having never been through a process of cataloguing or categorisation. Critically no digitisation of the material had ever taken place. Various alumni had collected material together from their own research and offered it to DOYRMS, but there was no person to take control of this material or repository in which to store it.

The school felt this situation needed to be addressed. The lack of information regarding the material or backups meant that in the event of an incident, not only would the information be lost but there would be no way of knowing what had been lost.

Several IT literate alumni had shown, using social media, that there was much material outside DOYRMS and that when this material was shared the alumni were keen to engage. So, working with

The Dukies Association (TDA - the school alumni organisation) several former pupils funded a six-month project to bring in an archivist who would begin to gather and catalogue this treasure trove of information.

Key to the success of this project was the ability to be able to share this material safely and securely with alumni all over the world. SocialArchive was selected as the solution as it provided a cloud-based repository for the digitised content alongside an access-controlled platform from which to publish the material. Not only could the content be shared, but the alumni could provide feedback, comments, and additional material. Providing a self-contained social network around the archive, hence 'a social archive.'

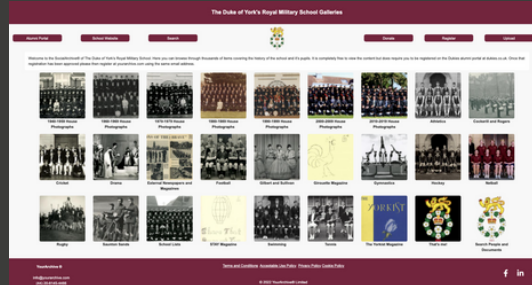
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"SocialArchive has not only allowed DOYRMS to start storing our history for posterity but is already proving to be a powerful tool to help us better engage with our alumni."

RACHEL ROBINSON
ALUMNI & DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

THE PROJECT

Categorisation and digitisation of material began in June 2021. The institutional archive was setup on the SocialArchive platform and DOYRMS was able to begin uploading content.



THE ARCHIVE



Folder structure

Although not necessary for operation of the social archive, DOYRMS chose to store their data in a folder structure, replicating their local storage format for ease of reference.



Data Tagging

All data was tagged on upload to the archive to enable efficient search and discovery, especially as the archive will grow over time. Bulk tagging features made this process fast and easy.



Facial Recognition

SocialArchive's built in Facial Recognition tools mean faces are automatically identified and matched in archival material, from which alumni can find or search for themselves and others. Not only driving additional interaction, but giving value back to users and enhancing historical completeness of the archive.

SOCIALISING CONTENT

Galleries are published subsets of archive material which can be shared publicly, or to a selected audience. The first galleries of material were published to the TDA user base in September 2021 and used a range of SocialArchive's tailored features:

- **Private galleries** – The social archive allows galleries to be set to either public or private. User details were exported from the current DOYRMS alumni platform so that only registered users could view the school's content.
- **Custom Portal** – Any new galleries published by the school are automatically added to their custom branded portal so users can easily find everything in one place. This also serves users with their very own personal galleries and archive search functions.
- **Watermarked content** – SocialArchive allows for files to be displayed to users with a watermark overlaid (modified in transit), protecting the intellectual property of the school while maintaining the archival integrity of the original.
- **Direct sharing** – Functionality within the system allowed direct publication of gallery links to the school's social media accounts, notifying both existing and potential users as to the publication of new content.
- **User comments** – The option to allow user comments within the galleries introduced a further social element to the archive, giving alumni a space to reminisce and share memories all in one place.
- **Download** – All galleries were set so the original content could not be downloaded, ensuring the school retained control.
- **Document search** – Having digitised thousands of pages of school publications, enabling document search let users quickly find any references to themselves, others, or topics of interest and add those they wanted to revisit to their personal galleries with a single click.

Email blasts regarding the SocialArchive® are sent via the alumni platform containing hyperlinks to longer news articles inside the alumni platform news page, this has encouraged readers to sign up to access the social archive galleries and increased the audience for general alumni news.

OUTCOMES

25,000

Publication of the galleries to the alumni have attracted in excess of twenty five thousand unique content views in less than five months.

5x

The rate of new users signing up to the alumni platform increased five fold in the six months following launch of the platform.

74%

News articles posted to the alumni platform attracted an average of 74% more hits when supported by archival content.



The comment and reply features of the social archive have allowed alumni to deliver additional insight and fill in missing information, in addition to driving further user interaction, and allowing the school to understand who their most engaged users are.



The school has received multiple contributions of further material, via the enabled user submission feature. These have provided new information and filled known gaps, unearthing material thought lost, or never seen before.



Early 2022 saw the school successfully complete it's largest ever capital campaign, raising over £150,000.00 for refurbishment of The Clocktower which has stood at the centre of the school for over a hundred years. Success of this campaign has been attributed to the a range of engagement activities carried out including the introduction of the SocialArchive®.

NEXT STEPS

- The school will utilise the full engagement data available to them from the archive to understand exactly which content is most engaging to the alumni and which alumni are most engaged. This clear understanding, which only comes from being in complete control of the system, will help inform future engagement and development decisions.
- New galleries of archival content will be shared with the alumni on an ongoing basis and existing galleries will continue to be updated with new content and information on existing content, filling gaps in timelines and further deepening the value of the archive.
- Using the tagging features in the SocialArchive, the school is able to quickly produce stand-alone galleries for special occasions and events to be sent out alongside related invitations or communications, increasing interaction. These galleries can even be set to expire at a given date.

For more information on SocialArchive® or to arrange a demonstration please email info@socialarchive.com or call us on 020-8145-4466.