

Digital Footprints Matter: Encouraging and Supporting Professionalism and Safety on Social Media

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SRHE Digital University Network.
Social Media In Higher Education: Current
Perspectives And Practices



SRHE



What is a digital footprint?

A digital footprint is the record of an individual's interactions and data trail in a digital environment. It consists of the traces left by their online activity, whether intentional or passive.

Active vs Passive Digital Footprint

Active

Content created and shared: Social media posts, photos, blogs, videos, tweets, emails, online comments, and articles.

Online interactions: Likes, shares, comments, and reviews.

Data provided to websites and services: Sign-ups, subscriptions, online purchases, and memberships.



Passive

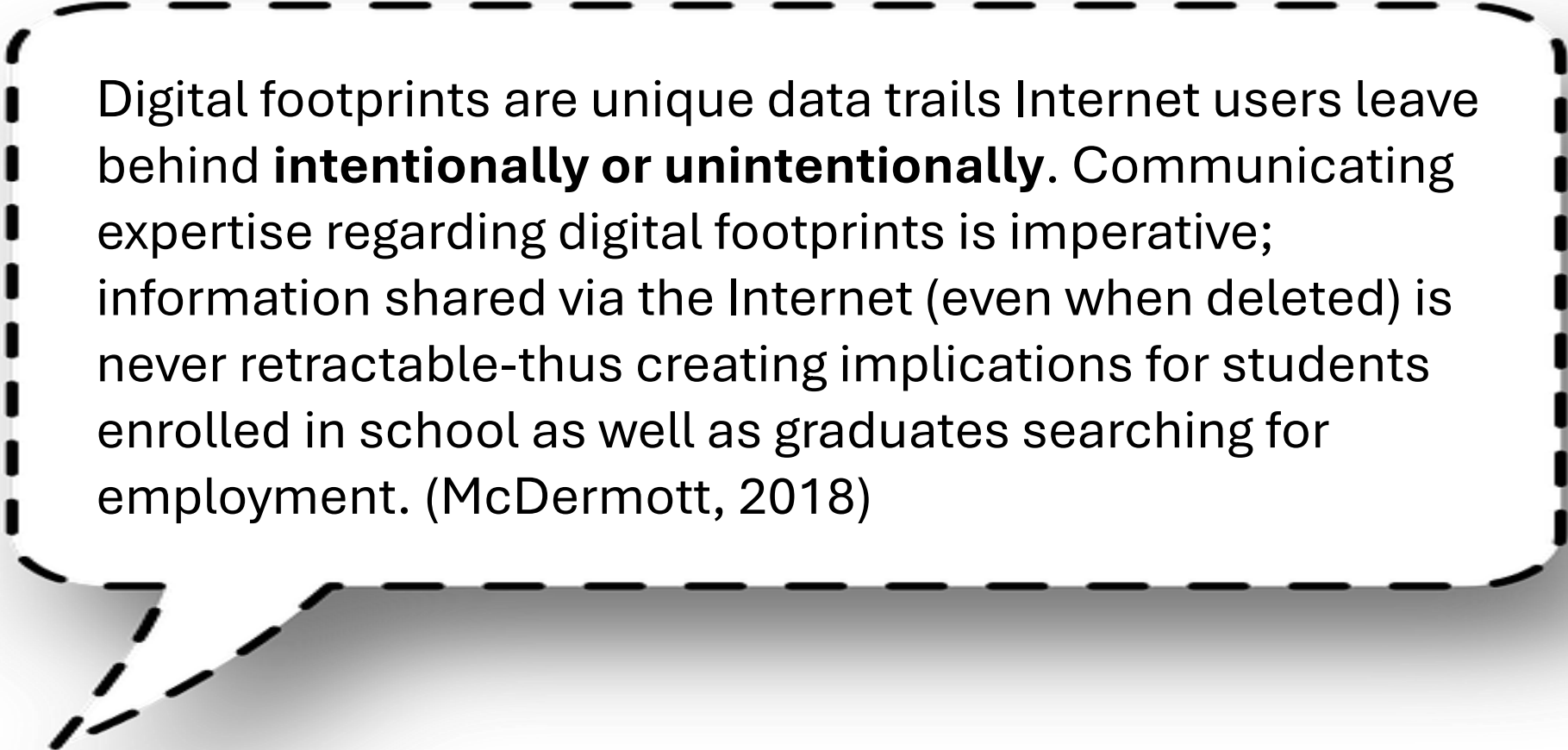
Browsing history: Websites visited, and searches made on search engines.

IP logs: Records of the IP addresses from which devices access services.

Cookies: Small files placed on a device by websites visited, tracking online behaviour and preferences.

Location data: Information collected by apps and services about an individual's geographical location, often through GPS on smartphones.

Metadata: Data that provides information about other data, such as the time a photo was taken, the device used, and location.



Digital footprints are unique data trails Internet users leave behind **intentionally or unintentionally**. Communicating expertise regarding digital footprints is imperative; information shared via the Internet (even when deleted) is never retractable-thus creating implications for students enrolled in school as well as graduates searching for employment. (McDermott, 2018)



During COVID lockdown



Employment:

Employers may search for potential candidates online to review their digital profiles. Inappropriate content, unprofessional behaviour, or negative comments on social media can lead to not getting a job offer or even losing a current job.

Education:

Admissions departments could review applicants' online presences. Poor digital footprints, such as evidence of plagiarism or offensive posts, could negatively impact acceptance into educational programmes.

