



'How to be a Successful Digital Academic to Boost Your Career' - Google+ Hangout on Air Transcript

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Panellists: Inger Mewburn, Andy Tattersall, David White, Jenny Delasalle, Michael Duignan

Inger Hi everyone and welcome to today's jobs.ac.uk google hangout today, and the topic that we are talking about with our panel is 'How to be a successful digital academic and boost your career'

I'm the panel host and my name is Inger Mewburn, you might better know me as 'The Thesis Whisperer' which is the name of the blog I run for PhD students to my hometown in Canberra in Australia. You might notice its dark, its 11 p.m. here in Australia, but it's lunchtime for most of you so I'm hoping that you're enjoying your sandwiches as you watch.

I'm the Director of Research Training at the Australian National University and the ANU is the most research intensive University in the country, so every third student we see on campus is actually doing some post-graduate study. I really have my work cut out for me trying to look after everyone

I've been blogging now for about five years, my blog has about 40,000 followers and I have about 20,000 followers on Twitter and Facebook, and I'm delighted to be asked to chair this panel today even if it did mean i had to stay up quite late because blogging is a passion of mine and along the way, of course, social media as become the place where i do a lot of work with my students and with my friends and with collaborators, so I'm a passionate advocate of social media as part of your career plan, but i realised a lot of people are confused by social media and how to leverage it best.

When ANU was looking for a new director of research training my digital presence was brought to their attention by some of the ANU PhD students themselves who were advocators of the blog so the ANU gave me a call and the rest is history. But how do you make something like that happen? When I talk to people often I hear them say 'I'd like to blog but I don't have enough time' or 'I should have a social media presence but I

really hate Facebook' and if you feel like this, you've come to the right place because our panel is here to help and talk through that confusion.

There's so many questions already coming onto the question and answer panel and there's obviously a lot to talk about today so I'm going to ask our panelists now to introduce themselves and I'm only going to give them thirty-seconds each, so first of all I'll throw over to Andy, so if you could let us know where you're from Andy a little bit about yourself?

[02:40]

Andy Hello everyone, my name is Andy Tattersall, I'm an Information Specialist based at the School of Health & Related Research at the University Sheffield, and an information specialist is a quite weird and wonderful job that would mean if I wasn't working in the university I'd be checking your emails via GCHQ right now, but my job is to kind of explore technologies, everything from social media to alt metrics, from infographics to videos and MOOC's, and I try and encourage academics and students to correctly use these technologies with an eye to information overload and information literacy, so that's me really.

[03:16]

Inger Ok thank you - obviously got some real expertise there to share especially talking to students. How about you David tell us a bit about yourself?

David Yeah, I'm the Head of Technology & Enhanced Learning at the University of the Arts London. I moved there from Oxford last year and I oversee a lot about e-learning platforms, and I spent a lot of my time exploring and researching what motivates learners to engage with the web, so you know the fact that a few years ago the library was where you went for information and now you've got the whole of the web but also the fact that anybody can publish and kind of the effect that that's having on higher education and, perhaps, you know, the ways that we need to adapt to it or take advantage of it

Inger Cheers David, and over to you Jenny

Jenny Hi yes I'm Jenny Delasalle, I'm the blog editor for Piirus but in a former life I was a Librarian. I used to work at the University of Warwick, supporting researchers and I investigated a lot of social media and other digital technologies that would be useful to researchers, and I'm now working freelance and I'm working for Piirus, and if people

want to know what Piirus is we say it's like an internet dating website but with less romance and with more research connections and networking.

Inger Alright that sounds pretty nerdy, which is really how most researchers would like to approach dating I'm sure.

Michael we can't see you on video here but I'm hoping that I have you on sound - do you want to tell us about yourself?

Okay I don't have Michael on sound. We had some trouble in the green room getting Michael connected but hopefully he'll jump in at some point today.

What I'm going to do for the first part of this hangout is just throw one question at each panelist, and I'm going to - in the Australian style - give them three minutes to answer. You may or may not know that the 'three minute thesis' is an Australian invention and we're quite attached to it, and we find that three minutes is usually enough time for someone to give you a succinct answer, so it's a challenge for our academics today. If you're watching live today you can write a question on the panel on the right hand side of the screen, and you'll only be able to ask a question this way if you're signed into G+. If you want to ask the question on Twitter if you use the hashtag **#jobsQ** I can see it at the bottom line of my screen. If I sound too Australian, and too much like an episode of Neighbours, please tell me on twitter if I'm speaking too fast. If you see someone's got a similar question that you would like an answer to, you can vote it up the list by clicking on it and so we will get them at the top of the list with the most clicks next to them which is a good way to avoid asking the same questions twice.

Okay so I am going to start with my three minute challenge, I'm going to start again with you Andy. My question to you - and I'm going to start my clock - I see you have a special interest in information overload and how it affects our lives, so do you think social media can make the problem of information overload better or worse and do you have any recommendations for academics who are worried about how much time it might take to spend online to build a profile and communicate. Three minutes.

