

social media promotion:

Using Instagram to promote *Eastside*

By Ali Koenig

instagram posts:

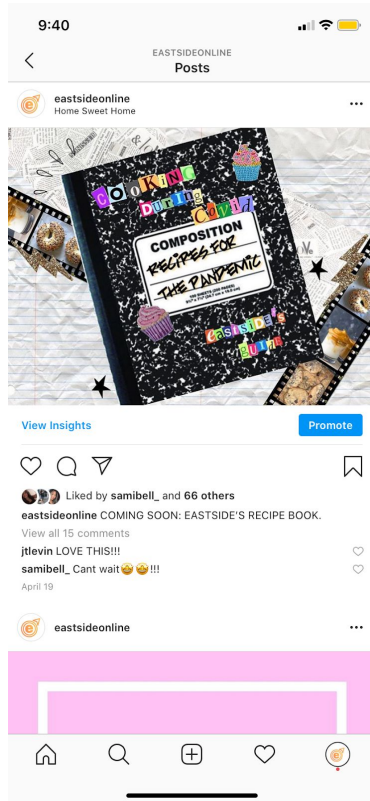
PROMOTING CONTENT FROM

eastside-online.org

& various digital platforms

Teaser image: Online package

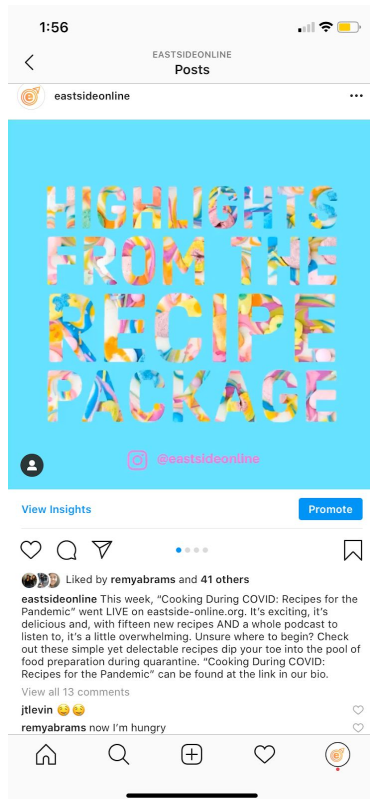
https://www.instagram.com/p/B_KsQ2gA_jY/?igshid=ny641bqsa816



The day before *Eastside's* special quarantine multimedia package, “Cooking During COVID: Recipes for the Pandemic” was posted to eastside-online.org, I shared this teaser post on our Instagram. Using the title and featured image of the package, its theme was obvious enough just by glancing at the post, but readers would have to wait a day before they could find out what specific content was included.

Package highlights: Online package

https://www.instagram.com/p/B_Xl_dWAUX0/?igshid=o1qjtkqbnc8



A few days after the recipe package was released, I took to Instagram once again to promote the package. I targeted the post specifically to those with a bit less experience in cooking by highlighting a few of the “easier” recipes featured in the package using colorful photos and bold, eye-catching animations. By selecting just a few recipes from a much larger package, I shared a sample of what the multimedia package had to offer without giving all of the content away, so readers would have much more to explore once they followed the link in our bio.

Podcast promotion: Eastside Radio's podcast network

<https://www.instagram.com/p/B-FQ1OPAFQD/?igshid=xlw3a255f0en>



I also have used Instagram to promote *Eastside's* extensive podcast network. I framed some of our best podcasts within the context of the current global pandemic, presenting each of them either as a way to get some different sort of perspective or information on the novel coronavirus or as something fun to listen to as a way to temporarily escape the heaviness of the situation of the world at the time. Rather than simply posting a list of the podcast titles and episodes, I shared the fun and unique cover art associated with them to convey the personality of the hosts and the podcasts' content.

Weekly recap: What You Missed This Week

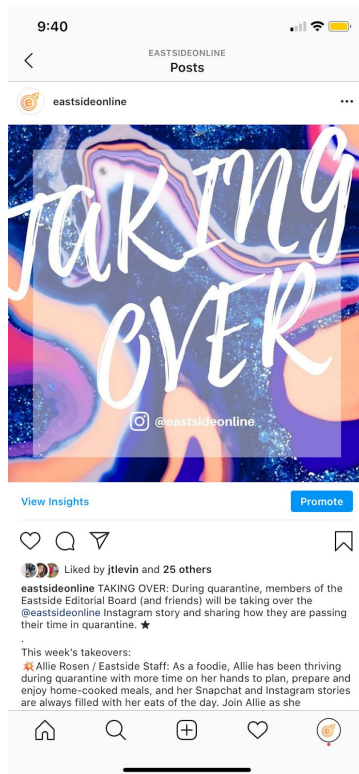
<https://www.instagram.com/p/B-CYIDiA1Gj/?igshid=18o3pkj7l67r7>



