



Content Evaluation of the Response to the Centennial Find Your Park Campaign

Natural Resource Report NPS/NRSS/NROC/NRR—2021/2242



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ON THE COVER

Find Your Park campaign logo and creative displays.

THE NATIONAL PARK FOUNDATION

Content Evaluation of the Response to the Centennial Find Your Park Campaign

Natural Resource Report NPS/NRSS/NROC/NRR—2021/2242

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Executive Summary

Purpose – The purpose of this study was to make an assessment of the National Park Service’s (NPS) communication efforts through the Find Your Park (FYP) campaign, which launched in conjunction with the agency’s centennial anniversary in August of 2016. The FYP campaign encourages citizens to visit national parks and share their experiences on social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube).

This study sought to understand how audiences expressed their connections to national parks in comparison to the content shared by the NPS. It also sought to gain a sense of the extent to which the NPS has been successful in connecting with a key target audience—the cohort known as the millennials (i.e., people born roughly between the early 1980s and the early 2000s). The National Park Service benefits from knowing more about the contexts in which audiences are connecting with the ideas, places, and landscapes the agency manages. This is especially true of social media, a collection of digital spaces increasingly significant for meaningful practices of individual and social identity. This report offers recommendations for how the NPS can enhance its communication efforts to facilitate relevant digital connections between parks and the public going forward.

Method – A total of 430 social media posts gathered between February and April of 2016 were analyzed for this study: 120 Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter posts (360 total) and 70 YouTube videos. Per each platform, half of the units of analysis collected were gathered from “citizens” (i.e., non-NPS users [e.g., members of the general public, celebrities]¹ who shared a photo of a national park featuring the hashtag #findyourpark). The other half were obtained from NPS accounts (i.e., the official NPS account as well as other branches [e.g., the Lincoln Memorial or Everglades National Park]). Posts and videos were gathered by entering the hashtag #findyourpark² into the respective platform search bar. Content was analyzed through constant comparison, a qualitative method that involves examining the content at a granular level to extract key themes and delineating core properties to develop a better understanding of the phenomenon in question. In addition, content was analyzed through a narrative coding process wherein one researcher examined social media posts to

¹ We struggled with what to call those posting who were not doing so as a part of a professional duty as a National Park Service employee. We considered such terms as “public”, “member of the public”, “poster”, “user”, “Park goer”, “visitor”, “civilian”, etc., but ultimately determined that “citizen” came closest to what we were trying to represent.

² Although the #encuentratuparque hashtag was used in the FYP campaign to reach out to Spanish-speaking audiences, the scope of this research project was limited to #findyourpark. The research budget did not permit hiring Spanish-speaking researchers to collect and analyze data.

determine the major message(s) (i.e., the stories, or, what we came to call, “value narratives”, as presented by the post creator).

Findings – Through multiple phases of constant comparison analysis, several themes emerged. One prominent theme is that of “emotional and identity multiplicity,” which refers to the idea that FYP participants express multiple emotions and identities in relation to their national park experiences. Specifically, citizens are more likely to present multiple feelings and identities in sharing their park experiences as compared to the NPS postings. It was also found that citizen users are more creative and expressive in writing photo captions and using hashtags (compared to the NPS). The NPS, however, is more likely to feature public figures or park rangers in FYP photos, and be relatively concise and routine in caption and hashtag writing.

Narrative analyses reveal that for citizens, beauty-grandeur, recreation, and photography are the most prominent value narratives (i.e., stories told). The NPS, on the other hand, presents supporting and participating in the parks and heritage as the top two narratives, with beauty-grandeur being third. Additionally, the NPS was more likely to present a heritage enthusiast identity (in regard to presentation of institution), which reinforces the fact the NPS cares about sharing our history.

An overarching indication is that the FYP campaign facilitates a “third space” (Mitra, 2008), or trans-local experience. That is, FYP participants are afforded the opportunity to interweave offline and online experiences directly related to National Park System landscapes. Further, producing content via social media allows producers to create, curate, and tell their own stories through experiencing the park, capturing video and/or photos, and producing a digital narrative (i.e., documenting the experience). See Table 1 for an overview of key themes and a comparison of citizen and NPS findings.

Table 1. Overview of Key Themes and Comparison of Citizen and NPS Findings.

Overarching Themes	Citizens	NPS
Presentation of Feelings (toward national park experience)	• Exploration • Beauty/grandeur • Appreciation • Deep meaning (specifically reflection) • Adventure	• Exploration • Deep meaning (specifically reflection) • Appreciation • Beauty • Bonding
Presentation of Self (Citizens) or Institution (NPS)	• Dynamic and multi-faceted: multiple identities presented	• Concise—sensitive to inclusion
Presentation of Place or Natural Environment	• More focused on sharing location	• Balanced location with human or cultural history related to the park

Table 1 (continued). Overview of Key Themes and Comparison of Citizen and NPS Findings.

Overarching Themes	Citizens	NPS
Posts about Activities (most prevalent activities participants engaged in)	- Experiencing the landscape or scenery - Participating in “quiet recreation” (e.g., hiking/walking) - Photography *Citizens more likely to disclose the specific park location (e.g., Yellowstone)	- Experiencing the landscape or scenery - Participating in “quiet recreation” (e.g., hiking/walking) - Photography *NPS more likely to disclose whether the park experience connects to human/cultural history/heritage and the specific park location
Presentation of Post	Shared information about the phone or camera used	- Tagged public or celebrity figures - Used the hashtag #encuentratuparque (Find Your Park in Spanish language)
Narrative Frequency	- Beauty/grandeur - Recreation - Photography	- Support the parks/participate - History/heritage - Beauty/Grandeur

Conclusion – The NPS was successful in reaching a millennial audience through this campaign. This is evidenced by the fact that on the citizen side, millennials were the most prominent participants across all social media platforms sampled. The NPS connected with millennial participants through its continued emphasis on visiting national parks and documenting the experiences via social media. Because the millennial generation is highly connected through smart phone technology (Anderson & Jiang, 2018), the NPS capitalized on this by building the FYP campaign around the documenting and sharing of national park experiences through photo and video (i.e., via Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube).

It appears that citizen participants felt a sense of connection to their national park experience(s) as well as a desire to share it via social media. The FYP campaign was relevant to a millennial audience because it afforded participants the opportunity to share digital narratives (through photo, text, and/or video) by using social media – quite possibly the most dominant form of communication among the NPS’s target audience (see Anderson & Jiang, 2018).

In sum, this study indicates that the citizen and NPS communicators, whose postings ended up in our sample, care deeply for the national parks in various respects. Both entities put forth an overwhelmingly positive presentation that National Park System lands/properties provide immense opportunity to experience wildlife and scenery, recreate, and bond (with nature, self, and others). Thus, social media afford the NPS and citizens an opportunity to strategically communicate about park experiences—which as the FYP campaign indicates, has been tremendously beneficial to the NPS.

Recommendations – The recommendations are broken apart into near-term, mid-term, and future. For more background, detailed descriptions, and examples of how to enact these suggestions, consult the full Recommendations section in the report.

Near-Term Recommendations

- The strongest recommendation is for the NPS to continue on its positive path of wanting to better understand its stakeholders and improve communication with them. The fact that this research project even took place attests to that.
- We recommend that NPS communicators do even more to suggest ways that stakeholders can be visually creative in and around national park lands (in terms of such creative activities as photography and videography). The fact that citizen social media communicators in our sample were twice as likely to reference narratives of beauty-grandeur in their posts supports this idea of the strength of visual culture.

Mid-Term Recommendations

- Our main mid-term recommendation starts off in the form of a question: What will the NPS do next to achieve another success like FYP? Success is good, but eventually many institutions, such as the NPS, are faced with competing against their past successes. That is, what is the next step—how should the NPS build upon FYP?
- We recommend that the NPS investigate, modify, and initiate activities that encourage “third space” (i.e., the interweaving of online and offline experiences) identity management activities of its stakeholders (particularly young people).
- Another mid-term recommendation connects to the NPS’s successful strategy of utilizing celebrities to increase public interest, especially among young people and/or underserved demographic groups. We suggest recruiting members of the growing cadre of Internet celebrities (also known as “influencers”)—people who offer content via social media that is consistently stimulating enough to attract sometimes very large followings (even hundreds of thousands of viewers).
 - To diversify and enliven its presentation on social media, we encourage the NPS to enlist a citizen guest host (e.g., a “micro” celebrity [commonly referred to as an influencer]) to manage its account for several days to one week. This strategy may enable the NPS to more authentically connect with millennial and other audience members.

Future Recommendations

Our future recommendations rely on more outside-the-box thinking that stretches beyond current standard communication techniques. For example, what will the NPS be in the distant future? What will our society look like?

- We recommend pursuing any communicational strategy that links the NPS and its landscapes with third space experience. For example, digital gaming has become more and more popular, with steady growth over the last 25 years. It is recognized that people (especially younger people) tend to retain more information if it is delivered in the form of a video game, than, for example, face-to-face classroom settings. Meanwhile, much of the business world is

recognizing this fact and is increasingly utilizing “gamification” strategies to train their workers (for example, shelf stockers at Walmart will soon learn how to do their jobs by first mastering a sims-like game). Virtual reality hardware and software are improving rapidly and dropping in price, making gaming more realistic and stimulating. Based upon this, we suggest that the NPS partner with high tech (specifically, gaming companies) to encourage these institutions to include gaming contexts that match the landscapes of NPS-managed lands.

- We recommend that the NPS start investigating the use of technology that blends offline and online experience, that is, augmented reality (AR). Instead of it mostly occurring within a computer, tablet, or smart phone, users could carry this technology into the NPS space where they can, for example, witness (and interact with) natural and/or historical events that take (or at one time took) place in these spaces.
 - The people using the parks today will be different than those who will enjoy them in one hundred years. We need to think about ways to connect future audiences to parks and public lands in ways that are relevant to them.
 - The FYP campaign was a good start. However, we are convinced future lives will be carried out in a world that blends the off with online. The NPS needs to make sure today that it is positioning itself to stay relevant in the future.

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Introduction

In August 2016, the National Park Service (NPS) celebrated its 100th birthday, referred to as the “Centennial”. The NPS’s goal: “to connect with and create the next generation of park visitors, supporters, and advocates” (Celebrating the National Park Service, 2018). As part of this celebration, the National Park Foundation, the NPS’s philanthropic partner, rolled out the “Find Your Park” campaign, specifically targeting 18- to 35-year-olds (a cohort commonly referred to as the millennials)—a highly influential, important stakeholder group for the NPS as it kicked off its second century of land management.³ Find Your Park employs⁴ a range of media, corporate partnerships, celebrity ambassadors, events, and advertising to drive awareness and connect audiences to parks. Social media are key strategic elements of the campaign because of their substantial use by the target audience.

Success was to be measured in relation to the three campaign objectives:

Objective 1: Create relevancy: improve awareness and understanding of the National Park Service

Metric: percent lift of awareness in a perception survey measuring how effective the campaign was in increasing perception and understanding

Objective 2: Drive connections/engagement: increase connection with the brand

Metric: quality engagement on websites and social media

Objective 3: Increase support: increase support and funding for the NPS

Metric: active donor file size, dollars donated to the National Park Foundation and number of NPS volunteers

The objectives underscore the NPS’s ongoing goal to better understand the relevancy of national parks to the public (see, [A Call to Action](#) and [Achieving Relevance in Our Second Century](#)). Quantitative measurements have provided the NPS with a largely numerical understanding of the success of the FYP campaign, which can address Objectives 1 and 3 (see, [NPS Centennial Final Report](#)). However, these metrics could do little to provide a sense of *what* people communicated in relation to the FYP campaign; to what extent was there a sense of awareness, connection, and engagement in the social media communication? And could we understand something about *how* those texts were constructed. In this research, we engaged in qualitative textual analysis specifically aimed at addressing Objective 2 (above). We examined how a sample of Find Your Park-related social media communication indicated particular patterns of expression about connections to national

³ Although the #encuentratuparque hashtag was used to reach out to Spanish-speaking audiences, the scope of the research was limited to #findyourpark. The research budget did not permit hiring Spanish-speaking researchers to collect and analyze data.

⁴ The Find Your Park is ongoing and supported by the National Park Service in conjunction with the National Park Foundation. <https://findyourpark.com/>

parks, distinct stories we call *value narratives*. We compared posts made by the general public (a category we came to label “citizens,” as we explain below) to those of the National Park Service itself, looking for similarities, differences, and various areas of overlap with these narratives.

Ultimately, we argue that this research helps us better understand how NPS audiences—particularly the younger generations—are engaging with the national parks and their resources. It also helps us assess the efficacy of the NPS’s ongoing communication management efforts to remain relevant, enhancing opportunities for connection with public lands well into the future.

Literature Review

The specific literature informing this research lies at the intersection of *place* – as defined by Stowkowski (2002) “an individual’s ability to experience feelings of attachment to particular settings” (p. 308), (which we argue can be both offline, online, and somewhere in between), and *social media* (computer-based, networked, interactive communication that facilitates sharing through virtual communities). Social media has been defined as “a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technical foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user generated content” (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010, p. 61).

Engaging in a database search for any one of these terms in the academic literature produces a relatively large, unwieldy number of hits. We helpfully narrowed our search by cross-referencing. For example, we concurrently searched terms such as *National Park Service*, *parks*, *public lands*, *nature*, and *place*, with such topics as *social media*, *Facebook*, and *Instagram*. We also attempted to search back no earlier than 2013. With rapid changes in new media technology, research can become quickly outdated. This strategy produced a manageable, yet quite helpful, collection of research reports elucidating clear themes in this young literature. That said, this emergent nexus is clearly a relatively recent area of research focus and will undoubtedly evolve and grow.

Three distinct themes emerged from this literature, which we present in no particular order: social media as productive source of representation; social media as strategic communication; and social media as “trans-locality.” These themes were not mutually exclusive. For instance, some of the articles could easily fall within more than one theme category. But at least briefly defining these ideas and common research methodologies helps us to understand the trajectory of this focused body of literature related to our topics of interest, as noted, various iterations of the intersection of social media and place. This helps us gain a better sense of where we should begin with our own interpretations, effective themes to build upon, and areas for improvement, in both theory and methodology.

Social media—Productive Source of Representation

This literature supports the idea that social media have evolved to perform the role of societal barometers, providing ready sources of cost-effective data and interpretive information to help researchers understand human experience, particularly in relation to the natural world. These articles largely reflect the positivist/post-positivist philosophy described in Guba and Lincoln’s (1994) seminal chapter delineating four common paradigms in social research. That is, a unitary reality is imagined to exist, and, in our case, through careful examination of social media, it is assumed that one can achieve a reasonably accurate representation of that reality.

Two of the articles that emerged in the search took a broad approach. For example, Schäfer and Schlichting (2014) reported on a meta-analysis of research on climate change-related communication, which included an examination of social media. They pointed out that social media are increasingly studied (and that is a positive development as far as understanding public attitudes about the environment), but researchers are still overly-reliant upon print media, and Western sources. Bengston, et al.’s (Bengston, Fan, Reed, & Goldhor-Wilcock, 2009) quantitative content

analysis exemplified the spirit of this idea with their “rapid issue tracking” (p. 367) research strategy, which utilizes online media (including social media) to help stewardship-oriented communicators relatively quickly gain a purchase on public opinion about environmental issues. Wood et al.’s (Wood, Guerry, Silver, & LaCayo, 2013) content analysis articulated the resource saving potential of such research. They proposed an alternative to relatively expensive, highly focused surveys of stakeholders at national parks, suggesting instead that information be gathered from social media—such as the photo-sharing website Flickr. The authors argue that recording the geographic location in which the photograph was taken can effectively reflect visitation rates [for a similar approach utilizing Flickr to estimate visitor numbers, see Levin, Kark, and Crandall’s (2015) quantitative content analysis research]. In research comparing thematic environmental blogs (including associated social media applications), Haider’s (2015) content analysis research argues that social media are a sign of, and contribute to, the articulation of meaningful “environmentally friendly living” (p. 474).

Social Media as Strategic Communication

Another distinct area of literature emerging from the intersection of place and social media focuses on the *strategic* possibilities of this media form in conservation. This research examines the effects of these digital media on attitudes and behaviors. This set of articles also aligned well with the positivist/post-positivist paradigm (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Explaining that the Western evolution from a production-based to a consumer culture has heavily impacted national parks in the United States, Wearing, et al. (Wearing, McDonald, Ankor, & Schweinsberg, 2015) argue this change is a result of a variety of developments, including: demographic shifts, the emergence of a consumer identity, increased leisure and disposable income, the growth of tourism, and improvements in transportation and communication, including social media. The authors recommend that media producers stay away from simplified clichés, and present a more complex image of place-related symbols. Meantime, effective social media strategies of Greenpeace have attracted the attention of researchers, including Davis, Glantz, and Novak (2015), whose case study explored the environmental advocacy group’s effective use of Internet memes to mock and delegitimize Shell’s plans for oil-drilling in the Arctic. Katz-Kimchi and Manosevitch (2015) utilized a case study to examine Greenpeace’s online tactics, focusing on the organization’s use of Facebook to share information, and increase public engagement, particularly transnational support.

Other strategic communication research focused on how social media supported the mixing of communicational strategies. For example, in their study of communication about climate change within the internal publics (management, staff, and volunteers) of the United States Forest Service, Laatsch and Ma (2016) utilized mixed methods—qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys—to assess “horizontal information flow” (p. 1171). They argue that informal social networks (including social media) could be very effective for messaging, although they cautioned that such interactive, Internet-based communication will pose security issues for U.S. federal agencies. Gervais (2016) used qualitative interviews to study the use of the Internet by conservation photographers and found the more effective communicators still reached a larger audience by utilizing mainstream media venues, but the photographers augmented that by utilizing social media to target more specific audiences. And in his study of communication related to the Australian Greens party, Hutchins (2014) (utilizing qualitative interviews and online textual content analysis) determined that Twitter

has been a critical supplement to what he calls the “media ecology mix” (p. 27), now performing an important role in the party’s strategic actions.

Social Media as “Trans-locality”

Our literature review identified another distinct, recent literature area related to our topic, a sense of online and offline experience blending to evoke the notion of an in-between, third space—what Appadurai (1996) has labeled “trans-localities” (noted on p. 631 of Polson, 2015), and Schwartz and Halegoua (2014) calls the “spatial self” (p. 1647), a bricolage of experiences, individual and social, public and private, within both online and natural space. Polson contextualizes this idea...

