CREATE A BETTER ONLINE YOU

Social media skills for students:
A learning and teaching guide for academics
Introduction

About this guide

This guide has been developed to support academics who wish to use the suite of social media modules found on the QUT Library website.

It contains suggestions for activities that could be used in tutorials or set for students as independent learning related to specific social media issues that undergraduate students may encounter. These activities are fairly general in nature and are not designed to be assessable, however they could be adapted by academics for assessment if required.

These activities are not designed to be exhaustive or prescriptive. However, it is hoped that this guide will support academics by providing some ideas about how these social media issues may be broached in face to face, online and blended learning environments.

More information about using social media in learning and teaching can be found in the QUT Social Media Guidelines for Learning and Teaching.

About the online resources

The online suite of resources was developed through a Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF) funded project sponsored by QUT Library and eLearning Services.

During the development of the resource, a literature review, environmental scan and focus groups were conducted. As a result of this research, the resources were developed around three major themes: rights and responsibilities, mental health and employment. The resources also align with the framework outlined in the Australian Communications and Media Authority’s Digital Citizens Guide¹.

The resources are not intended to be comprehensive. Rather, they are designed to encourage student reflection. Each topic has elements of interaction or video content, specifically chosen to encourage such reflection. While the resources sometimes make reference to specific social media tools by way of example, the resources focus on social media related issues rather than specific tools. Furthermore, each topic has links to different QUT support services that are able to provide students with further information, support and guidance.

Social media extends well beyond common applications such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Pinterest to include culturally specific applications and websites or versions only available in specific countries, such as Weibo and RenRen. It would be advisable to ask your students what social media they use prior to any further investigation of social media related issues.

It is preferable to advise a student who does not have a social media account to partner with another student rather than insist on the student creating an account specifically for the purposes of the activity.

If any of these activities or topics therein raise concerns for your students, please refer them to QUT Counselling Services.

More information

This guide and the online resources were developed by Megan Pozzi megan.pozzi@qut.edu.au with the support of Emma Nelms and Dr Jocelyne Bouzaid. They were developed in consultation with academics, QUT support staff and QUT students.

The eResponsible and eProfessional Project which led to the development of these resources was sponsored by Director, Library Services, Sue Hutley sue.hutley@qut.edu.au.

## Contents

Introduction ...................................................................................................................................... i

About this guide ........................................................................................................................... i

About the online resources .......................................................................................................... i

More information ......................................................................................................................... i

Learning and teaching activities ...................................................................................................... 1

Module 1: Social media in the workplace .................................................................................... 1

Module 2: Crafting an online identity ........................................................................................... 2

Module 3: Social media and your CV .......................................................................................... 4

Module 4: Internet addiction ....................................................................................................... 5

Module 5: Cyberbullies and trolls ................................................................................................ 6

Module 6: QUT, social media and you ........................................................................................ 7

Module 7: Managing security online ........................................................................................... 8

Module 8: Managing privacy online ............................................................................................ 9

Module 9: Social media and the law ......................................................................................... 10

Further reading ............................................................................................................................. 11

* * * * *
Learning and teaching activities

Module 1: Social media in the workplace

Activity 1.1
• Ask the students to form small groups and think of three different social media tools.
• Ask the students to consider how each tool could be used in an innovative way in the workplace (ensure that the responses are specific to your discipline. For example, education students might consider how each tool could be used to enhance learning or engagement).

Activity 1.2
• Moral dilemmas – ask students to consider the following in small groups and share their responses with the broader group:
  ○ A co-worker requests to be your friend on Facebook but you don’t like them.
  ○ A colleague takes photos of other staff at staff events and loads them to Instagram without their permission.
  ○ You find out that your employer did not shortlist a potential employee because they discovered their political beliefs when googling.

Activity 1.3
• Ask the students to think of how social media tools could be used to decrease productivity in the workplace (this should be fairly easy!).
• Ask students to consider the issue of social media in the workplace and its effect on productivity from the perspective of an employer. How would you feel if you saw your employees on social media all the time?
Module 2: Crafting an online identity

Activity 2.1

- Ask the students to list all of the attributes they would want their future employer to know about them:
  - Which ones are current?
  - Which ones are future prospects?
- Ask the students if they have an online professional identity such as LinkedIn (even an online CV).
  - If they do, ask them how accurate and up to date it is.
  - Get the students to log onto a professional networking site.
  - Students should go through their profile and modify it to fit in with their desired image:
    - Update qualifications, community work, interest and skills.
    - Write a blurb about their career plan, what they would like to achieve, where they would like to work, which sector, which city.
    - Remove unflattering information.

Activity 2.2

- In small groups, students quiz each other on what types of digital footprints they have.
- Students should take turns to Google someone’s full name in the group (put names in inverted commas – e.g. ‘John Citizen’).
- Encourage students to try searching with different limits – search by country, timeframe, web, videos, images:
  - Do any pages associated with the person being searched appear on the first lot of hits?
  - How many pages do you need to go through to find something?
  - What sort of things do you see? Any surprises? Anything you think would turn off a prospective employer?
- Move on to the next person in your group.
- After everyone has had a turn, brainstorm ways to maximise the power of the net so that positive hits come up and aren’t buried.

