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Communication Audit

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A. Background and Organizational Information

Adobe has been around since 1982, founded by John Warnock and Charles Geschke. Its headquarters is located in San Jose, California. Adobe is a computer software made to bring out a programming language to give details about the precise position, shape and size of objects shown on a computer page (Norr 2020). Adobe is more than just a software on the computer, it is used for films, advertising, branding, and mobile apps. "Let's create experiences that matter. Adobe is the global leader in digital media and digital marketing solutions. Our creative, marketing and document solutions empower everyone – from emerging artists to global brands – to bring digital creations to life and deliver immersive, compelling experiences to the right person at the right moment for the best results. In short, Adobe is everywhere, and we're changing the world through digital experiences," (Adobe Mission, Vision & Values). This mission is ambiguous. It targets companies large and small, schools and other organizations who need to use social media to promote and advertise their business. "There is not a vision statement," (Adobe Mission, Vision & Values). "Genuine: Sincere, trustworthy and reliable; Exceptional: Committed to creating exceptional experiences that delight our employees and customers; *Innovative*: Highly creative and always striving to connect new ideas with business realities; *Involved*: Inclusive, open and actively engaged with our customers, partners, employees and the communities we serve," (Adobe About). The location of public relations is not in plain sight. Adobe shows Gloria Chen as the Chief People Officer and Executive Vice President, Employee Experience; along with Ann Lewnes as Executive Vice President and Chief Marketing Officer, (Adobe, Executive Profiles).

B. Communications Practice

Publics:

The publics of Adobe are primarily people who are creative and primary publics are hired by Adobe are CEOs, graphic designers for Adobe, content creators for Adobe, film creators for Adobe, bloggers for Adobe. Secondary publics use adobe programs in their day to day life like graphic designers, content creators, film makers, university students/education. External publics are those who use adobe. So for example, content creators, graphic designers, student publications, education, bloggers, agencies. Internal publics are those who work for adobe. So this would be the CEOs, graphic designers, content creators, bloggers, film creators, social media specialists. Traditional publics are content creators, graphic designers, student publications, education, bloggers, agencies. Non-traditional publics are those who like to do graphic design for fun, not so serious media editing. Current publics are those who use adobe in their free time to design or edit. Future publics are those who haven't learned how to use the programs, but know about them. These could be potential designers, those who don't know it's what they love doing but will eventually figure it out.

PESO:

Paid, Earned, Shared and Owned media is based on how Adobe promotes and advertises to their audience. Adobe is solely online for the most part. Meaning Adobe gets sponsorships with certain social media platforms. The platforms are used all across the world so in a way it is good because it is reaching everyone who is interested in a sense, but in another sense it is also missing those who do not have social media or those who are too young for social media but have creative abilities. Facebook and Instagram are two of the main social media platforms that sponsor Adobe apps such as Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Creative Cloud, Adobe Design and many more apps. Some earned media would be the messages that their customer testimonials put out there, (Adobe, Customer Success Stories).

Campaigns and Messages:

Each form of social media gives off a different type of message and vibe. When thinking about messages there are many different ways that their publics can portray and absorb the messages that are being put out. Adobe as a whole gives out messages that promote their products, all apps and platforms as well as inspirational messages created by some of their publics. The messages aren't always clean cut, you have to sit there and take what you want from them. Many messages from their specific pages like Photoshop, Design and Creative Cloud. There is an inspiration tab that you can get to through the creative cloud and these messages are like features that explain how a certain artist or public has gotten their inspiration for their art pieces. These inspirations often show how-to tutorials, them talking about their experience, the platform they use and whether or not they used the desktop platform or the mobile platform. (Creative Cloud Inspiration). All of the features are written by someone different.

I have not seen many campaigns for Adobe, but what I did see is that they have a campaigns app to help organizations and other businesses set up for their own campaigns. "Adobe's Campaigns integrated customer profile enables marketers to unify data from both offline and online sources, in order to build a complete view of the customer," (Celerity, Adobe Campaign). Now it doesn't say whether or not the program is free, but this article is dedicated to selling the abilities that this program has. This could be a mini campaign for their campaigns app if you look at it in that sense. It is built to work with other Adobe platforms like Adobe Experience Manager and Adobe Analytics.

