Worksheet 7: Social Media and Digital Memory

> **PURPOSE**
> Analyse how social media platforms shape contested heritage narratives through algorithmic amplification, content moderation, and user-generated discourse. Develop a critical framework for understanding how platform logic transforms the way historical disputes are circulated, consumed, and remembered.
> ▶ Aligns with Module 09: Social Media and Digital Memory — also useful alongside Module 05

Instructions

Select two or three social media posts, threads, or videos related to Hashima Island from different platforms (e.g., YouTube, X/Twitter, TikTok, Reddit, Instagram, Weibo). These might include: heritage tourism content, historical commentary, political advocacy, documentary clips, or user reactions to news coverage. For each item, work through the analysis below.

Part 1: Platform Analysis

For each selected item, answer:

1. Platform and format. What platform hosts this content? What format does it use (video, thread, image with caption, short-form clip, long-form essay)? How does the platform's format shape what can be communicated?

2. Creator and positioning. Who created this content? Are they a heritage professional, journalist, activist, tourist, influencer, or anonymous user? How does their positioning shape their framing?

3. Narrative. What story does this content tell about Hashima? What aspects of the island's history does it emphasise? What does it omit?

4. Engagement signals. What do the likes, shares, comments, or view counts suggest about how this content was received? Do the comments reinforce or challenge the creator's framing?

5. Algorithmic context. What content appears alongside this item (recommended videos, related posts, algorithmic suggestions)? Does the platform's recommendation system create an interpretive context that shapes how this content is understood?

Part 2: Comparative Analysis

Compare across your selected items:

• How do different platforms produce different framings of the same history? What does a TikTok video about Hashima do differently from a YouTube documentary or a Twitter thread?

• Which platform(s) favour complexity and nuance? Which favour simplification or polarisation?

• How does the speed of platform discourse interact with the complexity of contested heritage? What gets lost when a multi-layered historical dispute is compressed into a 60-second video or a 280-character post?

• Do any of the items engage with scholarly evidence or institutional sources, or do they operate entirely within the platform's own discourse ecology?

Part 3: Platform Comparison Matrix

Complete the following for each platform you examined:

	Platform 1: _____	Platform 2: _____	Platform 3: _____
Dominant format			
Typical content length			
Primary audience			
Favours which narrative?			
How is complexity handled?			
Role of comments/replies			
Persistence (does content stay findable?)			

Part 4: Reflection

In 200–300 words, consider:

• Can social media platforms serve as meaningful spaces for heritage discourse, or does platform logic inevitably distort contested histories?

• What is the relationship between viral attention and durable change? Does a viral post about Hashima's labour history accomplish something that institutional advocacy cannot — or does it dissipate without lasting effect?

• How should heritage scholars and educators engage with social media discourse about contested sites? What responsibilities come with participating in these spaces?

EXTENSION
Design a social media strategy for communicating the findings of this learning resource to a public audience. Which platforms would you use? What format would you choose? What compromises would platform logic require you to make, and what would you refuse to compromise on? Present your strategy as a one-page plan.