Contemporary forms of mobility have shaped new ways of thinking about “place” and the role communication technologies play in place-making. Across disciplines such as geography, anthropology, sociology, leisure studies, and media studies, the concept of place has been wholly reconceived for an era of globalization, trans-nationalism, and postmodernity, with researchers demonstrating that places are social, gendered, flexible, extendable across distance and socially constituted through interaction in everyday routines (p. 630).

Polson described a new flexibility in the way places and place-making are conceived. There has emerged the idea of a blending to demonstrate “how places can exist in mediated and virtual worlds . . . (and a call) to explore how *digital media practices* may be employed to create mobile and *flexible places* that span on-and offline space” (p. 630).

We came across a number of articles focused on activity at the evolving intersection of experience with offline places and online media that, together, contribute to this notion of trans-locality. We sensed in this literature the admixture of Guba and Lincoln’s (1994) notion of critical and constructivist research paradigms. On one hand, we see an effort on the part of these researchers to explain the way that reality is influenced by what Guba and Lincoln characterize as “social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gender values; crystallized over time” (i.e., the critical perspective). But we can also sense a strong emphasis on what Guba and Lincoln describe as “relativism—local and specific constructed realities” (p. 109). It is clear to us that in the globalized, transnational, postmodern existence Polson (2015) describes, it becomes more and more difficult to claim that structures of ideology alone determine meaning (and technology may easily fall within that category). But it is also problematic perhaps to claim an individual, pristine experience of agency.

We also saw an undeveloped vs. developed place dichotomy in this literature. For instance, we were at first drawn to articles focused on the meaningful nexus of social media and what one would consider classically natural, un-developed spaces. For example, in their content analyses of online wilderness trip reports, Champ, Williams, and Lundy (2013) argue these posts combine notions of self-identity, narrative, and nature with online communication, such as blogs—in a gestalt sense, the whole being greater than the sum of its parts. Adams and Gynnild’s (2013) qualitative focus group research on the efficacy of interactive online tools (e.g., interactive ecological calculators and videos) intended to promote environmental messages (which could also be located in the strategic communication category) found these tools are less effective if they fail to account for nuanced

senses of place. In other words, if communicators blanket all social media with the same conservationist messages, without also accounting for particular elements of the offline geographic space an audience member inhabits, influence levels map drop. Adams and Gynnild (2013) argue audiences conceive of place in terms of spaces they inhabit, their individual life experiences, *and how that intersects* with Internet-based media. Again, a *trans-local* conception.

We were also impressed by a body of work that did not jump out to us at first as being directly relevant for our research (and search criteria). These researchers joined the growing list of scholars investigating the integration of human experience in urban spaces with increasingly sophisticated mobile technologies. For example, Bork-Hüffer (2016) utilized qualitative interviews to understand how German professionals living in Singapore utilized digital media to feel at home in what for them was a new offline place [Also see Lim, Bork-huffer, and Yeoh (2016)]. Polson (2015) ethnographically studied (content analyses, interviews, participant observations) ways in which meetup.com, the social organizing mobile app, prompts a “mobile ‘sense of place’ for ex-patriots who find themselves searching for a sense of belonging” (p. 639). In similar ethnographic research, Evans (2014) studied usage of the social network *Foursquare*, a location-based, search-and-discovery app that offers recommendations based upon tracked places a user has visited and the advice of other trusted users. Evans argues place must increasingly be understood as a combination of experiences with offline spaces, and experiences with computational devices which “alter and mediate the experience of space” (p. 846). As noted earlier, Schwartz and Halegoua (2014) engaged in case study analysis of social media sites and argue the growth in social media apps that utilize location information of users (such as Facebook, Foursquare, and Instagram) presents us with what he calls the “spatial self” (p. 1647) a bricolage of experiences, individual and social, public and private, within both online and natural space.

Finally, researchers are anticipating the impact on trans-local experience as a result of even more sophisticated, the-future-is-now, sorts of technology, such as augmented reality (AR) software which utilizes technology to present a blending of computer-generated sound, video, graphics, etc. within a real-world environment. Liao and Humphreys (2014) utilized naturalistic/interpretivist interviews to examine how people are using mobile, AR technologies in ways that, again, can be said to combine off-line spaces, virtual places, and identity. “Because of this,” they write, “mobile technologies raise new opportunities for the creation of place, allowing people to re-encounter every day space and understand the structure of those settings” (p. 1420).

Research Questions

Based on the interest in relevancy of national parks introduced in the beginning of this report and our review of recent research literature lying at the intersection of place and social media, we crafted the following research questions (following the three themes described in the literature section):

RQ1 Social media—productive source of representation?

How are stakeholders presenting in the social media posts we sampled (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube) a sense of valuation of the lands/properties under the stewardship of the NPS, and how is the NPS presenting in their social media posts we sampled a sense of valuation of the lands/properties under its stewardship?

RQ2 Social media as strategic communication

What are prominent and subtle similarities and differences in the ways stakeholders and the NPS are presenting their posts (in our sample) related to lands/properties under the stewardship of the NPS? Does that indicate that the NPS should adjust/change any of its messaging strategies to align more closely with that of stakeholders?

RQ3 Social media as “trans-locality”

Do the stakeholder/NPS social media posts in our sample provide us with evidence supporting the idea of trans-locality, or third space, a blending of off- and online meanings and experience as part of the process of identity—for both stakeholders and NPS posters?

Sub-question: Related to this, how does thinking in this way counter the common assumption that online communication is merely a reflection of off-line reality, or, the less common assumption that online experience does not need offline experience to be meaningful?

Method

The Value of a Qualitative Approach

This project was designed with a limited scope. We would not engage in direct data gathering with NPS communicators and stakeholders (e.g., quantitative surveys and/or qualitative interviews/observations). The need for that level of analysis would be determined later. Instead, we were to conduct a textual analysis of a sample of FYP social media posts that had been created and/or shared by both stakeholders and NPS communicators. These parameters established our goal for the project (as discussed above): we would provide data and analysis that would contribute to the NPS's second objective (or goal) for the Find Your Park campaign, which called for an assessment of FYP's connection/engagement with stakeholders.

As we formulated a methodological plan for this study, we (like anyone today with a computer and an Internet connection) knew we had unlimited access to everything publicly posted on social media. This included all of the observable platform elements, such as: words; colors, images; videos; names and aliases; captions, links; hashtags; and overall site architecture. As archaeologist, Ian Hodder, explained, "Words are, of course, spoken to do things as well as to say things—they have practical and social impact as well as a communication function" (Hodder, 1998, p. 112). We agree and apply this idea to all we experience in social media posts. For example, pictures (including videos) also "say things" and most certainly have a social impact and communicative purpose. Participants who share⁵ their experience(s) in national parks, thus, have the opportunity to say things visually (i.e., the photo or video itself), textually (i.e., the accompanying caption and/or hashtags), and structurally (in terms of design elements that may be exclusively created by the social media platform, but nevertheless are tacitly accepted as appropriate by the platform's users every time they send out a new post).

But what were we looking for in these FYP-related posts? Returning again to NPS Objective #2, we understood the call for an evaluation of connection and engagement to be, in many ways, an operationalized assessment of self-conscious presentations. That is, we assumed that when people, including national park stakeholders and NPS employees, share content on social media, they are *doing* something. For instance, as we will see, they may be telling others about the details of an upcoming event at a national park property, or describing a particularly enjoyable hiking route they experienced, etc. Clearly, they are, as Carey (1989) described, *transporting* information. But, as Hodder (1988) pointed out, they are also *saying* something that goes beyond mere information transfer. Carey has explained that human communication also has a potential *ritual* function, a practice that can serve to validate and re-confirm our favored systems of meaning. Taken this way,

⁵ The experience is shared by posting a picture on Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter or a video on YouTube using the hashtag #findyourpark in the description.

Hodder's notion of *saying* could be thought to imply a *presentation of identity*.⁶ In the case of our FYP research, we take the social media posts to range from rather simple on up to very complex *stories* (which we came to call *value narratives*) that can be further interpreted as linking to much broader, potentially society-wide, grand narratives, which we can think of as having great potential power to influence how all of us see, understand, and engage with the world. The extent to which these stories are detected, linked, and absorbed into the world views of others often determines their perceived weight in influencing social meaning. Parts of this process can be seen as individual and unique to the person, but other aspects are shared, co-experienced, and dialogic.

In order to make claims about patterns of value narrative presentations we observed within the FYP social media posts in our sample, we were guided by the constructivist qualitative approach (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Qualitative methods are helpful when a “complex, detailed understanding” of a particular issue or phenomenon is needed (Creswell, 2012, p. 48). The goal is not a flawless representation of a singular reality. For example, quantitative approaches seek to capture—to, essentially, *lock down*—an assumed reality by assigning number values to specific elements the researcher considers salient (i.e., worth paying attention to) within a given context. This approach may provide a very broad view. For example, one could conceivably ask every person on the planet to rate their life on a scale of 1-to-7. This might provide an indication of life satisfaction patterns around the world, which could be correlated with the results of other scaled numeric responses, an effort that could provide valuable information. But these sorts of assessments are, by design, shallow in that they cannot plumb the potential depth of complex, networked life experiences.

It has been argued that when the goal is providing a snapshot of actors associated together in potentially intricate networks of experience, we need a different model. Many constructivist qualitative research strategies instead aim for the metaphor of a crystal. According to Ellingson's (2009) notion of crystallization, the qualitative researcher builds...

...a rich and openly partial account of a phenomenon that problematizes its own construction, highlights researchers' vulnerabilities and positionality, makes claims about socially constructed meanings, and reveals the indeterminacy of knowledge claims even as it makes them (p. 4).

Crystallization models a reality (or what could more helpfully be thought of as multiple realities) in which we assume the following: those we study exist within meaningful worlds; we, as researchers overlap with those worlds, while occupying *our own* networks of existence; and, the audiences for our research reports (e.g., those who will read and consider this document) possess a sense of *their* lived realities (which can, to varying degrees, overlap with the realities of others). Thus, any descriptive claims for “what seems to be going on” must always be seen as simply one still-frame out of infinitely many others in a fluid, processual, potentially dynamic flow, continually imagined and

⁶ By identity, we follow cultural studies scholar Kathryn Woodward's (1997) definition which links the concept to what we present as our “location in the world . . . as a member of a particular community, ethnicity, social class, religion, as a parent, as a worker or as unemployed” (p. 1).

re-imagined by the different actors in play. As Ellingson indicates, this knowledge might feel indeterminate, yet it is the best we can do. The constructivist qualitative approach allows us to more thoroughly experience the data (in comparison to more automated data analytical methods), in the case of this study, enabling a deeper analysis of the FYP phenomenon, as presented via various social media. This research stance better-positioned us to sift through and interpret the evidence in the sample and reach our interpretations.⁷

Our goal was gathering and comparing the identity stories—the *value narratives*—presented by citizen posters and the NPS, looking for possible patterns in how those stories were constructed. For this task, we knew we would need some organizational assistance. We chose to use Nvivo qualitative software as the primary analysis tool for this study. Nvivo allows for analyzing data for frequency and provides visualization tools for interpreting (i.e., “feeling”) the data.

Before moving on to our sample selection strategy, we (i.e., the two principle investigators) will briefly provide a statement of our own identity (or, *identities*), as researchers. We hope that sharing something about *who we are* affords helpful context in relation to which our research interpretations may be judged. We are academics—one male and the other female—who share an interest in the social intersection of nature and communication (particularly mass mediated communication, with a particular focus on digital applications). Both of us grew up in the Northern Midwest of the United States (separate places, and generations—one is a baby boomer, the other a millennial). Both of our white, middle- to upper-middle class families socialized us according to a strong land conservation/stewardship ethic—family camping trips and other outings to local, state, and national parks and other undeveloped forests, rangelands, and waterways were common activities growing up. Politically, we both identify as liberal, with our views located along a moderate-left to progressive continuum, depending upon the issue. On the topic of land management, we both support the preservation and stewardship of landscapes in ways that sustainably support ecological diversity, while also contributing to the physical and emotional well-being of the public. Both of us have backgrounds in media production, and this led us to pursue scholarship in media studies. We share the belief that media influence broader culture in profound ways, but analyzing, understanding, and addressing those influences can be a complex endeavor. We will be saying more about our largely overlapping research ontologies, but we will add that we were educated in positivist, post-positivist, and critical/cultural research theory and methods (which continue to influence our research approach) before adopting the constructivist approach detailed in this report (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). There is, of course, more we could say about the filters that influence our interpretations. The important takeaway is that, like Ellingson’s (2009) metaphor of the crystal, this brief thumbnail representing our positionality is meant to encourage readers to problematize our constructions in multi-faceted ways. Although, our knowledge claims must always be seen as partial, indeterminate, and open to re-interpretation, the constructivist argues that these variations are not exclusive to qualitative research. Rather, *every* research paradigm has inconsistencies. We believe epistemological strength is the

⁷ For a deeper discussion of the “researcher as instrument approach,” see Lindlof and Taylor’s (2011) discussion of “interpretivism” or “naturalism” (pp. 8-9) in qualitative research.

result of being able to imagine more of Ellingson’s crystal facets—in this case, the perspectives of the FYP social media posters, the researchers examining their posts, and the readers who consider this report.

Sample Selection

A total of 430 social media posts gathered between February and April of 2016 were analyzed for this study: 120 Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter posts (360 total) and 70 YouTube videos. Per each platform, half of the units of analysis collected were gathered from what we came to call “citizens” (i.e., non-NPS users⁸) and the other half were obtained from NPS accounts (i.e., the official NPS account, as well as other branches [e.g., Everglades National Park]).

Posts and videos were gathered by entering the hashtag #findyourpark into the respective platform’s search bar. When generating the sample for Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, we selected every fifth post from the image stream that resulted when entering this hashtag⁹. We believe this method provided us with a comprehensive sample representative of the general FYP phenomenon. When generating the sample for YouTube, we gathered 35 videos from the Find Your Park YouTube channel (the total number of uploaded videos as of February 22, 2018). Though this channel was not produced by the NPS specifically, the National Park Foundation sponsored the Find Your Park campaign. Therefore, the videos on the FYP YouTube channel were considered a representation of NPS communication. In addition, we collected 35 citizen videos containing the hashtag #findyourpark by selecting every tenth video that populated when this hashtag was entered in the YouTube search bar. Given that we sampled the total number of videos available on the FYP YouTube channel (as of February 22, 2018), and matched the number of citizen posts collected (i.e., 35 citizen posts), we are confident that our sample adequately represents the YouTube portion of the FYP phenomenon.

Constant Comparison

Constant comparison is a qualitative method that can be useful when the researcher’s goal is to extract key themes from the data to form a better understanding of a phenomenon. Originally developed by Glaser (1965) and Glaser and Strauss (1967), it takes an inductive approach as it allows themes or patterns to emerge from the data. Generally, data will be broken into units of analysis as appropriate for the topic being studied. Once engaged in the coding process, the researcher must

⁸ We struggled with what to call those posting who were not doing so as a part of a professional duty as a National Park Service employee. We considered such terms as “public”, “member of the public”, “poster”, “user”, “park goer”, “visitor”, “civilian”, “stakeholder”, etc., but ultimately determined that “citizen” came closest to what we were trying to represent. It is important to understand that we are not implying that all “citizens” whose FYP posts ended up in our sample are United States citizens. It would be difficult in many cases to determine nationality.

⁹ We used April 2015 as the starting point for FYP posts (the campaign launch date). Because there are more than 1 million citizen Instagram posts (as of February 2018) containing the #findyourpark hashtag, we collected our samples on several occasions (*not* starting in April 2015, as it would have been nearly impossible to find that starting point among this mass number of posts).

delineate each category's core properties by revisiting the data multiple times, constantly comparing and contrasting categories based on everything the researcher has experienced in the study leading up to that time (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002, p. 219).¹⁰ The end result is a list of categories the researcher can use as he/she begins to interpret the findings. Social media posts (i.e., image and text) and videos were coded using constant comparison in an effort to group themes into grandparent, parent, child, grandchild, and at times, even great grandchild codes (described in a forthcoming section).

Overview of Coding Process and Code Descriptions

Before moving into our discussion of interpretations, it is important to explain our coding process as it evolved through the various phases of this project. Our goal was, first, gaining a sense of patterns of meaning in these FYP-related posts. We wanted to be able to make an informed statement (based on a relatively deep observation of the texts) about *what* these posts seemed to mean to us when we observed and interpreted them. Second, we wanted to see if we could move a little beyond the usual holistic, subjective interpretations common in qualitative research, to achieve a sense of understanding about *how* these FYP posts actually come to mean. That is, when someone presents a value-laden narrative that we assume is intended to represent their relationship to the idea of the national parks, is there anything we can say about *how* they go about doing this? For this research, we did not have the opportunity to observe the posters as they created (or even simply forwarded) their posts. But we could observe, analyze, and make statements about what we observed *in* the posts, and what we did not see. From there we could consider how those differences and similarities compared between the NPS and the citizens the agency serves, and how they compare across social media platforms.

¹⁰ Returning to Ellingson's (2009) metaphor of the crystal, when Constant Comparison is coupled with a constructivist ontology, it becomes a fluid, reflexive process. The researcher is truly the interpretive instrument. O'Connor and Joffe (2020) explained, "In quantitative research, reliability relates to the stability of findings across time, contexts, and research instruments. By the logic of positivist research, if a finding is reliably substantiated across these dimensions, it is more likely to represent an objectively true phenomenon rather than an artefact of the research process (Bauer et al., 2000). In contrast, most qualitative epistemologies reject the notion of a single, objective, external reality the scientific method can directly reveal. Instead, qualitative scholars see their research field as composed of multiple perspectival realities that are intrinsically constituted by an individual's social context and personal history (Bauer et al., 2000)." (p. 4) Following these ideas, our claim for inter-coder reliability, rather than consisting of a one-time comparative test of coder accuracy, is based on our weekly meetings that stretched on for months as we worked together to fashion and refine our coding instrument. As Ellingson says, the constructivist researcher (and the audience for his/her/their report) knows this. We must always consider research accounts of any kind to be partial (a limited fragment of some imagined, but never fully attainable, greater reality), and these claims should be appropriately problematized, paying particular attention to what Ellingson called the researchers' "vulnerabilities and positionality" (p. 4). The reward for this relatively humble research stance can be a deep, multi-faceted sense of understanding the phenomenon of interest.