Employee Relations

I have noticed that even on their website there isn't much that you can completely tell about their employee communications. What I did notice is that anyone who works for adobe is

proud to be a part of their program and staff, so that seems to be a good thing. Adobe prides themself on employee networks that make their workplaces more inclusive and make investments in the causes they care about, (Adobe, Employee Experiences). The way it sounds is that their employees are expected to be supportive and push their other colleagues to succeed. When I look at the employees list, there isn't much information about them, just their name and their role with a synopsis about what they have accomplished.

Community Relations and Corporate Social Responsibility

Community relations is another one that is solely based on social media. I feel like since Adobe is an online program for media relations and other media platforms like film, graphic design, illustrations, animation and more, all of their communications are done online. I have never seen a printed flyer about adobe. Even in electronic stores such as Best Buy, Office Depot, etc., I have yet to see any advertisement physically.

On their investor relations tab, there was the 2019 Corporate Social Responsibility report released with the CEO, Shantanu Narayen, speaking on the matter, bringing up the topic of COVID-19. "The devastating impact of COVID-19 is unfolding before us, changing everything about life and work as we know it. We're all focused on how to best protect and support our families, employees, customers and communities," (Narayen, CSR 2019 Report). This CSR report gives access to their concerns from and for the year to come, their bragging about their employees, their voices, their communities, and their future. The report gives numbers of their values in action, their practicing methods and a lot of their finances. This gives their record engagements, their governance, society, community, sustainability, policies, goals and change.

Environmental Scanning

Adobe does Adobe MAX, which is a free three day event where people who have adobe can listen to speakers, other designers and gain some insight and knowledge into the creative world around us. Adobe actually has a trend support document. They track their changes and they are dedicated to make the customer's journey and experience easy and fun. They want to bring in culture, creative culture to the table for the customers. (Adobe Digital Trends) Adobe has some issues with lagging. Some programs lag, they can run slow and when they have to update, you cannot be in a rush to do anything. Adobe has some issues with working or copying information across platforms, but other than that they all go hand in hand. Some people have expectations of Adobe to be such a universal platform but it is not. Adobe is difficult to learn, especially if you're doing it on your own. Adobe's expectations are that people are being creative and using their platform for creative purposes, which most people are.

Issues and Crisis Management

There was a font war at the beginning of adobe starting out, (Norr). Adobe sent out messages as the latest news when COVID-19 broke out, (Adobe COVID-19 Response). Adobe wanted to sue users for using old platforms of photoshop, (Bode). Another thing that could become an issue is that Adobe doesn't always address their public complaints right away. When there is an update and you work on multiple computers it can be difficult because if one computer updates then you can't use the others unless they update as well.

C. Competitors: Canva and PicsArt

About

Canva is a free online, browser friendly software that allows you to create graphics. The only difference is that it is free for the most part. Customers can pay for the premium version or for more storage. It is used to, "Design anything. Publish anywhere," (Canva About).

Mission, Vision and Values

"Mission is living and breathing diversity and inclusion in how we work every day at Canva. Vision had none listed. One of our core values at Canva, "Being a force for good" means we are actively working towards a world that isn't just good for a small few, but one that's good for everyone. We believe deeply that bringing together diversity of thoughts, perspectives and expression is key for building the best product for our equally diverse community. To achieve this, we need to constantly work towards making Canva the best place to work, for everyone. We celebrate the uniqueness that every person brings to the team, built upon respect, acceptance and kindness. We know that our success is firmly grounded in the richness of diverse perspectives converging with big, bold ideas. Every person contributes to Canva in their own special way. We know that building diverse teams helps us to empathise and understand the needs of our users, and create a product that improves their lives. Our users come from all walks of life, from all parts of the world. We aim to have a team that reflects the diversity that exists in the society we live in. We are committed to fostering an inclusive workplace where people feel safe to be themselves, are able to do the best work of their lives and fulfil their potential. There are no dumb ideas – just a group of people working together to solve a problem. We're all on an ongoing journey of learning, helping each other grow and becoming the best we can possibly be. When we bring people together, we create a culture of inclusion and openness. We hope that by building awareness of the importance of diversity and inclusion, and providing a safe place to speak about it, we encourage healthy conversations that create positive, lasting change. We are proud to work together with our community partners that inspire and provide opportunities to those that often need it the most. Finally, we know that there's a long road ahead and by no

means do we have it all figured out. It's a constant work in progress but we believe these are worthwhile things to strive for," (Canva About).