Activity 2.3

- Ask students to search for the social media accounts of some prominent professionals in their chosen field. They may know these people by name from their textbooks/lectures or papers that they have referenced.
- Use the information relating to their chosen professional’s education and work experience to map out their career. Ask:
  - What organisations have they worked in?
  - Did you already know about these?
- Look at their skills (these will be different depending on their field). Ask:
  - Do you see common skills? What are they? Think communication, written and oral skills, team work.
  - Are there any profession-specific skills you have never heard of? Are these important in your field?
• See if students can crosscheck their chosen professional’s skills with their career milestones/publications. Do they think some of the skills were established during their education or early in their career?

• Ask students to make a note of 3-4 profession specific skills – have they started to acquire any of them? If so, in which units/assessment items? Is there a skill that they would like to develop? If so, encourage students to look at their unit outlines, upcoming assessments, readings, online courses, and library resources to see if they can plan a way to start developing that skill.

• Next, ask them to look at their professional memberships – these memberships can play an important role in networking and national/international recognition of your skills.

• Google the membership body – do they have special memberships for students?
Module 3: Social media and your CV

Activity 3.1

• Have students view the following ‘prezume’: ‘Meet Iveta, FB Marketing Specialist’.
• Ask students to list the pros and cons of presenting one’s CV in a non-paper-based format – would it work in their industry? Why? Why not?

Activity 3.2

• If your students have an Instagram account, they might use it to create a video introducing themselves to a potential employer. Encourage them to create the video however they like (e.g. it may just be them talking straight to camera, or they may incorporate cuts/edits etc.).
• Ensure the students use a hashtag unique to your unit to upload the videos.
• Ask students to search for your class videos using a site such as Iconosquare.
• Encourage students to write comments on the videos, articulating the strengths of the video.

Activity 3.3

• Ask students to read the article Anatomy of a Great Infographic Resume, focussing on the examples provided and the design principles outlined.
• Using the examples and principles as a guide, ask the students to create an infographic resume using a program such as Kinzaa.
Module 4: Internet addiction

Activity 4.1
- Challenge students to spend 24 hours off social media.
- Ask students to write a reflective passage about their experiences and feelings:
  - Were there any positives?
  - What were the negatives?
  - What feelings did they experience?
  - Was it harder or easier than they thought?

Activity 4.2
- Arrange students into groups and discuss:
  - Where do you hang out online?
  - Have you ever wasted time online; what did you feel like?
  - If the internet did not exist, what would you do with your time?
  - Have you ever felt compelled to respond to an inappropriate comment?

Activity 4.3
- Have students complete a time audit of their day (this could happen in a table):
  - How much time did they spend online?
  - What were they doing?
  - Was it the most effective use of their time?
Module 5: Cyberbullies and trolls

Activity 5.1

- View Steph Guthrie’s TED Talk ‘Don’t Feed the Trolls’.
- Discuss in class or have student write a self-reflective piece:
  - What are the issues Guthrie has with ignoring trolls?
  - What alternatives approaches can you suggest?
  - Is Guthrie’s response in turn problematic?

Activity 5.2

- Ask students to identify one news item about cyberbullying or trolling, e.g. ‘Claims Halal Certification Fees Fund Terrorism ‘Absolutely Wrong’ or Gamergate is Loud, Dangerous and a Last Grasp at Cultural Dominance by Angry White Men’.
- For each news item, ask students to identify the victim, the attacker and the bystanders.
- Then, ask students to identify what was done and why (their potential motivations) and the type of language used (e.g. threatening, sarcastic, violent etc.)
- Ask students to share what they would have done in a similar situation and from the perspective of the attacker, victim and bystander.

Activity 5.3

- Or alternatively one of the Anonymous videos on YouTube: ‘Anonymous – We can Change the World’.
- Students to discuss (via presentation or written short answer) the following questions:
  - Who are Anonymous?
  - What are some of the strategies they use?
  - What has been the impact of what they have done?
  - Have Anonymous been positive or negative overall?
Module 6: QUT, social media and you

Activity 6.1
- Encourage students to seek out official QUT social media pages (e.g. QUT Library Twitter, QUT Facebook channel, QUT Student Guild, QUT Sport etc.).
- As they search for the channels, they are likely to encounter unofficial channels that use QUT logo and channel.
- Work with students to identify features of channels around credibility, trustworthiness and integrity (this could form part of a broader discussion around the credibility and trustworthiness of sources more generally).

