

Social media to support research

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Handbook of social media for researchers and supervisors: <http://oro.open.ac.uk/34271/>

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Publications: <http://oro.open.ac.uk/view/person/sm577.html>

Resources

- Minocha, Shailey and Petre, Marian (2012). Handbook of Social Media for Researchers and Supervisors. The Open University, <http://oro.open.ac.uk/34271/>
- Petre, Marian; Minocha, Shailey and Barroca, Leonor (2014). Digital technologies for doctoral dialogues at a distance. In: Frontiers in Education, 22-25 October 2014, Madrid, <http://oro.open.ac.uk/40580/>
- Online collaboration: Scientists and the social network, <http://www.nature.com/news/online-collaboration-scientists-and-the-social-network-1.15711>
- Research using social media, <http://www.natcen.ac.uk/our-research/research/research-using-social-media-users-views/>
- Facebook's Emotion Experiment: Implications for Research Ethics, <http://www.thehastingscenter.org/Bioethicsforum/Post.aspx?id=7002&blogid=140>
- Mendeley Co-Founder Speaks To Asian Scientist, <http://www.asianscientist.com/2014/09/features/mendeley-elsevier-interview-jan-reichert/>
- 10 Software Tools For More PhD Productivity And Less Headaches, <http://www.nextscientist.com/phd-productivity-software/>

Tools for research dialogues

- Formal dialogue with supervisors
- Informal interactions with peers and supervisors
- Document authoring, sharing with supervisors and storage
- Space for reflection, working with ideas and the process
- Engaging with the community at large
- Keeping informed

Advantages of social media

- Awareness (e.g. Twitter, Facebook)
 - Events
 - Other researchers
 - Links to other research
 - Thinking in the area
- Conference notes
- Similar research groups or areas
- Funding opportunities
- Job opportunities

For the research process

- Receive feedback and have conversations
 - Blog-posts
 - Twitter-comments
- Get people interested in the research project
- Advertise events/workshops/studies
- Access to research participants
- Form a research group

Aspects to think about

- Time
 - Regular blog posts
 - Twitter (giving and receiving)
 - Value to others
- Discipline
- Persona in the social media
- Personal and professional boundaries
- Privacy

Dangers too

- Online bullying
- echo chambers: making it difficult to hear distinct and different voices
- Half-baked ideas, mis-information
- Distraction from deep reflection
- Information-overload
- Frequent interruptions
- Writing abilities

Some other dangers

- Giving out details of the research project prematurely
- About industrial partners
 - Intellectual property rights
- Details of research participants
- Recruiting in the public domain
- Concentration span
- Ability to read long pieces of text

Other concerns

- Longevity of the tools
 - Delicious, Mendeley
- Dropbox or box.com or other data storage tools in the cloud
 - What-if it is not available
 - Research data in the cloud
 - Identifiable data about the participants
- Regular backups – multiple copies

Strategies

- Follow anonymously
- Start in a small way (closed blog)
- Look for a mentor
- Look for role models
- Maintaining discipline
- Writing regularly (off-line)
- Less is more (choose a set of tools that suit them)

Some other strategies

- Combination/choice of tools
 - Twitter, blog
 - LinkedIn
 - Facebook (two accounts, anonymised account)
- LinkedIn groups
- Mailing lists (lurker)
- Using different usernames for personal/professional profiles – not linking the two
- (official) website (institutional) to set up a researcher profile/persona
 - Useful for recruitment
 - Building trust
 - Giving it out in conferences

Research and social media

- Informed consent
- In their professional persona
- Transparency
- Platform/group manager's consent before sending links to surveys
- Some groups and mailing lists have published or implicit rules for recruitment
- One-to-one message rather than local chat

Research and social media

- Identities of the people they are interacting with
- Do you need to know their real identities?
- How much of background information is required? (pre-interview questionnaire)
- Adapting the methods as per the participant's preferences
- References to blog posts, keep pdfs, take permissions where required
- Context is important
- Traceability – give platform name, date, etc.
- Pictures on Flickr (creative commons license)

How you are using social media? (for discussion)

- motivation for adopting these tools or a particular tool
- one example where it helped in your research
- one incident where it helped in increasing the impact of your research?
- one lesson to share with colleagues
- one cautionary note to make others aware