Communications Practice

Canva really tries their best to make the designing world easy and simple. It doesn't always work. When I look at their social media they seem very easy going and like they aren't worried about the competition. I find that to be a strength in communication because they aren't worried about what their competitors are doing.

Environmental Scanning

Canva does little seminars with people who work for their company, they advertise through video, and they share them to another facebook page with tutorials. Canva has design trends for the year. I noticed that they are focused on satisfying the customers eye design wise rather than putting out their data. They have trends that last all year so plentiful of people can take their hand at it, (Canva Design Trend). Canva has a storage issue. The free version doesn't have much storage. This can be an issue for those who have larger files to access while making a logo or any type of design. Canva also has some issues with options of fonts, it's very basic, non-creative.

PicsArt

About

"PicsArt is an all-in-one photo and video editing app for making your social content pop.

We make it super easy to step up your photo-editing game, create amazing images and videos, and share them with friends. It's the one app that lets you be truly creative with its almost limitless features — and it's starting a movement to help the people "go beyond the filter" and make awesome pictures. A consistent top 20 downloaded app with more than 150 million

monthly active users, PicsArt spans the globe and is available in over 30 languages. PicsArt is your mobile creative playground. Remix images with us and discover an entire world of content and tools to help you tell your unique story," (PicsArt About).

Mission, Vision, Values

Piscart has two mission statements I have found. "To make the world more creative," (Comparably). The other is "our mission is to beautify the world by providing easy-to-use yet professional level tools and features to help anyone reveal and express their inner creativity, sharing it with a supportive community who appreciate and collaborate around image creation. We believe in open source and in collaboration between artists. (Melcher). Vision none listed. Values none listed.

Communications Practices

When I look at the website and think of the app, it is very easy going. PicsArt isn't in your face talking about how they are the best. They simply show and give their publics the support that they need and the information they need for when something is going on whether that is an event or just any little information they can give you. They also send little notifications about different filters and text options when you have the app.

Environmental Scanning

Picsart does little games, they have contests for their users to post their work and they allow the community to show off their skills. Picsart has creative trends that they use. I noticed they use a lot of hashtags while they are rotating work done by their customers. Picsart has some issues because while it used to be completely free, now you have to pay for some of the features. Of course it's much cheaper than Adobe, and if you aren't doing major editing or designs then it's perfect.

IV. Formative Analysis/Critical Analysis

When I think about Adobe my thoughts, opinions and views vary. Throughout my research I have found negative and positive feedback. Most of the customer reviews of the programs are good. Meaning that people find the software of Adobe to be effective and great quality. However, when it comes to the reviews of customer service and the business management, the reviews are very poor. Many of them are outraged about how the customer service is generated responses and not getting responses at all, (Anderson, Adobe Rated). I can see why these are genuine concerns for customers because if they are paying for a service, then they should be able to get some answers regarding whatever issue they are having. As a personal preference, I prefer to use Adobe rather than the free options because there is so much more freedom. The only downside is that having the Creative Cloud service is a little expensive, not just for students even with a discount but for those who need it for their careers and business. Even though the price is hefty, Adobe has so many loyal customers who will vouch for them and promote their software.

About and Mission

Adobe has been around since 1982, founded by John Warnock and Charles Geschke. Its headquarters is located in San Jose, California, (Norr). The strengths that Adobe has is that they are well known and have been around for such a long time. Them being around for such a long time means they have targeted many different age groups. As times change with technology and the past generations aren't fully committed to using their programs they are making changes to keep up with the demand of the creative world. "Let's create experiences that matter. Adobe is the global leader in digital media and digital marketing solutions. Our creative, marketing and document solutions empower everyone – from emerging artists to global brands – to bring digital

creations to life and deliver immersive, compelling experiences to the right person at the right moment for the best results. In short, Adobe is everywhere, and we're changing the world through digital experiences," (Adobe Mission, Vision & Values). I think this mission statement is ambiguous. While it encourages their publics to use their platforms to be creative and to get their work done and messages across, it also seems very big headed. Them including that they are the global leader in digital media and digital marketing in their mission statement seems braggy. Communication that is braggy can be good and bad, but in this case it rubs off the wrong way.

