

## **Lunch and Learn – How to be digital academic, part 1**

### **Notes on session and useful links**

This series is organised by the LSE KEI Integrated Service, a coordinated internal infrastructure to communicate, support and assess knowledge exchange and public engagement activities, as well as other pathways to impact, within the School. We aim to encourage LSE researchers to think about opportunities for knowledge exchange and public engagement throughout their research projects; to communicate the value of engaging non-academic audiences in research to LSE researchers and the wider LSE community; to showcase “effective” engagement activities; and to equip LSE researchers and research support staff with the skills needed to carry these out.

Find more information at [lse.ac.uk/kei](https://lse.ac.uk/kei)

[Link to handouts and PowerPoints from this session](#) (via Google Drive).

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Dave Smith, LSE Social Media Manager ([d.a.a.smith@lse.ac.uk](mailto:d.a.a.smith@lse.ac.uk), [@daasmith0](https://twitter.com/daasmith0))

### **Tips for using social media** (see handout)

Top recommendations:

Don't be afraid to add personality

Do emulate your colleagues

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Professor Sonia Livingstone ([@Livingstone\\_S](https://twitter.com/Livingstone_S))

### **How to be a digital academic**

Why did she add a digital dimension to her work?

- To try to engage those who are interested in what she is working on and encourage them to be a part of it, building a community
- Evidence sharing
- Encouraging new voices and debate
- Promoting good research wherever she sees it (not just her own)
- Staying up to date (her research area is fast moving and topical)

How does she use social media?

- Primarily she uses Twitter and blogging
- Thinks about all her articles in terms of “Is it a blog post?”
- Commitment to open access – always tweeting links to open sources, or if something is pay-walled telling people to email and she'll send them a pdf
- She has used Facebook, but mainly as a means of a research team keeping in touch all over the world
- Her social media is purely professional – not emotional or political outside of work, although identifiably her with warmth and a concern for the community she has built.

How could other academics use it? Her top tips.

- Know the danger points, think about the risks: Block, mute, disengage with any trolling
- Try to be generous in relation to the work of others, but **only tweet or retweet links that you have read.**

And why should you do it?

- It's fun
- It's useful
- It helps in your writing
- And it feeds back into your research

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Chris Gilson, Managing Editor of USAPP blog and author of [Communicating Your Research with Social Media](#) ([c.h.gilson@lse.ac.uk](mailto:c.h.gilson@lse.ac.uk), [@ChrisHJGilson](#))

**Social media and the research lifecycle** (see slides)

He takes a broad church definition to social media. It includes collaboration tools (like email, skype, whatsapp), content (like blog posts, infographics, podcasts, images, videos) and then the platforms you use to share that content (Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, Pinterest).

Where do you start? Think about what is easy – updates on Twitter and Facebook are the simplest way of engaging with social media.

Think about your audience. Who are you targeting? Colleagues/Current and potential funders/ Policymakers/Other academics/Interested members of the public.

There is no such thing as the “general public”, you have to figure out who is interested.

[Try mapping your audience.](#)

- Direct = colleagues, people you email on a day to day basis
- Indirect = big players affected by your work, e.g. the university, key partners
- Remote = those who *could* be affected, e.g. government
- Societal = wider societal influence, no direct influence or impact

Think about a power/interest matrix – a useful tool to decide how to communicate with your audiences.

How can you use social media at various stages of the research lifecycle?

- Social media is a great source of inspiration.
- It can be a platform for collaboration (for example, through [Pinterest](#))
- It can be a source of primary research, for example through [crowdsourcing](#)
- Dissemination and engagement is where it is most commonly used – tweeting/blogging/podcasting about your work.
- Can it have an impact? How do you prove it? [Blogs have been cited as sources of information for policy makers.](#)

Some tactics you can use across social media:

- Curation including “Today I learned”, links of the week/blog roundups

- Community to engage people you know are out there with updates about your research or conference reports
  - Creation of new content that outlines your research aims/commentary/links to your new articles (though summaries are better)
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Jean Liu, Head of Product, Altmetric ([jean@altmetric.com](mailto:jean@altmetric.com), [@portablebrain](https://twitter.com/portablebrain))

**Making research visible online: why researchers' voices matter** (see slides)

Altmetric is part of a movement to look at things outside of citations including public engagement and policy mentions. It tracks and analyses the attention paid online to academic work, mentions that that *may* indicate impact.

Attention (social media, news, blogs) leads to engagement, which can lead to impact (citations, policy patents).

Key tips for academics in order for your work to be accurately tracked.

- Make sure you include a link to your research paper in your tweets
- The metadata of online pages about your research needs to include a scholarly identifier.

What can you use Altmetrics for?

- Near instant feedback on who is talking about a piece of research work (articles, books, blogs) online and where
- Help identify who is interested in your research and the best ways of connecting with them
- Look at how your peers have been successful

What is the best way for your voice to be heard?

- Write for a general audience (lay summaries)
- Raise your online profile (contribute to communities, create social media profiles)

People tend to google in order to find expertise = there is no harm in expanding your online profile.

All LSE staff can use the [Altmetric explorer](#).

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Dr Asa Cusack ([@AsaCusack](https://twitter.com/AsaCusack))

**How to be a digital academic** (see slides)

Uses Twitter (primarily) and LinkedIn

Why?

- To stay up to date  
Create a list of people you trust on Twitter to inform you about your areas of interest
- To promote your work  
Share your research, get it out there, it raises your profile

- To create networks and make connections, to debate topics.  
Remember you can use direct messages on Twitter. It is a less formal channel than email.
- To cross over from social to traditional media  
There is a virtuous circle – the press pick up on you as an expert in a topic via social media, you appear on radio/TV/in print, then you post about that appearance.
- It provides unexpected channels of influence  
High profile people are less guarded on Twitter and often very engaged

How you want to present yourself is a personal choice, but bear in mind it will be a key part of your public-facing profile.

There is a danger of getting too wrapped up in it – beware.

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