[06.36]

Andy Ok well I think social media is a very personal thing and how much someone engages with it affects how much it's going to impact on their life but a good thing for - I think, younger career researchers, and anyone wanting to step into using social media and technologies more, and they're worried about this problem of information overload and these intrusions into the working life is to perhaps try and start with some

good housekeeping, because I'm sure people actually feel overwhelmed already by the amount of emails and various kind of contacts they get on a personal and professional level. So what I would start by doing is having a look at first of all - all the mailing lists that you're subscribing to and how many notifications you're already getting and trying to offload a load of stuff, because I think people all too often just delete delete delete and they don't actually get to the root of the problem of the intrusions they're getting.

So there's some great tools out there - one particularly good tool is something called 'unroll me' which will sync up with your email account and it will list all of the subscription you receive notifications from you can en-batch just remove a load, so rather than just adding some new ones to the pot and feeling even more overwhelmed, just have a look at where you are at the moment and get rid of some of those and then also look at the notifications you're getting - what you're getting on your tablet device, what you're getting on your smart phone - and try and figure out which ones do you really want to be prodded and poked about, so, you know, if you're using Twitter, do you want to get a phone or tablet alert every time someone mentions you or do you want to kind of go to it when you want?

So think about switching off these notifications because I think that's the problem, that people then start to feel even more overwhelmed and then they just stop using it all. So that's not what we want people to do, so look at using aggregation tools such as TweetDeck for your Twitter and using curation tools like Scoopit to curate information that's coming at you from all these different places and create these little strands of academic interest, very much like kind of a Pinterest board, but of blog articles & journal articles and videos in all kinds of things in different themes and a good tool to use is called 'if this then that' if you search for 'IFTTT' that creates recipes, so if you do something here in social media it will have an action over there so you do something in Facebook it will impact on Twitter, you do a tweet and it'll save it as a Google Doc - and collate your tweets into one Googledoc - so it stops duplication because one of my interests as information specialist is trying to simplify processes and trying to remove replication and duplication because I think these all hinder people from trying to use technology, and another good thing to do is just try and kind of plan your day trying not be driven by these notifications so don't have a mobile phone on when you don't need it, remove those kind of things so you can do the traditional academic work, so you can sit and write in silence and try and plan your day ahead to achieve a few things because you need to do this if you're going to the use technologies because they can be very intrusive.

[9:49]

Inger So, yeah that was 3 minutes – it goes fast doesn't it? I'm imagining some kind of

you know, real live TV show where someone comes in and helps you organise all these things because you named already quite a few tools, I know I use 'if this then that', I use pocket, I use buffer and I use various others tools - flipboard - to arrange and to segregate my feeds, that's so that they're not in my face all the time. I think social media is a bit like a hosepipe put to your face If you don't actually engage with these tools.

But knowing which ones right for you – you've nailed it there - it's a very personal thing, ok thank you for that and I'm sure we'll come back to that because there's been some questions already on the question and answer panel on the right – if you're logged into g+ you can ask us questions . So thank you for that Andy.

And now David, I was very excited to see you here on the hang out because I've admired your work now for quite some time, so I just outed myself there as a fan girl, could you talk to us just briefly about the concept of visitors and residents – I use this with my students and find it very helpful. So what is the difference between a digital resident and a digital visitor and how might you move from one to the other?

David Yeah okay well - this is an idea which was originally a partial reaction to Prensky's idea of digital immigrants and digital natives which was kind of predicated on the idea that if you're a bit older you'd never get technology quite as well as the kids which just didn't seem to be true and the point about visitor and residents as an idea is it just helps us to think about how we engage online, so instead of necessarily getting caught up with 'oh there's this application does this or there's this app or this way of doing this' and talking about functionality, we're actually talking about our motivation to engage.

So it's a continuum of motivations to engage if you like, so it's not two people, and the quickest way to explain it is that at one end of that continuum - when you're engaging in visitor mode, you're kind of thinking of the web as almost like an untidy toolbox, so you work out what you want to achieve and you go on line and you pick the tool that you think's going to work for you, then you use it and then you put it back, close the lid and come away. So this is what Andrew was talking about, sometimes you actually have to manage your time to give you the space to do that and you don't leave a social trace.

[12:30]

This is the point. At the resident end of the continuum you're thinking about the Web really more like a series of places or spaces and you're living out part of your life - whether that's professional or personal – online, so that's where you're going to go online to express opinions, to get involved in chat, in discourse, it's likely to take place

in social media and that is certainly one of the territories I think is really intriguing when we talk about successful digital academic, is to what extent we feel the need to be visible and what are the advantages and disadvantages of that. So the advantage is that you might end up with global visibility in the opportunity to form networks to collaborate etc. etc.

[13:13]

But the disadvantage is you might feel like you're working 24/7 depending on how that goes, so that's the spectrum of the modes of engagement. You know, I've developed with colleagues a sort of mapping format where people can actually sit down and map their engagement online across that visitor / residents continuum which people find quite a useful reflective process as it's actually quite difficult, the problem is all this is virtual and all of us kind of hold a very loose map of the way that we engage online. It's actually quite useful to sit down and draw that out and see how other people are engaging as well so that's what that is in a nutshell as an idea it's just a very simple way of coming to an understanding of that very broad landscape of possibilities that we have that go from googling and reading a bit of Wikipedia all the way through to making a YouTube video, tweeting about it, blogging and all that and everything else.

