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THU: (Keynote) The Digital Scholar Revisited (Martin Weller)

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[Dr Simon Ball](#)

18 December 2017

In 2011, the author published a book entitled The Digital Scholar. It was an attempt to examine the impact of digital, networked technologies on scholarly practice. Since 2011, there have been a number of further social media tools that have gained widespread popularity (for example Instagram, and Snapchat), the widespread adoption of Twitter and Facebook into all aspects of society and academic developments such as MOOCs, learning analytics, and the integration of tools into education.

This represents an opportunity then to consider the changes in practice since the book's publication and to examine the current landscape of digital scholarship, with particular reference to current challenges and future directions.

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[Mr Jonathan G Brown](#)

3:32pm 18 January 2018 [Permalink](#)

Hi Martin,

When I chose the title 'Tomorrow's Digital Scholar' for my presentation, I had no idea that you'd be at the conference, nor that I'd be following you! If we need to work out some royalty payments, let me know ;-)

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In your research, have you come across any examples of how Secondary schools are integrating these tools into the curriculum well, or have you focused on HE? If the latter, have you seen evidence of students entering HE well-equipped to use the tools of the digital scholar - or have they needed to be nurtured within the university environment?



[Katherine Hinchey](#)

4:30pm 4 February 2018 [Permalink](#)

Martin, [The New York Times recently did \(another\) expose about bots in social media](#). Do you think our current understanding of this side of social media has any effect on digital scholarship -- for example, how it is appreciated or not in the scholastic arena?



[Simon Rae](#)

1:45pm 17 February 2018 (Edited 4:27pm 17 February 2018) [Permalink](#)

Hi Martin, it was interesting to hear your presentation on Thursday and your update on the world of The Digital Scholar, thanks. One issue in particular has got me thinking though. It was your point about how academics (digital scholars) are still using Blogs and Twitter etc to publish but how the institutions haven't really got to grips with recognising (or rewarding) their output. I'm a huge believer in being digital but I have (at least one) concern about digital practice. How accessible will it be overtime (and to whom)? I'm currently reading A History of the World in 100 Objects by Neil MacGregor, based on things in the British Museum (an Xmas gift from my daughter who works there). I often read while partner Jan knits and I wondered if a bit of knitting was included in the 100 items around which MacGregor spins his history. There isn't. Lots of metalwork, lots of stonework and woodwork and ceramics, but no knitting. Odd, given its utilitarian importance, but then I realised, knitting rots away whereas metal etc doesn't. When looking back, or when future generations look back, it's difficult to know what was going on without evidence. Take Ada Lovelace, I saw a TV program about her last week, claiming her as the first computer programmer and more. These claims were based primarily on the fulsome notes that were published as an Appendix to a report on Babbage's Analytical Engine and which have survived in printed form (<https://www.gresham.ac.uk/lecture/transcript/download/the-scientific-life-of-ada-lovelace/>). Without that evidence would current generations know anything about Ada other than her being Byron's daughter? As I said, I'm a believer in being digital ... there was a time when I had "authored" most of the contents of IET's Knowledge Network (in its early days) ... a digital proof-of-concept research project, intended, I thought, to record the wisdom of IET for posterity. However, following up on a request on another digital forum recently I tried to find an entry that I had written on the KN about affordances, not all that long ago, that included some useful references to Bill Gaver's work ... but I couldn't. I didn't have access. The URL had changed, servers had been swapped, or closed ... and unfortunately I hadn't kept a paper copy, I had believed in being digital. (I did find the ref to Gaver's TECHNOLOGY AFFORDANCES paper in the end via Google Scholar: <https://www.lri.fr/~mbl/Stanford/CS477/papers/Gaver-CHI1991.pdf>). This is my big worry about being digital. I share your concern that institutions are not really coping with digital scholarship now, but mainly I worry for people in a hundred years time trying to assess digital scholars whose work is effectively lost (do you know... they still used electricity and silicon in those days, how quaint, pity we can't access it). My advice is, unfortunately, keep a paper copy of anything you write, preferably on archive quality paper, and store it somewhere safe, or get it published in a paper-based journal :-)

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