HITS 2015: Academic use of social media

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LEARNING OUTCOMES

• At the end of this session students will be able to:
  • Define social media
  • Illustrate how social media can potentially be used to collaborate within the research cycle
  • Provide examples of several ways which social media can be used in an academic framework
  • Be aware of the pros and cons of social media
“Social media consists of the internet or web-based technologies that allow people to connect, communicate and interact in real time to share and exchange information.” (Rowe, 2011).
# COMMON USES OF SOCIAL MEDIA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Communication</strong></th>
<th><strong>Blogging:</strong> Blogger, LiveJournal, TypePad, WordPress</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Microblogging:</strong> Twitter, Yammer, Google Buzz</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Location:</strong> Foursquare, Gowalla, Facebook Places</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Social networking:</strong> Facebook, LinkedIn, MySpace</td>
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<td><strong>Aggregators:</strong> Google Reader, Netvibes, Pageflakes, iGoogle</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Collaboration</strong></th>
<th><strong>Conferencing:</strong> Adobe Connect, GoToMeeting, Skype</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Wiki:</strong> PBworks, Wetpaint, Wikia</td>
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<td><strong>Social bookmarking:</strong> Delicious, Diigo, BibSonomy</td>
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<td><strong>Social bibliography:</strong> CiteULike, Mendeley</td>
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<td><strong>Social news:</strong> Digg, Reddit, NewsVine</td>
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<td><strong>Social documents:</strong> Google Docs, Dropbox, Zoho</td>
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<td><strong>Project management:</strong> Bamboo, Basecamp, Huddle</td>
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<th><strong>Multimedia</strong></th>
<th><strong>Photographs:</strong> Flickr, Picasa, SmugMug</th>
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<td><strong>Video:</strong> Viddler, Vimeo, YouTube</td>
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<td><strong>Live streaming:</strong> Justin.tv, Livestream, Ustream</td>
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<td><strong>Presentation sharing:</strong> Scribd, SlideShare, Sliderocket</td>
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<td><strong>Virtual worlds:</strong> OpenSim, Second Life, World of Warcraft</td>
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ACADEMIC RESEARCH CYCLE

Figure 1: The academic research cycle

i. Identification of knowledge
   e.g., undertaking literature reviews
   using peer reviewed sources

ii. Creation of knowledge
    by professional researchers
    usually behind closed doors

iv. Dissemination of knowledge
    e.g., publication, presentation
    at conference

iii. Quality assurance of knowledge
     e.g., peer review, filtering the best for publication

The RIN identify **four key stages (identification, creation, quality assurance and dissemination)** all of which entail elements of collaboration.

**Collaboration** is defined broadly to include the work of all the people who might be involved in research including researchers, librarians, funders and the general public. Each stage is important to the research community’s ability to produce knowledge and learn from the work of others. **Social tools have the potential to contribute something to each of these stages.**

TOP 5 MOST USED SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLS IN ACADEMIA

• Wikis (including Wikipedia)
• General social media sites such as Facebook
• Listserv groups
• Blogs
• Video / Teleconferencing tools
PERSONAL BENEFITS TO RESEARCHERS USING SOCIAL MEDIA

- Establishing new connections
- Strengthening existing connections
- Keeping up to date with topics in a field of research
- Promoting a researchers own scholarly work
ADDITIONAL BENEFITS

- Access to online support networks for professionals
- Access to professional discussion forums
- Mobile and Online learning opportunities e.g. TCD blackboard
- Access to online research
- Continuing professional development
- Access to low-cost webinars and conference streams
## SOCIAL MEDIA ON CAMPUS

<table>
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<tr>
<th>LEARNING</th>
<th>ACADEMIC STUDENT SUPPORT</th>
<th>COMMUNITY BUILDING</th>
<th>EXPANDING CONNECTIONS</th>
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<tr>
<td>Faculty communicate with and engage students in their courses</td>
<td>Provide student support</td>
<td>Build and strengthen campus community</td>
<td>Connect students with alumni</td>
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<td>____</td>
<td>Offer workshops on financial aid</td>
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<td>Resolve issues and allow students and the community to provide feedback to the college</td>
<td>Increase sense of belonging for students taking online courses</td>
<td>Conduct outreach to community</td>
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<td>Offer orientation</td>
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<td>Provide mentoring to students</td>
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<td>Help to navigate the registration process</td>
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<td>Aid in improving student retention</td>
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<td>____</td>
<td>Recruit students into specific academic programs</td>
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- Construct links between Facebook and Blackboard so students can check class assignments and receive course announcement
- Post portions of lectures for downloading
- Create stronger learning communities
- Facilitate class discussion and group project work
- Facilitate study groups and other in-class collaboration
- Boast about students’ academic accomplishments