Inger Okay – so you were very succinct and you had twenty seconds left.

So there's already been a few concerns people have raised about privacy, do you think that this is the key issue when people decide whether they.. You talked about when you're a digital resident you leave traces of yourself, you're exposing yourself, are some people, do you think, more comfortable with that, or is it something that you can learn?

[14:39]

David Well it's interesting because when you're moving around in visitor mode leaving traces but just not social traces so you could - you know - obviously your data is being trawled and sold all the time so don't think it's as simple as you're leaving traces in one mode and you're not in the other, I think privacy is you know a tricky area in that sense.

Personally I'm not very resident in in my personal life, i don't post pictures of my kids or talk about my life, but I'm very resident in terms of my professional persona so that's quite an easy way of managing that. I think you have to look at it as a kind of, you know, deal that you're striking, in terms of visibility in profile versus perhaps the amount that you're giving yourself to the web and there are performative aspects to it from that point of view, so you know, really, you have to decide how comfortable you are engaging with platforms like Twitter and Facebook who are effectively ... their business model is effectively selling your identity In terms of the way they make adverts and target adverts and all of the rest of it, and I think most people come to the conclusion that they're comfortable making certain compromises because the of benefits to

themselves but it's worth considering, and I think it's got more to do about what aspects of yourself you're selling and in what ways than it has to do with privacy in some senses.

[16:05]

Inger Okay that's great we'll look at that point up again later because I think there's a lot to be said about branding and there's a lot of discomfort about that in academic circles I've noticed.

So Jenny, I jumped on Piirus which is the social network that has been launched for researcher dating well – but not actually dating, dating of the platonic intellectual kind - and I was very impressed that it immediately suggested that I friend Megan McPherson who's already my friend so do you want to tell us something about this social network, what do you think the value is of this kind of site and given that there's quite a few - we've got academia.com , we've got LinkedIn we've got Researchgate - they seem to be mushrooming everywhere, why Piirus?

[16.51]

Jenny Piirus grew out of our work at the University of Warwick really and our connection with the researchers there and I think it's slightly different than the other kinds of platforms mainly because it's so light touch, you know you can create a profile on Piirus in five minutes on your iPhone so it's quite simple and easy to create a profile there and it doesn't try to do anything else for you other than put you in touch with other academics, other researchers, so it's very simple very light and you can connect it to your profile somewhere else, on LinkedIn, or academia.com or wherever you use but whereas the other sites maybe look a little bit more at your publications your past history, your achievements, like an online CV, I think Piirus is very much focused on keywords you choose to describe your current and future direction of your research so it's about your collaboration interests and it's very much focused on the idea that researchers need to make connections across boundaries across the disciplines across nations you know interdisciplinary and international connections ...particularly younger researchers don't already have those connections and there's lots of people who value the opportunity to do that online and I think the thing about Piirus is that it's part of the academic community, it grew up from the University of Warwick, it's a partner of jobs.ac.uk who are hosting this hangout and it's very much a part of the research community.

[18:20]

And it's been growing since it started, it went live to the world in August last year we've been picking up a lot more members and a lot more interactions are taking place now as the result of Piirus which I think is great.

Inger Its interesting Jenny that you talk about international connections, being from Australia as you can see it's dark here and we're connected now through the internet so we have many tools at our disposal, and I've often thought that back in the old days international connections for us had to be made by literally flying to other places, so there's a cost issue here and an equity issue do you think with these tools, that's why I do say to students and academics a lot that that this is just another tool to enable that and I'm imagining on Piirus that you get suggested that there's a friend, what the next step?

[19:15]

Jenny The next step is that you can send them a message, and then you can take it forward in your email you know, how you would normally carry on if you go to a conference and you meet someone maybe, or if you found them on twitter maybe you get in touch with each other and you carry on your conversation and in the way that you feel is best for your work, for your networking whatever you're doing, so it's not trying to force a particular model on people once they make that connection but you might just go on Piirus. We don't manage any of those interactions.

I should just point out I'm actually based in Berlin here So yeah International is my thing!

I do a lot of work with people in the UK obviously because I speak English but I also do some work with Humboldt University here in Berlin.

Inger Okay thanks Jenny. Michael – have we got you on sound now?

Michael I really do hope so can you hear me now?

Inger Yes perfect.

Michael Oh thank God!

Inger So Michael, I might get you to do both things if you could briefly introduce yourself and then I'll ask you the question – so tell us about yourself Michael?

Michael So I'm a researcher and lecturer at Anglia Ruskin University in the Business School here and my research is really looking into the economic impact of mega-events, and my research has kind of led me down a path that's developed institutional networks, across governments, across non-governmental organizations and my previous experience working for the research councils funded organisation called Vitae, which led me to

project manage a conference called 'The Digital Researcher' over 2011 & 2012 which opened my eyes up to the types of institutional networks you can develop as a result of using social mediums, and that sort of thing has kind of continued on into my very own PhD research and has help me develop these network that have allowed me to gain access to networks that are usually quite closed. So from a methodological point of view, social media has been kind of the crux of my entire research in terms of gaining access without it I don't know whether I have been able to get the leverage and the platform to be able to research what I'm doing now

Inger Yeah you actually answered the question that I was going to ask you so maybe I'll put it slightly different spin on it, do you encounter people that look at what you're doing and say 'I don't know how you do that? I don't know how you managed to do that' if you were to tell a person maybe one thing that they could do that could leverage social media in their research what would be your top tip?

