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# Social media skills for Researchers

## Workshop outline

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### Summary

During this workshop, participants will explore the variety of practices associated with social media use and relate this to the wider aims of research practice, connecting with peers and public engagement.

We'll reflect on what it takes to develop an online identity that individuals feel comfortable with and that balances an authentic human voice with the requirements of operating in a professional context maintaining your personal wellbeing.

We'll explore how to create compelling social media context through the use of narrative and digital media and lastly, we'll look at how you can use the features of different social media platforms to meet your aims and connect with the right audiences.

### Workshop themes

#### Understanding engagement with online spaces

The way we use social media platforms is complex so knowing how to make the most of them can be daunting. We'll start off by using a simple but powerful technique for mapping our own individual use of online communication tools. We'll then develop this further by extending the same technique to look at organisational practice.

The benefit of taking this approach is that it provides a framework for people to discuss the purpose behind using social media and ensuring that efforts are targeted at the right place for your intended audiences. It also provides us with a solid grounding for the rest of the workshop, focussing on the strategy rather than the technicalities.

## Harnessing narrative to grab audience attention

Your ability to tell a story using social media is key whether you are talking to peers or members of the general public. We'll look at helping you develop an understanding of narrative and how you can use social media tools to communicate a rich engaging story about research activities.

We'll also touch on how you might manage individual and group identities on social media so people can feel comfortable engaging online in the context of their work. In that context we'll also take some time to devising and approach to dealing with forms of online abuse and trolling.

## Making the most of the tools

Finally, we'll bring all those lessons together and explore how the different features of platforms can be used to get your message across. We'll focus on your target applications of – LinkedIn, Research Gate, Twitter, Facebook and YouTube and consider which others might offer potential.

We'll look at sources of information and analytics to evaluate success across the various platforms and how you can decide what measures of success you actually want to use.

## Detailed outline

Session	Description
<b>Morning</b>	
Thinking about social media engagement (30mins)	<p>Considering a high level view of what the team wish to gain from using social media. Developing a rich picture of future success.</p> <p><b>Activities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Outlining objectives for social media use</li> <li>» Contrasting opportunities versus risks</li> </ul> <p><b>Outcomes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Taking a record of "where we are now" and "where do we want to be" – use for benchmarking progress through the day</li> </ul>
Understanding engagement in online spaces (personal practice) (45 mins)	Using the mapping technique to visualise personal practice

Session	Description
	<p><b>Activities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Using axes of social engagement and info exchange mapped against personal and professional use.</li> <li>» Participants compare their existing practice with peers</li> </ul> <p><b>Outcomes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Reflection on the nature of social media and digital communication.</li> <li>» Establishing that there is no one right way to do social media</li> <li>» Establishes a more nuanced vocabulary</li> </ul>
<b>Break</b>	
<p>Understanding engagement (organisational practice) (60 mins)</p>	<p>Mapping current organisational practice in digital communication. Developing a plan for developing future direction.</p> <p><b>Activities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Variation on the mapping of individual practice</li> <li>» Working in teams to map current institutional practice</li> <li>» Comparing results between teams</li> </ul> <p><b>Outcomes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Describing current practice across the department</li> <li>» Coming up with a more detailed vision for future use of social media</li> <li>» Identifying areas of strength and priorities for development</li> </ul>
<b>Afternoon</b>	
<p>Managing identities and maintain wellbeing online. (60 mins)</p>	<p>Techniques in framing research activity to be meaningful and engaging on social media. Balancing benefits of individual voice with feelings of vulnerability.</p>

Session	Description
	<p><b>Activities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Looking at examples of social media in research to identify best approaches.</li> <li>» Thinking about “finding the story” and setting the narrative</li> <li>» Troll-spotting – a beginner’s guide. Where do they lurk, how to defeat them?</li> </ul> <p><b>Outcomes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Participants start to establish the level of personal involvement they feel most comfortable with</li> <li>» Identifying the potential topic areas that might attract trolling</li> <li>» Actions and guidelines for supporting each other and managing abusive interactions online.</li> </ul>
<p>Making the most of the tools (60-80 mins)</p>	<p>A closer look at Twitter, LinkedIn, Research Gate and other tools</p> <p><b>Activities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Cross referencing purposes of engagement with functions of the platforms</li> <li>» Describing which platforms different audiences are using?</li> <li>» Thinking outside the box – considering innovative approaches to using social media and linking them all together.</li> </ul> <p><b>Outcomes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Referring back to earlier activities, establishing a rubric for how to approach the use of the main platforms</li> <li>» Building a target list of other platforms to engage with over time.</li> <li>» Some handy rules of thumb for evaluating new platforms that emerge.</li> </ul>

Session	Description
Next steps (30 mins)	<p data-bbox="671 465 1270 528">Starting to look at building a strategy and establishing what the next steps are.</p> <p data-bbox="671 539 783 566"><b>Activities</b></p> <ul data-bbox="671 600 1284 831" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="671 600 1284 663">» Revisit the original objectives and vision statements from the morning</li><li data-bbox="671 685 1284 831">» "Action-mapping" follow-up activity (Need for further Skills and Knowledge development, addressing motivational issues and establishing a supportive environment)</li></ul> <p data-bbox="671 887 783 913"><b>Outcomes</b></p> <ul data-bbox="671 947 1230 1066" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="671 947 1230 974">» Establishing an agreed way forward</li><li data-bbox="671 996 1230 1066">» Ensuring that follow-up activity is targeted and supported in the right way</li></ul>