

Shaping a trustworthy representation online: researchers' use of social media

Sara Kjellberg, Department of Arts and Cultural Sciences, Lund University/Library and IT Services, Malmö University

Our online presence is often distributed in a number of digital spaces today like Facebook, Twitter or other kind of web sites. This research project investigates how researchers represent themselves online and what happens with the issues like trust and authority when researchers publish, create and communicate in digital settings. There are a growing number of researchers that use blogs and Twitter as a part of their scholarly communication (Kjellberg, 2010; Weller, K., Dröge, E., and Puschmann, C., 2011). In addition, a number of social network sites for researchers in particular have been developed the last years. Research has shown that the motivations for maintaining scholarly blogs are as much of a personal character - for example to keep up writing and manage information - as driven by intentions to enter a dialogue with others (Kjellberg, 2010).

The aim here is to study how researchers use social media and social network sites in scholarly communication and how this might contribute to the researchers shaping an image of themselves online. Which choices do you make to represent yourself as a researcher? When do you choose to share your research and where? How does information exchange happen and who becomes an authority? Furthermore, the negotiation of trust and authenticity is an important aspect to study more in detail in the area of scholarly communication, while earlier research on these aspects in social media rather has been focusing on youth and their participation in different social network sites or tools (see e.g. boyd 2006).

A theoretical point of departure is that technical and social aspects are intertwined and hard to separate. Even if technology can influence how we act, the way people interact with technology also influence the technology or how it is used. Consequently, in this study the theoretical framework is based on how people act and their practices as a way of studying how people and technology relate to each other. Practices are here used as a theoretical analytical instance to make visible the interaction and interplay with tools based in a socio-technical framework (e.g. Knorr-Cetina, 1999). In this context it is also important how people learn to become part of a community and interrelate in that specific group's understanding of the traditions, norms and practices. Epistemic cultures are here used as a theoretical entrance to study research practices online (Knorr-Cetina, 1999).

In this poster I will explore the methodology of how to use Twitter data to study who becomes an authority among researchers that use Twitter in particular. One thing to keep in mind is that in scholarly blogs, several communicative purposes and target groups are included (Kjellberg, 2010). An assumption is that this is the case also with scholars' use of Twitter. As a starting point for the analysis the hashtag #pdftribute is used. This hashtag came into use by researchers during spring 2013 when sharing publications. Both a network analysis of the tweets

and a qualitative close reading of the exchanges between different Twitter handles will be used to understand the interactions of the researchers and the negotiation of an intended audience and authorities (see Weller, K., Dröge, E., and Puschmann, C., 2011). At the same time, a discussion about methodological development is presented and how it is possible to analyze tweets and retweets in relation to shaping an online representation in this particular context.

Additionally, the results in this poster will form the basis of a larger study on how scholars create an online presence in different contexts. The selection of which researchers to include in an online ethnography, where some scholars within a certain epistemic culture will be followed during a longer time, will draw on the understandings developed from the Twitter study. Consequently, the aim is also to form a background for the work in progress with the larger project.

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