Narrative Coding—Searching for the “What”

Taking advantage of having two researchers on our team, we split the task of coding into a pair of separate fronts. The first researcher coded for broad themes interpreted in the posts. The interpretive task was asking oneself: What seems to be the major message (or, often, messages) of a particular FYP social media post? Soon after we started our weekly analysis meetings we came to think of these messages as *stories*, or *value narratives*, following the ideas of cultural historian, Margaret Somers (1994), who sees life as “storied,” with “narrative (as) . . . an ontological condition of social life” (p. 614). We also drew from psychology researcher, Mark Freeman (1998), who sees distinct human narratives as giving “form to the flux, to make it all seem like there is a point, a purpose, a meaning . . .” (p. 29) Storytelling is one of humanities most powerful abilities.

As discussed, coding the narratives interpreted in the posts was a subjective exercise [for a list/definitions of the narrative codes used in this study, see the glossary in Appendix C.]. As noted earlier, qualitative research positions us to think in terms of multiple realities that vary according to time, space, and the people experiencing them. Rather than seeking any sort of inter-coder reliability measure between researchers, qualitative research practitioners prefer to demonstrate validity by, as Lindlof and Taylor (2011) explained...

...evaluating multiple forms of evidence (triangulation, disjuncture, and crystallization); by looking at (and for) evidence that disconfirms an interpretation (negative-case analysis); and by checking out some of our hunches, claims, and explanations with the participants themselves (member validation) (p. 274).

We did all of these things, as described earlier, investigating four social media platforms containing FYP posts presented by both citizens and the NPS. Our research was emergent, so we went in with few pre-existing assumptions about what we were looking for (negative-case analysis). And though, due to Office of Management and Budget (OMB) regulations, we were unable to interview anyone posting on these social media sites, we engaged in member validation by, on several occasions, formally presenting research updates to NPS employees (e.g., managers, communicators, practitioners). Their feedback, followed by discussion, led us to make some adjustments in our analysis. We also regularly, and less formally, communicated with the local NPS representatives who conceived of and funded the project. And as described, we had our weekly meetings, relating our progress, and comparing notes and ideas. The media audience research of Hoover, et al., (2004) served as model for our work. As the authors explained in *Media, Home, and Family*, these regular interactions

...became an important part of what we learned in this project. . . . sessions were lively struggles, sometimes contentious but more often energetic and enthusiastic, as we tried to make sense of what people told us (p. 11).

Recognizing the contribution of such developmental, negotiative activities reminds us that we are, as Lindlof and Taylor (2011) characterized, “reflexive agents in the field” (273). This approach to qualitative investigation positions the researcher squarely within the overall context of meaning.

Granular Coding—Searching for the “How”

As stated, in addition to the *what*, we also wished to be able to say something about the *how* of FYP social media narratives—that is, how citizen and NPS posts in our sample seemed to be sharing their stories of relations with national park land and activities? What could we say about the *details* of these posts? Though OMB rules prevented us from observing and interviewing those posting FYP social media texts, we could at least track what was *in* those texts. We thought that, perhaps from there we could gain a sense of patterns of how the narratives we interpreted were constructed. With one researcher working on narrative coding, the other focused on much more closely coding each social media post at what we came to call a granular level, essentially (and we admit, somewhat tediously!) recording very fine details.

We found Nvivo qualitative analysis software especially helpful for organizing and analyzing this granular level of analysis, which, even in qualitative research, generates many thousands of data points (Nvivo was also instrumental in the narrative coding/analysis). As a qualitative tool, Nvivo assists the researcher in moving beyond numeric or linear data to a more detailed picture of the phenomenon under study. We found Nvivo to be a valuable resource in that it helped us to not only organize a large amount of data (in various formats [e.g., image, text, video]), but also to visualize (in spatial representations) and interpret our findings in innovative ways.

Nvivo encourages thinking in familial generation terms to designate codes (or nodes as they are termed in Nvivo) hierarchically. Below is an overview of how codes are categorized in Nvivo:

- Overarching theme = *grandparent* code
 - Sub-theme = parent code
 - Sub-sub theme = *child* code
 - Sub-sub-sub theme = *grandchild* code
 - ◆ Sub-sub-sub-sub theme = *great grandchild* code

As we observed and coded the texts for this study, we found ourselves separating the elements of these social media posts into three categories. And each category was itself broken into sub-categories. Three overarching themes (grandparent codes) and sub-themes for each (parent codes) were as follows:

- Presentation of Humans (grandparent)
 - Feelings toward Experience (parent)
 - Presentation of Self or Institution (parent)
- Presentation of Place or Natural Environment (grandparent)
 - Amenities (parent)
 - Recreation/Activities (parent)
- Presentation of Post (grandparent)
 - Post Elements (parent)
 - Technology (parent)

For a full list of all codes (i.e., including sub-codes) see Appendix A. In the forthcoming sections, we provide an explanation of grandparent codes and their associated sub-codes. The codes presented in this study were generated through a constant comparison process wherein we analyzed the participant's photo or video, photo or video caption (i.e., description), and/or hashtags (if they were included with the post). To delineate core properties for the overarching themes and codes, and to ensure a logical hierarchical code structure was employed, as discussed earlier, we revisited the codes numerous times and consulted with NPS personnel for what is known in qualitative research as "member validation" (Lindlof and Taylor, 2011, p. 175).

Presentation of Humans

The grandparent code *Presentation of Humans* was developed to represent elements of a post that seemed to elevate the awareness of people—front and center. It is about the human element first, with national park-related places and experiences serving as a backdrop. When something was coded this way it indicated that the poster was presenting identities and feelings in relation to park experiences. In other words, these posts seemed to provide them with an opportunity to say something about themselves. And this human-focused communication was not exclusive to the citizen posters; we included the National Park Service communicators as well. The NPS is a human institution.

We broke this grandparent code down into a pair of sub-(parent) codes. *Presentation of Self or Institution* was created as an overarching parent code to broadly represent identities presented by citizens (i.e., self) and the NPS (i.e., institution). In deciding what to include in this category, we asked: "In what ways do users present a sense of who they are (or, at least, wish to be seen) as an individual or as an institution?" Child codes sub-grouped within this category included *adventurer*, *age*, *brand ambassador*, *diversity*, *history enthusiast*, *lifestyle enhancer*, *outdoorsperson*, or *public figure or celebrity* (see Appendix A for a complete list). For example, a photo featuring a millennial-aged African American woman hiking in Zion National Park would have been coded for age, diversity, lifestyle enhancer, and outdoorsperson, among other codes, depending on the content included in the photo caption and/or hashtags. Figure 1 provides a visual example of how we coded a citizen Instagram post within the *Presentation of Self* (i.e., citizen) category.



Figure 1. Example of coding process for Presentation of Self or Institution.

The other parent-code, *Feelings toward Experience* (again, a sub-code to the grandparent code *Presentation of Humans*), was created to categorize codes associated with feelings or emotions participants expressed (i.e., through text) in relation to their park experience. Child codes within this parent code included *adventure*, *appreciation*, *beauty*, *bonding*, *change*, *creation*, *cute or adorable* (most often associated with animals), *danger or caution*, *deep meaning*, *exploration*, *friendship*, and *wonder*. For example, a photo featuring a group of friends hiking with a caption containing the hashtags #exploremore, #neverstopexploring, #naturalbeauty, and #createcultivate, would have been coded for *beauty*, *bonding*, *create*, *exploration*, and *friendship*.

Presentation of Place or Natural Environment

It became evident to us early in the development of our coding scheme that these FYP social media posts were not always presenting people and/or the NPS institution as the main focus. In many of these posts, it seemed that it was the *place* that was central to the presentation. *Presentation of Place or Natural Environment* came to be our second of the three overarching grandparent categories. Many of these posts featured land- and sea-scapes, geological formations, historical sites, statues, and buildings, etc., but no people. But others did include humans within the frame, but it was not primarily about them. The focus was NPS-managed spaces and what those places afforded visitors.

This overarching grandparent code was broken down into a pair of sub-codes. We labeled the first parent code, *Amenities*, which included the sub-(child) codes: *Human or Cultural History* (i.e., ethnic or national park); as well as a *specific park* (i.e., when the participant shared which specific park(s) he/she was visiting). The other parent code that emerged came to be called *Recreation*, and included child codes of: *camping*; *eating*; *education*; *experiencing scenery*; *experiencing wildlife*; *quiet*

recreation (such as the child codes of *backpacking*, *climbing*, *hiking*, and *yoga*); *snow sports* (such as *sledding* or *snowshoeing*); and *water sports* (such as *kayaking* or *rafting*). Under the parent code of *Recreation*, we sub-coded 9 child codes and 17 grandchild codes (see Appendix A for a complete list). Figure 2 provides a visual example of how we coded a citizen Instagram post within the *Presentation of Place or Natural Environment* category.

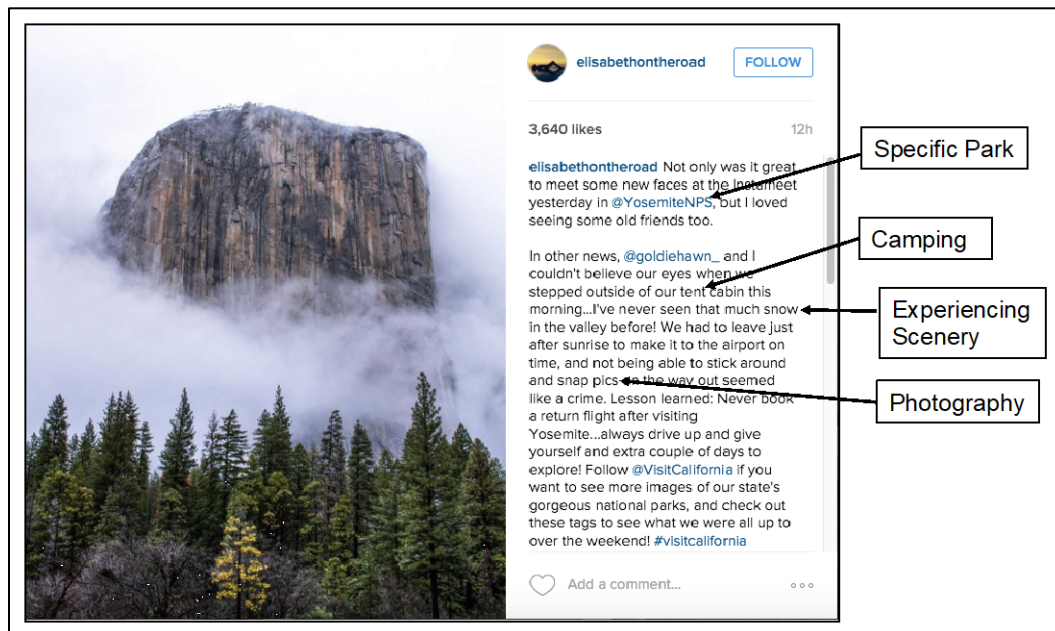


Figure 2. Example of coding process for Presentation of Place or Natural Environment.

Presentation of Post

Lastly, we created the grandparent code *Presentation of Post* to categorize elements of the post or video itself. Again, a pair of sub-(parent) codes seemed to make sense to us. The first, *Post Elements*, included the child codes: *attribution*; *feedback seeking*; *information sharing*; *link*; *location*; *media* (or, *account “shout-out”*); *original post*; *public figure endorsement*; *quote*; and *shared post*. The second parent code was labeled *Technology*. Child codes within that category included *camera type* or *phone type* used to produce their photo or video. The *Technology* code, however, was not prominent (i.e., coded frequently) throughout the study. See Figure 3 for a visualization of how we coded an NPS Facebook post within the *Presentation of Post* category.



Figure 3. Example of coding process for Presentation of Post.

For a definition of each code, see the glossary in Appendix B.

Analysis

Once the coding is complete, the Nvivo software enabled the slicing and dicing of data in a variety of ways, essentially allowing us to unpack these relatively specific data sources (that is, the individual social media posts) and reassemble the myriad data points in relation to prominent value narratives. For example, we can take all the posts associated with the most commonly coded narrative we labeled “beauty and grandeur.” We can then compare the coding across all of the social media posts to see which codes are most commonly utilized to present that particular narrative. The results can then be visually represented in a mosaic—a graphic Nvivo refers to as a “sunburst.” The sunburst graphics provide a visual representation of the hierarchical relationships of the coded data analyzed via Nvivo. We chose to use the sunburst graphic as it offers a thorough and clear picture of the results. The sunbursts provide a way to visually display the codes, their frequency, and how they fit together hierarchically.

Findings

Presentation of Humans

As explained in the previous section, we divided our findings into three overarching code categories, the first being Presentation of Humans. Within this category, it became apparent that both citizens and the NPS are apt to attach feelings to their experiences in national parks. Thus, we created the parent code Feelings toward Experience. Additionally, it was found that FYP participants, particularly citizens, are likely to present multiple simultaneous identities. Based on this, we created the parent code Presentation of Self (i.e., citizen) or Institution (i.e., the NPS). Figures 4 and 5 (below) provide visual sunbursts of our analyses.

Our initial analytical efforts simplified the process by combining the coded data gathered from all of the social media platforms included in this study—Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube—which can be seen in the sunburst images throughout this section.

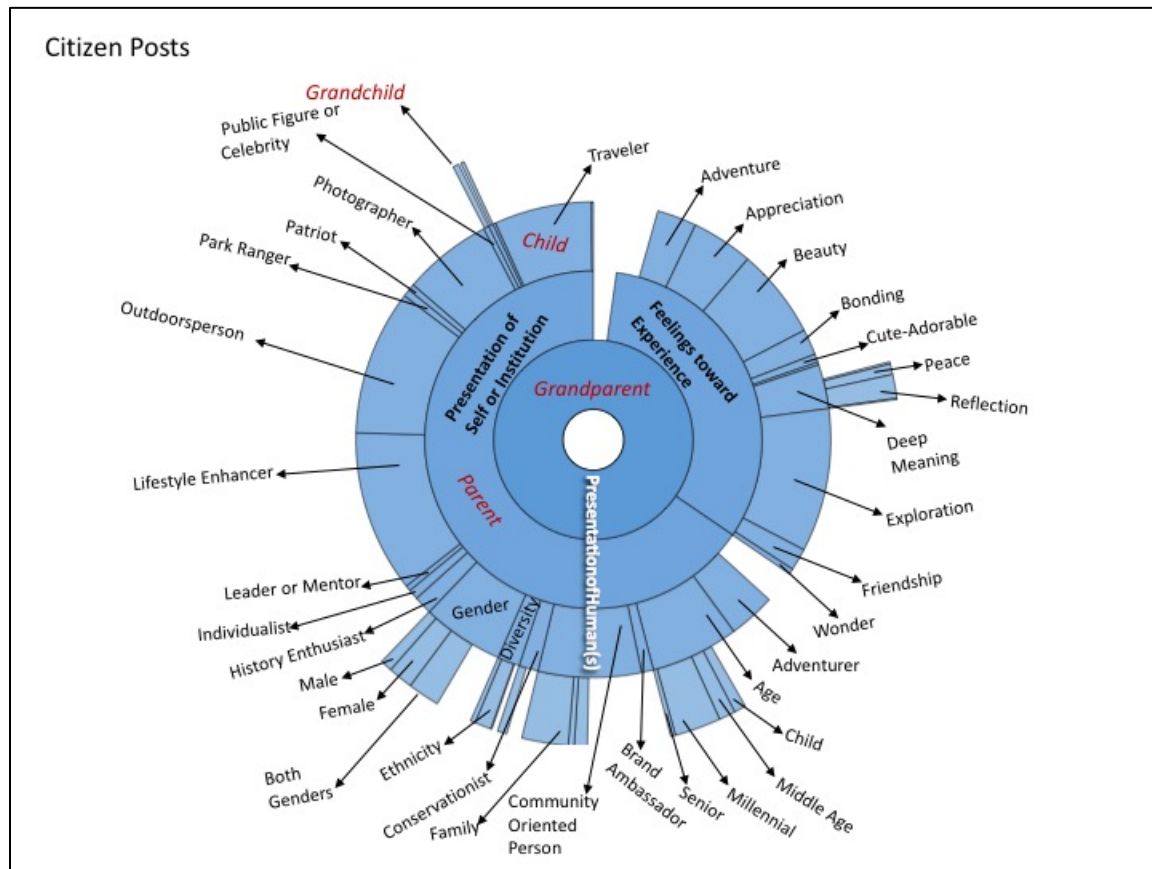


Figure 4. Sunburst Image of Citizen Presentation of Self & Feelings toward Experience.

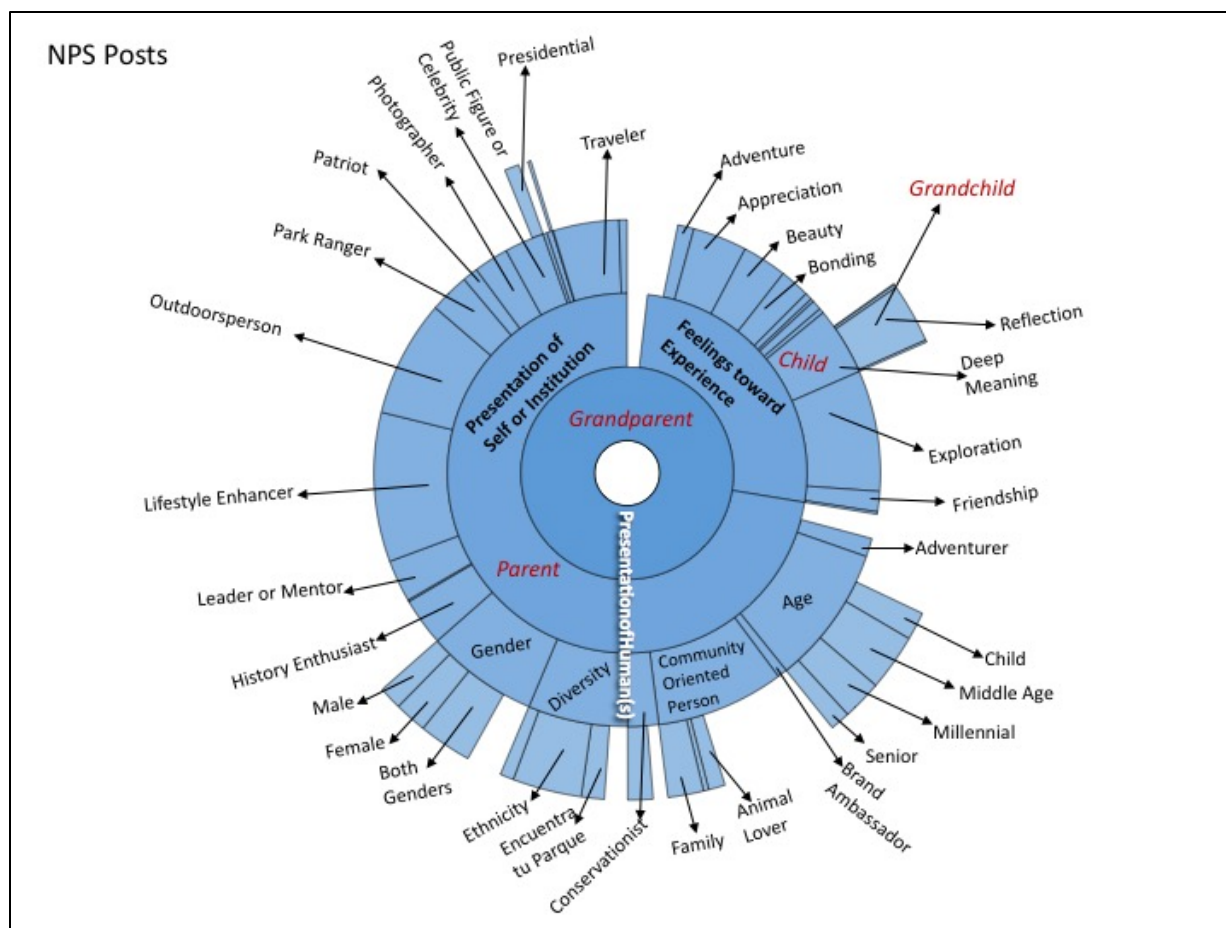


Figure 5. Sunburst Image of NPS Presentation of Self & Feelings toward Experience.