Personal Relationships:

Personal relationships can be strained or damaged if sensitive or private information is shared publicly or if individuals engage in online arguments or negative interactions.

Identity Theft:

A digital footprint that includes too much personal information can lead to identity theft if such information is accessed by cybercriminals. This may be collected from multiple sources.

Legal Consequences:

Online activities, such as illegal downloading or libelous blogging could result in legal action.

Personal Branding:

A negative online presence can damage an individual's personal brand, impacting their professional networking opportunities and overall reputation.

Cyberbullying and Harassment:

Being the perpetrator or victim of online harassment can have lasting repercussions on one's digital footprint and offline life.

Privacy Loss:

A digital footprint can also lead to a loss of privacy, where personal information is publicly accessible, leading to unwanted attention or scrutiny.

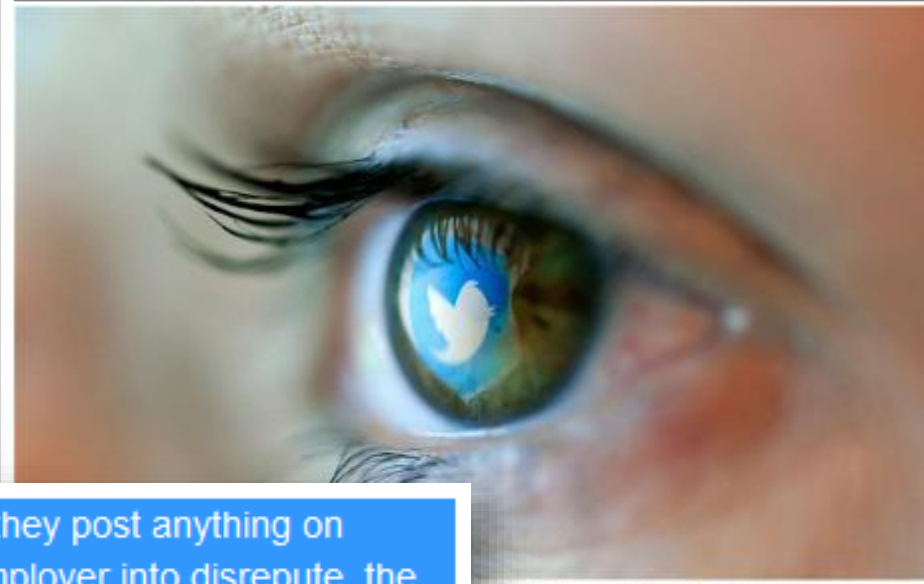
Psychological Impact:

The pressure to maintain a particular image online can lead to stress, anxiety, or depression, especially if the digital footprint becomes a source of embarrassment or regret.



Tweeting about a bad day could lose you your job

Employees who tweet or update their Facebook status saying 'I had a bad day at work' could face losing their jobs, says a leading employment lawyer.



"Employees think they are bullet-proof when they post anything on Facebook or Twitter. But if they bring their employer into disrepute, the boss of that firm is well within their legal right to sack them," she explained.

"By posting something even vaguely negative about your work on these social media sites, it's breaking the relationship of trust and confidence between the employer and employee and the company reserves the right to sack the employee."

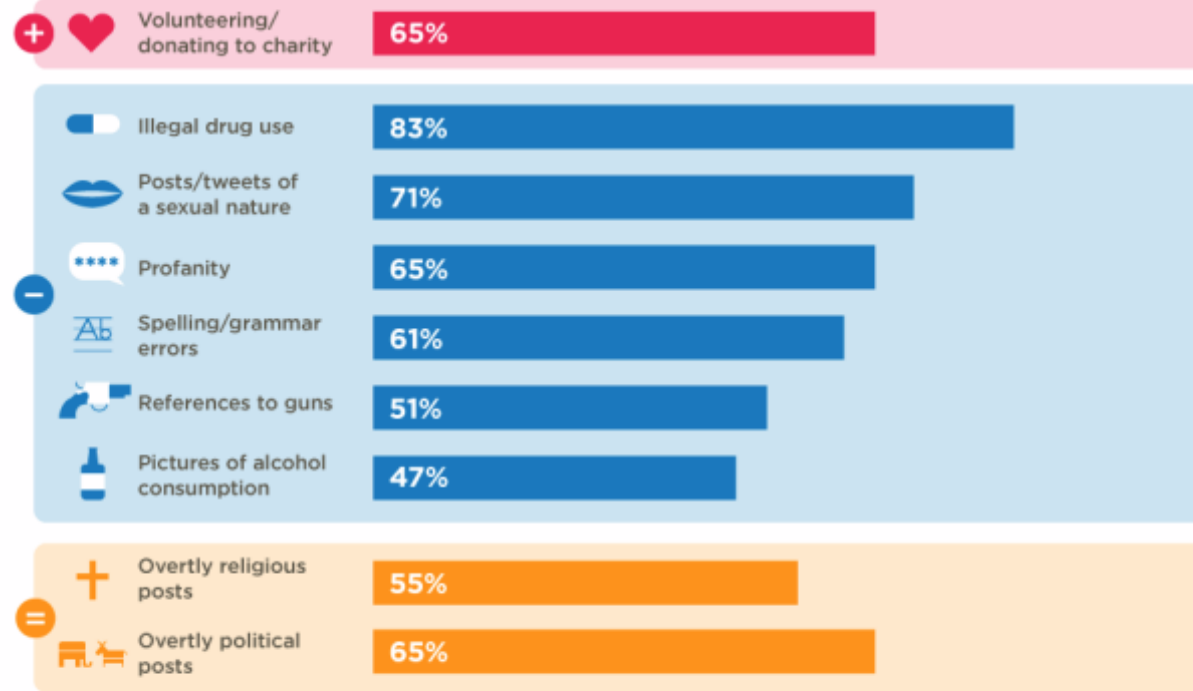
J BETTER INSIGHTS, BETTER CHOICES J

By vetting candidates on social channels, recruiters can make more informed hiring decisions.