Over my time working on *Eastside's* social media networks, I have struggled with finding the most effective and efficient way to promote online stories. Posting too many Instagram stories at once ensured that not all of them would be viewed, and sharing every online headline as a permanent post on our Instagram profile would clog up our feed. So, enter What You Missed This Week: a weekly summary, usually posted on Sunday morning, listing every headline posted on Eastside Online the previous week as well as the names and positions of all authors. This post has become successful because anyone who wrote an article mentioned in the post can share it to their own Instagram story, bringing in many new viewers each week.

Instagram promotion: Editorial board member Instagram story takeovers

https://www.instagram.com/p/B_fKJ6kgbG-/?igshid=p95dkvnwb10v



A final use for permanent Instagram posts was promotion of activity on *Eastside's* own social media channels. One development to come out of this year, with the entire editorial board working from home, were Instagram story takeovers. At the beginning of every week, usually on Monday or Tuesday, I would share this marble-print graphic with all of that week's takeover information, including the people taking over, what they would be sharing, and when their takeover was scheduled. Posting the schedule ahead of time allowed those taking over to be able to advertise their takeover on their own accounts, bringing in more viewers for @eastsideonline.

instagram posts:

PROMOTING PRINT ISSUES

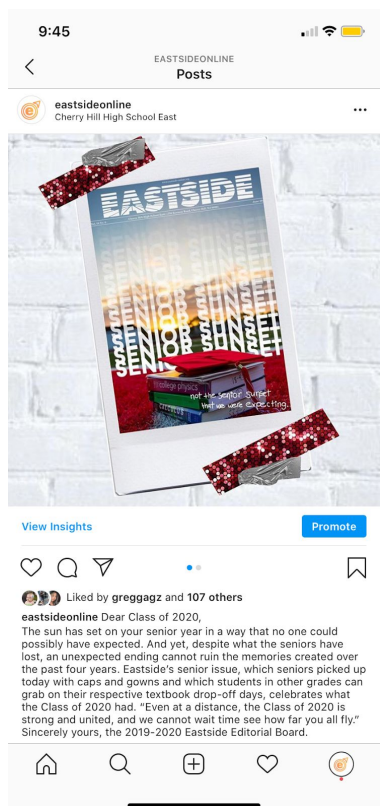
& print issues found online

Issue teaser: Before distributing the print issue of the month
<https://www.instagram.com/p/CA-URLuAI9r/?igshid=x4lrp4e25nc>



Teaser posts can be excellent promotion for print issues as well! Though we do not always know in advance the exact date that our issues will arrive from the printer, I love posting the day before issues are distributed when possible. Especially after the three-month hiatus *Eastside* unfortunately had to take from print issues during quarantine, it was crucial that our June issue, of which seniors would receive a copy when they went back to school to return textbooks and pick up caps and gowns, was well-advertised and that students knew it was coming in advance! The day before seniors were assigned to go to school for the last time, I posted this teaser image along with a list of a few elements readers could expect to find.

Promoting new or recent issues: Promoting the link to the issue PDF
<https://www.instagram.com/p/CBCAi3wACfO/?igshid=1ut8rfu2p2dno>



Promotion does not stop once an issue has been distributed. During the typical school year, members of the editorial board hand out issues in the morning as students are walking into the school, and the PDF of that month's issue is available on issuu.com often by the end of the school day so students who were absent, alumni, members of the school district or any other readers have access to it as well. For the senior issue, however, the PDF was posted to issuu.com by the end of the day that seniors returned their textbooks to school—an emotional day for all. Feeling nostalgia after their last time in their high school as students, seniors flocked to the online PDF and the shares for the promotional post skyrocketed.

Keeping the hype going: Talking about an issue past distribution day

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CBMI1qVAPiP/?igshid=1u4md8xhwipxl>



Relief, pride, exhilaration... emotions ran high after the release of *Eastside's* last print issue of the year, all of which had been written, edited and laid out remotely. To keep our followers invested past that original distribution, it was important to maintain promotion of the June issue. Luckily, underclassmen were scheduled to return their textbooks to school over three days next week, which provided the perfect excuse to continue posting promotional content related to the recently released issue.