[http://www.academia.edu/1220569/Social_Media_in_Higher_Education_A_Literature_Review_and_Research_Directions](http://www.academia.edu/1220569/Social_Media_in_Higher_Education_A_Literature_Review_and_Research_Directions)
**RESEARCH FOCUSED SOCIAL NETWORKING SERVICES**

**ResearchGate:** (www.researchgate.net) is a social networking service aimed at scientists and other researchers. It offers a range of Functionality including a semantic search engine that browses Academic databases.

**Graduate Junction:** (www.graduatejunction.net) is a social networking service aimed at postgraduates and postdoctoral researchers.

**MethodSpace:** (www.methodspace.com) is a social network service for social scientists run by the publisher Sage.

**Nature Network:** (http://network.nature.com) is a science-focused social network service run by Nature Publishing Group

Pick the one which best fits your research focus and your study style.
A **blog is a type of website**, or part of one. Usually a blog is maintained by an individual or small group and presents a mix of opinion, news and other types of content. The posts on a blog are usually organised in reverse chronological order so that the first entries that you see are the most recent ones.

Blogs can be used for a wide variety of purposes. At their most basic they can provide you with an easy way to make some of your data or writing available on the web.

Most blogs also offer a comment feature and they frequently become temporary forums for discussions prompted by an original post.

Blogs can be useful to build your profile as a researcher, provide a vehicle for collaboration and to get ideas.
Academic blogging has been described as:

‘conversational scholarship’, a means by which academics can attempt to loosen their formal style of writing as part of communicating to a wider audience (Gregg 2006)
EXAMPLES OF ACADEMIC BLOGS

**Alun Salt:** (http://alunsalt.com) – a personal and eclectic academic blog maintained by an archaeoastromist.

**Finds and Features:** (http://findsandfeatures.wordpress.com) – archaeology blog.

**Fresh and Crispy:** (http://blog.cpjobling.org) – e-learning blog.

**FemaleScienceProfessor:** (http://science-professor.blogspot.ie/) – personal academic blog

**PhD Blog(dot)Net:** (http://phdblog.net) – education blog which Discusses student learning, higher education and social media.

**Science in the Open:** (http://cameronneylon.net) – science blog which focuses on the technical and social issues involved with open research.
Twitter (www.twitter.com) is a micro-blogging service that allows users to post and read 140-character status messages, called ‘tweets’. They can be any thing from what someone had for breakfast to feedback on a live event such as an academic conference.

Twitter users use a hashtag (#) to describe tweets with a subject. A hashtag can be seen as metadata, describing the content of a tweet; it enables users to search the subject of a tweet, rather than the specific content.

Most conferences now announce a hashtag to describe tweets referring to that conference. Twitter has the potential as a news delivery system, or for gathering viewpoints on a current topic, or to connect people with similar interests.

“If a social service like Facebook has entrenched its users in a world of people they already know in some way, Twitter, often as its best, connects strangers through ideas” (Ovadia, 2009)
N.B. Think before you comment – this happens in “real time” and you can’t take it back before someone will have read it.
Academics “used Twitter to share resources, information and media with each other, discuss their teaching and students, request assistance from and offered advice to others, engage in social commentary, construct professional personae, network with others and highlight their participation in other online networks” (Veletsianos 2012)
“Twitter operates as a multidirectional complex space involving intersecting conversations, questions, note-making, the sharing of resources and the establishment of an online presence for the tweeter and for the conference community” (Ebner et al. 2009, Ross et al. 2011)
Fast Tracking Research: “A small study of academics’ citation practices on Twitter found that scholars often use this medium to cite articles and as part of a conversation about their content. The citation often occurs within a week of the article’s publication: a much faster response than traditional academic citation practices” (Priem and Costello 2010).

Impact on article views: One academic’s investigation of the impact of tweeting about her own research found that doing so had a significant impact on how many views her published articles received (Terras 2012).

