

## Top 5 findings

1. Social media was mainly used for promoting and sharing information
2. Shakespeare Lives worked best when close, reciprocal local partnerships were formed
3. Celebrities and local cultural intermediaries drove traffic
4. Competitions, controversies and quirky posts and good visuals created engagement
5. Shakespeare was the main attraction. Perceptions of the UK were enhanced but not changed

## Top 5 recommendations

1. Use social media more effectively for engagement not just information, PR and marketing
2. Allow celebrities to speak for themselves. Users engage directly with celebrities who post from their own accounts or communicate directly in British Council posts, creating positive sentiment. British Council posts *about* celebrities put a distance between the audience and celebrity, who is effectively put on display rather than being approachable.
3. Mix the immediate gratifications of quotes and quizzes around events with longer term engagement (Russian and Spanish did this well)
4. Encourage users to share their experiences and views, especially when they attend events, because this then demonstrates participation in action and informs those who did not attend e.g. Russian users loved it when they saw the public at an event where McKellen was shouting 'You shall not pass'.
5. Foster future leaders. In Russia young elite users dominated social media. The same was true among Arabic audiences who loved sharing Shakespeare quotes. The British Council could mobilise these young, enthusiastic potential future leaders into long term, trust-building relations through careful mixtures of educational and cultural programmes.

## Top 5 events

Events/ activities that had highest engagement

- Weibo's Shakespeare Lives page got 290m visits and 74,000 discussions. Astonishing!
- The BC's English, Spanish and Russian Twitter administrators interacted with users very effectively, being helpful, encouraging, and timely in their posts.
- The most popular SL event was the Shakespeare and Cervantes Viven festival
- The Madrid BC officer posted about BC events within his own updates about the Madrid art scene. This seemed particularly effective at showing the BC's cultural events to be part of a wider milieu.
- Instagram posts from 'behind the scenes' of actual productions or events were very popular. The authenticity of such posts went with the grain of Instagram which is very much based on showing one's frontstage and backstage personalities.

## Top 10 Findings across the Language Reports

1. Arabic users displayed keen interest in Shakespeare but BC's Arabic team had very poor levels of reach and engagement compared with other languages
2. Users in Mexico showed higher levels of engagement than other Spanish speaking countries. This was a reflection of excellent local partnerships and good use of links to ELT users
3. Users liked comparing and contrasting. Spanish users compared the status and treatment of Shakespeare to Cervantes. Some Russian users connected Shakespeare to Pushkin. Chinese journalists relished comparing Shakespeare to Tang Xianzu. This demonstrates how Shakespeare is contextualized culturally, and how debates were driven by questions of cultural value and literary achievement in global terms. The tension between the universal and particular cultural value needs to be managed. Users claim Shakespeare, Cervantes, Pushkin and Tang as part of a global literary canon but also as literary stars arising from and representing national identities, simultaneously. This oscillation between universal and particular can go wrong if an actor claims their national figure was a universal cultural figure above all others. But a meeting-of-equals allows for celebration. This emphasizes the need for consistent approach to mutuality and reciprocity in the cultural sphere.
4. There is a generational divide in Russia. Young people express emotion and focus on events; older people are more discursive and intellectual in their social media discussions. It's not clear whether this generational divide is present in other languages.
5. Locality matters. The Moscow metro conversation was small but elicited very positive sentiments and interactive conversations. Seeing locals from Basra engage with an SL event had a similar effect, as was shown in the Arabic report.
6. In English, we found several examples of celebrities on display asposts around Prince Charles' comments or President Obama's whereabouts. Users appropriated these informational posts into their own narratives of the event: 'has anyone seen that Obama is there?'. This triggered talk amongst users themselves rather than attempts to communicate directly with the celebrity. The BC might consider when this is desirable and when it is not.
7. In several languages (Russia, China) the #ShakespeareLives hashtag/s were used more by non-British Council accounts, i.e. by partners and other organisations. This is a mark of success insofar as it shows the content was relevant and appealing and could be disseminated even without the BC's own efforts. This suggests soft power in action: that others found SL attractive and associated it with Britain. The question then is what to do with that activation of attraction and whether this translates into positive perceptions of Britain.
8. Quotations were popular in all languages and formats except with Chinese users on Weibo.
9. BC China set up a Mandarin Twitter account after our first phase report recommendations and by the later stages of 2016 this was performing solidly.
10. Celebrity posts were successful, albeit with variations, in all platforms except Instagram.