Feelings toward Experience

Across the platforms, one theme that emerged as the most prominent feeling (or idea) citizens and the NPS attach to experiencing national park was the concept of *exploration* (i.e., 156 citizen references compared to 149 NPS references). Thus, it appears that exploration is a meaningful aspect of engaging with national parks for both citizens and the NPS. Interestingly, beauty, appreciation, and deep meaning (specifically reflection [i.e., a child code]) also came through as prominent feelings for both citizens and the NPS (though they ranked slightly differently [see Tables 2 and 3 below]). The difference in this category is that the NPS presented bonding as a feeling toward experience whereas citizens presented adventure more often. This makes sense given that citizens presented an adventurer identity while the NPS did not. Moreover, because the NPS recognizes that many visitors come to parks in social groups with a primary purpose of spending time with friends and family, it makes sense that bonding surfaced as a more prominent feeling in the citizen data.

Table 2. Top 5 Feelings toward Experience Code Frequencies for Citizen Posts.

Code	Citizen Frequency
Exploration	156
Beauty	98
Appreciation	67
Deep Meaning	48
*Reflection [child code]	*20
Adventure	43

Table 3. Top 5 Feelings toward Experience Code Frequencies for NPS Posts.

Code	NPS Frequency
Exploration	149
Deep Meaning	84
*Reflection [child code]	*57
Appreciation	67
Beauty	55
Bonding	37

We found that citizens who present multiple identities are more likely to communicate feelings/emotions attached to experiencing national parks (as compared to the NPS). In addition, we found that when park rangers and/or public figures (including celebrities) are featured in NPS posts, emotions are more frequently expressed in the post. For example, posts featuring a park ranger(s) may include the codes such as bonding, deep meaning, exploration, or friendship, while posts featuring a public figure (e.g., National Park Director Jonathan Jarvis, or a FYP celebrity ambassador) may communicate feelings of appreciation.

Figure 6 exemplifies a citizen post that contains a caption and numerous hashtags denoting feelings towards a national park experience.



Figure 6. Citizen Instagram Post illustrating Feelings towards Experience Theme.

Our sample of social media texts indicated that hashtags are handy vehicles allowing producers to share how they feel about particular experiences and ideas related to national parks and related activities. Hashtags such as #divine_deserts, #desertlife, #wanderlust, #wonderful_places, #travelstoke, #ic_adventures, #ourplanet, #pure nm, #nmtrue, #travelgram, #outdoorlife, #traveldeeper, #campvibes, and #ventureout speak to the feelings toward experience theme. Specifically, Figure 6 was coded for adventure, beauty, exploration, and peace.

Feelings toward Experience, and its related child codes, align with what Daer et al. (2014) call *critiquing* – which is “used when the purpose of the post is [sic] express judgment or verdict regarding the object of discussion (a described experience, an image)” (p. 13). In other words, users critique their experience (i.e., an image from an experience at a national park) in part through the use of the aforementioned hashtag examples. They may describe the image (e.g., physical qualities of the image captured), talk about how they felt before, during, or after the experience (e.g., completing a fourteener [a 14,000-foot hike]), and/or provide some type of judgmental hashtags that speak to the significance of the location (e.g., preserving endangered lands).

Identity Multiplicity

In addition to feelings, we found that FYP participants are likely to present multiple simultaneous identities in their posts. In other words, a producer may identify as a photographer, female, African-American, millennial, adventurer, and traveler – all within the same post. These identity presentations are conveyed through the photo or video, as well as the caption (including hashtags). Figures 7 and 8 (below) provide visual sunbursts of the most prominent (i.e., highest coding frequency) identity codes.

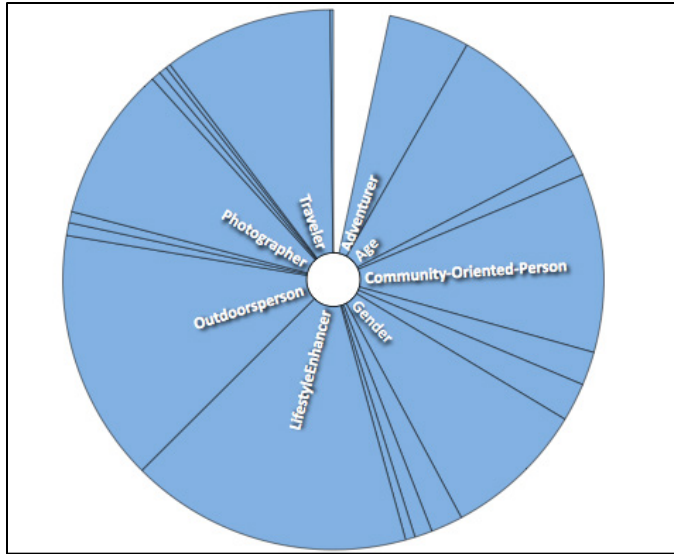


Figure 7. Citizen Presentation of Self Sunburst.

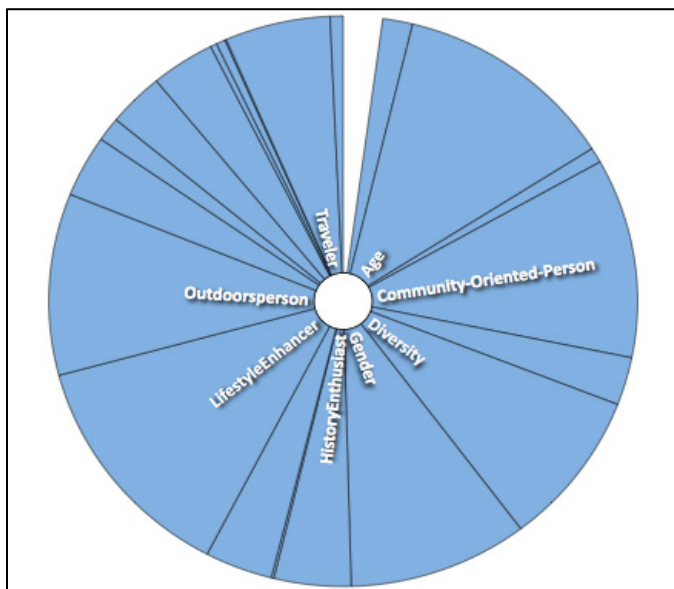


Figure 8. NPS Presentation of Institution Sunburst.

It was found that citizen posters are more dynamic and multi-faceted in their presentation of self, and that the NPS posts are less rich, containing less description and fewer hashtags compared to citizens. The NPS was also found to be more restrictive in their presentation of self (as an institution). We realize, however, that NPS social media managers are communicating in relation to a clearly defined goal of fostering a community of users who create rich and meaningful content, often in response to agency posts. NPS communicators must also be cognizant of posting content that fits the agency's mission of inclusiveness for the maximum number of national park enthusiasts. In other words, the desire to avoid excluding stakeholders may prompt them to steer clear of appearing to over-focus on

one user group which may, in some cases, limit the use of photos, captions, and hashtags by NPS communicators.

This idea of presenting identity/identities via image, photo captions, and hashtags links to findings from Smith and Sanderson (2015). In their study of professional athletes use of Instagram, they developed a theme titled “personality traits and interests.” Consistent with our findings, they found that athletes use Instagram to share pieces of their personality (i.e., “personal likes, interests, families, and charitable work,” p. 355). Similarly, Zappavigna (2016) posits that “a user’s stream of images is an unfolding construal of identity in which the particular phenomena photographed are presentations of personal style” (p. 273). Further, Daer et al. (2014) put forth the idea of *identifying* through hashtags. For instance, by using hashtags such as #traveladdict, #womentravel, #mountaingirls, #getoutsidestayoutside, or #freespirit, users present identifying characteristics or reflective descriptors (Daer et al., 2014, p. 13), which aligns well with our theme of identity multiplicity.

It is important to note that on the citizen side, the most prevalent age presented was millennial (see Figure 4). Interestingly, the NPS was more balanced in their presentation of age. Figure 9 offers a breakdown of the four age ranges on the NPS side.

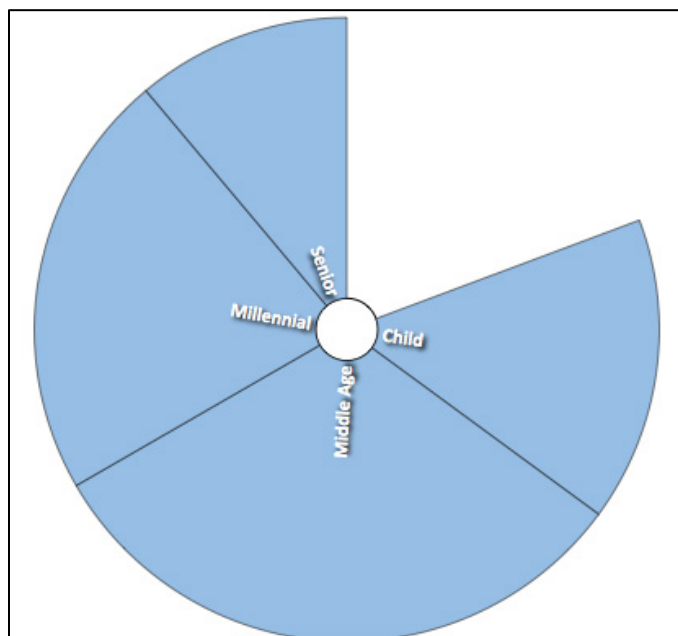


Figure 9. Age Breakdown across NPS Posts.

This difference points to several important factors. First, given the most prominent age presented on the citizen side was millennial, this can be taken as a sign that the NPS was successful in targeting and generating participation from a millennial audience. Second, it makes sense that the NPS presented a more balanced approach in regard to age (i.e., of individuals featured in its posts). Because the NPS is a federal institution, it serves the public and strives to reflect a diversity of stories

and people in its effort to be relevant to the majority of Americans, one of the goals of the Centennial campaign.

Presentation of Place or Natural Environment

In addition to examining identity presentation among FYP participants (which, as we explained, foregrounded people, we also wished to represent posts that highlighted the recreational possibilities and other amenities of NPS managed spaces. In this section, we consider the grandparent code Presentation of Place or Natural Environment.

Figure 10 offers a visualization of the types and frequency of activities citizens represented in the social media posts we analyzed, as well as various amenities associated with the parks. As demonstrated by Figures 10 and 11, the dominant types of recreation among FYP participants included (1) experiencing landscape or scenery, (2) quiet recreation (hiking and walking being the two most common), and (3) photography.

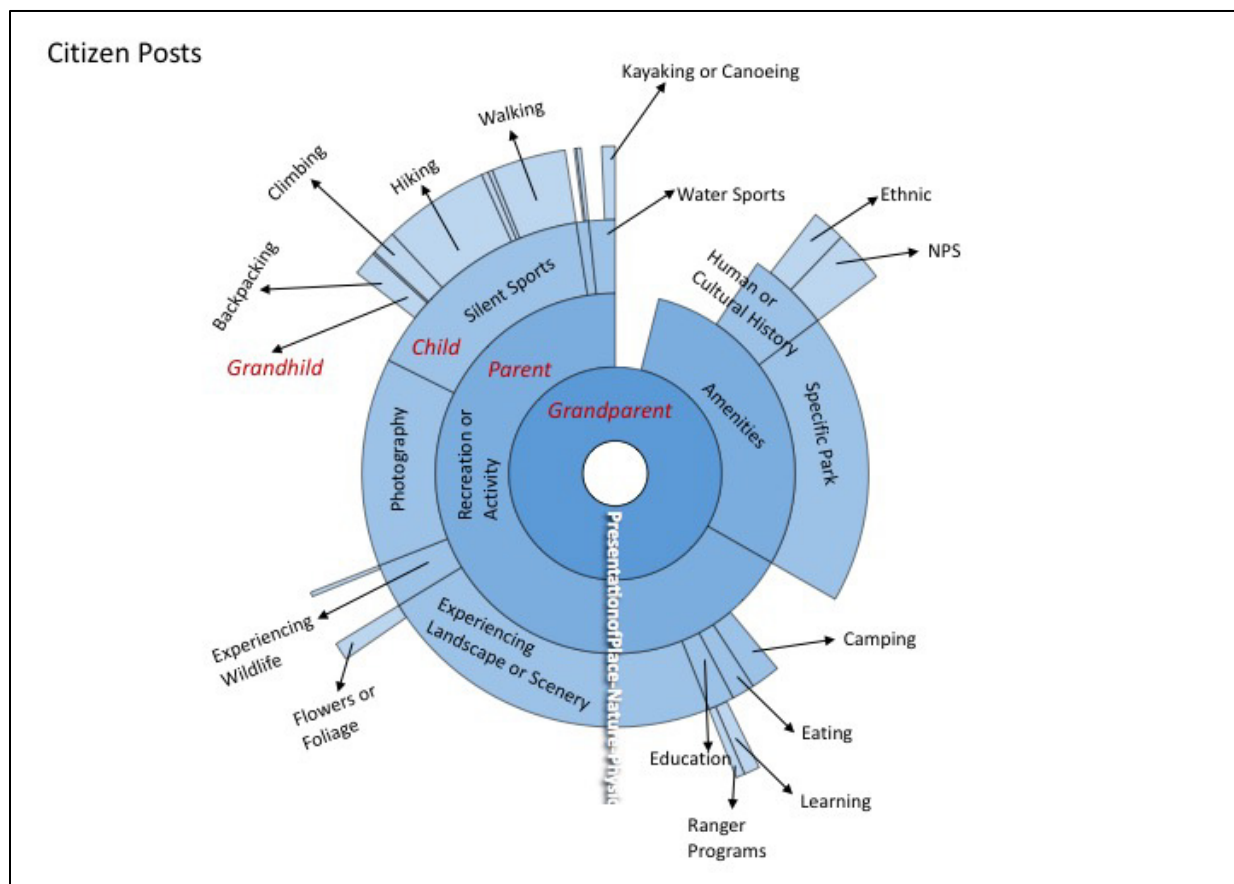


Figure 10. Citizen Presentation of Place or Natural Environment Sunburst.

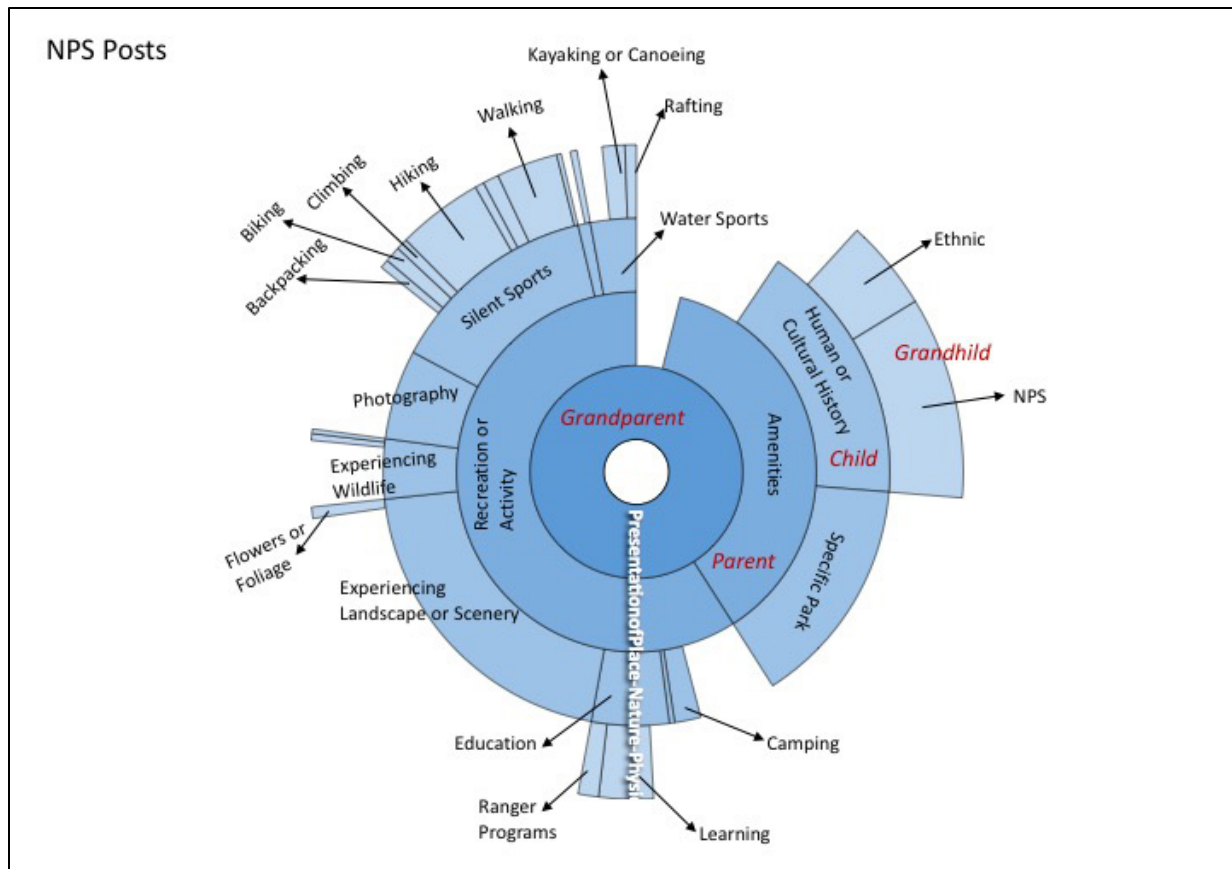


Figure 11. NPS Presentation of Place or Natural Environment Sunburst.

