Understanding Networked Scholars: Experiences and practices in online social networks

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Overview

**What** do professors do on social media?

**Why** are professors on social media?

**What** are some characteristics of online social networks?
In the broader Higher Education Landscape, we observe...

Increasing engagement with open practices in teaching, learning, and scholarship.
What are open practices?

In general:

Open Publishing activities (e.g., publishing open data),

Open Teaching activities (e.g., creating/using open educational resources)

Open participation (e.g., keeping a blog with an open license)
Increasing engagement, because open practices are expected to...

- Broaden access to education and knowledge
- Reduce costs
- Enhance impact + reach
- Lead to better scholarly and educational processes
In this presentation

Focus: Open participation

Specifically: The experiences and practices of individual scholars on social media and online networks in order to explain,

What do scholars do on social media?
Why do scholars do what they do on social media?
How can we characterize online scholarly networks?
In this presentation
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Social media and online networks are an integral part of open and digital scholarship.

Open and digital scholarship: seen as major breakthroughs in radically rethinking the ways in which knowledge is created and shared (Nielsen, 2012; Weller, 2011).

Thus, examining social media = understanding & advancing open and digital scholarship.
The ways that emerging technologies and social media are used and experienced by scholars are poorly understood.

Open/digital/social scholarship are largely driven by advocacy rather than evidence (Kimmons, 2014)

We need to understand “state-of-the-actual” rather than the “state-of-the-art” (Selwyn, 2011)
Networks of scholars have arisen that function (& succeed) outside formal university structures.

Their potential for teaching, learning research, collaboration, and mobilization is enormous.
Why is this topic important?

How, if at all, is the MOOC experience impacting residential teaching and learning?

Qualitative Research
- Amy Collier (Stanford)
- George Veletsianos (Royal Roads)
- Rebeca Fernández (Davidson)

Quantitative Research
- Daniel Seaton (MIT)
- Chris Marsicano (Vanderbilt)
- Pat Sellers (Davidson)

Data Specialist
- Jack DeLoach (New York)

Pedagogical Design
- Ann Fox
- Dave Wessner
- Erland Stevens
- Kristen Eshleman

https://www.insidehighered.com/blogs/higher-ed-beta/are-moocs-working-us-part-2
Why is this topic important locally?

Pervasive use of social media in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

1st in Twitter penetration per capita with 41% of Internet users tweeting (BII, 2013)

6th most visited site in the Kingdom
Framework

• Networked Participatory Scholarship

“scholars’ use of participatory technologies and online social networks to share, reflect upon, critique, improve, validate, and further their scholarship” (Veletsianos & Kimmons, 2012)

• A non-deterministic perspective
A series of investigations

Guided by gaps in our understanding of scholars’ online practices

Pragmatic selection of methodologies to answer research questions

– Basic qualitative studies (e.g., analysis of tweets, participant-observer journal)
– Phenomenological analysis of interviews
– Social Network Analysis of data trails
– Inferential statistics
What do scholars do on social media?
Technologies

- Academic-specific technologies
- Repurposed technologies

Logos: Quora, Mendeley, Zotero, Academia.edu, YouTube, Facebook
Activities

- Announcements
- Draft papers
- Open textbooks
- Syllabi + Activities
- Live streaming
  - Live-Blogging
- Collaborative authoring
- Debates + commentary
- Open teaching
- Public P&T materials
- Crowdsourcing
- The doctoral journey (e.g., #PhDChat)

Veletsianos (2013)
Activities

Faculty use these Twitter to:

- Share information, resources, and media
- Open classrooms
- Provide opportunities for learning
- Request assistance
- Provide help and support

Veletsianos (2012)
Why do they do what they do?
Why do they share?

• Faculty use social media to:
  – Explore scholarly ideas
  – Share knowledge
  – Debate & critique
  – Advice & reflect
  – Connect with other researchers
  – Reach multiple audiences
  – Re-envision their identities (as public intellectuals)

Kjellberg, 2010; Kirkup, 2010; Martindale & Wiley, 2005; Mewburn & Thompson, 2013; Veletsianos, 2012
How can we characterize scholarly social networks?
Theme #1

Identity Networks
Identity Online

Two perspectives

We create it

→ Intentional web presence (e.g., Lowenthal & Dunlap, 2012)

It is created and/or structured for us
Identity consists of various fragments that we consider acceptable to others.

Each fragment is:
- Intentional
- Authentic
- Transitional
- Incomplete
- Socially-responsive

(Kimmons & Veletsianos, 2014)
Theme #2

Networks of Conflict
Networks of conflict

• Academics often post their papers online
Networks of conflict

• Academics often post their papers online
• Elsevier sends copyright infringement notices (late 2013)

• Systems and tools that have been used to circumvent restrictions are the following...
Networks of conflict

Request a Paper

If you're looking for a specific paper then this is the place to ask for it. Simply fill out the form below and your request will end up listed on the homepage and in the rss feed. Hopefully you will then have a copy shortly so you can continue your studies. The more information you can provide the better, this will help make it easier for someone else to find the paper that you are looking for. The email field is mandatory, otherwise we won't be able to deliver the paper once it is made available, one or more of title, DOI or description should be filled in and the authors field is helpful but not absolutely required.

title:
Authors:
DOI:
description:
Your email(*):
6 times 9

Please find, then Email me this paper
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PirateUniversity.org

The Pirate University

The Pirate University is a site specially build to allow students who don’t have access to up-to-date academic resources (publications) to ask students who have, to help them out.

How does it work?

Posting a request

First, register for a new account here, check your mail and then you can post a new request for a wanted academic resource through this page: http://www.pirateuniversity.org/node/add/quest

There you describe the article you are looking for.

To facilitate people in locating the article, you can enter the title of the publication the article appeared in, its author, the year of publishing, the issue, the volume and the page it was on. It’s also possible to provide an ISSN-number.

Also, we ask you to indicate from which (academic) discipline your wanted article approximately is.
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Dropbox
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#icanhazpdf
HOW TO JOIN THE COLLECTIVE AND START SERVING REQUESTS

SHORT INSTRUCTIONS AND REQUIRED SOFTWARE:

1. Twitter: Monitor #icanhazpdf #requests
2. Zotero and zotero browser plugin: after clicking on DOI link or abstract page just click on ‘Save to Zotero’ button to auto-grabs PDFs
3. Zotfile: automatically copies new Zotero pdfs files saved to public Dropbox folder
4. Dropbox: Cloud storage system to seamlessly share files with anyone without login.
5. Dropbox linker: automatically adds links from public folder to your clipboard
6. Reply to request tweets: paste URL from clipboard and if you want #papester

That’s it! Now you can just click request links, click the Zotero get PDF button, and CTRL+V a dropbox direct download link in response!
But why?

“an act civil disobedience toward the publishing enterprise” Kroll, 2011
But why?

Or scholars are increasingly calling for options better than the publishing industry.
Theme #3

Networks of Disclosure
Vulnerabilities (e.g., areas of personal growth)

Struggles (e.g., a workplace issue)

Passions (e.g., soccer)

→ Unrelated to the profession, but...

What is the value of these activities?
Implications

Certain practices question elements of traditional scholarly practice

Social media transforms practice

Practice shapes how we use social media

How can universities support and encourage networked participation without fear?
Thank you!

Research available at: http://www.veletsianos/publications

This presentation: www.slideshare.com/veletsianos

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