Recruiters' Reactions to Seeing Certain Attributes on Candidates' Social Pages:

42% have reconsidered a candidate based on content viewed in a social profile, leading to both positive and negative re-assessments

Key: **+** Positive **-** Negative **=** Neutral



Social recruiting is still going strong. With recent insights into its benefits to companies' hiring procedures, we can now see this invaluable process is here to stay.

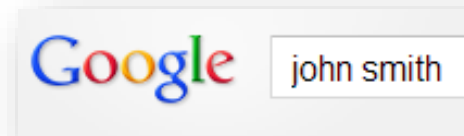
Source: Jobvite

Jobvite

Digital Identity

Avoid being mistaken for someone else with the same name.

Beware of your Digital Doppelgänger!



**Politician
Musician
Filmmaker
Brewery
Explorer**

but it could be worse...

HOW

How as educators do we support our students to:

- understand the impact of their digital footprints
- develop a professional online presence
- learn what social media platforms can be beneficial to use
- attain social media literacy

A graphic of a rearview mirror with a black frame and a light blue reflection. The text is centered in the reflection. At the bottom of the mirror's frame, there are five small white circles.

Looking back
Definitions of literacy

Media Literacy

“A media literate person - and everyone should have the opportunity to become one - can decode, evaluate, analyze and produce both print and electronic media.”
Aufderheide, 1992

Literacy

Lanham (1995:198) extended the definition of literacy from "the ability to read and write" to "the ability to understand information however presented".

Multimedia Literacy

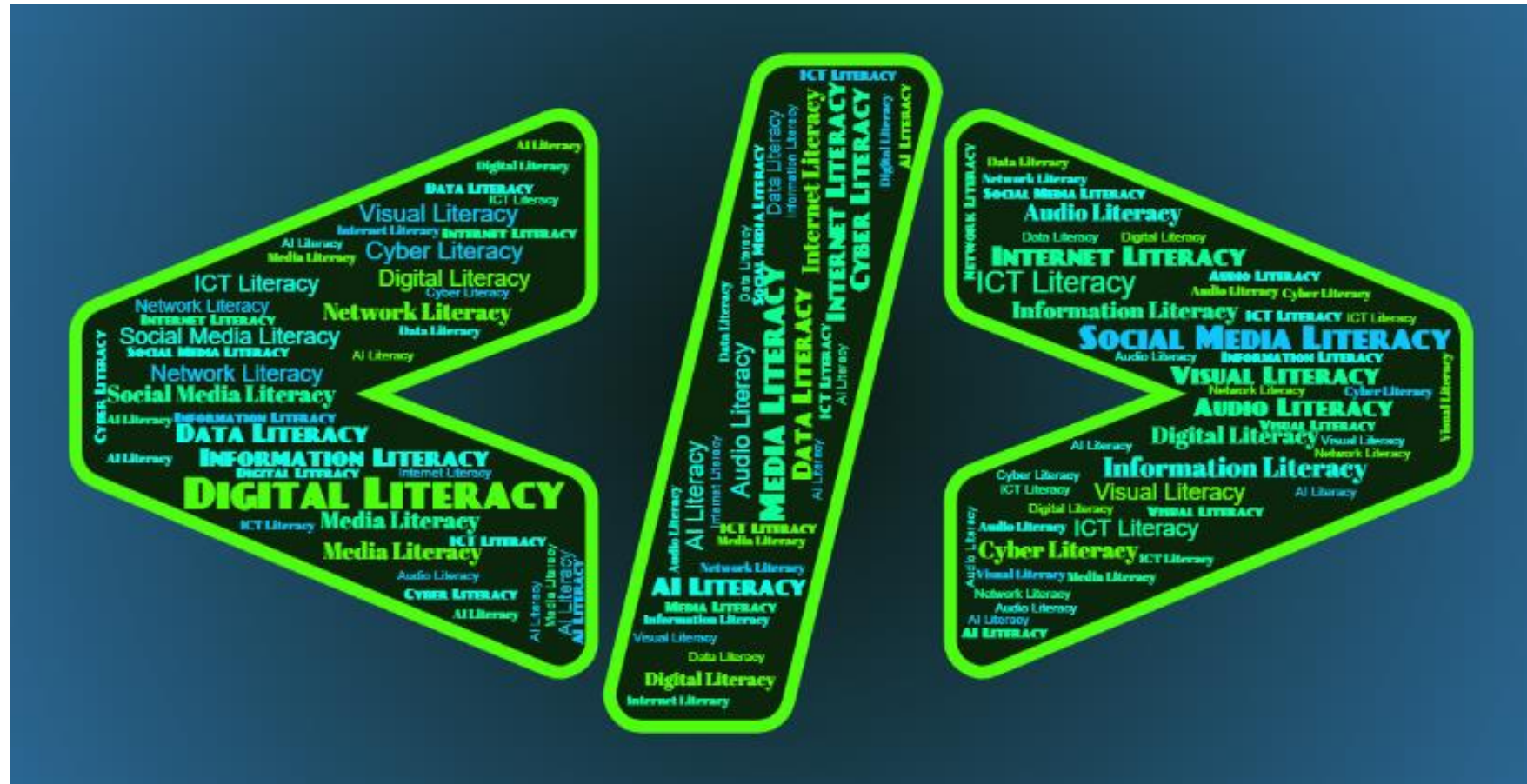
Lanham (1995:198) also stated that:
“Print literacy aimed to pin down
information; multimedia literacy couples
fixity and novelty in a fertile oscillation.”