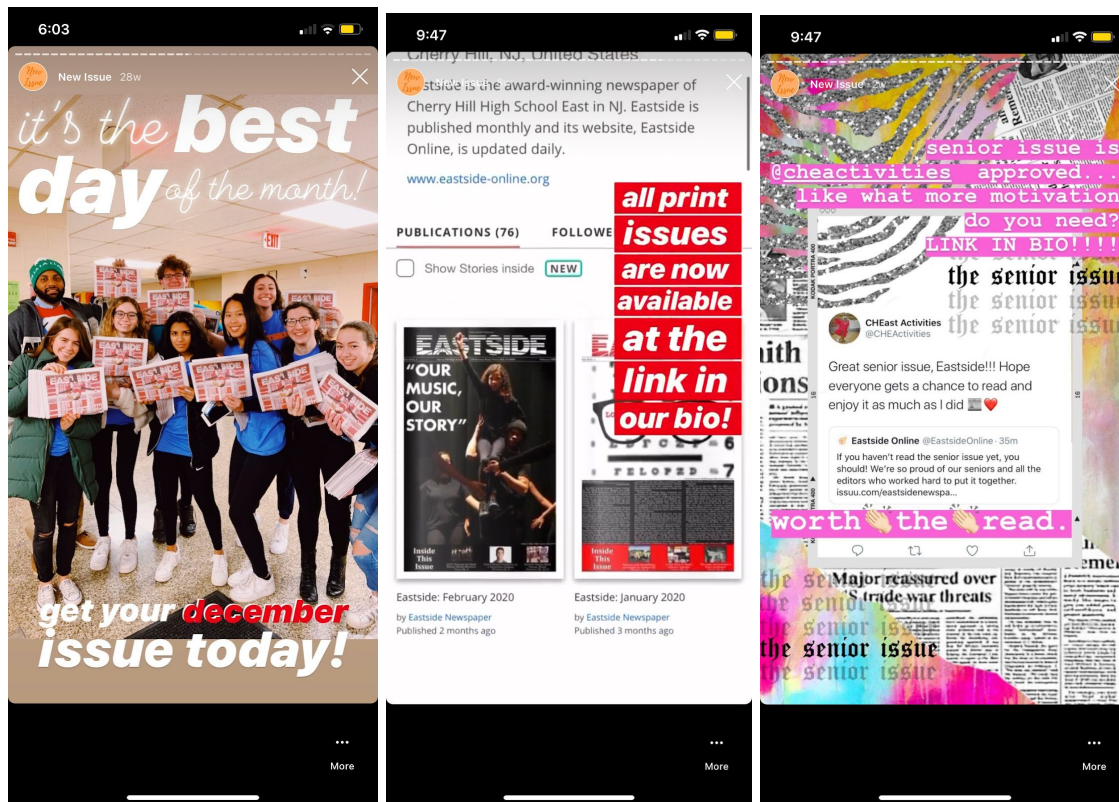
instagram stories:

PROMOTING PRINT ISSUES

& print issues found online

Promoting Print Issues: The “New Issue” highlight reel

https://www.instagram.com/s/aGlnaGxpZ2h0OjE3ODU4NTk1NTc0MzM1MTgw?igshid=1bb2res0uxvi4&story_media_id=2324119388355158043



When it comes to promoting new print issues using Instagram stories, there are two steps (with an optional third) that I like to take. The first is at the beginning of Distribution Day, often before students have even arrived at school, when members of the Editorial Board are waiting near the school’s entrances, armed with issues of *Eastside* to hand out to our peers. Board members love being featured on the @eastsideonline Instagram, so I like to take pictures of them posed with armfuls of issues. In addition to being fun for those featured on our Instagram story, it also serves as a heads-up to students who have yet to arrive in the parking lot, so they know that it’s Distribution Day before they even step inside.

The next step comes after students have received their issues, normally around the end of the school day or early that evening, once the link to the PDF version of the issue has been posted to Issuu. At this time, my strategy is usually to screenshot the front page and post it to our story, along with a note that the PDF can be found at the link in our bio. Sometimes, I will post three or four stories right in a row of the cover page, adding a bit more text each time. It creates an animation effect when one quickly taps through, and I feel as though it is more likely to catch the eye of a follower who just mindlessly taps through the stories on his or her feed.

The final step, which I made sure to utilize when promoting our recent senior-centered June issue, uses the feedback of readers to continue spreading awareness of a recent issue. Our Activities secretary tweeted an enthusiastic message about the June issue, so I included it in a story post to boast that the senior issue had received the @cheactivities stamp of approval.