[22:12]

Michael Well, you know, every researcher has a very close-knit group of stakeholders and I guess it's about identifying those that you need to leverage to gain access to certain forms of data and that's absolutely crucial so in terms of... and it's exactly like the model that I used to be taught when I was at my previous institution, when I go to a conference you need to identify key stakeholders who you want to speak to, who have the value and the knowledge that you require to push forward your research agenda so it's about kind of identifying those networks within social mediums. I think that that's the powerful thing with social media there are... and that's the problem is social media is there are so many of them the so many networks that you have to you have to look across them all and you have to identify those particular groupings of people that you need to find so - get online and get yourself familiar with these particular networks and then find out the specific ways in which you need to develop those institutional networks so you know a lot planning is involved and then connecting with the right people hopefully that answers your question.

Inger It does actually, I can relate to it because in my own PhD research I did anthropology and so I found my anthropological methods very helpful, in engaging in these networks as you're saying, finding where these people lived, finding what they're doing, just by watching really, lurking, okay so I'm going to go over to the question and answer panel now ,yeah, and I can see that there's a lot of really tasty questions but I'm going to go to the one that has thirty-seven people wanting an answer to it and that is at the top there 'which digital tool platform have you found most useful to your academic career and why' - now I'm going to get all the panelists to say one just one that they think is the best tool that they have got in their toolbox the moment and why it's good.

So I might start with Jenny just for a change,

[24:21]

Jenny Hi I love Evernote, a lot of researchers were raving about it and told me about it and since I tried it out it's crept more and more into becoming my most useful tool so I use it when I find a web page I immediately add it to my Evernote collection or if there's an email that's got something really useful for my work in it I forward it to my Evernote collection and I basically means that I don't have to have separate file structures everywhere for all of my different files because Evernote tags them all together so it's a personal database application that's not platform dependent so you can have it on your phone, on your iPad, and on your computer so once you put the piece of information in there.. and it's free as well, hello? you get more if you pay for it but I get enough out of the free version I have to say, I love tagging things because of my librarian background and it's very useful when I want to write a blog post on something new then I go and look at my Evernote collection for what I've found recently in that area.

Inger Alright thanks Jenny, so Evernote, big tick for Evernote, what about you David ?

[25:33]

David Yeah I mean for me it was it was twitter and the reason is – and that's one of those kind of visibility networking tools - I'm an incredibly disorganized person so no end of productivity tools will help me but what I enjoyed about twitter was that there was a time when I was perhaps the only person doing the kind of research I was doing in my institution so I felt like within my institution there wasn't really an actual network of people, so I went on to Twitter and found those people who are interested in same things and slowly got to –

Inger How did you find them David?

[26:14]

David I think the way that I started was I would follow people that I met face to face at conferences, and I think that's a really effective way of doing it, because you only need a cluster of about 10 people, and then you follow the people you know and so branches out so there's a genuine network effect there, and I found that that tied me in with people that were interested in similar things to me, to begin with this wasn't particularly organized you know, I wasn't.. I didn't plan anything.. I was just having chats that entertained me about stuff I was interested in and overtime that network grew and lead to - you know funded projects and lead to particular lines of inquiry but at its heart, the reason that it worked for me is because it connected me to people I otherwise wouldn't have been connected to in an extremely efficient manner so I can keep that ticking over

during the day much better than email and as you were mentioning certainly much much more efficient than going to face to face conferences.

[27:18]

Inger Sorry, sorry to interrupt you there – which client do you use to look at Twitter on your phone?

David I use twitter! in a radical departure from trendiness, yes, what I found over the years is that actually the originator of the software, their clients have got better, and I try not to do anything too clever with the way I manage my engagement with Twitter which sort of helps keep it to a minimum so I I'm not timing tweets or you know making lists or anything like that I pretty much just accept that there's this massive flow of information and if I'm interested I'll go on, have a look, and engage if there's something interesting on there...

[28:05]

Inger I'm the opposite kind of twitter user myself i have TweetDeck, I schedule, I use Buffer, we're at the opposite ends of the spectrum.

David I think you're more a professional social media user, which would explain why so many people follow your blog but for me I went through a period of doing that and it made me feel sad, because it had taken the joy out of it for me so I had to get back from that, stop trying to chase down numbers or trying to organize things and try to be strategic and just thought – I'm going to be me, floating around and talking about things I'm interested in and I think that that's you know it it's worth saying that depending on the kind of person you are and what you're trying to achieve don't professionalize your engagement to the point at which you stop enjoying it would be my advice in that sense but twitter certainly is the core thing for me.

Inger Yeah id agree, i actually just love twiddling the knobs and turning the dials - so that for me...

David You're just a geek! Essentially you're just geeking out there.

Inger Yeah... ok how about you Andy? What's your one tool, and sorry twitters off the menu..

