SAT: Harnessing the power of twitter: recommendations for extending the reach of resources in a Higher Education context (Matthew Street)

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Extra content

Part A:- Short abstract

Title:- Harnessing the power of Twitter: recommendations for extending the reach of resources in a Higher Education context

Theme:- Implementation

Abstract

Social media use is growing across the higher education (HE) sector and is increasingly becoming a part of many peoples everyday lives, (McAndrew, 2010) highlights this citing 'the average user in the global survey spending 30% of their time online' (TNS global 2008) this is reinforced by data retrieved from (http://www.internetlivestats.com/twitter-statistics/) showing an increase from '5000 tweets per day in 2007 to 500,000,000 tweets per day in 2013' (Internet live stats, 2015).

It can be argued that social media tools coupled with the changing nature of the Internet facilitates collaboration opportunities and tools that provide an 'architecture of participation' (O'Reilly, 2004). The creation of 'Digital content, distributed via a global network, has laid the foundation for potential changes in academia' argues (Weller, 2011), This foundation is strengthened by the technological developments, the prevalence of WIFI and 3/4G networks, the development of mobile devices which enable ease of access to the Internet and collaborative tools like Twitter, these factors create an environment where collaboration and engagement online facilitating connections between people and resources has become easier.

For this foundation to be built upon solidly and to have its greatest impact relies on the individual being connected and engaged within a communityor network. Described as 'digital scholarship' (Weller, 2011), Weller describes that we are already seeing the impact of digital in scholarly practice for example the academic conference now incorporates social media back-channels through Twitter Hashtags and other media like blogs and online synchronous discussion. Highlighting that tools like Twitter can't be ignored and when used correctly can result in increased reach of resource. Part of this use could be described as participating in communities or communities of practice defined as 'groups of people informally bound together by shared expertise and passion for a joint enterprise' Wenger & Snyder (2000) though these are hard to develop and sustain.

There can be a preconception that Twitter has little purpose in education and some potential users may lack the confidence or digital skills to harness the potential of it. This coupled with being recently asked the following question:- How can the reach, engagement and currency of good practice resources in learning and teaching in higher education that have been published openly on a blog, Solutions (http://lpdcsolutions.blogspot.co.uk/) be improved and increased using Twitter. Has led to the development of the artefact described below.

The artefact and focus of this presentation is a multimedia web object produced as an open educational resource (OER). It will be stored on its own website and separately added to Jorum (www.jorum.ac.uk) thus allowing the wider community to access, re-use and re-mix the resource. Drawing together four main areas that represent factors involved in harnessing the power of Twitter, What is Twitter? And how to use it, creating and participating in networks, case studies, recommendations and lessons learned drawing together the previous sections. The artefact will be used to inform the longer-term development of the Solutions blog and act a resource for others in HE in harness the power of Twitter for scholarship. The presentation will be a synchronous discussion on OULive consisting of a Mulitmedia Powerpoint presentation and a web-tour to demonstrate the artefact.

Questions or comments tweet #H818MS or add to this padlet
http://padlet.com/m_j_street/h818ms

References

McAndrew, P. (2010), 'Defining Openness: Updating the Concept of "Open" for a Connected World', *Journal Of Interactive Media In Education*, ERIC, EBSCOhost, viewed 11th January 2015.

O'Reilly, T. (2004), 'The Architecture of Participation'. Available at http://oreilly.com/pub/a/oreilly/tim/articles/architecture_of_participation.html [accessed 11th January 2015.

Weller, Martin. "Digital, Networked and Open." In *The Digital Scholar: How Technology Is Transforming Scholarly Practice*, 1–13. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2011. Accessed January 11, 2015. http://dx.doi.org/10.5040/9781849666275.ch-001

Wenger, E, & Snyder, W 2000, 'Communities of Practice: The Organizational Frontier', *Harvard Business Review*, 78, 1, pp. 139-145, Business Source Complete, EBSCOhost, viewed 27 January 2015.

http://www.internetlivestats.com/one-second/#tweets-band (Last accessed 11th January 2015)

matthew street
21:29 on 17 January 2015 (Edited 18:18 on 27 January 2015)

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[M M](#)
4:51pm 17 January 2015 [Permalink](#)

Hi Matthew Sorry to post this on Cloudworks. You can delete it after you have read it.
Would I have your permission to use quotatuons from the comments you left me regarding
my classroom footage on My padlet? It would greatly assist in my presentation at
conference.