Increase in citation: Research investigating this aspect of academic tweeting has confirmed the positive affect on traditional citations (Eysenbach, 2011, Shuai et al. 2012)
Social citation-sharing tools are designed specifically to enable researchers to manage their references and to share information about what they are reading. They are first and foremost reference management systems, and share many features with social bookmarking tools.
TOOLS FOR CITATION SHARING:

- **ENDNOTE BASIC**: [www.myendnoteweb.com](http://www.myendnoteweb.com) is an online reference manager. It integrates with Word and a range of other applications and allows for research sharing.

- **CiteULike**: [www.citeulike.com](http://www.citeulike.com) enables you to store, tag and retrieve bibliographic information.
  
  - CiteULike emphasises the social elements of citation sharing and encourages you to make ‘connections’ with other researchers and to ‘watch’ what other people are adding to their library.

- **Mendeley**: [www.mendeley.com](http://www.mendeley.com) describes itself as a reference manager and academic social network. It integrates with Word and a range of other applications (including CiteULike).

- **Zotero**: [www.zotero.org](http://www.zotero.org) is another bibliographic service which contains some social/collaboration elements.
This is a professional networking site which allows you to:

- Follow professional organisations and ideas
- Hear about new job roles
- Track job role changes across your discipline

• Be very selective with who you add

• Use other colleague’s connections to expand your network – not your list of friends

• Only post on professional topics in this environment

• Add your CV in this area to attract interest for your professional development
GENERAL CRITICISM ON THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

**Being irrelevant**: Although it is important for you to engage in conversation with others within your social networking community, it is crucial that you only interact when it is relevant to do so.

**Incorrect usage**: Observe how other people and organisations with similar interests, audiences and purposes to you, use social media before you begin, eliminating margin for error.

**Self-promotion**: It is easy to lose track of the art of conversation social media allows and purely see it as a way to promote yourself to your followers.

**Not listening**: If people are trying to interact with you regarding your posts, make sure you do interact with them as this will help to spread your message.

**Loss of Control**: Once you have posted information - you are relinquishing control of where it goes from there.
Growth of Technology: some people feel that the encroachment of technology into every aspect of life has potentially damaging implications.

Privacy: social media are built on a culture of active personal and professional disclosure. There are concerns about how this is changing the interface between public and private spaces, and about misuse of our data. For researchers, putting your professional life online can feel exposing, particularly if you express opinions and ideas that have not been subject to the normal process of peer review.

Banality: many social media tools are based on the exchange of many small bits of information such as status updates or the sharing of links. These short-form individual contributions have led to the charge that social media are trivial in nature and suitable only for entertainment rather than professional research.
Peripherality: many researchers stress that social media are still peripheral in research, and this leads some to argue that it is therefore not worth engaging. Loss of an authoritative perspective; traditional publishing aims to provide a filter for quality whereas social media allow everyone to publish anything that they have to say. This inevitably means that it is more difficult to identify which contributions are valuable or authoritative.

Information overload: social media have dramatically increased the amount of publicly-available information: 24 hours of video are added to YouTube each minute.

Work/life balance: social media has the potential to extend your working day and blur the distinction between work and other aspects of your life. Researchers may need to think carefully about boundaries, particularly if they are using mobile devices.
GUIDELINES FOR PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOUR ONLINE

• Privacy - Keep your personal and professional life separate. Check your privacy settings and respect privacy of others.
• Person-free; patient or client-free; personal confidentiality
• Protect yourself
• Images - Protect your professionalism, your reputation and yourself.
SOCIAL MEDIA AFTER UNIVERSITY

• Think before you post
• Always check and update your security settings
• Untag any images or videos you don’t want seen
• Respect your peers privacy
• Be safe – never post personal details like location, phone numbers, addresses online

REMEMBER The permanency of digital information.

Everything you do online is potentially searchable – make sure it is the image of yourself you want to present
References


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  http://www.rin.ac.uk/system/files/attachments/social_media_guide_for_screen_0.pdf

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- 100 serious Twitter tips for academics: http://www.bestcollegesonline.com/blog/2009/07/21/100-serious-twitter-tips-for-academics/

- 10 commandments of Twitter for academics: http://chronicle.com/article/10-CommandmentsofTwitter-for/131813/

- A guide to using Twitter in university research, teaching, and impact activities:
Thank You!

The Library of Trinity College Dublin, the University of Dublin

Leabharlann Choláiste na Tríonóide, Ollscoil Átha Cliath