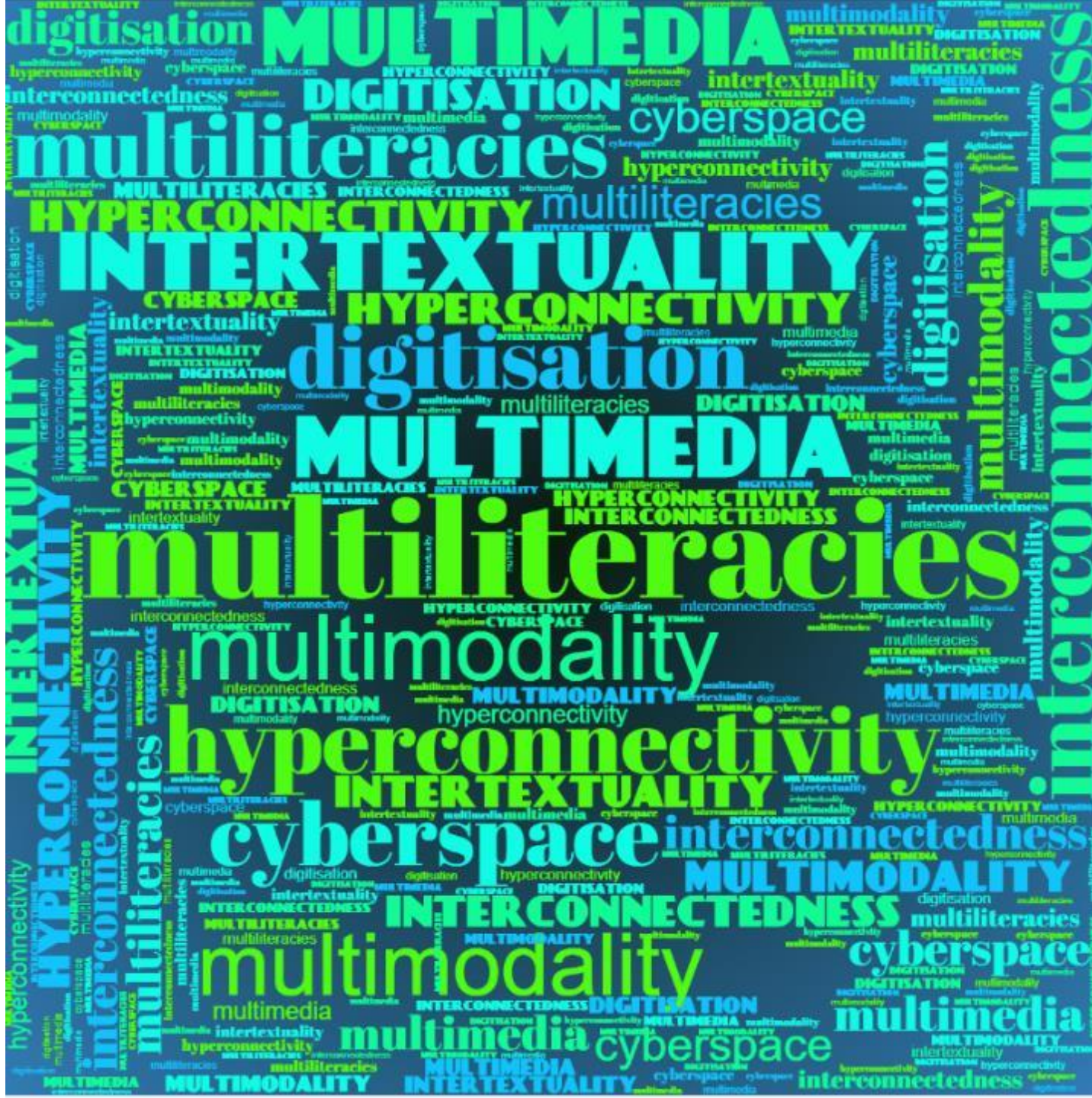
Media Literacy

Livingstone (2004) defined media literacy as "the ability to access, analyse, evaluate and create messages across a variety of contexts".