[29:20]

Andy Ohh id got twitter lined up.. can I just briefly say something about Twitter - Twitter does a lot of great... i agree with what david says,.. about the fun aspect in that it should be

enjoyable, cause it's a learning tool as well as a communication tool but one of the great things I found with twitter was that because I was able to kind of snoop and follow all the trends you know I spotted kind of MOOCs about three years ago and I was able to kind of take this idea to my director of teaching and we ran our own MOOCs at University Sheffield you know, two years ago and that's thanks to Twitter and I've been rewarded at university level becoming a senate teaching member because of that so proof in the pudding that social media can enhance your academic profile. so if I wasn't to pick twitter id pick Mendeley.

Inger Ok then tell us about Mendeley

Andy Ok so Mendeley is part social media, part social network of researchers I think there's in excess of three million researchers globally now. Its part kind of linked in with the groups and the conversations, it's part massive database that's being organically curated by the users of academic references and its part reference manager database and it's free, well there's paid for versions but the free version is excellent for any researcher out there and the great thing about it is it kind of introduces you to resources and to discussions and papers that you don't necessarily pick up in conventional database searches so we have a lot of international students in my department and quite often they're wanting to research topics revolving around what may be conditions in their own country especially in Africa and sub safaran Africa so quite often they'll search the traditional western databases may struggle to find papers and then they'll maybe try and search Google Scholar and try to find some great literature Mendeley is bringing in data and papers from all over the place and it's also an alternative metric, so the more people save a paper potentially the more useful it is not always the case it may just be a very very bad Peace of research but it helps identify other kinds of research that's out there and it's got its own kind of hot topics kind of trend and Mendeley are very keen about the analytics of these things, so they're very keen about how long someone has a paper open and how long they read it, what they do with it so it helps perhaps, researchers identify other areas of research new themes, etc. that you may not have spotted, and the great thing is it is this social network and it's a great way for researchers put their publications up, it's another repository, quite often organizations build these repositories and they sit there and think everyone's going to rush to it but they don't tell anyone because they're not using social media and they're not using communication tools This puts this where the community is active so it is a fantastic tool, I've taught it to hundreds and hundreds of PhD and masters students and we've never had a problem, they love it, It's kind of what Google Docs was to Microsoft word, this is kind of reference management to what reference manager endnote was really, it's brought it into the 21st century. It's owned by Elsevier but don't hold that against it

[32:54]

Inger Ok, thank you for that, what about you Michael? so you can't have twitter or Mendeley or evernote,

Michael Do you know I probably wouldn't even have chosen any of those purely because you know I'm a bit of a fundamentally lazy researcher and what I mean by that is that I don't like social media taking up too much of my time because it it I got into it a scenario where I really was spending too much time, so I would choose kind of the blog and at the moment I'm using WordPress and purely because it interlinks between all the different types of social mediums out there and it means that you only really need to put your content in one place to get it disseminated across the range of networks so for example I write some kind of ideas about a paper I'm about to write when I post that blog it instantly goes out to different networks right so we're looking at Twitter networks yeah I've got my mum on Twitter but I've also got other academics on Twitter right so Twitter is a kind of blur between personal and professional networks in my case – it depends on who you tend to follow and who follows you and but It also goes to my LinkedIn which is full it professors that would never normally speak to me on a regular day but with LinkedIn I can connect with professors, key professors like Bent Flyvbjerg, Project Management Professor at Oxford University who connects with me, I don't know why, I don't know why he connects but he does and all my ideas can be stored in that one place which is the blog it's a decent amount of space where I can articulate something - well depends on the thing I'm trying to articulate – but I can articulate something in relatively enough depth to get the point across and to get feedback across all the networks so the one key thing and you know the things I've been doing with working with you know the research councils and at Vitae and at the Institution that I'm in now is we just don't have enough time for embedding social media into our work load, right, and that's absolutely kind of fundamentally fine - academics are busy so how can you be lazy about it? well you can have a blog which then speaks to other different forms of communication that we'll be talking about today and it's already being discussed and in a comprehensive way so that that's why I would probably choose a blog yeah

[35:25]

Inger Ok great

I'm a big fan of WordPress myself , I run thesis whisper off WordPress, and its fantastically easy to use if I can use it anybody can, so I'm last up and my favourite now that twitter has been taken is pocket and one of the reasons that I've grown such a large twitter audience is because I do something called curation If you're interested in curation have a look at @catspajamasNZ on Twitter or google Joyce Seitzinger who's done a lot of work on social curation, the idea is that you treat your Twitter feed like a

radio station and so I tweet out four times a day - just useful links or whatever I'm reading. We also run another Twitter feed called `anew_rsar` which does the same thing but with much more focus on writing so the whole aim with my twitter channel and my LinkedIn channel and my Google+ channel and my Facebook page they all run the same links and I run it through pocket, so what I do is I get up in the morning I pick up my iPad I eat my eggs at breakfast and I do my reading. I've got all my blogs set up in flipboard - all my magazines, all my other curated lists - I go through and I just find what I find interesting and I find if I follow my nose, what I'm interested in most people of my type of person is interested in it too, so most academics have some interest in what I'm reading, and there's a little button on pocket, so in any other of my apps - so Zite, flipboard, Twitter Facebook - all have a little button that I can press to send it to pocket. I got this from Jason Downes - who's another person on twitter we're following @jasondownes - everything goes into pocket and I can then go into pocket - I've literally stuffed all my reading into my pocket so I don't read very much of each one, I just sort of scan it to see if it's interesting, stick it in pocket. Later on when I've got a little bit more time say over lunch I pull out my iPad again and I'd read pocket, and pocket strips out the ads and gives me multiple opportunities for sharing so I just click on a little button and I can send what I've read in pocket to all my networks to LinkedIn, to google+, to Facebook, you name it - and so people always say to me 'how do you have so much time to be on twitter? You must be sitting on there all day' well actually it's breakfast and it's lunch time and that's it - I'm just sharing what I'm reading. So that's my favorite app.