[matthew street](#)
9:28pm 17 January 2015 [Permalink](#)

Hello,

Not a problem at all of course you can, I hope they were useful

Best

Matt Street

M M
2:13pm 24 January 2015 Permalink

Hi Matthew

Thanks for the permission.

Can I ask if you are going to make any comment about the inherent value in using Twitter or whether you think it is right to use it in an educational environment? I have a lot of colleagues (sometimes including myself!!!) who would disagree with the use of social media to teach and I have also read conflicting blogs so I was wondering if, after all of your research, you might suggest the deeper reason why we SHOULD use Twitter and not just HOW?

Basically looking for some more arguments to make me feel like my own 'Twitter attempts' are not in vain.. If this is something you weren't going to share at conference I would still be keen to get your opinion on it.

Jocelyn Anderson
8:57pm 24 January 2015 Permalink

Hi Matt,

I am really intrigued by your topic. I've actually just joined twitter - at the moment more in a passive-observer role than as an active user - and I can't wait to hear more about how it might be deployed to develop a project...I think my first question would be, how do you know when a project is ready for Twitter's power? To put it another way, can Twitter be part of a project from the very beginning, or does something need to partially formed to get the full benefit of Twitter? This may be betraying my ignorance/lack of confidence with it though!

All the best,

Joceyn

matthew street
2:15pm 25 January 2015 Permalink

Hi Jocelyn,

I really think the trick is defining the purpose behind chosing to use Twitter in a project I think that this then will give you an insight into when to use it, I am just feeling my way with this too. For example you'll see on the websit https://sites.google.com/a/keele.ac.uk/h818/ I developed to house the resource and presentation I have put forward some really early ideas about the presentation and resource with an aim to get feedback and develop them accordingly, I also setup a hashtag #H818MS and a padlet http://padlet.com/m_j_street/h818ms as a place to collate feedback. These are a under used at the moment and I think that this is for a range of reasons around the networks I have on Twitter and the way I interact with them, hopefully the resource will help explain this. In a nutshell, I think that harnessing the power (so to

speak) is a long process, with many different fatcors involved.

matthew street
2:43pm 25 January 2015 (*Edited 9:43am 27 January 2015*) Permalink

Hi Marease

An interesting and huge question, one that I wont really touch on in the presentation. The focus of the presentation and subsequently the focus of the resource being developed is about how Twitter can be used to extend the reach of resources that have been published openly, so this is more about ways to engage with networks and the value of working openly to increase the perceived value of the resources that have been published openly.

To answer your question from my perspective, I think it is about exploring what you want to achieve by using Twitter and then assessing whether it is the right tool for the job. So I would say whether it is right or not depends on the context and what the goals are, this is probably why you have seen a lot of conflicting blogs. For example I work in a HE institution all our students are 18 or over, so you can imagine a situation where staff use Twitter in a learning and teaching context, they might use it to share resources with students (where there has been a prior conversation with students about whether this is ok with them or are there are other tools they would prefer, they might also display the twitter feed in the VLE so those that aren't signed up can still see the resources). They also might also for some disciplines use Twitter to show how communities can build up as support networks around illness or topics for example (Health and social work) opening conversations around the advantages of social media and also the disadvantages with students, linking this back to the students own digital practice and the digital skills they may need when they graduate. So I think social media has real potential for education and can be used for a range of different areas but the activity has to be purposeful and well thought through for the context.

Hope ths helps, sorry its not concreate evidence and more of a ramble

best

Matt

Richard Heffer
12:50pm 27 January 2015 Permalink

Matt

Interestingly, my original idea was to look at Facebook and Twitter as pathways for learning (in my case in an organisational context). I dropped the Twitter idea to concentrate on Facebook (I am relatively new in using both-so one had to go!). I think that there is a strong congruence in both SNS having almost limitless spread giving anyone the opportunity to view and experience the learning material. The converse is that this is also a significant weakness if the learning should be limited to certain groups for whatever reason, confidentiality, suitablity, etc. Are you looking at your concept from an opened-ended and 'free to view' resource or as a more closed platform to deliver material to specific groups please?

I am tending to edge to looking at Facebook as means to develop and engender interest in

our learning materials, almost as an advertising platform to allow staff to view material and then comment, like, share etc. Thus, as such it would not be a primary delivery tool, but rather as 'interest-getter'. One area that I saw for Twitter is as such a tool, to post up short snippets and links to further material, your work indicates that it is capable of much more that this and by implication this suggests that my view of how to use Facebook may also be overly simplified. I would welcome your ideas.