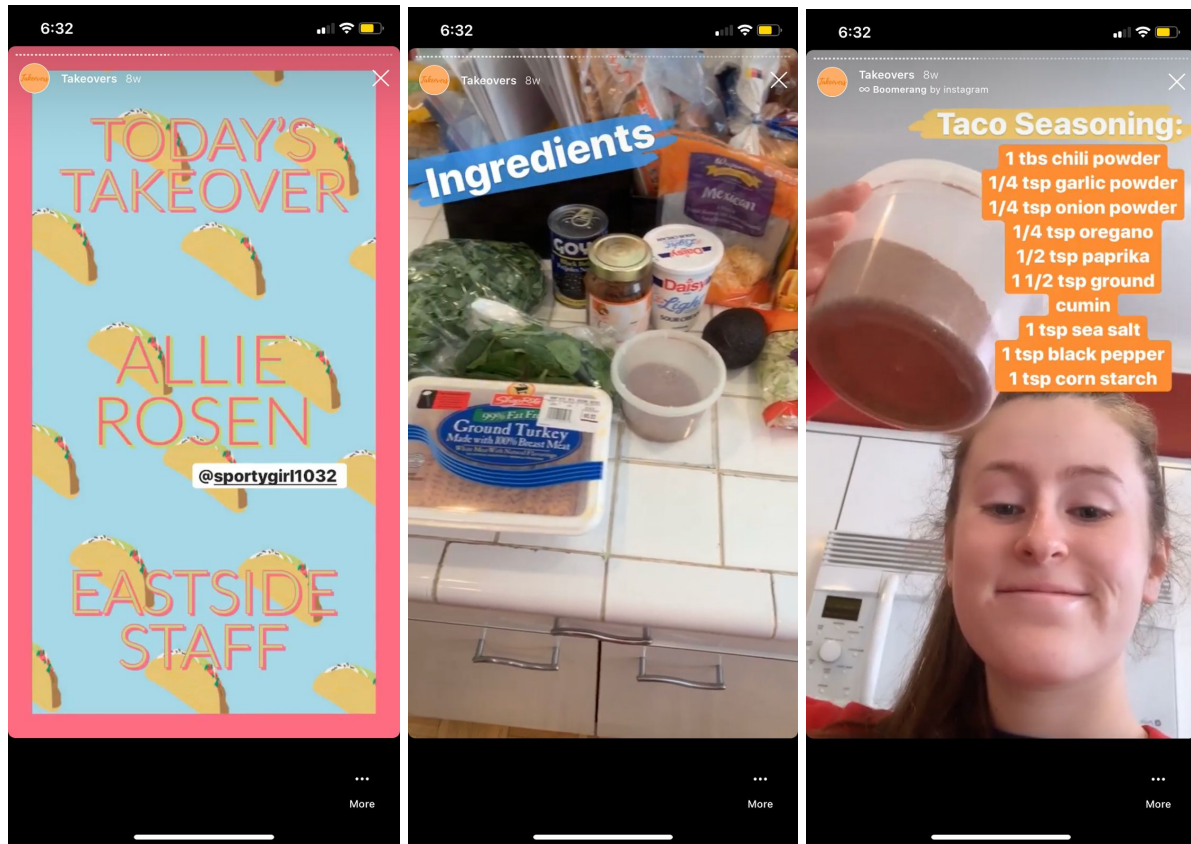
instagram stories:

INSTA TAKEOVERS

& using social media to continue coverage
during the pandemic

Editorial Board Takeovers: The “Takeovers” highlight reel (plus “Takeovers 2” and “Takeovers 3)

https://www.instagram.com/s/aGlnaGxpZ2h0OjE4MTM5NzU2OTE4MDU0MzY0?igshid=1rbecl13ro4pj&story_media_id=2293065414474815966



Takeovers, one of the most fun elements of *Eastside* to come out of quarantine, allow for more creative use of Instagram stories beyond simply promotion; they are a vehicle for journalism all on their own. Over the past few months, I have refined and developed a takeover process that has included students from all four grades and from varying degrees of involvement in *Eastside*: a mix from freshmen to seniors, staff to editors to editors-in-chief.

The takeover process starts at the beginning of the week with the posting of the schedule as mentioned above. When the day of a contributor’s takeover comes, I create a quick animation with their name and position and send it to them to be the first post of their takeover. After that, it is all up to them, though most staff and editorial board members have begun with an introduction and a brief explanation of what they plan to use the platform for that day. Takeovers can be a series of story posts all within ten minutes, or a few posts spaced out throughout the day.

We have filled up two entire highlight reels, which can each hold a maximum of one hundred story posts, and are very close to filling up a third, with topics ranging from Earth Day education and a peek into the shift of a frontline worker during the pandemic to cooking on Taco Tuesday, homemade room decor, and an at-home workout. Each takeover uniquely reflects the personality of the editor or staff member leading it, and they have been equally enjoyed by those who get to use the platform for a day and those who get to watch something slightly different from *Eastside*’s usual content during quarantine.