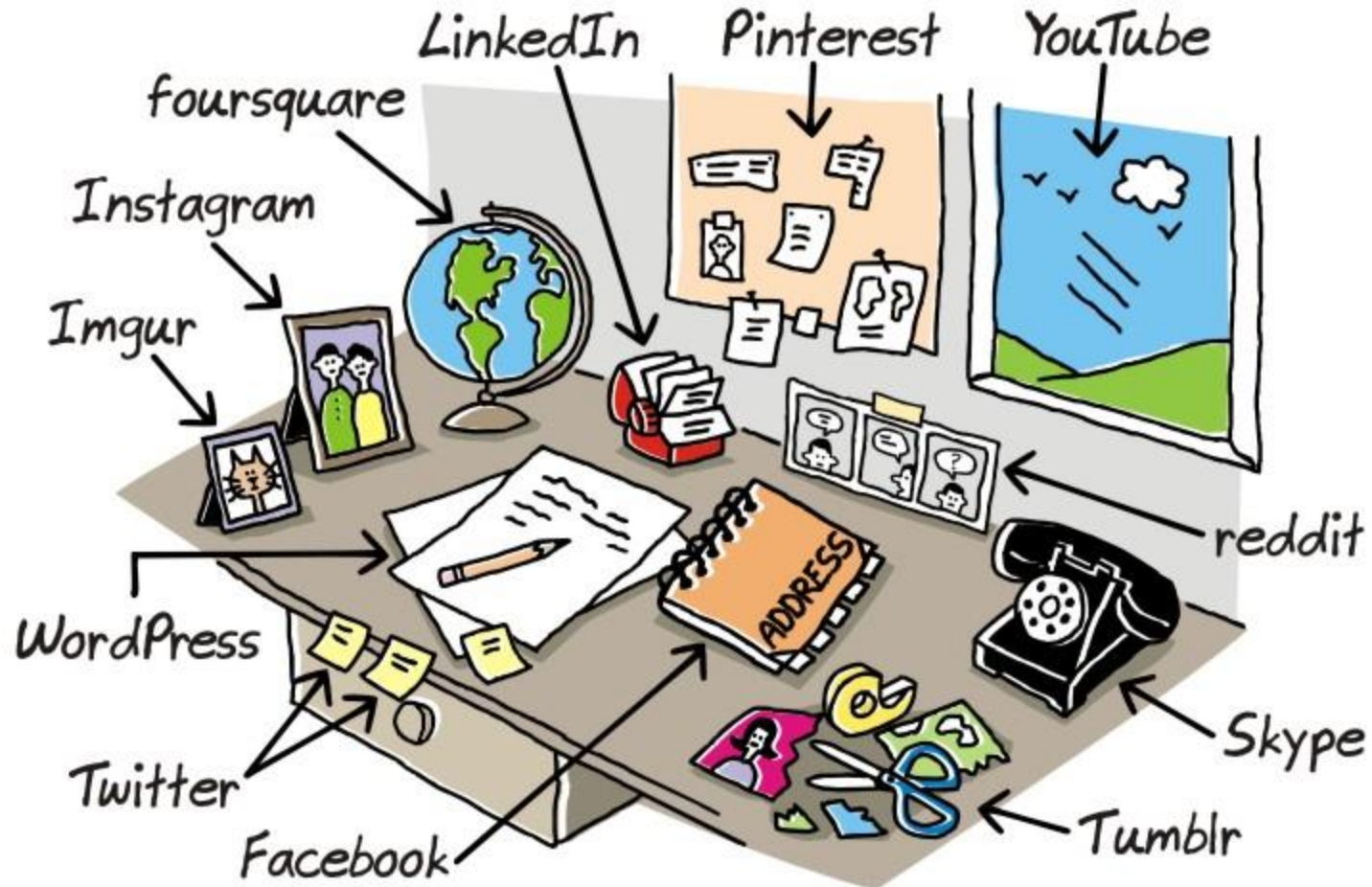
21st Century Literacies

and the ever-increasing need for critical literacy





vintage social networking



<http://wronghands1.wordpress.com>

© John Atkinson, Wrong Hands

Social Media

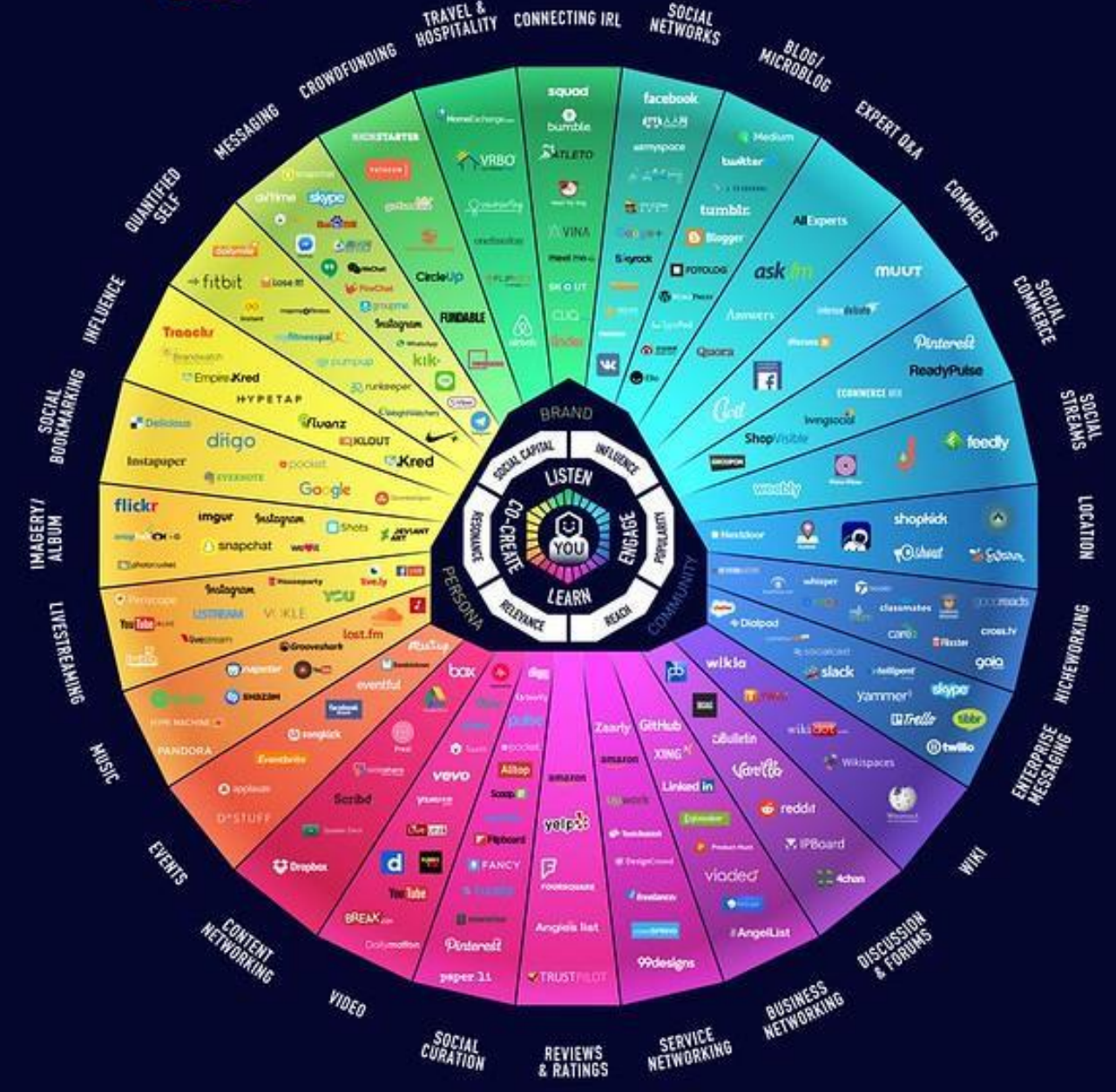


Solis and JESS3, 2008

Solis and JESS3, 2017

CONVERSATION PRISM 5.0

Brought to you by
Brian Solis & JESS3



Social Media Literacy

Schreurs and Vandenberg (2021:321) define social media literacy as “the extent to which cognitive and affective structures are present among users to ensure the risks of interactions with social media content are mitigated and the opportunities are maximized.”

How is social media being used in practice?