Richard Heffer

Alison Walker
3:33pm 27 January 2015 Permalink

Hi Matt

I'm really interested in seeing your presentation as I am intrigued by the potential of Twitter to develop learning beyond physical walls either within education or an organisation. I often encourage delegates on my leadership and development workshops to tweet from the workshop and to encourage their networking afterwards. I haven't yet measured whether this is successful or not but I can see a real opportunity for people to support each other via Twitter in implemeting the new skills they have learnt. One drawback I can see from this is that Twitter is public and therefore people may be very careful in what they share in order to protect themselves. Have you been able to identify the constraints around individual's Twitter use and whether this impacts on the learning experience?

Hugo Teixeira
12:59pm 28 January 2015 Permalink

I'm really impressed by how you've pulled together Prezi, Youtube, Padlet (new to me), Google Sites, and started exploiting resources like Jorum in preparation for your conference presentation. Are you also integrating twitter somehow? I'm going to keep an eye on this one as it seems to already be a great model for future participation in online conferences.

matthew street
5:24pm 28 January 2015 Permalink

Hi Richard,

Yes I can imagine, approaching using two social networks to be quite overwhelming. In my context I am looking at using Twitter for resources that are openly accessible to anyone really. For your context I can see why you opted for Facebook.

Given the context you describe around sharing snippets, I think either platform would be useful, you could even use both. You can link together Twitter and Facebook (if memory serves) so what you post on Twitter posts to Facebook thus reaching two different networks, though this would mean trying to grow a network and engage with two different audiences. I could imagine this being quite a large task

Best

Matt

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matthew street
5:36pm 28 January 2015 [Permalink](#)

Hi Alison,

Not really been able to identitfy constraints as such, you can have a private twitter account though this does limit what can be done with it. I think there are questions around make people aware of how Twitter operates and as you say how public it is so they can make informed choices. This was partly the idea behind developing the resource.

Best

Matt

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matthew street
5:39pm 28 January 2015 [Permalink](#)

Hi Hugo,

Yep the intention was to use #H818MS to gather questions from those that couldn't attend the live presentation or those that wanted to use Twitter during the event.

Best

Matt

Rachel O'Connor
7:01pm 28 January 2015 [Permalink](#)

Hi Matt
I am really interested in what you have chosen to talk about. I am also intrigued that you have chosen the theme of implementation. My initial reaction if your theme hadnt been stated at the top on the abstract would have been to assume you were looking at innovation. Maybe it is both? Have you considered that these themes might overlap? I also wondered like Alison about the constraints of using Twitter. From the sound of the abstract you see Twitter adding positively to the development and reach of the resources but are there any risks? We have discussed in early parts of the module about even though something is popular on twitter does it mean it is good? the same as if an article has lots of citations does it mean it is good quality? There is probably a fine balance to be negotiated between using the power of twitter and the popularity. Or for your needs are these the same thing.
Looking forward to your presentation

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matthew street
7:43pm 29 January 2015 (*Edited 7:47pm 29 January 2015*) [Permalink](#)

Hi Rachel

Thanks for the comments, yep I had considered that they both overlapped I found it quite hard to separate them out. In the end it was the context that dictated which theme I chose, the eventual end for the resource will be to support myself and colleagues in extending the reach of the good practice website Solutions. I would agree that there are risks and just because it is popular doesn't mean that it is good, though the difference here is that this is about extending the reach of resources that are already published on the web and housed on a website so they are out in the public domain already the idea being to extend the reach of these resources so I am not really identifying what is good or not but looking at ways to further grow what already exists and Twitter is one mechanism to reach a wider audience through engagement rather the resources sitting quite passively on a webspace. I guess harnessing the power comes from ways to engage with networks that may or may not result in resources having greater reach, I am still exploring.

Hugo Teixeira
3:41am 30 January 2015 Permalink

I might have to borrow that idea. Thanks!

matthew street
11:35am 1 February 2015 Permalink

Hi Hugo, Go for it, one of the advantages of sharing progress and working openly.

Best

Matt

Dave Martin
11:48am 2 February 2015 Permalink

Hi Matt, and other readers, one academic use of Twitter is to broadcast or advertise ideas. I think this links with Richard's work on Facebook for Notts Fire and Rescue Service. One way everyone who is on Twitter can experiment with this is to try and publicise our conference (as some already have) using the hastag #H818conf and linking your Twitter followers to the Cloudworks page http://cloudworks.ac.uk/cloudscape/view/2916

Steve Castle
2:33pm 4 February 2015 Permalink

Hi Matt, I've used Twitter for a number of years now and have tried to use it as an educational tool in EFL, but without much success, but not for the want of trying. Perhaps I should attend my own presentation on implementation :) I think Twitter is more accepted now than four or five years ago, but there are still some cynics. I look forward to your presentation. Best Wishes Steve

Rachel O'Connor

3:56pm 6 February 2015 Permalink

Interesting to hear your thoughts on the themes and I can see that implementation fits this well in this instance.