Values

While their mission statement is a little braggy, their values as a corporate business seems very straightforward and engaging. "Genuine: Sincere, trustworthy and reliable; Exceptional: Committed to creating exceptional experiences that delight our employees and customers; Innovative: Highly creative and always striving to connect new ideas with business realities; Involved: Inclusive, open and actively engaged with our customers, partners, employees and the communities we serve," (Adobe About). What I like about the way they state their values is that they make it into little sections with what they mean beneath them on the website. This is a good form of communication because those four main topics of being genuine, exceptional, innovative and involved can be interpreted in so many different ways.

Strengths

Another thing that I notice as a strength is that they have so many audiences based on their social media. While Adobe is solely online engagements between the company and their publics, there are so many different places to look for information. It is a good thing that their publics can look to Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, their website, their blog for information on the

softwares. However, having so many different platforms that are all open for communication, Adobe has to be very careful with the messages that they share. When they are posting on certain platforms they have to make sure that the messages align especially if they post the same content and same message on multiple platforms. For example, when they were promoting their event, AdobeMAX, they sent out an email encouraging their users to sign up for the free seminar. They also posted about it for a while before the seminar actually happened. Many people complained that the times that the seminar lessons were in conflict with their schedules. I noticed that at first Adobe was not responding, but with enough complaining and concern from their publics, they ended up releasing a post and a follow up comment on that post. In the post they said, "We're aware of an issue affecting your schedules. We're working hard to resolve this issue as soon as possible. Thank you for bearing with us during our first virtual #AdobeMAX." Then they commented, "We want to confirm that the issues with schedules have been resolved and they are now live. We appreciate you all hanging in there! Don't forget, if you missed a session, you can watch on-demand: https://adobe.ly/3dGKvbV," (AdobeMAX, Facebook Post). I think them responding to their publics was a good move because it showed a form of two-way communication.

Two-Way Communication

Two-way communication is valuable when it comes to public relations because it helps the public's feel heard and like their views and opinions matter. This two-way symmetrical move during the AdobeMAX event was such a power move in my opinion. Adobe showed that they cared about not just their event and the views they would be getting but about the fact that people felt that they could actively participate in this event. I wanted to attend but most of the lessons that I wanted to attend were during my class times. When I got the notification about the sessions

being uploaded to be watched on demand, I was beyond excited. These types of events are the events that new publics want to attend to expand their knowledge and older publics want to attend these events to expand their knowledge on things that may be new or may not make the most sense to them. Some just want to expand their skills set and Adobe allows them to do this. Even though there was good two-way communication in this situation, that doesn't mean that they always have good two-way communication. One of the things that I noticed as a weakness in communication is the way their messages aren't always straightforward on social media and publics have to interpret it themselves.

Another form of two-way communication is the fact that they have customer testimonials on their website. This is a good form of communication because this means that they value their customers' opinion and views to help serve the public. For example, when COVID-19 hit, Gail Cummings, a Global Digital Design Lead, had to be innovative and figure out how she was going to portray new flavors without photography. That is when she began to use the Adobe Creative Cloud. "When Cummings was first introduced to Adobe dimension in 2017, she thought it was interesting — but not right for Ben & Jerry's. Per Cummings, "We all thought it was super cool, but didn't really know how we could use it for our brand." (Adobe, Ben & Jerry's Pioneers). This is the statement that shows not everyone thinks Adobe is the best or that all Adobe softwares works best for what they want. However, they were thrown into the loop and gave it a try, "The pandemic — and resulting lack of studio photography resources — prompted Cummings and team to reconsider. So they put Dimension to the test," (Adobe, Ben & Jerry's Pioneers). After they put Dimension to the test, they noticed how in depth the graphics look, and how realistic it looked. Reviews like this really help their future publics to feel secure in coming around and using the products. "The assets are completely on brand, and they look

hyper-realistic. Anybody who looked at them wouldn't be able to tell that they weren't just shot using traditional photography." (Cummings, Adobe, Ben & Jerry's Pioneers). This kind of response to a software can send so much shared and earned media to Adobe because Ben & Jerry's is sharing their experience so you'll have two different audiences.