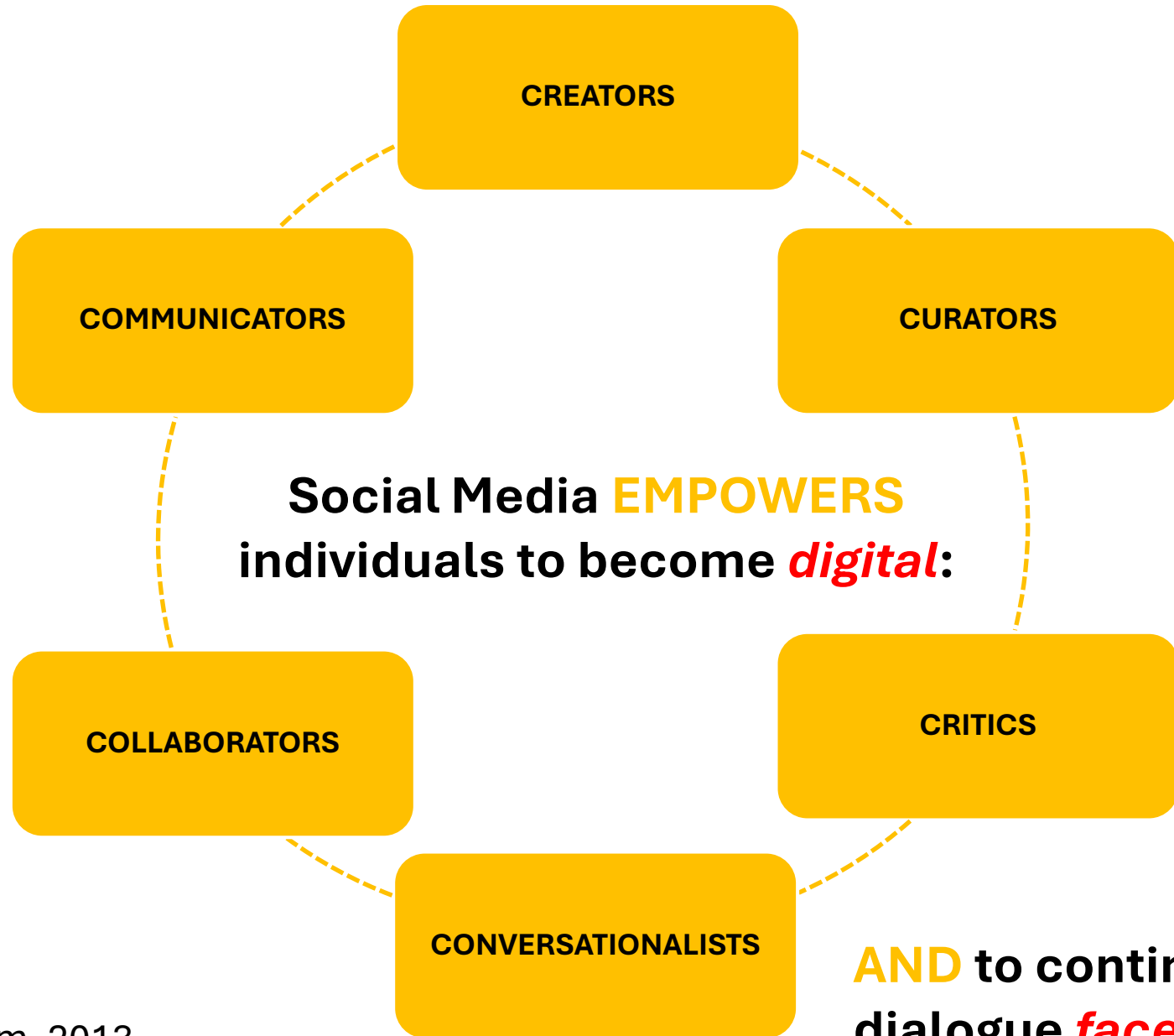


Taxonomy of Social Media Platforms

Description	Examples	Use in Higher Education
General Networks		
Platforms designed for broad interpersonal connections and content sharing.	Facebook, LinkedIn, Mastodon, Threads	Networking, alumni groups, class discussions, job search
Media Sharing Platforms		
Photo Sharing - Platforms emphasising visual content, primarily photos.	Instagram, Snapchat	Documenting campus life, sharing educational infographics
Video Sharing - Platforms focusing on video content and livestreams.	YouTube, TikTok, Vimeo, Twitch	Instructional videos, livestreaming lectures, student project showcases
Blogging and Publishing Platforms		
Microblogging - Platforms focused on short, frequent updates and quick engagements.	X (Twitter), Tumblr	Sharing research, class updates, engaging in professional dialogues
Traditional Blogging - Platforms that allow for long-form content creation and sharing.	WordPress, Blogger	Course blogs, research journals, student portfolios
Social Blogging - Mix of blogging and social networking features.	Medium, Tumblr	Reflection essays, interdisciplinary discussions, creative writing projects
Community and Discussion Platforms		
Forums - Websites or sections of websites dedicated to discussion and user-generated content.	Reddit, Quora	Subject-specific forums, Q&A for course topics, study groups
Q&A Platforms - Specifically focused on questions and answers.	Stack Exchange, Yahoo! Answers	Academic help, research inquiries, technology troubleshooting
Messaging and Communication		
Instant Messaging - Tools primarily for direct and group messaging.	WhatsApp, Signal, Messenger, Telegram	Study groups, project coordination, quick peer communication
Video Call Platforms - Focused on video communication.	Zoom, Skype, FaceTime	Virtual classes, office hours, guest lectures
Professional and Business Networks		
Networking - Platforms designed for professionals to connect and share.	LinkedIn, Xing	Professional development, networking, internships and job opportunities
Collaboration and Workspace - Combines networking with tools for teamwork.	Slack, Microsoft Teams, Discord	Group projects, faculty collaboration, course management
Niche and Specialised Networks		
Dating and Relationships - Platforms focusing on romantic or social connections.	Tinder, Bumble	Socialising, networking (though less academically focused)

Taxonomy of Social Media Platforms (Purvis and Beckingham, 2024)

Hobby and Interest-Based - Tailored to specific interests or activities.	Strava (cycling/running), Ravelry (knitting)	Clubs, extracurricular activities, shared interest groups
Social Commerce and Reviews		
Shopping Platforms - Platforms integrating social features with shopping.	Pinterest (with Shop the Look), Instagram Shop	Promoting university merchandise, art and design portfolios
Review Platforms - For reviewing businesses, products, or services.	Rate My Professors, Student Room, Yelp, TripAdvisor	Rating courses, reviewing local accommodations and eateries for students
Content Discovery and Curation		
Bookmarking - Platforms for saving and discovering web content.	Pinterest, Pocket	Organising research materials, curating study resources
News Aggregators - Platforms curating news or articles based on interests.	Flipboard, Feedly	Staying updated with industry news, academic articles
Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) Social Platforms		
VR Social Spaces - Virtual environments for social interaction.	VRChat, Facebook Horizon	Virtual campus tours, immersive learning experiences
AR Social Tools - Apps or features enhancing the real world with digital content.	Snapchat Filters, Instagram AR Effects	Augmented campus experiences, interactive learning modules



We need to **support** our students to become confident and professional communicators and collaborators



using a wide range of social software and social media



We need to **support** our students to know how to confidently find and apply for jobs online and through social media

Ongoing concerns

Impersonation and privacy invasion

Cyber-aggression motivations

Trolling

Online disinhibition

Peer influence

Emotional venting

Addiction and compulsive use

Lack of awareness



Examples of social media misuse

- **Impersonation and privacy invasion:** Misuse can also include impersonating others or sharing private information without consent, often as a form of harassment or for malicious fun.
- **Cyber-aggression motivations:** Seeking revenge or expressing rage can motivate students to engage in cyberbullying or other forms of online aggression.
- **Trolling:** Viewing trolling or other antisocial behaviours as a source of entertainment can encourage misuse. The blend of public discourse into a form of "show business" on social media platforms encourages this behaviours.
- **Online disinhibition:** The sense of anonymity and invisibility online can lead to disinhibition, where students might say or do things they wouldn't in face-to-face interactions. This could include posting harmful or offensive content.