Interestingly, Figure 11 indicates that on the NPS side, the agency's social media communicators represented the same types of recreation we observed in posts by citizens. The primary difference between citizens and the NPS regarding Presentation of Place or Natural Environment is that citizens more often disclose the specific park they are visiting (e.g., Yellowstone). By disclosing the location of a specific park, a citizen participant may feel that he/she is making an identity presentation. By tagging Glacier National Park, for instance, a participant may be attempting to promote the idea that he/she is an avid traveler and supporter of the parks. It is also possible that participants disclose their location to showcase affluence, almost as a form of boasting or humble bragging (i.e., the participant has the financial means and leisure time to travel across the country to visit various parks).

The NPS, however, appears more apt to disclose whether the park experience connects to human or cultural history (i.e., ethnic and/or NPS oriented). In other words, citizens seem to focus more on sharing their park location in comparison to the NPS, which devotes nearly equal attention to sharing the park location as it does human or cultural history (i.e., about that particular park). Practically speaking, this is due, in part, to the fact that, by nature, an NPS participant (e.g., social media manager) would likely know more about and be able share the history of the NPS. That is, it is something to talk about. But perhaps more importantly, these cultural stories of places, programs, and employees connect people with contextual knowledge which may further define the unique character of particular NPS sites. NPS managers hope that, ultimately, these communications link

national park experiences to broader American values, particularly about land stewardship and preservation.

Photography

Photography emerged in the sample as one of the top activities in which FYP participants engage, particularly on the citizen side. National parks provide immense opportunity for photographers to capture beautiful scenery. Social media—Instagram especially—affords the opportunity for nearly anyone with at least beginner-level knowledge to edit and share photos with the masses (provided he/she has a smart phone). Taken together, it may come as no surprise that photography surfaced as one of the most popular activities among citizen FYP participants. Figure 12 provides an example of a citizen post wherein the producer was aiming to showcase her photography skills, while experiencing scenery (another popular activity among both citizens and the NPS).



Figure 12. Citizen Instagram Post (showcasing citizen photography).

It is important to note that the NPS succeeded in promoting photography as part of the FYP campaign. Figure 13 is one example of several we came across throughout our analysis wherein the NPS encourages FYP participants to not only visit national parks, but to also share their photos. This example demonstrates how the NPS solicited feedback (a child code we call feedback-seeking) through asking followers to share if and where they would be participating. In this case, the NPS also presents a lifestyle enhancer and photographer identity. This is seen in the fact that they encourage followers to take advantage of free park admission, in addition to promoting photography in parks (e.g., requesting that participants share photos). As illustrated in this example, followers engaged

with the NPS by commenting on which parks they were planning to visit. This post serves as an exemplar, illustrating how the NPS was successful in reaching its target audience(s) and generating participation in the FYP campaign. This particular post received more than one thousand likes and was shared more than 200 times. Moreover, it garnered significant feedback (i.e., comments) from followers.



Figure 13. NPS Facebook Post (promoting citizen photography).

Presentation of Post

Lastly, we thought it was also important to examine the physical elements of the posts. We created the grandparent code Presentation of Post to account for attributes producers may have included in their posts. Examples include attribution (e.g., did the producer provide photo or quote credit?), information-sharing (i.e., was the producer sharing information of some sort with followers?), link (e.g., was a link included in the caption?), and location (i.e., was the specific location of the photo or video disclosed?). Figures 14 and 15 provide visual sunbursts to showcase the various characteristics of citizen and NPS posts.

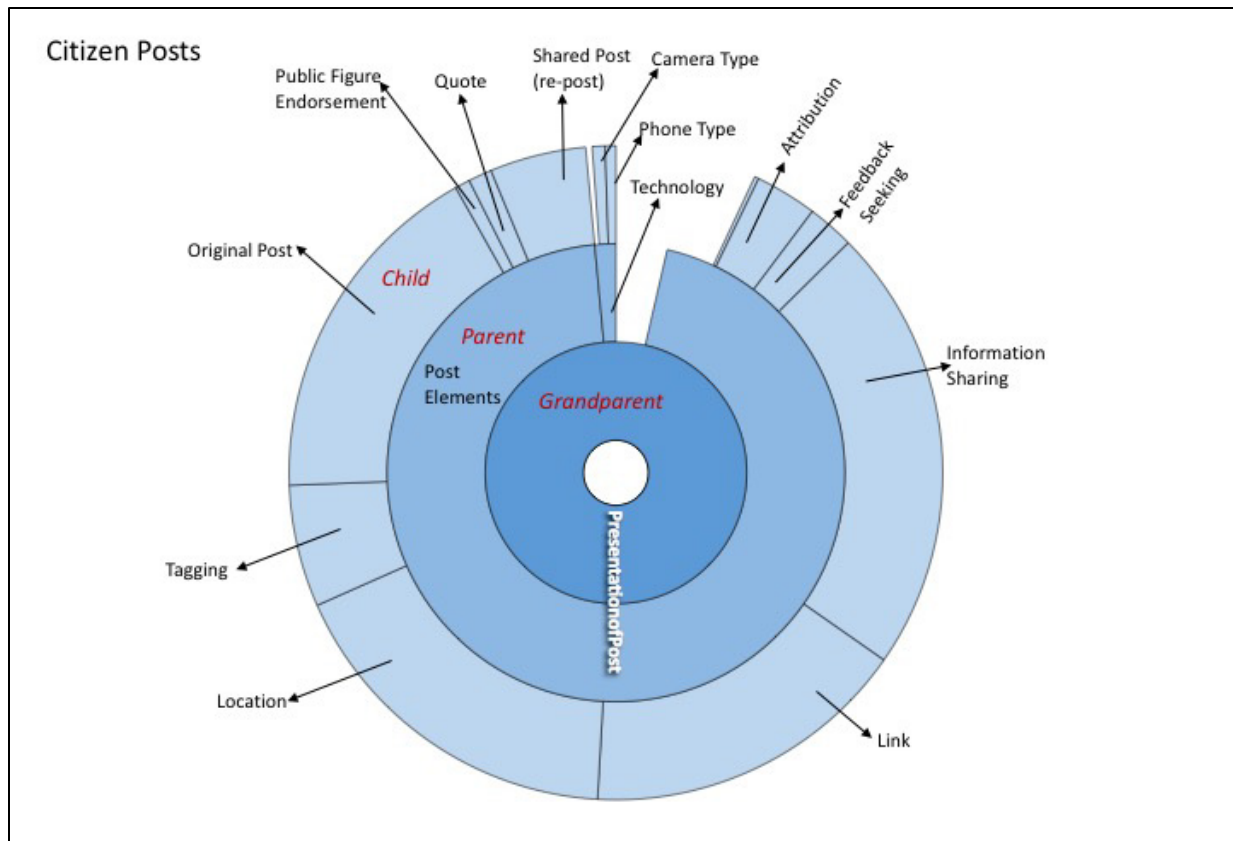


Figure 14. Sunburst Image of Citizen Presentation of Post.

Several key differences emerged regarding citizen and NPS Presentation of Post. The NPS did not include any information about technology (e.g., phone or camera type) in its posts. Citizens, on the other hand, sometimes share information about the type of camera or phone that was used to produce photos or videos. As mentioned earlier, it is possible that citizens felt compelled to reveal such information, as doing so may communicate taste and socioeconomic status. For example, a producer who shot a spectacular photo using an expensive camera may seek to present not only his/her photography skills, but also affluence. At the same time, however, conveying such information may also help users who have a shared interest in videography and/or photography. In other words, disclosing details about technology is a form of information-sharing that may help participants make decisions about what type of camera or film they should use. This idea speaks to the community-oriented nature of social media environments (i.e., they can serve as information portals).

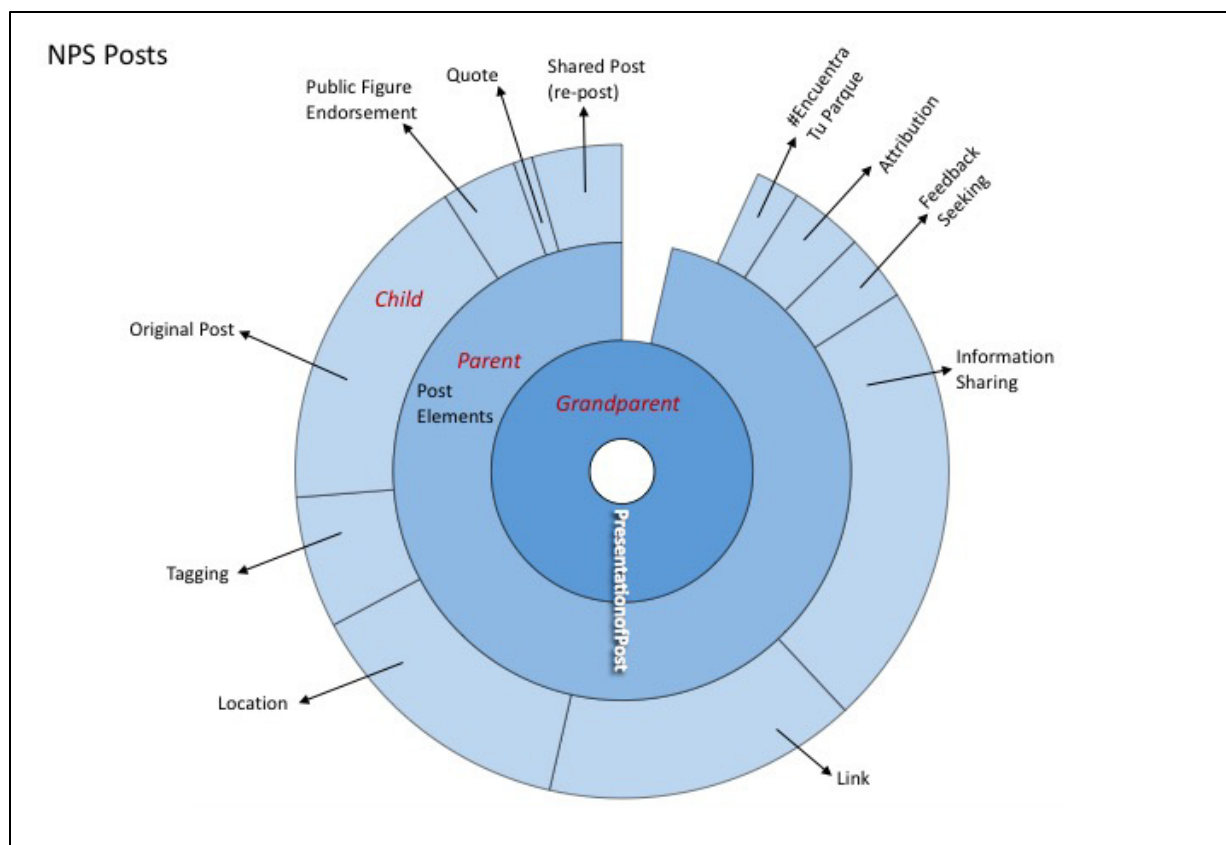


Figure 15. Sunburst Image of NPS Presentation of Post.

The NPS was more likely to mention public figures or celebrities in its posts, as compared to citizens. We recorded 7 citizen references wherein a public figure or celebrity was featured and/or tagged in comparison to 36 NPS references. The FYP campaign included a number of ambassadors (e.g., Bella Thorne, Terrence J., Bill Nye) who were recruited by the National Park Foundation to help promote the campaign. The insertion of public figures into the NPS posts aligns with the association principle out of advertising literature. According to Leary (1995) “people want to be associated with the successful, the powerful, the popular and the attractive, and they may connect themselves, not directly but symbolically, to things that have these attributes” (as cited in O’Shaghnessy & O’Shaghnessy, 2004, p. 58). Future researchers could more deeply examine the communicational effects of featuring celebrities and/or public figures in NPS posts. Does such a strategy help convey the significance of the NPS and increase its popularity with target audiences (e.g., millennials)? We return to this idea and offer some additional insight in the Conclusion (see RQ2).

Finally, as illustrated by the sunburst figures above, citizen producers did not appear to actively use the hashtag #encuentratuparque (Find Your Park in Spanish) compared to the NPS. Given that the target audience for the Find Your Park campaign was multi-cultural millennials, it makes sense that this hashtag was prominent on the NPS side. By using this hashtag, the NPS was perhaps able to connect with more Spanish-speaking followers, and ultimately, a more diverse audience.

Value Narrative Code Findings

Again, having two researchers on the team allowed us to enhance triangulation (i.e., observation/analysis of one phenomenon from multiple perspectives, Guba & Lincoln, 1994) by including the separate value narrative coding strategy (described earlier). As stated in the introduction, the National Park Service needs to understand more about the contexts in which audiences are connecting with the idea of the landscapes and other specific places managed by the agency. We believe acquiring more perspectives on how citizens and the NPS craft their stories, particularly in the realm of social media, helps move the agency closer to that goal. We do not think the NPS needs to exactly mimic those stories from the public, but the agency must at least be aware of how the brand is being utilized, and react accordingly.

One rather straightforward example of a post the project team analyzed through narrative coding is seen in Figure 16.

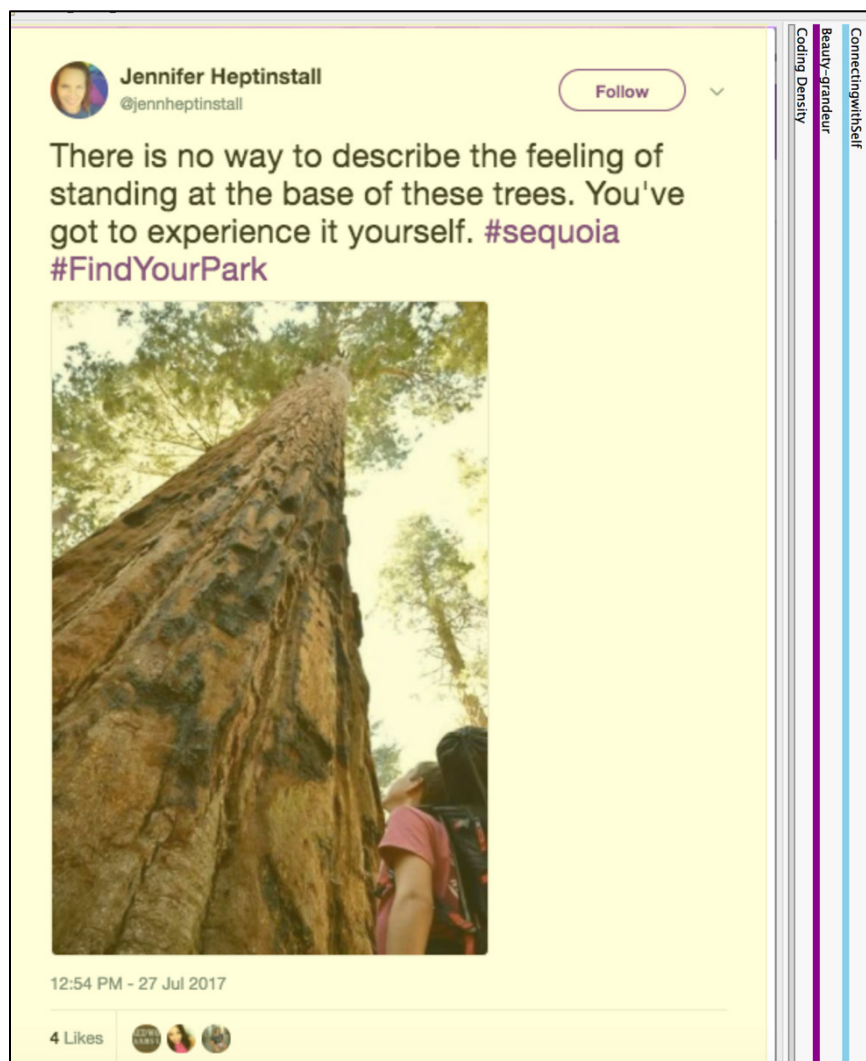


Figure 16. Narrative Coding Example Post.

In this is a screen shot from the Nvivo workspace, we see a tweet (Twitter post) celebrating the majestic sequoia (and it is implied by the Find Your Park hashtag that the poster is linking experience with this tree species to National Park System lands). The colored bars running vertically on the right-hand side indicate this post has been interpreted by our researcher to be coded as exemplifying what we are calling general narratives of “beauty-grandeur” and “connecting with self” (for a full list of distinct narratives we identified, described, and utilized in coding, see the glossary in Appendix C). To help us in interpretation, we often crafted short statements summing up a simple story, with a subject, an action, and an object (Ricoeur, 1971). In the case of “beauty-grandeur” we wrote, “The National Parks are sites of beauty/grandeur.” Of course, in relation to this rather simple statement, countless narratives could be told. Other descriptions of narrative types were more nuanced. For example, in terms of the other code for this Twitter post, “connecting with self,” our summary statement was a bit more involved. “The National Parks enable reflection,” we wrote in the narrative code glossary, “finding one’s place in the scheme of things: e.g., escape, rejuvenation (of physical, emotional, cognitive, spiritual, etc. health).”

It is one thing to code individual social media posts. It is another to attempt to make claims about general patterns across a large number of them, in this case 430 texts in all. We dealt with this by drastically changing the scale of our units of analysis. Although many might assume that each social media post constituted a unit of analysis, we followed the lead of Gamson (Gamson & Lasch, 1983; Hall, 1996) by thinking in terms of broad, discursive structures. To date, in keeping with the NPS goals for this research, we have been interpreting the material in terms of two primary units of analysis—all of the citizen FYP posts and all of the NPS FYP posts, combined (i.e., (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube). In this way, each post (such as the Twitter post described above) is seen as an individual data point in relation to a broader, ongoing flow of social media.