Diffusion

I find that Adobe does a nice job at targeting their publics when it comes to future publics. I think this way because of the diffusion process as we break it down step by step. First, these new publics need to get the bug planted in their ear, so a friend or social media tells them about the product and software. Second, they start to gather information and build an interest into getting these products. Third, they begin to wonder if these programs will help them grow and help them create whatever they want to design or create. Fourth, they finally hit the trial side of things. This is when people start to apply for free trials and diving in to see if they like the program they could possibly pay for. Lastly, they stick around if there is a sense of satisfaction being given to them and they continue to use the program. Now the thing with diffusion is that they can reject the idea at any time. So, later down the line they may decide that they do not want to be a part of the design world or they could decide that these programs just aren't for them.

Situational Theory

I think Adobe could do better when it comes to situational theory. Situational theory has four parts but the last two are pretty much together. The first part is unaware meaning that there is a problem that has not been recognized. This would relate to Adobe because if there is an instance that a public has to force quit the application, then they usually ask for a report on what happened and if people do not fill those out then Adobe is unaware that there is an issue going on. Truly, if I have to force quit and I am in a rush, I won't do the survey report and that is on

me. That is one thing the public needs to do to get better. The second step is awareness. Bringing awareness to the issues their applications are having would help a lot. The last two steps are aware and actionable. This means that the pubics have done their part in sharing their experience and now Adobe can use their feedback and make changes. The level of involvement with the Adobe headquarters is very low because it is such a large corporate company. Adobe needs to address information when there is a situation where people may or may not lose their content because of a lagging or crashing problem.

Weakness

A weakness that I noticed right off the bat is that there is not a vision statement to be found, (Adobe Comparably). A vision statement is important to a company, especially one as big as Adobe because it helps their customers understand what their vision is for Adobe. I just think by them not sharing their vision, it can be misleading. People can assume that Adobe thinks they are the top dog and that they don't need to have a vision for their company. While this is not proven, it is still misleading. Another weakness is that they don't always respond the quickest when it comes to uprising concerns and issues. Adobe software can be very large, taking up a lot of space and information on a person's computer, so at times there will be some issues like lagging, freezing, and even crashing. From my own personal experience, I have had my computer sit loading whatever image I was working on for a good twenty minutes or more because it was being slow. It is little things like this that need addressing because it raises concerns from their publics.

Opportunities and Threats

Some opportunities that Adobe has is that they are always evolving. There is always a way to get better and to become more innovative. Their team is full of computer people who

know how to advance technology, and they have these people who are experts in strategy and growth, (Adobe Executive Profiles). There will always be a chance for them to become more diverse. Adobe believes in being diverse because it allows them to experience equal treatment, employee fulfillment, and opportunities for all, (Adobe Diversity). There is also '#AdobeForAll' at the end of their diversity page, which mentions how great ideas come from everywhere, and how everyone should feel included and accepted.

A threat that I noticed is that Adobe could be overreacting to those who are using older already paid versions of Photoshop. Before there was an app store or a place to download all the programs, they used to come on cd's with the content on them. That is how people used different programs and they shouldn't have to worry about being sued if they want to use an outdated version of something they did a one time payment for. Another issue that happened a long time ago is that there were font wars. (Norr). The result of that is now there are fonts that only Adobe owns and you can only use them with Adobe programs.

Message Mapping

One issue that I think could and does happen to Adobe quite often is when their users who are in school have their own subscription and all of the applications in the Creative Cloud Update on their personal computers, but not on the computers in the labs because they aren't allowed to update them on their own. Then these students cannot work on their projects at home on their own computer and then come to school to work in the lab because the new updated software does not cross over with the old one. The stakeholders of this issue would be users who use more than one computer to complete their projects. How can Adobe help them get this done as smoothly as possible?

Key Message 1: Adobe users need to know that if they update, they will not be able to cross over platforms from version to version. Supporting fact 1: Adobe should be able to cross over versions at least over to the one version lower. Supporting fact 2: There should be some sort of warning when you begin working once there is an update. Supporting fact 3: Adobe will not allow you to use the applications if you are not signed in.

Key Message 2: Adobe is prepared to give you options to use older versions of their programs. Supporting fact 1: If it updates without the user's knowledge, they could give a pop-up box that allows the user to pick which version they want to use. Supporting fact 2: Adobe could allow you to compress the saved version of the file into an older version to make things compatible. Supporting fact 3: Adobe sends an email to acknowledge that their software has started the updating process.