- **Peer influence:** The desire to fit in or gain approval from peers can drive students to engage in negative behaviours on social media, such as participating in cyberbullying or spreading rumours.
- **Emotional venting:** Posting content in moments of high emotion, which they might later regret. This could include derogatory remarks or personal attacks.
- **Addiction and compulsive use:** Excessive and compulsive use of social media can lead to neglect of personal responsibilities, face-to-face relationships, and academic work.
- **Lack of awareness:** Some students may not fully understand the impact their online actions can have on others or themselves. This lack of awareness regarding the consequences of their posts, comments, or shares can lead to misuse.



(Social) Media Literacy

The acquisition of digital and media literacy competences cannot be conceptualized merely as a set of technical and operative skills; rather, these competencies are embedded in a process of cultural change. (Hobbs, 2016)

Development of Guidance

- 2013 first set of guides
- Iterative changes
- 2023 new set of PDFs and accessible web pages



Research-based Recommendations

1

A clear statement about the support and expectations for the use of social media within the university community

2

Support and specific guidance for the use of professional networks which develop staff and student professional identities

3

Principles for consideration in using social media for learning and teaching

4

A protocol for guiding how social media accounts are best administered for groups and peer learning

5

Guidance for dealing with online behaviours and encouraging positive and professional online interactions.

6

Sharing of examples of pedagogic uses of social media in practice.

7

Supporting appropriate risk-taking in exploration of emergent social media technologies





Using social media and digital tools for learning

Identify your approach: How can different social media sites enhance learning?



Managing your digital footprint

What is a digital footprint?

Every time you use a digital device, you leave a digital footprint.

The digital footprint you create can be viewed by others. It can be used to identify you and track your movements. It can also be used to identify you and track your movements.

It is important to be aware of your digital footprint and to manage it carefully. This means being aware of what you post online and who you share it with.

Why is it important to be in control of your digital footprint?

Your digital footprint can be used to identify you and track your movements. It can also be used to identify you and track your movements.

How can different social media sites enhance learning?

There are many different social media sites, each with its own strengths and weaknesses. Some sites are better for sharing text, while others are better for sharing images or videos.

It is important to choose the right site for your needs. For example, if you want to share text, a site like Twitter or Facebook might be a good choice.

If you want to share images or videos, a site like Instagram or YouTube might be a better choice. It is also important to be aware of the privacy settings on the sites you use.

By being aware of your digital footprint and choosing the right social media sites, you can enhance your learning experience.



Enhance your employability

There are many ways to enhance your employability, including using social media. Social media can be used to showcase your skills and experience.

It is important to choose the right social media tools for your needs. For example, LinkedIn is a good choice for showcasing your professional skills and experience.

By using social media to showcase your skills and experience, you can enhance your employability and increase your chances of finding a job.

Decide which social media tools will be most useful

There are many different social media tools, each with its own strengths and weaknesses. It is important to choose the right tool for your needs.

LinkedIn is a good choice for showcasing your professional skills and experience. It is also a good choice for finding job opportunities.

Twitter is a good choice for staying up-to-date on the latest news and trends in your industry. It is also a good choice for connecting with other professionals in your field.

Instagram is a good choice for showcasing your creative skills and interests. It is also a good choice for connecting with other people who share your interests.

YouTube is a good choice for showcasing your video skills and interests. It is also a good choice for connecting with other people who share your interests.

- Established and ubiquitous with global adoption
- Ethical and moral considerations
- Alternative and emerging spaces
- Misinformation and ‘fake news’
- Social media guidance still requested
- Guidance updated and republished in 2023
- Further publications in progress



Responsible use of social media and digital communications

It is important to use social media and digital communications responsibly. This means being aware of the impact of your actions and being respectful to others.

Some ways to use social media responsibly include being honest, respectful, and aware of your privacy settings. It is also important to be aware of the impact of your actions on others.

Your responsibility

It is your responsibility to use social media and digital communications responsibly. This means being aware of the impact of your actions and being respectful to others.

Some ways to use social media responsibly include being honest, respectful, and aware of your privacy settings. It is also important to be aware of the impact of your actions on others.

What are the consequences of behaving inappropriately online?

Behaving inappropriately online can have serious consequences. It can damage your reputation, harm your relationships, and even lead to legal action.



Responsible use of social media and digital communications



Using social media and digital tools for learning



Using social media to enhance your employability



Managing your digital footprint

Social Media Guidance

**Sheffield
Hallam
University**

<http://go.shu.ac.uk/socialmedia>

Digital Footprint Spring Clean-up

- Google yourself to identify what information is present
- Delete old unused social media accounts
- Review your follower list and remove unwanted or block any dubious accounts
- Use strong passwords
- Set up two-factor authentication
- Check location settings
- Check and implement updates on social media apps used on your phone
- Choose to disable photo tagging and location sharing
- Review your bios and update profiles (including photo periodically)



1.

Follow selectively

2.

Check and understand the privacy settings of each platform used

3.

Browse

Engage

Share

Amplify

4.

Consider your online 'voice'

5.

Build your online reputation and digital presence

**Social
media
policy
research**



Development of a Community

- SocMedHE at SHU 2015, 2016 and 2017
- 2018-2023 hosted by other unis
- **Returning to SHU in December 2024**
#SocMedHE24



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