

## Sharing academic and professional information through social media

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### Introduction

#### What is social media?

Social media are technologies on the Web and Internet that allow interactive dialogue with other people (Wikipedia, 2010).

Here’s an example of this interactive dialogue:

- You share information on the Web.
- People view it online and they may respond or provide feedback.
- A discussion may then begin between you and your audience – or just among your audience.

Social media consists of many different technologies (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Social media technologies organized by purpose and type with examples (Source: Social Media in Wikipedia, 2010)

Communication	<p><b>Blogs:</b> Blogger, ExpressionEngine, LiveJournal, Open Diary, TypePad, Vox, WordPress, Xanga</p> <p><b>Microblogging:</b> FMyLife, Foursquare, Jaiku, Plurk, Posterous, Tumblr, Twitter, Qaiku, Yammer, Google Buzz</p> <p><b>Location-based social networks:</b> Foursquare, Gowalla, Facebook places, The Hotlist</p> <p><b>Social networking:</b> ASmallWorld, Cyworld, Facebook, Hi5, LinkedIn, MySpace, Orkut, Tagged, XING</p> <p><b>Events:</b> Eventful, The Hotlist, Meetup.com, Upcoming</p> <p><b>Information Aggregators:</b> Netvibes, Twine (website)</p> <p><b>Online Advocacy and Fundraising:</b> Causes, Kickstarter</p>
Collaboration/ authority building	<p><b>Wikis:</b> PBworks, Wetpaint, Wikia, Wikimedia</p> <p><b>Social bookmarking (or social tagging):</b> CiteULike, Delicious, Diigo, Google Reader, StumbleUpon, folkd</p> <p><b>Social news:</b> Digg, Mixx, NowPublic, Reddit, Newsvine, MyWeboo</p> <p><b>Social navigation:</b> Trapster, Waze</p> <p><b>Content Management Systems:</b> Wordpress</p> <p><b>Document Managing and Editing Tools:</b> Google Docs, Syncplicity, Docs.com, Dropbox</p>
Multimedia sharing	<p><b>Photography and art sharing:</b> deviantArt, Flickr, Photobucket, Picasa, SmugMug, Zoomr, BetweenCreation</p> <p><b>Video sharing:</b> sevenload, Viddler, Vimeo, YouTube, Dailymotion, Metacafe, Nico Nico Douga, Openfilm, TubeMogul</p> <p><b>Livestreaming:</b> Justin.tv, Livestream, OpenCU, Skype, Stickam, Ustream</p> <p><b>Music and audio sharing:</b> ccMixter, Pandora Radio, Last.fm, MySpace Music, ReverbNation.com, ShareTheMusic, The Hype Machine</p> <p><b>Presentation sharing:</b> scribd, SlideShare</p>
Reviews and opinions	<p><b>Product reviews:</b> epinions.com, MouthShut.com</p> <p><b>Business reviews:</b> Customer Lobby, Yelp, Inc.</p> <p><b>Community Q&amp;A:</b> Askville, EHow, Stack Exchange, WikiAnswers, Yahoo! Answers</p>
Entertainment	<p><b>Media and entertainment platforms:</b> Cisco Eos</p> <p><b>Virtual worlds:</b> Active Worlds, Forterra Systems, Second Life, The Sims Online</p> <p><b>Game sharing:</b> Kongregate, Miniclip</p>
Brand monitoring	<p><b>Social media measurement:</b> Attensity, Statsit, Sysomos, Vocus</p>

Our discussion today will focus on five types of social media that are popular for sharing professional and academic information.