The sunburst graphic in Figure 17 is a visual representation of the narratives (and sub-narratives) coded in the 215 citizen FYP posts. The size of each pie slice corresponds to the prevalence of each narrative. Only the more common narratives have been identified. Table 4 lists the top five most common narratives coded from the citizen posts.

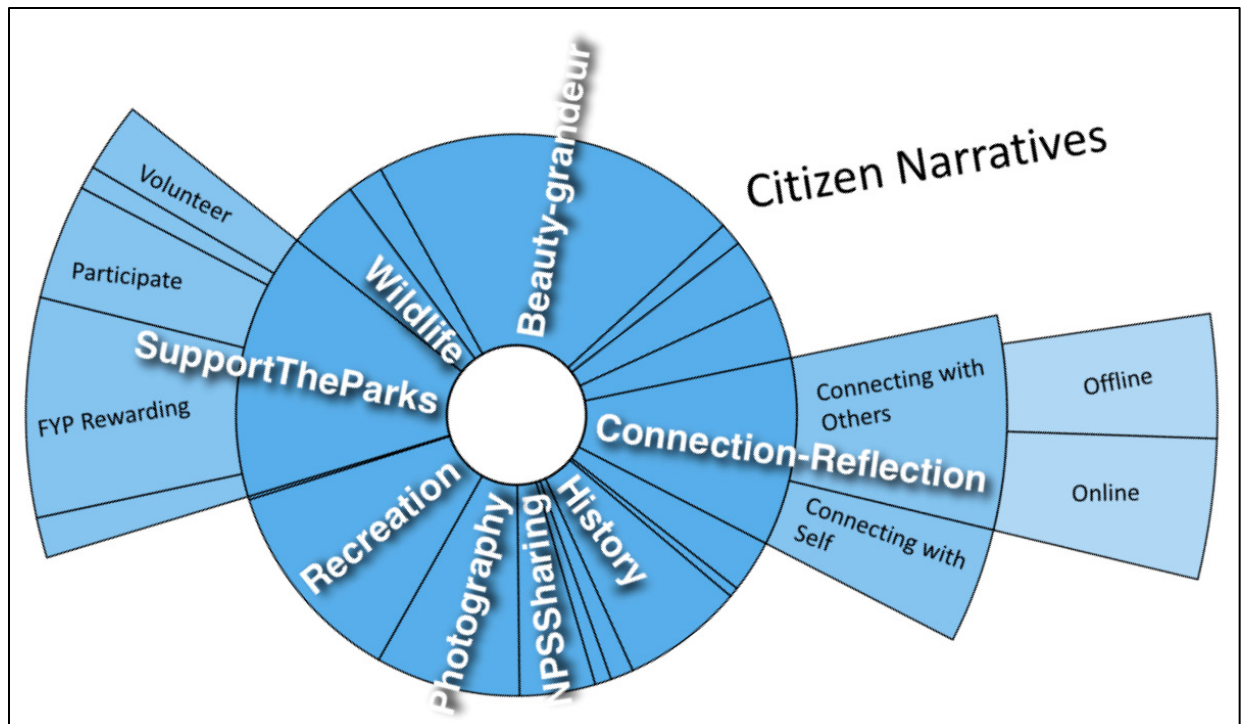


Figure 17. Example Narrative Sunburst Graphic.

Table 4 lists the top five most common narratives interpreted.

Table 4. Top 5 Narrative Code Frequencies for Citizen Posts.

Code	Citizen Frequency
Beauty-Grandeur	112
Recreation	63
Photography	44
Support the Parks	38
History	37

Figure 18 is the representative graphic of narratives coded in the NPS posts.

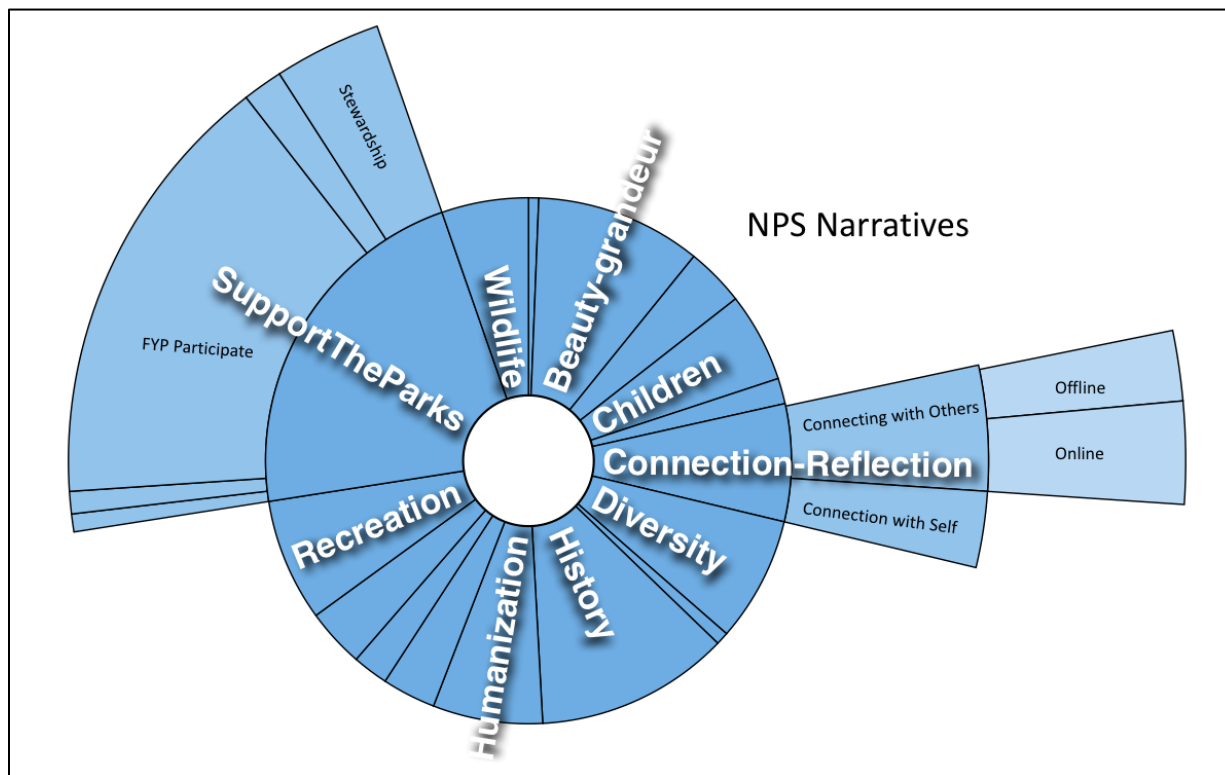


Figure 18. Sunburst Graphic of NPS Posts.

Table 5. Top 5 Narrative Code Frequencies for NPS Posts.

Code	NPS Frequency
Support the Parks-Participate	99
History	76
Beauty-Grandeur	65
Diversity	49
Recreation	48

Several notable narratives that did not make the top-five list on the NPS side, but were still relatively prominent, include: “humanization” (an effort to let the public know some of the faces/names of NPS employees and volunteers who make it all happen—43 posts), “children” (a narrative based upon making sure children are encouraged to experience the National Parks, looking to the future of the NPS) and “wildlife” (34 posts).

We have found it helpful to display both visual representations side-by-side, as seen in Figure 19.

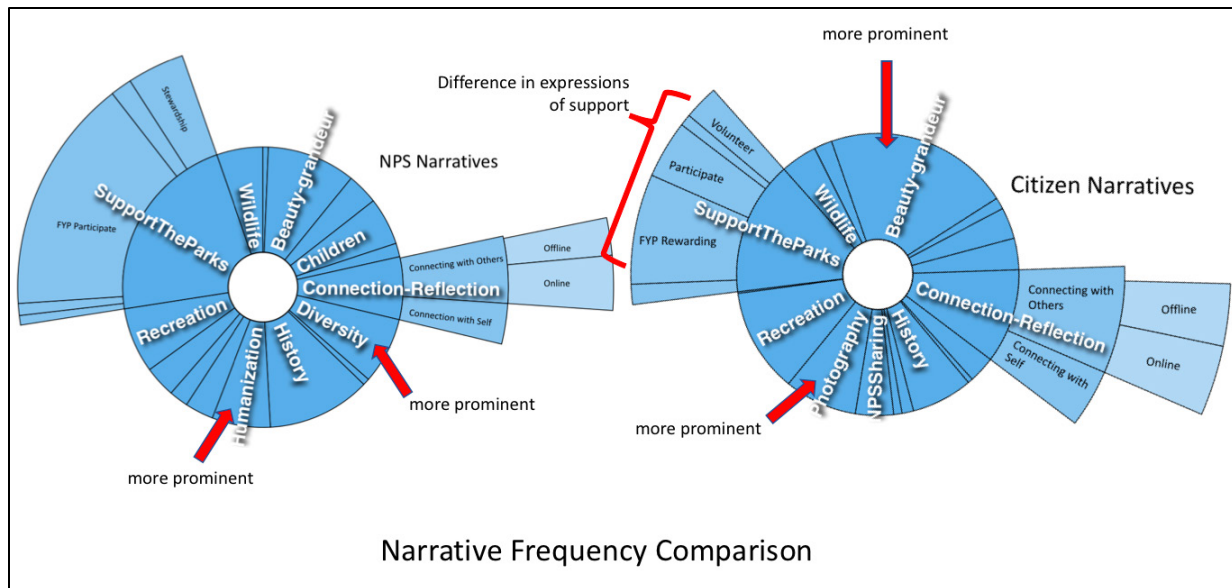


Figure 19. Side-by-Side Display of NPS & Citizen Narrative Sunbursts.

A quick look might easily leave one feeling the two graphical representations (and thus, the narrative patterns of citizen and NPS social media communicators that ended up in our sample) are quite similar, and in many ways, they are. One can interpret this as being positive for the NPS. If, as stated in the introduction, an NPS goal is “creating relevancy” by improving “awareness and understanding,” it makes sense that the NPS must communicate in relatable ways with the public.

However, closer inspection reveals interesting differences. As seen in Tables 3 and 4, both citizens and NPS social media communicators whose texts ended up in our sample presented prominent narratives of “beauty-grandeur,” but citizens were twice as likely to present a post evoking that narrative. Another notable difference involves a narrative of photography. As the third most commonly coded narrative on the citizen side, many members of the public (at least those posting on social media) seem to specifically value the act of capturing images (and other related creative recording pursuits, such as videography). It is possible this fits a growing connection in our society with visual culture—expressing one’s identity in pictures, videos, animations, etc. (Fallon, 2014; Linder, Snodgrass, & Kerne, 2014). This research indicates that, when people want to communicate visually, they often seek out and take advantage of what they consider to be positive, stimulating settings and backdrops that put them in the most favorable light for those experiencing their social media posts. It says something about the social capital of NPS sites that our research indicates that these spaces provide very popular contexts for visual communication—a style of messaging that will only increase as millennials and younger cohorts mature.

Other notable narrative differences:

- “Humanization”—this narrative lets the public know there are really people who manage National Park System lands. This theme was fairly prominent (as noted) in the NPS posts, but barely registered with citizen posters. (This makes sense, as humanizing its employees/volunteers improves the NPS’s brand image).

- “Diversity”-fairly prominent on the NPS side, less so with citizens. Again, it is the NPS mission to increase its connection to underserved populations (and this undoubtedly prompts more diversity-related messaging). The citizenry has not (yet) caught up with this initiative, at least according to our interpretation of the social media posts in our sample, though we are not yet sure what “catching up” would look like.
- Both sides expressed relatively equal amounts of “support for the parks,” but moving to the sub-narrative level, one can see that they each highlight different means in which to do so. The NPS more commonly provided a message of general participation at the parks, followed by calls for stewardship. Citizen posters also called for participation (to a lesser extent), and were more likely to celebrate the FYP campaign in general (not a big surprise because they were asked to do just that by the FYP campaign). Citizens also were more likely than the NPS to point out volunteer activities.

We end this analysis section by pointing out similarities between the NPS and citizen social media narratives. Moving clockwise around the sunburst graphics, we are seeing:

- Narratives on both sides of “beauty-grandeur” (more prominent on the citizen side).
- Awareness of opportunities for “connection-reflection” (more prominent for citizens).
- Both NPS communicators and citizens narrativizing about the value of “history” in National Park System lands, as well as “recreation,” “support for the Parks,” and “wildlife.”

Future plans for this narrative line of inquiry involve breaking up the two larger discursive structures we just discussed, analyzing the four social media platforms separately, while continuing to compare and contrast NPS and citizen communication.

Conclusions

An overarching goal of this study was addressing Objective 2 of the National Park Service’s Centennial Find Your Park Campaign. To what extent did the campaign appear to *drive connections* and *engage* the public with the NPS brand? Was the campaign relevant? Did the social media offerings, when compared to citizen FYP postings, seem to resonate? We used the Research Questions (RQs) included at the end of the Literature Review to guide our investigation of this question (as well as to consider other ways in which this phenomenon could be examined). We will provide a brief response to each based on our findings.

RQ1 Social media—productive source of representation?

How are stakeholders presenting in the social media posts in our sample (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube) a sense of valuation of the lands/properties under the stewardship of the NPS, and how is the NPS presenting a sense of valuation of the lands/properties under its stewardship?

Our analyses confirmed that social media provide a productive source of representation for both the NPS and citizen FYP participants. Overall, citizens present genuine support for and appreciation of the lands/properties under the stewardship of the NPS. From our examination of citizen posts, it became apparent that these stakeholders overwhelmingly support the NPS and its efforts to maintain and promote amenities the parks have to offer. See Table 6 for a list of the most prominent feelings expressed by citizens.

Table 6. Most Prominent Citizen Feelings.

Rank	Most Prominent Citizen Feelings
1	Exploration
2	Beauty
3	Appreciation
4	Deep meaning (specifically reflection)
5	Adventure

Taken together, we believe that citizens used the Find Your Park campaign, and more specifically, their experiences in national parks, to explore, find adventure, and enjoy park amenities. Further, these experiences resulted in feelings of appreciation and reflection (i.e., philosophical reflection on one’s life, relationships, goals, etc.).

Similarly, the NPS presented/connected many of the same feelings with national park experiences. The most prominent feelings expressed by the NPS included 1) exploration, 2) deep meaning (specifically reflection), 3) appreciation, 4) beauty, and 5) bonding (see Table 7). It is interesting that both NPS and citizen posters expressed many of the same feelings toward this experience, but in slightly different order. Both citizens and the NPS present exploration, appreciation, beauty, and reflection as prominent feelings related to spending time in national parks. Thus, we argue that, for

the most part, the NPS and citizens are similar in their valuation of National Park System lands/properties.

Table 7. Comparison of Most Prominent Feelings Expressed by Citizens and the NPS.

Citizen Feelings	NPS Feelings
Exploration	Exploration
Beauty	Deep meaning (specifically reflection)
Appreciation	Appreciation
Deep meaning (specifically reflection)	Beauty
Adventure	Bonding

But there was a subtle, but noteworthy, difference we would like to point out. While the NPS most often communicated *bonding* as the top feeling in relationship to national parks, citizens were more likely to communicate a sense of *adventure*. For citizens, the opportunity to explore the outdoors and experience new territory and/or activities in stimulating and satisfying ways, is a significant value in relation to national parks. For the NPS, on the other hand, it appears that bonding—the opportunity to connect with family and/or friends, or possibly connect with strangers—is a key value afforded by the lands/properties under NPS stewardship. What does this mean? It may be that for citizens, a major motivation for spending time in national parks is the opportunity for adventure. Now an important question—is it the *actual* opportunity for adventure (and exploration) that motivates park-goers to find their park, or are they primarily motivated by the opportunity to *broadcast* their park adventures (presenting an adventurer identity) to a larger audience, an act made relatively easy by social media? This is an important question to parallel with past research on social media and digital self-presentation. It also ties in to RQ3, which focuses on social media and trans-locality. Specifically, RQ 3 addresses whether stakeholder/NPS social media posts in our sample demonstrate *trans-locality* (or third space [Mitra, 2008]) as part of the identity presentation process, in relation to experiencing national parks—and sharing that experience through social media. In other words, do participants (citizens and the NPS) blend on- and offline experiences as they create meaning and identity by participating in the FYP campaign? We return to this important question in RQ 3.

RQ2 Social media as strategic communication

What are prominent and subtle similarities and differences in the ways stakeholders and the NPS are presenting their posts (in our sample) related to lands/properties under the stewardship of the NPS? Does that indicate that the NPS should adjust/change any of its messaging strategies to align more closely with that of stakeholders?

Broadly speaking, our research indicates that social media have been strategic sources of communication for the FYP campaign. This study demonstrates that the NPS succeeded in reaching a millennial audience and generated participation in this campaign, especially via Instagram. It is important to include some statistical information to provide context for this finding. With more than 120 million active Instagram users, the United States is the leading market based on audience size—

this number is projected to reach 125.5 million by 2023 (Clement, 2019). Instagram is used by 43% of American women and 31% of men. Further, a reported 72% of teenagers use Instagram. Of internet users broadly speaking, 31% between the ages of 18 and 24 use it, while 32% of users between 25 and 34 use it (Instagram users by the Numbers, 2019). With this in mind, it is worthwhile to briefly highlight research concerning social media as a form of strategic communication in various realms.

There is a growing body of literature that explores social media, often Instagram, as a form of strategic communication directed toward millennials—which lends support to our response to RQ2. For example, Phua, Lin, and Lim (2018) examined celebrity-endorsed E-cigarette advertisements on Instagram. They found that celebrity endorsed e-cigarette brand pages “exert a significant effect on attitudes and e-cigarette smoking intentions” especially among teenagers and young adults who may embrace celebrities as exemplars and model their behaviors (p. 558). Similarly, Instagram has been studied for its powerful ability to influence consumer purchasing decisions and brand engagement in fashion, beauty, and lifestyle categories—often referred to as influencer marketing (see, Abidin 2016; Carah & Shaul, 2016; De Veirman, Cauberghe and Hudders, 2017; Enke & Borchers, 2019; Sundermann & Raabe, 2019).