Key Message 3: Adobe communicates with their publics about the issues of updates. Supporting Fact 1: Adobe sends out an email at the beginning of their updating process to allow users the time. Supporting Fact 2: Adobe cares about their users and wants to make sure that their users are able to get their work and content out in a smooth manner. Supporting Fact 3: Adobe is allowing users to put their updates on hold.

Overall Conclusion

I think Adobe has some great applications for people to execute their creative needs.

Their software has so many features and endless possibilities that users can use to get their projects done and published. However, I do think there are some things that adobe needs to work on. They need to work on their issues and crisis management. I feel like they are so arrogant they do not care if their system is failing their users for a longer period of time because regardless they will always have loyal customers. They should really think about putting their vision up

because as stated before it can be misleading. Another thing I think they need to work on is making sure their customers are taken care of rather than the economic side of things. During this research, at times it felt as if there was not enough communication between the company and their publics. However, I felt like there was a lot of concern on the money side and it makes them seem all about the money. Overall. I am a loyal customer, I do not know what I would do without these programs but they do need some communication work.

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Appendix

Social Media

Social Media

Adobe:

- Facebook
 - o Followers: 1,333,834
 - o Likes: 1,314,226
 - Engagements: Post about everyday, more engagement around 100+ likes, few comments, around 10ish shares. Depends on the message of the posts really.
- Instagram
 - Followers: 1.1MFollowing: 31Posts: 1,930
 - Engagements: some are less than 5,000 likes, others are more than 10,000 likes. Comments are ranging from 50-100, some less than that.
- Twitter
 - Followers: 673KFollowing: 209
 - Engagements: More retweets and favorites, up there with 20-50 retweets and 100-200+ favorites

Adobe Design: Indesign, Illustrator, XD, Dimensions

- Facebook
 - o Followers: 1,996,478
 - o Likes: 1,958,641
 - Engagements: Post about everyday, around 100+ likes, very few comments depending on the message and some shares, not too many
- Instagram @adobedesign

o Posts: 511

- Followers: 109K
- o Following: 60
- Engagements: 300 is the least likes I've seen, plenty are in the 700 range to 1,000+ likes, comments are 1-20.
- Twitter @adobedesign
 - o Followers: 487K

- o Following: 168
- Engagements: More retweets and favorites, up there with 20-50 retweets and 100-200+ favorites

Adobe Photoshop:

- Facebook
 - o Followers: 8,039,404
 - o Likes: 7,988,399
 - Engagements: Post about everyday, more engagement around 100+ likes, few comments, around 20ish shares. Depends on the message of the posts really.
- Instagram: @photoshop
 - o Followers: 5.1M
 - o Following: 272
 - o Posts: 1,194
 - Engagements: Plenty interactions, some have 10,000+ likes, while others have 100,000+ likes, comments are about 100+, and videos posted are about 20,000 views.
- Twitter
 - o Followers: 3.2M
 - o Following: 756
 - Engagements: More retweets and favorites, up there with 20-50 retweets and 100-200+ favorites

Adobe Video: Premiere Pro, Premiere Rush, After Effects

- Facebook
 - o Followers: 1,496,983
 - o Likes: 1,493,563
 - Engagements: Post about everyday, more engagement around 100+ likes, few comments, around 20ish shares.
- Instagram: @adobevideo
 - o Followers: 71.1K
 - o Following: 188
 - o Posts: 345
 - Engagements: Videos get 15,000+ views, some of the posts are getting 15,000-20,000+ likes, about 50 comments
- Twitter
 - o Followers: 289K
 - o Following: 1,401
 - Engagements: Some retweets, about 50 favorites

Adobe GenCreate: A place for students to submit their work and possibly have it posted on their social media.

• Facebook:

o Followers: 761,112

o Likes: 756,190

• Engagements: Post about everyday, not so much engagement, few likes, few comments. Interaction is very low.

• Instagram: @adobegencreate

Followers: 298KFollowing: 450Posts: 1,624

• Engagements: least likes are in the 200's, and the most is 600+ likes, comments are 1-20

• Twitter:

• Followers: 60.3K, Has grown in a few days, now at 60.4K

o Following: 1,264

• Engagements: Not too much interaction on their own page, but they get interaction based on the retweets of the other adobe accounts