Activity 6.2
- If group work is an assessable element of your unit, have students, in their groups, develop a set of shared guidelines and expectations for how they will interact online.
- Have each group sign a copy of their guidelines and submit it to you.
- This will help to resolve any group disputes later in the semester.
Module 7: Managing security online

Activity 7.1

- Ask students to open up 5-10 tabs and in each go to the addresses that they most likely to use to buy things online or log into (eBay, bank, Facebook, Twitter, QUT).
- Ask them to take note of the URL that appears for each address.
- How many URLs begin with the secure https:// and how many begin with the not secure http://?
- Now add an ‘s’ the URLs that begin with http:// and see what happens:
  - If the page reloads, they may be able to trust the site with their information.
  - If they get an error message, the company/site shouldn’t be trusted.
Module 8: Managing privacy online

Activity 8.1

- Ask students to log onto their Facebook profile (if they have one).
- Then ask them what information on their profile they think is public/private:
  - Get them to categorise their profile contents (status updates, photos, ‘about info’).
- Get the student to view their profile as ‘public’ and see what comes up:
  - Were the students surprised and how much information was available to the public?
- Encourage the students to discuss their findings and their feelings about the result.

Activity 8.2

- Log onto Facebook (or another site that has advertising).
- Ask students to go through their profile page and those of their friends and take a note of the products/services/sites being advertised on the side.
- Then, encourage students to search the web for things they might like to purchase.
- Tell students to go back to Facebook and refresh the page and see if the ads have changed and, if so, to what?
- Then show students how to go into browser settings and clear cookies then log onto Facebook again.
- What do the students see? What does this show about the nature of privacy online?
Module 9: Social media and the law

Activity 9.1
- Ask students to look at the Australian Human Rights Commission information on Freedom of Expression and the Internet.
- Discuss the issue of internet censorship (as outlined in section 3.2):
  - Should the internet be censored? If so, by whom? If not, why not?
  - What are the motivations behind censorship?
  - Who ‘owns’ the internet?
  - Is freedom of speech a human right? If so, why are some opinions regulated by law?

Activity 9.2
- Watch Werner Herzog’s documentary ‘From One Second to the Next’.
- Ask students to reflect on the impact of technology on society:
  - Is technology bad?
  - What are some of the positive impacts of technology on society? The negative?

Activity 9.3
- Read the article, ‘Aussie Bands Reveal The Truth About Making Money In Music’
- Discuss the impact that social media and piracy has had on the music industry:
  - Why do people pirate art, music and video even though they know it’s against the law?
  - Are piracy laws fair? Why/why not?
  - What about copyright laws?
Further reading


This paper draws on a study of UK business graduates which found that undergraduates use social networks for socialising whilst postgraduates are more aware of the business use. Online networking is likened to building and reinforcing career capital and connections in career management. The authors propose an employability skill set for graduates to be embedded into their studies.


This article discusses the growing trend for employers to monitor the social media activities of their employees as well as the associated privacy issues and implications. It considers the perspective of prospective employees who may be willing to sacrifice privacy for job security.


This video argues that one’s social media presence constitute ‘digital tattoos’ that produce a kind of immortality. The presenter shares four tips for dealing with social media given that anonymity online is scarce.


This article provides guidance and suggestions for writing professional biographies on social media.


A journalist, one of the first to report on the Edward Snowden case, discusses the nature of privacy in a culture of surveillance. It challenges the common assumption that surveillance is not a concern if there is nothing to hide.


This article delineates the differences between behavioural and substance addictions, and internet addiction. It outlines some of the difficulties in treating and addressing internet addiction.


This article outlines proposed legislation to address cyberbullying of children on social media. The proposed legislation would make it easier to order social media sites to remove offensive material.


This article responds to Greenfield’s argument that digital culture will negatively impact the brains of users to reduce attention spans and lower empathy. Levy suggests that her findings are too simplistic, not looking at other possible issues and lack evidence.
LinkedIn. (n.d.) LinkedIn for students: An overview of what LinkedIn can do for your students. Retrieved from https://university.linkedin.com/linkedin-for-students

This site contains a selection of tip sheets and videos for undergraduate students using LinkedIn. The resources provide advice on communication, networking, job seeking and site specific features of LinkedIn.


This website, a coproduction between the National Film Board of Canada and The Guardian, explores the moral dilemmas that social media users face on a daily basis. It provides videos, online polls, and true stories that could be used as stimulus in a classroom environment.


This text is directed at students who need further scaffolding and guidance incorporating social media into their day-to-day study. It covers a range of topic including digital literacy, cybersafety, copyright, writing for the web and more.


This program takes an in-depth look at the phenomenon of trolling and hears from trolls themselves as well as those affected by trolls and trolling.


This article argues that social media profiles are now routinely checked as part of the recruitment process. Companies are concerned that future employees’ behaviour would impact negatively on their brand image.


In this fact sheet, internet addiction is discussed as a diagnosable health issue with suggestions for self-help and support.

Stevenson, S. (2014). By Clicking on this article, you agree to … Does it matter that we don’t read the inscrutable license agreements we encounter on the web? Retrieved from http://www.slate.com/articles/technology/technology/2014/11/end_user_license_agreements_does_it_matter_that_we_don_t_read_the_fine_print.html

This article looks at the legal impact of internet online service agreements, for example when using iTunes, and what is effectively being signed over.