**Table 2.** Common social media technologies for sharing professional and academic information.

Social media technology	Definition**	Examples
Blogs	<p>A type of website where authors post regular entries like commentary, description of events, multimedia, etc. Readers can leave comments. Blog entries can be delivered automatically to the reader via RSS reader.</p> <p>Example tool: Blogger, <a href="http://www.blogger.com">http://www.blogger.com</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wake Forest News Center, <a href="http://newscenter.blogs.wfu.edu/">http://newscenter.blogs.wfu.edu/</a></li> <li>ScienceBlogs, <a href="http://scienceblogs.com/">http://scienceblogs.com/</a></li> <li>Facebook Blog, <a href="http://blog.facebook.com/">http://blog.facebook.com/</a></li> </ul>
Microblogs	<p>Similar to a blog, but the entries are typically smaller in size. Typically consists of a short sentence, image, or video.</p> <p>Example tool: Twitter, <a href="http://twitter.com/">http://twitter.com/</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WFULawSchool, <a href="http://twitter.com/WFULawSchool">http://twitter.com/WFULawSchool</a></li> <li>deaconfootball, <a href="http://twitter.com/deaconfootball">http://twitter.com/deaconfootball</a></li> <li>pizzahut, <a href="http://twitter.com/pizzahut">http://twitter.com/pizzahut</a></li> </ul>
Social networking	<p>Online technology for maintaining social relationships. The classic example is Facebook.</p> <p>Example tool: LinkedIn, <a href="http://www.linkedin.com/">http://www.linkedin.com/</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wake Forest University, <a href="http://www.linkedin.com/companies/wake-forest-university">http://www.linkedin.com/companies/wake-forest-university</a></li> <li>Wake Forest University Boston Area Alumni Network, <a href="http://www.linkedin.com/groups?home=&amp;gid=86871">http://www.linkedin.com/groups?home=&amp;gid=86871</a></li> </ul>
Video sharing	<p>Web sites where you can upload, share, and view videos.</p> <p>Example tool: YouTube, <a href="http://www.youtube.com/">http://www.youtube.com/</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wake Forest University Channel, <a href="http://www.youtube.com/user/WFUniversity">http://www.youtube.com/user/WFUniversity</a></li> </ul>
Presentation and document sharing	<p>Web sites where you can upload, share, and view presentation slides and other documents.</p> <p>Example tool: SlideShare, <a href="http://www.slideshare.net/">http://www.slideshare.net/</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wake Forest University ITSM, <a href="http://www.slideshare.net/UniversityITSM">http://www.slideshare.net/UniversityITSM</a></li> </ul>

\*\* definitions are paraphrased from Wikipedia (2010)

## Goals for today

By the end of this class, you will be able to:

1. Recognize the value of social media for academic and professional information
  - a. Identify the role of social media for communicating who you are, engaging with others, and learning from others.
  - b. Evaluate the potential benefits and risks of social media.
2. (If you're interested) Implement social media to share your academic and professional work
  - a. Identify a social media technology for sharing.
  - b. Consider ways of mitigating potential risks related to your professional image and your responsibilities for sharing information.
3. Consider the appropriate use of social media for academic and professional information
  - a. Use social media safely and effectively by developing personal guidelines and restrictions for the different spheres of your life (personal versus professional) and with your targeted audiences (private versus public).

## Part 1: Recognizing the value of social media for academic and professional information

Using social media, there are potential benefits and risks for:

- communicating who you are (i.e., “brand” yourself),
- engaging with others (e.g., identifying and connecting with other people, holding discussions), and
- learning from others.

**Table 3.** Potential benefits and risks of social media

<b>The potential of social media for ...</b>	<b>Potential benefits of using social media</b>	<b>Potential risks of using social media</b>
Communicating who you are	A venue for showcasing your talent, work, ideas, etc. This may bring you recognition and help you forge collaborations with others.	Sharing personal information in a public venue may lead to misunderstandings, misuse of this information by others, and concerns about your professional image.
Engaging with others	A platform for discussion and forging connections and a sense of community with a range of audiences from personal to public and from local to international. You may cultivate a social network you can turn for assistance and feedback.	Your contacts may post information about you that you don't want shared. Spending too much time maintaining your social media may be a distraction from your professional and academic work.
Learning from others	Through quick and direct communication with large numbers of people, you can collect information, news, and recommendations in a timely manner.	Relying heavily on anecdotal information from your social network (e.g., others' personal opinions and perspectives) may introduce bias to the information you are exposed to.

## **Part 2: Getting started with social media for academic and professional work**

### **Social media tools used by academics and professionals**

Let's review Table 2 on page 3.

It's easy to set up a social media channel. However, take care to address the potential risks of:

- Inappropriate image and networks (by managing your contacts and professional image)
- Restrictions for sharing information (e.g., copyright, intellectual capital, confidential information, proprietary information, avoidance of plagiarism).