Well I'm looking here at Q&A and I'm just trying to find one - and there's a couple of questions that sort of relate to each other - one is talking about 'Do Universities actually really care about digital presence or not' and the other one is talking about 'how to ensure your digital presence is positive rather than negative' and I think those two questions are quite related ...putting things out there on the web or being on twitter or making YouTube videos, they're creating a reputation, they're creating a kind of understanding of you as an academic, I know that I got my job at ANU through that activity, they would never have known I existed if I hadn't been out there sharing my reading, blogging whatever, but I'm interested in what some of our panelists think of this territory between private and public and trying to make their blogging activities positive and actually leveraging their career, so perhaps I can go through one by one and ask you just what do you think is the one thing that you've done, online that's brought you the most positive attention. So that's giving a bit of thought who wants to take it? First hands up who feels like they can answer that straight off? Ok, David first. The others of you can keep thinking - what's the one thing that you've done that's been the most positive?

David I'm going to come at this from a completely different angle because I suppose one thing I did that was positive was to come up with an idea and then talk about it online so I think just coming off the back of your comment Inger the thing that I think I like doing online and I find the most positive is putting a half-baked idea out there and then having a discussion about it and I think that that can kind of suddenly open up your approach to engaging online, because the...

You know what? We trained throughout school and university generally to work on something until it's finished and then only show the world when we finish, quite often we don't show the world, you just show your tutor. Whereas I think that that the real - you know - interesting aspect of the way that online networks can work... and I'm talking about, you know, this kind of engaging with others is the opportunity to be part of a flow of discourse, you know, and the opportunity to kind of push knowledge forwards... so for me that's the most positive aspect to it and that's the thing that I enjoy the most, is the idea that I can put one of my notions out into the world and with the help of others develop it evolve it and see it travel.

Inger So that's really at odds to how we're taught to think about our knowledge and ideas, it's all about the citation, it's all about making the claim, it's all about sticking your name on something making sure that you're first and not getting scooped and of course that anxiety is very present in PhD students. What's your response to that? Because what you're saying takes a lot of courage and goes against some cultural norms.

David One of the thing that's that helps, I think, is that i didn't do a PhD so I wasn't trained in that way of thinking so in that sense I don't have an academic career and yet here I find myself so I consider myself to be somebody who's kind of travelling almost entirely by a different route whereby I'm more interested in expressing ideas and as I say moving knowledge forwards in those online spaces and places now what I'd say coming back on your question and I'm very confident about this is that some people think if you blog an idea you're giving it away, my experience is if you blog an idea you're actually claiming it yourself and I've never had any problem that I know of people stealing my ideas and that is partly because, my career path - if we're talking in that sense - is not tied to classic institutional structures and so I don't have to worry about that quite so much, but I'd recommend to anybody out there to start putting your ideas out into the world via the digital because it's a place where you can actually develop those ideas, you know? That principle of being in your own room and working on an idea until you completely own it and then putting it out there is I think just... really not fun - you know and I don't think that's part of what university should be about. I don't think that's our remit.

Inger It's a good answer David and there are some areas at the University where that argument ... because obviously I have issues... but what about you Andy? What's the most positive thing you've either made or done or put on the web? That's got you the most positive interest?

Andy I'm going to agree with David just make a point that one of the issues I've come across by you know dealing with researchers and PhD students and masters students is this fear of failure and the fear of they don't feel that they can say things that they are actually experts in and I've kind of run workshops where I kind of ask people to search for stuff on each other on the web to find out what's out there, these are people who are not using social media finding interviews with themselves some such as even soundcloud and things like that and what I'm trying to express to them is, if you're happy for someone from the Guardian to ring you up or someone to interview you for some blog or some magazine and you'll speak there as the expert, why can't you take control of that message yourself and push it out there?

We don't see that because it is a fear of failure it's a fear of 'I'm not exactly sure I can say this' so I mean what I try to do is try and kind of practice what I preach so you know I'm trying to pitch blog articles in and trying to get bits of evidence to show academics that there's another way. So, a recent example was, I wrote something for the LSE impact blog which is an excellent blog for anyone interested in this area to follow the impact of social sciences I wrote a two piece article on post publication review which is a big issue these days because again it falls into this area what can I say publicly? Can I say this? Can I say that? Where we're seeing academics now commenting post publication on other people's research, and we'd like to think it's all very measured and very balanced and it's a critical response so I wrote about the various tools available in the implications to this and I got an email a few weeks later from a journal editor - a professor from New Zealand asking whether I would write something for a special issue on open access for his peer review journal so there we see it all flipped on its head you know I've written these informal pieces for a blog, I've pitched them and someone from the other side of the world contacted me and said I find these very interesting and will you write me a journal article? So there's an invite to write a journal article - that's great! The first person I told was our Director of Research and he was impressed! You know something for him - for a professor - not a big impact really? He will be invited to do these things all the time but for me, and for people of my like, that's quite a big step forward, I think it shows that social media and these elements such as blogging can kind of get you in the back door it gets you heard because if you're not engaging, if you're having a conversation but no one's here listening, you don't exist in their eyeline and I think it's about bringing you into people's eyelines that you do know about a particular topic.