Studies exploring the intersection of social media and environmental communication are beginning to emerge (see Büscher, 2016; Merry; 2014; Hendricks, Duus & Ercan, 2016). Further, numerous studies investigate the relationship between social media, recreation, and tourism (e.g., see Wood et al., 2013). Of particular interest to the present study is research conducted by Liu, Wu and Li (2019) wherein they explored travel sharing experiences via social media among millennials. Using social comparison theory, Liu et al. (2019) investigated how millennial consumers travel intentions are influenced by travel experiences shared by their peers (i.e., shared via social media). They found that “among consumers with low trait self-esteem, luxury travel experiences shared by similar others stimulate focal consumers’ own intentions to visit the same destination” (p. 355). Moreover, the intent to visit a given destination was triggered by “benign envy” toward the individual sharing the experience (p. 355). In other words, by seeing an image of a luxurious vacation destination on Instagram, for instance, a consumer may then develop aspirations for traveling to this same place. Liu et al. (2019) note several key characteristics of millennials:

...they prefer experiences over material possessions (Morgan 2015) and value authenticity, creativity, and uniqueness (Nielsen 2014)—tourism marketers could highlight authentic, creative, and unique experiences in social media marketing activities to provoke benign envy and aspirational consumption among Millennial consumers (p. 364).

The authors reference the Los Angeles Tourism Bureau’s 2016 campaign titled “Get Lost in LA,” which was geared toward millennial travelers. To resonate with its target audience, the Bureau enlisted two lifestyle influencers to appear in the campaign video and highlighted local experiences including food, natural street views, and symbolic LA attractions (as cited in Skift, 2016). The “Get Lost in LA” campaign was similar to the FYP campaign in that it encouraged engagement across social media including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Pinterest (as cited in Hughes, 2016) (Liu et al., 2019, p. 364). As mentioned in the Mid-Term Recommendations section, the “Get Lost in LA”

campaign example sheds light on the value of enlisting celebrity influencers to promote campaign participation.

In addition to illustrating the power of peer-to-peer communication among millennial consumers via social media, this study also provides support for the fact that destination marketers should increase social media engagement by inspiring travelers to share their experiences (Lui et al., 2019, p. 364)—which again speaks to the logic behind and effectiveness of the NPS’s FYP campaign. Lui et al. (2019) also referenced a 2015 campaign launched by the Hawaii Visitors and Convention Bureau wherein residents and visitors were encouraged to share their Hawaii-based travels by posting images featuring the hashtag “#letHawaiiHappen” (p. 364). This campaign resulted in approximately 100,000 Instagram posts (within one year) and more than two-thirds of people who encountered this campaign expressed an interest in visiting Hawaii within the next two years (Mediakix, 2016 as cited in Lui et al., 2019, pp. 364–365). While literature examining the intersections of social media, recreation, and tourism is in a rather early stage, Lui et al.’s (2019) study offers some excellent insight into how to effectively market destination travel content to millennials. The aforementioned research serves as evidence for the fact that Instagram (specifically) and social media (generally) are ideal platforms for marketing to and connecting with millennials. The NPS made a wise choice in choosing to promote the FYP campaign via Instagram (among other platforms). As mentioned, we strongly encourage the NPS to use this platform for its future campaigns *and* to enlist influencers to help with campaign promotion and participation.

However, as our analyses reveal, there are several differences in how citizens and the NPS present via social media. Compared to the NPS, citizens are more creative and expressive in their use of hashtags, and often more verbose in writing photo captions. Additionally, citizens appear to be a bit more spirited in their presentation of identity and feelings toward experiencing national parks. For instance, citizens are more likely to present multiplicitous identities and feelings when sharing about national parks. The NPS, on the other hand, seemed more concise when sharing feelings and presenting identity through its posts. As we have noted, this may be due to guidelines under which social media managers must operate (i.e., conform to the NPS mission, etc.).

Further, the narrative analyses indicate that for citizens, beauty-grandeur, recreation, and photography are the most prominent narratives. The NPS, on the other hand, present supporting and participating in the parks and history as the top two narratives, with beauty-grandeur being third. This citizen finding resonates with the granular coding analyses in that citizens were more apt to post about photography, the beauty of the parks, and the types of recreation they engaged in while spending time in parks. See Table 8 for a comparison of these findings.

Table 8. Most Prominent Citizen and NPS Narratives.

Most Prominent Citizen Narratives	Most Prominent NPS Narratives
Beauty-grandeur	Supporting and participating in the parks
Recreation	Heritage
Photography	Beauty-grandeur

Moreover, on the NPS side, it makes sense that supporting and participating in the parks, in addition to park-related themes of heritage¹¹, emerged as the top two narratives, given this connects to several of our granular coding findings. For instance, the NPS reported bonding as one of the top five feelings toward experience, which connects to the narrative of supporting and participating in the parks (i.e., connecting with family, friends, and/or other park-goers). Additionally, the NPS was more likely to present a heritage enthusiast identity (in regard to presentation of institution), which reinforces the fact that NPS units represent historical, cultural, and natural sites as well as the historical significance of the NPS Centennial.

In sum, this study indicates that citizens and the NPS care deeply for the national parks in various respects. Both entities are similar in their overwhelmingly positive presentation that NPS lands/properties provide immense opportunity to experience wildlife and scenery, recreate, and bond (with nature, self, and others). Thus, social media afford the NPS and the public an opportunity to strategically communicate about park experiences—which as the FYP campaign indicates, has been tremendously beneficial to the NPS.

RQ3 Social media as “trans-locality”

Do the stakeholder/NPS social media posts in our sample provide us with evidence supporting the idea of trans-locality, or third space, a blending of off- and online meanings and experience as part of the process of identity—for both stakeholders and NPS posters?

Sub-question: Related to this, how does thinking in this way counter the common assumption that online communication is merely a reflection of off-line reality, or, the less common assumption that online experience does not need offline experience to be meaningful?)

To understand how the FYP phenomenon on social media is a trans-local experience, it is worthwhile to consider to the notion of third space, which is a concept developed by Ananda Mitra, a professor in the Department of Communication at Wake Forest University. Mitra (2008) describes the third space concept as “synthetic cybernetic space,” explaining the idea through his research on blogs produced by individuals who have experienced a diaspora. He claims that the internet can be understood as “a synthetic space made up of the real and the virtual where people are able to voice themselves” (p. 458). In other words, the creation of an Instagram page devoted to national park travel is informed by both online and offline experiences. In describing how bloggers built identity through experiencing a diaspora, he states:

...the person who writes a blog produces a specific identity narrative that is rooted in real space while at the same time expressing the voice in cyberspace, eventually using the blog to carve out a synthetic cybernetic space (p. 457).

¹¹ Note: Originally, the concept of “heritage” was coded as “history”. Figures included in this report feature the term history, though the it was changed to heritage through in later iterations of this research.

Thus, we can think of social media platforms (e.g., participants can partake in activities, such as the FYP campaign, act as third space environments by affording the opportunity to interweave offline and online experiences directly related to National Park System landscapes. Further, these platforms allow producers to create and tell their own stories through experiencing the park, capturing video and/or photos, and producing a digital narrative (i.e., documenting the experience). Arguably, this use constitutes what Mitra (2008) would refer to as “carving out” a synthetic cybernetic space (p. 457).

Using the third space concept to understand FYP participation also demonstrates the idea that social media afford users the opportunity to create their own frame (i.e., tell their own story) as opposed to being framed by the medium, or in this case, the NPS. In other words, a park-goer visiting Rocky Mountain National Park, with smart phone in hand, is much more able today to capture and tell the story he/she pleases—without as much interference from outside sources.

This finding situates the FYP campaign as a third space (Mitra, 2008) or trans-local experience. Drawing from Mitra’s description of the third space notion, it can be argued that participating in the FYP campaign is not simply a reflection of reality, or a completely “cybernetic” experience. It is something new that is made up of both experiences (it requires both to exist).

Recommendations

Based on our research results thus far, we offer the following recommendations to enhance National Park Service communication efforts, particularly via social media platforms. We organize these recommendations into three temporal categories including: near-term; mid-term; and future goals.

Near-Term Recommendations

Our strongest recommendation is for the NPS to continue on its positive path of wanting to better understand its stakeholders and improve communication with them. The fact that this research project even took place attests to that. We also underscore the obvious success of the Centennial “Find Your Park” social media campaign. After our analysis, we realize the extent to which this communication strategy was an excellent way to take full advantage of long-term relationships with the public, sometimes stretching back for multiple generations, which has contributed to the NPS’s strong bank of social capital. At the same time, FYP made use of the openness of a networked, digital Internet communication system in which more and more people (particularly younger generations) are communicating and identifying in relation to the Web. As discussed in this report, the FYP strategy would seem to fully exploit the developing reality of a third space (Mitra, 2008)—the blending of off-and-online experience in crafting versions of the self—as noted, often in multiple ways.

As far as tweaking these sorts of communication, both the granular and narrative coding indicate that citizens in our sample who posted to social media wish to be seen by other social media users experiencing (or at least reflecting upon) NPS-managed landscapes. As discussed earlier, as the popularity/prevalence of visual communication continues to expand, the importance of NPS spaces will likely grow with it. We recommend that NPS communicators do even more to suggest ways that stakeholders can be visually creative in and around national park lands (in terms of such creative activities as photography and videography). The fact that citizen social media communicators in our sample were twice as likely to reference narratives of beauty-grandeur in their posts supports this idea of the strength of visual culture.

Mid-Term Recommendations

Our main mid-term recommendation starts off in the form of a question: What will the NPS do *next* to achieve another success like FYP? Success is good, but eventually many institutions, such as the NPS, are faced with competing against their past successes. That is, what is the next step—how should the NPS build upon FYP?

We recommend that the NPS investigate, modify, and initiate any sorts of activities that encourage third space identity management activities of its stakeholders (particularly young people). For example, Google Arts & Culture, a subsidiary of the Google Cultural Institute, offers a free mobile app called, “search with your selfie,” in which users take a selfie picture with their smart phone, upload it in the app, and the Google Arts & Culture software analyzes the image and matches it with a similar image in Google’s vast collection of digital pictures of the world’s great art works. The program often isolates a section of the art to closely match the selfie image, often presenting a

remarkably similar doppelganger. Since its launch, the app has been wildly popular, as people seek to connect in new ways with art, in a fashion not possible before the Internet and digital technology.

The best next move is capturing and replicating the spirit and energy of Find Your Park with a new campaign. Perhaps (FYP) can be re-arranged and re-launched as “Park Find You” (PFY).¹² The NPS could assign a series of values to all of the places and spaces it manages. For example, Rocky Mountain National Park in Colorado could be characterized in physical ways as, “high elevation,” “cold” (at altitude), “mid-sized” (in the wide range of national parks), “popular”, etc. The park could also be assigned more subjective, psychographic qualities (and here is where programmers can get creative), such as: “extroverted” (due to its popularity), “easy going” (in reference to the friendliness common in the western U.S.), “bright” (due to Colorado’s copious sunshine), etc. Using an app, citizens could plug in characteristics describing themselves, submit, and then be matched with a specific NPS site. If the user supplies location information, the software could be set to return hits that are closer by. We recognize that an activity like “Park Find You” may not be acceptable under federal privacy rules. Whatever activities NPS communicators create, they need to continue coming up with novel, stimulating ways to blend off- and online experience to engage the public in the third space.

Another mid-term recommendation connects to the NPS’s successful strategy (evident in our social media text sample) of utilizing celebrities to increase public interest, especially among young people and/or underserved demographic groups. For example, would millennial audience members be intrigued by posts featuring popular and attractive young celebrities (e.g., Bella Thorne or Terrence J.)? Further, FYP ambassador Mary Lambert, a singer/songwriter and LGBT advocate, may appeal to followers who identify with or support the LGBT community; while ambassador Bill Nye may intrigue followers with an interest in science. By associating FYP with celebrities and/or public figures, the NPS may appeal to and ultimately generate a larger and more diverse audience.

We also suggest recruiting members of the growing cadre of Internet celebrities (i.e., influencers)—whose fame is almost completely a result of their Web presence. Their online content (on social media platforms like YouTube) is consistently stimulating enough to attract sometimes very large followings (even hundreds of thousands of viewers). After careful vetting the NPS could recruit some of these people to play the role of celebrity ambassadors, with the understanding that they will share their NPS-related experiences and reflections with their followers. The NPS could enlist a citizen guest host (e.g., a “micro” celebrity) to participate in the management of its social media accounts for several days to one week. Although this idea might run counter to the agency’s tradition of strong control over its missing messaging, this is the sort of communication that will enable the NPS to more authentically connect with millennial and other audience members. It is how they are communicating, and living.

¹² This is just an idea to get people thinking. We are certain that the creative National Park Service communications staff who came up with Find Your Park will do a much better job conceiving of an effective, new campaign.

Future Recommendations

Our future recommendations rely on more outside-the-box thinking that stretches beyond current standard communication techniques. For example, what will the national parks and the NPS *be* in the distant future? What will our society look like? It is impossible to know. As media researchers, we keep a close eye on trends in the communication technology field and we are fairly certain it is having significant impacts on human experience and, in general, life on the planet. That will probably continue. We see our research as providing at least indications of the evolving influence of such applications as social media. If the NPS wishes to stay out front, it may have to acknowledge that this is happening, and prepare for it.

Again, we would recommend pursuing any communicational strategy that links the NPS and its landscapes with third space experience. For example, digital gaming has become more popular, with steady growth over the last 25 years. It is recognized that people (especially younger people) tend to retain more information if it is delivered in the form of a video game, than, for example, face-to-face classroom settings. Meanwhile, much of the business world is recognizing this fact and is increasingly utilizing gamification strategies to train their workers (for example, supply managers at Walmart are now learning how to do their jobs by first mastering a Sims-like game). Virtual reality hardware and software are improving rapidly and dropping in price, making gaming more realistic and stimulating. Based upon this, we suggest that the NPS partner with high tech (specifically, gaming companies) to encourage these institutions to include gaming contexts that match the landscapes of NPS-managed lands. So, for instance, if a game setting is based in a virtual version of Rocky Mountain National Park, gaming tourists will travel there to experience the real spaces in which he/she lived their game, or at least they may develop enough of a sense of place for these spaces to preserve them.

Integrating national park experiences with gaming platforms may be a bit of a stretch for our contemporary sensibilities. Perhaps it is more realistic to build upon a variety of existing Internet-based experiences sanctioned by the NPS that assume park goers have the mobile technology needed to access these resources while on site. This includes maps, images, video, audio, and texts linked to specific geo-located sites. Rapid improvements in artificial intelligence (AI) combined with augmented reality (AR) technologies, will present even more opportunities. We recommend (perhaps at some future time) that the NPS start investigating the use of technology that blends offline and online experience. But instead of this experience mostly occurring *within* a computer, tablet, or smart phone, users *carry* this technology *into* the NPS space where they can, for example, feel as if they are witnessing (and/or interacting with) natural and/or historical events that take (or at one time took) place in these spaces.

Then again, NPS leaders may one day (perhaps at the urging of a public weary of pervasive, always-on, networked technology) decide that National Park System landscapes better serve us by being largely free of digital gadgets and their networked experiences. The parks could be promoted as places in which to turn off the electronics for awhile—to take a break, and just *be* in a more natural space.

Whatever the case, the Find Your Park campaign was a good start, effectively tapping into the way many (especially younger) people are living and communicating. But the National Park Service must understand that the people using the parks today will be different than those visiting a hundred years hence. We are convinced those future lives will continue to be carried out in a world that largely blends the off- with the online (even if that blending happens well after the park visit is over). The NPS needs to make sure today that it continues positioning itself to remain relevant, engaging, and a valued part of life narratives, well into the future.

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Appendix A: Code Hierarchy

1. Presentation of Humans (Grandparent)
 - a. Feelings toward Experience (Parent)
 - i. Adventure (Child)
 - ii. Appreciation
 - iii. Beauty
 - iv. Bonding
 - v. Change
 - vi. Creation
 - vii. Cute or Adorable
 - viii. Danger or Caution
 - ix. Deep Meaning (Grandchild)
 1. Dream
 2. Peace
 3. Reflection
 4. Spirituality
 - x. Exploration
 - xi. Friendship
 - xii. Wonder
 - b. Presentation of Self or Institution
 - i. Adventurer
 - ii. Age
 1. Child
 2. Middle Age
 3. Millennial
 4. Senior
 - iii. Brand Ambassador
 - iv. Community Oriented Person
 1. Animal Lover
 2. Dogs or Puppies (Pets)
 3. Family
 - a. Child
 - i. Kids

- 4. Couple
 - 5. Dad
 - 6. Family Man or Woman (e.g., family oriented)
 - 7. Grandparents
 - 8. Mom
- v. Conservationist
 - 1. Conservation
- vi. Diversity
 - 1. Encuentra tu Parque
 - 2. Ethnicity
 - a. Race or Ethnicity
- vii. Gender
 - 1. Both Genders
 - 2. Female
 - 3. Male
- viii. History Enthusiast
- ix. Individualist
- x. Leader or Mentor
- xi. Lifestyle Enhancer
- xii. Outdoorsperson
- xiii. Park Ranger
- xiv. Patriot
- xv. Photographer
- xvi. Public Figure or Celebrity
- xvii. Scout
- xviii. Spiritualist
 - 1. Spiritualism
- xix. Technology Disconnecter
- xx. Traveler
- xxi. Volunteer

2. Presentation of Place or Natural Environment

a. Amenities

i. Human or Cultural History

1. Ethnic
2. NPS

ii. Specific Park

b. Recreation or Activity

i. Camping

ii. Eating or Drinking

iii. Education

1. Learning
2. Ranger Programs

iv. Experiencing Scenery

1. Flowers or Foliage

v. Experiencing Wildlife

1. Bird Watching
2. Rehabilitation

vi. Photography

vii. Quiet Recreation

1. Backpacking
2. Biking
3. Climbing
4. Hiking
5. Relaxing
6. Running
7. Walking
8. Yoga

viii. Snow Sports

1. Sledding
2. Snowshoeing

ix. Water Sports

1. Kayaking or Canoeing
2. Rafting

3. Presentation of Post

a. Post Elements

- i. #Encuentra tu Parque
- ii. Attribution
- iii. Feedback Seeking
- iv. Information Sharing
- v. Link
- vi. Location
- vii. Media or Account Shout Out
- viii. Original Post
- ix. Public Figure Endorsement
- x. Quote
- xi. Shared Post (re-post)

b. Technology

- i. Camera Type
- ii. Phone Type

Appendix B: Granular Code Glossary

This glossary provides definitions for grandparent, parent, child and grandchild codes used in the granular coding portion of this study.

