

---

## DEVON AKMON, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, ARAB AMERICAN NATIONAL MUSEUM



**Similar to other institutions, the Arab American National Museum (AANM) began using social media in a rather piecemeal fashion. The community-based museum opened to the public in May 2005 and, with a relatively young staff, immediately began finding ways to incorporate social media into its outreach strategies.**

The nature of social media lends itself well to an institution so rooted in its community. Usually, a staff member would propose using a particular social media platform, present to staff on how it could benefit the institution, and adopt the day-to-day management and oversight of it.

In September 2009,

we hired our first Social Media Marketing Coordinator.

Shortly thereafter, the Community Foundation of Southeastern Michigan (CFSEM) launched its inaugural Challenge Arts and Culture, which sought to help raise much needed funds for the 75 cultural arts organizations that make up the Cultural Alliance of Southeastern Michigan. Recognizing the importance of individual giving via the Internet, the CFSEM online Challenge required institutions to use social media as a primary tool for raising funds. The Challenge lasted approximately 12 hours, and the AANM placed fourth among all institutions, raising over \$300,000 in unrestricted funds.

Currently, the Social Media Marketing Coordinator manages the oversight of all social media tools at the AANM. At this time, the Coordinator is developing a social media strategy and works within the Marketing and Communication Department to produce online messages while also monitoring conversations relevant to the AANM.

We are currently utilizing several social media outlets like Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Flickr, Delicious, blogs and iTunes. Further, we are developing other social media tools for collecting community history and building community (e.g. Wikis). And finally, social media tools are now being used within exhibits.