[45:56]

Inger It's really interesting what you are both saying, talking about basically just extending what you would normally do as an academic into these online spaces in maybe tentative ways or unfinished ways so it's challenging already that, that notion that somehow social media sits aside or separate to everything else you do as an academic.

So how about you Jenny?

Jenny I think my key thing is if you're going to blog you need to be authentic and you need to be open and I've got similar stories where we've had a blog post where I've written something about what I'm interested in, what I'm investigating, and how I'm investigating it led to somebody tweeting at me saying can we get in touch cos he also interested in the same area and it's led to us being co-authors on a paper.

[46:47]

I'm a librarian not really an academic but I'm still an author on a paper because of my digital media presence. Similarly I co-authored a chapter in a book I went to the book launch and met some of the other of the authors on that book and now one of the other authors and myself have a blog conversation so it's gone from the face to face and traditional route into digital and now it's gone the other way for me as well so if you're authentic and open and you maintain those connections that you make and, sometimes, you know, they can take a long time, as I said the author I connected with on the book, it was over a year before we got back in touch and just reflected on the things we talked about when we met face to face and yet being open and authentic and keep in touch.

Inger Jenny, it's interesting and speaking as a woman I often get asked 'do you get trolled a lot?' because that's the discourse we hear, especially through the conventional media, is 'well be careful the internet it's been scary place and you're going to get trolled' Has that happened to you?

Jenny Never, never my only experiences have been overwhelmingly positive, maybe I'm inviting it now - I can't share much on that sorry!

Inger I've had my fair share of them I've just learnt to strategically ignore them but I think it's very helpful that my avatar isn't gendered and I've been very careful to keep my face out of my most of my feed I think that's actually been helpful because the bigger you get, the more opportunities there are for people to troll you. Though maybe I ask for it a little bit when I do posts like 'Academic arse holes in the circle of niceness' but I'll leave that where it sits – how about you Michael? What's the one thing, you know single most positive thing that you've done that's been the best for your career in social media?

[48:38]

Michael Well my career has been relatively quite short in comparison with most on the panel but really just to reiterate putting your work out there, putting the hook out there and hoping that a fishy will bite is obviously the most important aspect of using social media, just getting your research out there, dissemination right, that's probably the main thing but I also want to kind of look at it from a very different route. I want to use an anecdote from my research, so I mentioned earlier that social networks can be really useful for accessing closed communities and difficult to engage with conventional institutions like the government, non-governmental departments and stuff like that, for my research I worked with two communities in east London that were part of my case study and I had a really good following around them and hopefully they'll be following me now and I needed to get access to the mayor's office, and I sent them email after email and I didn't get much response, however, when I tweeted them on their institutional profile and this was then amplified by my network the constituents that they were representing, and they amplified my message.

So on one side, it's kind of almost like a really good political lobbying tool for getting people who would not normally speak to you, to speak with you, and that's a really important... particularly when you doing quite kind of politically and economically orientated subjects and that can be quite contentious like looking at the economic impact of mega-events, big kind of macro spectacles, it's sometimes very difficult to get people to speak to you, so that's kind of one thing and that kind of then branches out to, you know, institutional importance of the REF, and research impact and it's about kind of it's about connecting with your people especially as social scientists, you need to connect with your people, get their views, get their backing and which can then, because I sit within the field of a critical theory, which requires some modes of social action, an emancipation for certain communities who have been affected by whenever I'm looking at.

[51:04]

And through access with these governmental organisations, these organisations and you can, subtly influence policy and practicing, get your research out there on a on a kind of an important leveraging platform like these institutions so for example in working with the Federation of Small Business on the next part of my research survey and without a social media presence in getting through at discussion and communicating with them via social media, that would never never never happen. but now we're kind of co-branding a study together - which is huge - and we got the government involved, we've got, you know, the confederation for British industry involved and without that access to those relatively quite closed communities the research would never been able to

invoke one such a wide dissemination of research and two and push forward the kind of the social action critical theory that's required for taking that those types of theoretical approaches and its underpinned by the fact that kind of places like Twitter, forums like Twitter really give hard faced institutions a public and personal persona I think that underpins it in my perspective, in my opinion.

[52:31]

Inger It's really really interesting thinking about political action particularly because Twitter and other social media starts being implicated in revolution so maybe it's viva the academic revolution?