1. Presentation of Humans – A grandparent code designed to encompass codes associated with how citizens and the NPS present identities and feelings in relation to their park experiences. Posts coded this way position humans—front and center—with NPS spaces largely serving as impressive backdrops.
 - a. Feelings toward Experience – A parent code designed to encompass prominent feelings/emotions producers expressed regarding their national park experience(s) (i.e., most often through photo captions).
 - i. Adventure – The spirit of risk-taking or boldness; excitement or anticipation expressed toward a potentially exhilarating and/or hazardous experience where the outcome may be unknown.
 - ii. Appreciation – The sense of gratitude or thankfulness toward someone or something.
 - iii. Beauty – An indication the producer views the place(s) shared in his/her post as a source of beauty. Most often, this was expressed through the hashtag ‘beauty’ or ‘beautiful,’ or by using related terms to describe the post.
 - iv. Bonding – The act of connecting with a friend or loved one. This may be evident through a couple holding hands, a parent carrying offspring, or friends sharing an experience (e.g., hiking or rafting).
 - v. Creation – An indication that the act of ‘creating’ was present in the photo or video itself and/or referenced in the caption. For instance, this code often appeared in posts focusing on photography, acknowledging in some way the act of creation, as well as creativity, associated with this activity.
 - vi. Cute or Adorable – Adjectives used most often to describe content featuring an animal (e.g., Alaskan husky puppies in training to be park dogs; newborn bear cubs).
 - vii. Danger or Caution – An indication that the activity or experience showcased in a post (through photo, caption, and/or or video was potentially dangerous or a warning that participants should act cautiously.
 - viii. Deep Meaning – An indication that the experience showcased by the producer was one of emotional significance. For instance, the experience may have elicited the following emotions or mental states:
 1. Dream – The act of envisioning or pondering the future.
 2. Peace – A sense of tranquility or relaxation, possibly elicited by spending time in a sacred or serene place.

3. Reflection – A sense of ‘looking back’ or reminiscing about times past; often evoked through spending time in a place of special meaning (i.e., a national park).
 4. Spirituality – The idea that experiencing a special place (i.e., a national park) evoked a sense of spiritualism; connecting with a higher power.
- ix. Exploration – The act of undergoing or encountering new territory or engaging in a new experience (i.e., something unique or novel). This code was often associated with content featuring hashtags such as #neverstopexploring or #exploremore as well as the physical activity showcased such as camping, hiking, or photography (i.e., it was evident the producer was exploring in some fashion).
 - x. Friendship – A sense of connection or attachment to another; companionship. This code was often used with content wherein companionship was evident (e.g., a group of friends taking a road trip to national parks during spring break).
 - xi. Wonder – A sense of amazement, awe, or marvel. This code was often used with posts in which the producer attached such feelings to his/her national park experience.
- b. Presentation of Self or Institution – Again, this parent code tracks posts that place the human element first. But instead of an expression of feeling, in this category we coded for signaling distinct identities, from individuals, (i.e., the self) to the NPS (i.e., the institution). In deciding what to include in this category, we asked: ‘In what ways do users present a sense of who they are as an individual or as an institution?’ Codes that emerged included:
- i. Adventurer – Identity presentation of someone who is willing to take risks, explore new territory, engage in new experiences.
 - ii. Age – Based on content provided in the photo, video, and/or caption, the age of the producer and/or those appearing in the content, was coded using the following:
 1. Child – Approximately infant to late teens.
 2. Millennial – ages 18–35 (born within the years of 1981–1996 (Dimock, 2018).
 3. Middle Age – Approximately 35–55 years of age.
 4. Senior – Approximately 55 years or older.
 - iii. Brand Ambassador – Identity presentation of an individual who identifies with, supports, and/or promotes a specific brand. This may be showcased through the hashtags used with a post and/or through ‘tagging’ a given brand. For example, a producer may use the hashtags #rei and #rei1440project to

associate him/herself with the outdoor brand, Recreational Equipment Incorporated (REI).

- iv. Community Oriented Person – Identity presentation of someone who enjoys participating in community events, connecting with friends and loved ones, and/or cares for or loves animals.
 - 1. Animal Lover – Identity presentation of someone who loves animals (i.e., the producer presents him/herself as a pet owner and/or as someone who has a genuine passion for animals and their well-being).
 - 2. Dogs or Puppies (Pets) – Dogs representations appeared in a photo, video, and/or referred to in the caption frequently enough that we developed this code to account for this phenomenon.
 - 3. Family – This code encompasses any family-oriented content featured in a video, photo, and/or caption. The child codes listed below were developed to account for specific familial variations including: child, couple, dad, family man or woman (i.e., family oriented), grandparents, mom.
- v. Conservationist – Identity presentation of someone who cares for the preservation, protection, or restoration of the natural environment, natural ecosystems, vegetation, and wildlife (based on definition provided by [Oxford Dictionary](#)).
- vi. Diversity – The child codes listed below were created to account for various components of diversity:
 - 1. Encuentra tu Parque – ‘Find Your Park’ in the Spanish language. This phrase was sometimes included in NPS posts, most often as a hashtag.
 - 2. Race or Ethnicity – This code was developed to account for race or ethnicity when non-White individuals appeared a photo or video. Race or ethnicity could be communicated solely through a photo or video (i.e., by seeing a person physically), though participants also used hashtags to convey this information. For instance, this code would have been used for a post featuring an African-American female and the hashtag #blackadventuristas.
- vii. Gender – This code was developed to account for gender as presented by individuals appearing in photos and videos. We coded based on our assumption that an individual presented him/herself according to traditional notions of female and male appearance.
 - 1. Both Genders – Both genders (i.e., at least one male and one female) were present in the photo or video.
 - 2. Female – Individual presented as female in the photo or video.
 - 3. Male – Individual presented as male in the photo or video.

- viii. History Enthusiast – Identity presentation of someone who is passionate about history. This code was primarily associated with American history.
- ix. Individualist – Identity presentation of someone who aspires to be ‘unique’ or ‘different’ from others.
- x. Leader or Mentor – Identity presentation of someone who leads, guides, or possibly inspires others. Examples include park rangers, scout leaders, and/or celebrities or public figures. This code was often associated with Girl or Boy Scout leaders working with a troop, park rangers leading a ranger program, or a public figure or celebrity promoting the value and importance of spending time in national parks.
- xi. Lifestyle Enhancer – Identity presentation of an individual who represents the promotion of a healthy, active, and/or well-informed lifestyle. This code was often associated with individuals engaging in outdoor activities such as biking, hiking, kayaking, or running (among many other activities). This code also encompasses individuals who present an interest in conservation, education, and/or other forms of recreation (i.e., not necessarily outdoor), which broadly connect to the betterment of themselves or others.
- xii. Outdoorsperson – Identity presentation of an individual who is passionate about outdoor exploration and recreation (e.g., engaging in quiet recreation, water sports, snow sports, photography, etc.).
- xiii. Park Ranger – Identity presentation as someone who works for the National Park Service (generally, park rangers were identified wearing a park ranger uniform).
- xiv. Patriot – Identity presentation of an individual who supports the United States of America (USA), its traditional, ‘Founding Fathers’-oriented history (as taught in public schools), the belief in American exceptionalism, and the importance of preserving these classic values into the future. This code accounted for photos or videos wherein the producer shared the American flag, or a patriotic symbol (e.g., Statue of Liberty), and/or included a caption indicating his/her support for America.
- xv. Photographer – Identity presentation of an individual who is skilled in and/or passionate about photography (in the case of the FYP campaign, the photography often focuses on landscapes).
- xvi. Public Figure or Celebrity – Identity presentation of an individual who is known as a celebrity or public figure. Examples include Find Your Park ambassadors Terrence J., Bella Thorne, and Dierks Bentley, as well as presidential figures including Barack and Michelle Obama.
- xvii. Scout – Identity presentation of someone, generally a child or adolescent, who is a member of a Girl or Boy Scout troop.

- xviii. Spiritualist – Identity presentation of someone who uses his/her experiences in national parks to connect with a higher power and/or reflect on or ponder life on a deep or philosophical level.
 - xix. Technology Disconnecter – Identity presentation of someone who thinks it is important to disconnect from technology (i.e., phone and/or social media) while experiencing national parks.
 - xx. Traveler – Identity presentation of someone who enjoys visiting and experiencing different places. Within the Find Your Park phenomenon, this was often demonstrated among producers who used hashtags including #travelmore, #travelgram, #travelstoke, or #instatravel.
 - xxi. Volunteer – Identity presentation of someone who is willing to participate in community-oriented events that may center around conservation, connecting with or guiding park-goers, or mentoring the youth.
2. Presentation of Place or Natural Environment – This grandparent code represents elements of posts that seem to position National Forest System lands first. The code was developed to categorize affordances of these landscapes, the amenities available, as well as recreation and other activities associated with national park experiences.
- a. Amenities – This parent code was developed to account for presentations in the social media posts of natural park features that can be utilized for practical application(s) and/or pleasure.
 - i. Human or Cultural History – This child code was created to account for ethnic or NPS history or narratives:
 - 1. Ethnic – This code was created to account for any ethnic history that may have been shared through photo, video, and/or captions. For example, a post wherein the producer posted a story about the Tuskegee Institute or the San Antonio Mission’s National Historic Park featuring a caption about cultural and/or ethnic history.
 - 2. NPS –This code was developed to account for any posts that featured history specific to the NPS (i.e., institutional history). For instance, when a certain park was founded or when a special event took place on National Park System lands.
 - a. Specific Park – A great grandchild code associated with NPS is Specific Park, which was developed to record when a producer shared the specific park he/she visited.

- b. Recreation or Activity – This parent code was designed to encompass the activities park visitors engage in – ranging from physical fitness to education.
 - i. Camping – A type of recreation some park-goers engage in while experiencing national parks. This activity generally involves sleeping in a tent or camper, preparing and eating food outdoors, and engaging in many of the other recreational activities listed in the codes below.
 - ii. Eating or Drinking – The act of eating food and/or drinking a beverage while spending time in national parks.
 - iii. Education – The act of participating in some type of educational experience while visiting a national park. This code was most prominent across NPS-produced posts.
 - 1. Learning – The act of gaining knowledge through an activity or experience a park-goer participated in while visiting a national park.
 - 2. Ranger Programs – An educational program organized by the NPS wherein children have the opportunity to learn about the parks and become junior rangers.
 - iv. Experiencing Scenery – This code encompasses the act of park-goers experiencing landscapes and scenery offered at the parks.
 - 1. Flowers or Foliage – This child code was developed to account for park-goers experiencing flowers or foliage during their visit.
 - v. Experiencing Wildlife – This code encompasses the act of experiencing (i.e., most often observing, but possibly engaging with) wildlife. Most often, this included seeing wild animals in their natural habitat, bird watching, or possibly encountering a rehabilitation habitat.
 - vi. Photography – The act of taking photos in a national park (primarily of scenery, landscape, wildlife, and/or family or friends experiencing the park).
 - vii. Quiet Recreation – This code was created to encompass various types of ‘silent’ recreating that park-goers may engage in. Such activities (i.e., child codes) include backpacking, biking, climbing, hiking, relaxing, running, walking, and yoga.
 - viii. Snow Sports – This code was created to represent recreational activities that are experienced in snow, such as sledding, snowmobiling, and snowshoeing.
 - ix. Water Sports – This code was created to account for recreational activities experienced in the water, such as motorboating, kayaking, canoeing, or rafting.

3. Presentation of Post – This grandparent code was developed to categorize elements of the post or video itself.
 - a. Post Elements – This code was designed to account for the physical aspects present in posts and videos.
 - i. #Encuentra tu Parque – ‘Find Your Park’ in the Spanish language. This phrase was sometimes included in NPS posts (to connect with Spanish-speaking followers) most often as a hashtag.
 - ii. Attribution – This code was used to account for when the producer attributed to the source of a quote or information included in the caption of the photo or video. In the case of a shared post, the producer may have attributed to the original creator of the content.
 - iii. Feedback Seeking – This code was developed to account for posts wherein the producer sought feedback (i.e., requested information generally through questions) from his/her followers.
 - iv. Information Sharing – This code was designated for any post wherein information sharing took place. (Given the overarching premise of the FYP campaign is sharing one’s story—and thus, share information—it is not surprising that this code was dominant across citizen and NPS posts).
 - v. Link – This code was used when the producer included a link in the photo or video caption (e.g., a link to other related information).
 - vi. Location – This code was used when the producer shared his/her location (i.e., the national park) by tagging it in the post, the description, and/or in hashtags.
 - vii. Tagging – This code was used when the producer tagged a friend (i.e., a ‘follower’) and/or other account. The purpose of ‘tagging’ is to make the content visible to followers and/or those searching for content in a given area. For example, by tagging ‘@REI,’ the producer is attempting to inform this brand that he/she is in support of or affiliated with.
 - viii. Original Post – This code designates that the content featured in the photo or video is original to the producer (i.e., the content was uploaded by the account owner to his/her own page).
 - ix. Public Figure Endorsement – This code was created to account for the inclusion of a public figure (i.e., celebrity or public figure) featured in a photo or video.
 - x. Quote – This code accounts for when a producer included a quote in the caption for his/her photo or video. For example, quotes from John Muir were popular among FYP participants.
 - xi. Shared Post (re-post) – This code refers to any post that has been re-posted by a producer other than the original creator.

- b. Technology – This parent code was created to encompass the various technology producers may have used to create his/her content (i.e., photo or video).
 - i. Camera Type – This code was created to account for when a producer disclosed the type of camera used to take his/her photo (e.g., a Sony Alpha A9). This information was most often noted in a photo caption through hashtags.
 - ii. Phone Type – This code was created to account for when a producer disclosed the type of phone he/she used to take the photo featured in the post. This information was most often included in a photo caption through hashtags.

Appendix C: Narrative Code Glossary

See narrative code term, then a simple narrative statement of overall meaning of the term, often followed by other helpful insights and possible examples from the data [*in brackets/italics*].

Anti-(something negative): Anything that casts a negative light on NPS-managed landscapes and related activities.

Beauty/Grandeur: The National Parks are sites of beauty/grandeur [*often presented in words and carefully composed images—a sense of the wonders of nature and National Park-related experiences.*]

Celebrity: Well-known people support NPS-managed lands, visit them, and encourage others to do the same.

Children: It is positive for kids to experience the national parks. It helps them to be more authentic human beings. [*This covers national Park related participation on the part of children for self-improvement, education, and overall well-being. This code covers notions of family, scouting, and the concept of future generations.*]

Conditions: NPS-managed lands present a variety of conditions, some of them beneficial for those experiencing them, some of them challenging. [*This could include conditions such as soils (promoting certain plants), temperature, storms, air quality due to fires, etc.*]

Connection-Reflection: (*See the following sub-codes*)

Connecting with others:

Offline: [*such as at NPS-managed lands—good examples include Instagram’s ‘Instameets’*]

Online: [*such as encouraging connection through social media*]

Connecting with self: Finding one’s place in the scheme of things: e.g., escape, rejuvenation (of physical, emotional, cognitive, spiritual, etc. health). [*Individual reflection brought about by experience with some sort of NPS-related land/activity. This goes beyond someone saying simply, “Wow, this landscape is beautiful!” It is about reflection, spirituality, mindfulness, peace, and connecting with nature, as much as oneself, etc.*]

Diversity: NPS-managed lands are experienced by people from underserved/underrepresented demographic groups [*Focuses on ‘inclusion’ and can include racial, ethnic, the disabled, gender, sexuality, etc.*]

Dogs: Canines can enhance one’s experiences (where allowed) at National Park System-managed lands. [*Note that this can involve private citizens experiencing their dogs in a national park setting, advice for the best ways to handle a dog, and also National Park Service use of dogs in their management in the national parks*]

Heritage: In addition to stewarding the nation’s natural heritage, NPS-managed lands preserve and present important elements of American cultural heritage as well. [*The National Parks reflect who we are as a nation. This code really covers efforts to preserve our history in national Park managed lands. E.g., NPS Facebook post/image # 16, “Every national Park is part of our collective identity that defines who we are and where we came from as a nation. They are tactile reminders of the values, the ideals, the freedoms that our veterans protect.”*]

Humanization: It is important to understand that there are individuals (often including NPS employees and volunteers) who are of course real people (not uniformed, nameless, faceless bureaucrats) making National Park Service management of public lands possible.

Local NPS Lands: You do not have to travel far away to exotic park locations and expend great resources to explore what NPS has to offer nearby. [*This can also include lands that are more easily accessible, not necessarily an exotic, faraway place, but perhaps right off the highway, often urban environments.*]

Photography: National Park Service-managed properties are excellent locations to capture beautiful/interesting photographs [*This also includes video posts in which it appears an effort has been made to capture images that go beyond the usual point-and-shoot experience, such as, artistic composition, a great variety of shots, effects in shooting (e.g., slow-mo, fast motion, time lapse, Gopro), or effects in editing that go beyond the usual (such as relatively sophisticated editing, more complex uses of text and other effects, including sophisticated animation, as in the ‘Ask a Ranger’ [NPS YouTube] series). Also including any sort of effort at visual presentation, such as an NPS post focused on a virtual reality tour of El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historical Monument (NPS FB post/image # 3). This code could also involve people practicing art in (and in relation to) National Park lands.*]

Recreation: The National Park Service-managed landscapes provide excellent locations for healthy recreation.

Support the Parks: Calls/encouragement to show support for the NPS managed lands, their protection and preservation. (*See the following sub-codes*)

Commemoratives: Show your support by purchasing commemorative items that support the national Parks. [*This would also cover references to “passes”.*]

FYP-Rewarding: Participate in the FYP activities [Note that all of these posts could be coded with this. We did use this code though when it was quite obvious that the post was specifically intended to reference the Find Your Park effort]

Participate: Your life will improve if you participate in some way at the national parks.

Partnership: Work with the NPS (and others) to improve our national parks.

Stewardship: Help protect the environment of the National Parks. [*This is about environmental protection—preservation of the public lands. Also included: any mentions of scientific efforts to study National Park System landscapes to aid in the preservation of lands, water, air, wildlife, etc.*]

Wildlife: It helps you to be a more authentic human being if you can experience wildlife at the National Parks. [*Also includes most other non-human, non-domesticated life forms—fish, insects, etc.*]

The Department of the Interior protects and manages the nation's natural resources and cultural heritage; provides scientific and other information about those resources; and honors its special responsibilities to American Indians, Alaska Natives, and affiliated Island Communities.

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