I have been looking through Openstudio and trying to see the journey of some of the artefacts including yours. It is really interesting to see how your initial ideas about what to choose for this project have remained and that initial ideas document really reminded me the relevance of the topic for you. I think it was a good reminder of how for many students these projects have been beneficial in a number of ways. For you I can see that this is not only going to be useful in your own working practice but also will be useful to fellow students as you share your learning of the reach of Twitter. So it has done all this as well as satisfying the needs of H818. Pretty impressive in a few short months. I had a quick look at the presentation on your website (didnt want to read it in too much detail as I am looking forward to the 'live' version tomorrow) but my first impression were that I could really see the journey of the artefact and it really made me want to hear more about what you have learnt.

One thing common throughout the whole group which is nice is the benefits to this open way of working - you can see the difference it makes and how it has grown as we have all gone along.

Well done and good luck tomorrow

Dr Simon Ball

3:48pm 9 February 2015 Permalink

Here are the comments and questions from your live presentation at the conference:

- How far along is the development Matt?
- I'd like my tutorial group to use twitter to share their research project iedas
- Would you think about using it to increase the reach of another resource in the future to compare to the findings you have had this time?
- Like that the branding is minimal - great for adaptation
- Hove you considered getting Twitter colleagues to undertake research for you with explanation/instruction?
- examples showing colleagues how to save their time usually gets a positive response

matthew street

8:21pm 9 February 2015 Permalink

Just to pick up on some of the comments before responding to the questions,

I agree with Dave on other uses of Twitter, the work Richard has been doing in relation to the Fire Service and Facebook is interesting there seems to be a real mass of people engaging with the content produced which is great.

Thanks for the comments Rachel, it has been a real benifit working in this way and quite useful for documenting the progress. It has been great to see all the ideas evolve into projects and seeing the amount of work that has gone into them

Just to pick up on the questions from the presentation, thanks for taking the time to listen and contribute everyone

- *How far along is the development Matt?*
- I have version one ready which is shows the direction of travel, i am just rethinking the approach to the website. As an interim step I have made a video of the resource so people can see what it looks like I may also include the source files to download as embedding the resources is directly in the site proving to be a real headache. https://sites.google.com/a/keele.ac.uk/h818/products-services
- *I'd like my tutorial group to use twitter to share their research project iedas*
- Thats a great idea, twitter also alllows you to embed a timeline or hashtag directly into a website or VLE, this makes it more accessible for those not using or not wanting to use the platform
- *Would you think about using it to increase the reach of another resource in the future to compare to the findings you have had this time?*
- I would, i am going to make more of an effort to share developments to work openly, thus modelling the practice in the resource a little more so it will be interesting to see how this develops and then compare this with the future developments to the sharing practice space to see if there are any differences or similartites
- *Like that the branding is minimal - great for adaptation*
- I was really keen for it to be easily reused and adapted so fingers crossed it is
- *Hove you considered getting Twitter colleagues to undertake research for you with explanation/instruction?*
- I hadnt got this far down line yet, that is something to definetly consider as the resource develops
- *examples showing colleagues how to save their time usually gets a positive response*
- I would agree and I am all for saving time, I was hoping that as a spin off people would start exploring Twitter and sharing more openly in their practice if the model succeeds.

Dave Martin
10:37am 10 February 2015 Permalink

- *I'd like my tutorial group to use twitter to share their research project iedas*
- Thats a great idea, twitter also alllows you to embed a timeline or hashtag directly into a website or VLE, this makes it more accessible for those not using or not wanting to use the platform
- I'd endorse that point about embedding Twitter in a website Matt. Our Credit Union website does that so volunteers who are reluctant to use Twitter can still see what is going on, that is if they are using the Internet. http://www.firstdorsetcreditunion.co.uk/index.html

Louise Worsley
6:41am 18 February 2015 Permalink

> ▷ *I'd like my tutorial group to use twitter to share their research project iedas*

I also like this idea - Just last week I tried getting my tutorial group to summarise their research projects into the 140 chars. I think they were more inspired by the exercise knowing that this was the kind of thing they would do on Twitter.   Its kind of a modern day 'elevator speech' isnt it!

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