### **Managing your professional image and contacts**

In the US, 75% of recruiters and human resources professionals research job candidates online (Dutta, 2010). Furthermore, people have been fired for comments on blogs and Facebook that employers felt were inappropriate (Dutta, 2010).

Is there anything online about you that you don't want a potential employer to see?

## Sharing information that you have permission to

Share information that you have permission to share. Be careful of confidential, proprietary, and extremely sensitive information. For example, do not share a company's secret formula for tasty fried chicken or answers to a problem set for your class. In general, if you have private information you want to maintain control over, think carefully about sharing via social media.

Furthermore, do not break copyright.

- What is copyright? When people create an original work (e.g., writing, music, video, etc.), they have copyright for this work. This gives them permission to copy, distribute, and adapt their work. You cannot copy, distribute, and adapt the work without their permission. Learn more about copyright at: <http://zsr.wfu.edu/services/research/guides/copyright/>
- As an aside, authors and artists can assign a Creative Commons License to their works. This allows the creator to specify the degree that other people can copy, distribute, and adapt the work. <http://creativecommons.org/about/licenses/> If you find a work that has a Creative Commons License, you may have special permission to copy, distribute, and adapt it.

## Next steps

1. Google yourself. What information exists online about you that a potential employer might see?
2. Consider creating an academic or professional online identity with social media. Share your CV/resume, sample writing, sample works, etc.

## Part 3: Considering the appropriate use of social media for academic and professional work

To maximize the potential of social media and minimize risks, Dutta (2010) suggests carefully planning your communication:

- between the different spheres of your life - personal versus professional
- between different target audiences - private versus public

Let's define these different spheres of your life:

- Your personal life includes hobbies, leisure activities, personal pursuits, your family and friends, and more.
- Your professional life includes your work, your research, your writing, your work-related ideas, and more.

Sometimes you may not want to share details about your personal life in a professional setting, and vice versa.

Let's define the different target audiences of social media.

- A private audience may include people you trust very much like friends, family, and close work colleagues.
- A public audience may include strangers, peers, the general public, your casual colleagues, and more.

Sometimes the information you share with a private audience you may not want shared with the general public.

### Discussion activity

Let's begin our discussion activity.

1. Divide into four groups:
  - a. Group 1: personal sphere + private audience
  - b. Group 2: personal sphere + public audience
  - c. Group 3: professional sphere + private audience
  - d. Group 4: professional sphere + public audience
2. For your assigned sphere and target audience, discuss:
  - a. What are some types of information that people might want to share through social media?
  - b. Are there certain topics to focus on?
  - c. Are there certain topics to avoid sharing?

**Table 4.** Definitions and examples of different sphere and target audiences

	<b>Personal sphere</b>	<b>Professional sphere</b>
<b>Private audience</b>	Sharing your <u>personal information</u> about hobbies, leisure activities, personal pursuits, etc. <b>AND</b> Sharing with <u>people you trust</u> like friends, family, close work colleagues, and the like.	Sharing your <u>professional information</u> like your work projects, your research, your writing, your work-related ideas, etc. <b>AND</b> Sharing with <u>people you trust</u> like friends, family, close work colleagues, and the like.
<b>Public audience</b>	Sharing your <u>personal information</u> about hobbies, leisure activities, personal pursuits, etc. <b>AND</b> Sharing with the <u>general public</u> like strangers, peers, casual colleagues, and the like.	Sharing your <u>professional information</u> like your work projects, your research, your writing, your work-related ideas, etc. <b>AND</b> Sharing with the <u>general public</u> like strangers, peers, casual colleagues, and the like.

Let's compare our discussion with Dutta's (2010) guidelines for social media presence for the different spheres and audiences (see page 129).

## Summary

1. Social media lets you communicate who you are, engage with others, and learn from others in an academic and professional capacity.
2. Take advantage of the potential benefits, but beware the risks.
3. If you choose to use social media technology for sharing your academic and professional work, address the potential risks related to your professional image and your responsibilities for sharing information.
4. Use social media safely and effectively by developing personal guidelines and restrictions for the different spheres of your life (personal versus professional) and with your targeted audiences (private versus public).

## References

Dutta, Soumitra. 2010. What's Your Personal Social Media Strategy? Harvard Business Review. November 2010, pp.127-130.