I'm to lead my last one so that apart from the fact that I credit twitter with my current job which is a great job and enabled me to move interstate and work in one of the best universities in the country - which is fantastic - the other really positive thing that happened is I wrote a paper with Pat Thompson called 'Why do academics blog?' and it's become, I think at the moment, it's the 3rd most read paper ever in 'Studies in Higher Education' which is a fairly prestigious journal and both Pat and I have been amused and amazed at the speed that it traveled up the ranking table, I think the one that's ahead of it at the moment has been, you know, seven years it's taken to get to that level and we're just behind it and it's only been out for 18 months so I think that what social media can do is actually amplify your conventional research metrics because marketing an academic paper is a little bit of a niche marketing prospect, there's only a certain number of people in the world that are going to be interested in what it is that you're saying and I think everyone here has spoken about entering those communities, being part of those communities - those communities are the audience and consumers of your work, as we know and that then has an effect on those conventional counting metrics because I know for one I can't make my blog count in any of our research impact systems here in Australia, maybe in the UK would be different, so I think also that raises an important equity question in my mind which is people who aren't tweeting, who aren't blogging, are they at a disadvantage then in conventional publishing metrics? I'm going to give Andy one minute to respond to that because it's mostly his area before we can begin to summarise because we're almost done with our time here amazingly – Andy? Conventional metrics? Alt metrics?

Andy At this stage I think is too early to say too much cos alt metrics have only really been around since 2012 - certainly what alt metrics are doing is helping people to identify what's going to be hot topics or what's going to be a good piece of research or certainly a well cited piece of research down the line so I think for those not using it they're not necessarily at a disadvantage in terms of metrics I think it's just more but disadvantage in terms of staying in touch with what's happening at the cusp of the areas that you're researching in, so that's how that massive the benefit is of keeping you at the forefront,

which is think these days is - you know - in a very overcrowded academic market is worth an awful lot.

I think the metrics will become more and more important as we go along because the problem is we've not been really measuring everything that comes out of University we're only measuring journal articles and there's an awful lot of other stuff to measure so it may be more of interest to people with data sets and other things like blogs etc. as we go on that we start to find these things I know one thing the alt metrics do is show you where the conversations are happening and perhaps where people are talking about you in the media and blogs so you get to find out geographically what's happening with your research and I think again that is something quite useful for researchers to know.

[55:55]

I think secretly they all want to know this, they try and say they don't but I think secretly inside they like to know where their research is being talked about you know, is it popular in Canada? Is it popular in Australia? Has one of my peers said something about my research - so those kinds of metrics are going to become more important I think. but at the moment, still fairly early - I think fund holders are quite interested in these things and publishers are certainly more than researchers at the moment.

Inger Right, interesting thank you Andy. We've got 4 minutes left so we're going to have to go very very quick, I would like to now ask each of the panelists what's your key take away message from tonight? I'll start with you Michael and I'll give you 20 seconds!

I think your microphones off Michael?

Michael Sorry can i have 20 seconds from now?

Inger Ok go!

Michael Make sure that you engage with your public, especially if you're social sciences, because you've got to look towards where the trajectory of the research excellence framework is taking us, it's taking us to impact on society, impact on people, it's becoming more humanized and we really need to think about how you convey that in the context of your own research and try and push your institution and your department, whatever research community you're within, to also adopt that kind of mindset, it's really really fundamentally important.

[57:23]

Inger Great thank Michael, Jenny? one key take away?

Jenny Yeah I think the main thing is to be using these kinds of digital media to consume what other people are doing keep an eye on it but also to keep in touch with them so it's a two-way process it's not just about what you put up but it's also about what you're learning about other people through these kinds of media.

Inger Cos that's the 'social' part of social media.
Okay great - how about you David?

David Yeah I think interesting ideas and opinions, they travel so stop worrying about selling yourself and branded metrics and all those sort of things to start seeing the web as a place where you can actually engage with people to push forward your ideas into your actual work because if you remember that's what you got into this game - so don't get too hung up on the metrics would be my advice.

Inger Yeah don't geek out like I do, I can't help it, if there is a number around, i want to know it. Okay that's good advice actually cos it's sucking the fun out of it. It's very easy that, but that might happen – Andy last word from you?

Andy Have a go writing a blog piece, it's not a scary as you think it is it's a good piece reflective practice it just allows you to kind of think about the stuff that you're doing and just think about it in terms of if a journalist was asking you the question, so they'd ask you what is the research about why is the research happening and who is it going to impact on when is it out where is it available just put it into those simple terms and then you'll be able to kind of transform an academic paper that probably makes sense to a small group people to a large group of people because especially when we have to talk about things like societal impact now and the REF, it's quite important we perhaps think about how far research can go and what it can do.

Inger Okay, right about one minute left, this is really like doing radio except with your face on the screen, so thank you! I'd like to thank all our panelists today, Andy, David, Jenny and Michael.

[59:27]

You can find more careers advice, articles, free e-books and resources on the jobs.ac.uk website, which even us Australians keep a close eye on, and in the careers advice section there's lots of articles relevant to this topic, and if you're watching on google+ and YouTube then some links will be posted below just to remind you that if you want

to go back to listen to any of what we've talked about tonight, this hangout will be put up on YouTube very shortly.

If you want to find it have a look at the jobs.ac.uk website YouTube channel, and so on behalf of all at jobs.ac.uk, thank you and goodbye from Australia and the UK and good luck with your digital presence online.

[60:13]

- ENDS -

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