



Social Media for Educators

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Praise for *Social Media for Educators* by Tanya Joosten

“Dr. Joosten’s insight about social media frees us from our traditional silos and provides a terrific foundational text for social media in higher education.”—Eric Stoller, blogger, Student Affairs and Technology, InsideHigherEd.com

“*Social Media for Educators* is a needed bridge between the ambiguity and popularity of social media and the rigors of academic pedagogy. Joosten’s immersion in the social media strengthens her insights and establishes a clear pathway to effective use of social media in higher education for those sufficiently brave and willingly eager to innovate.”—Stephen diFilipo, vice president and chief information officer, Cecil College

“Teaching faculty the mechanics of social media isn’t difficult. The challenge lies in articulating the pedagogical framework for successful deployment in the classroom and at the institution. Joosten accomplishes both these tasks in a fashion that is accessible to anyone regardless of technical expertise. It doesn’t matter if you’re a professor or a provost. If you want to understand how to use social media effectively at your institution, then you’re going to want to read this book.”—Robert H. Soulliere, Jr., director, Distance, Instruction and Educational Technologies, University of Saint Francis, Fort Wayne, Indiana

“By telling us why and showing us how, this book provides detailed information to guide educators through the steps of implementing social media in both their lives and their classrooms.”—Shannon Ritter, social media coordinator, School of Theatre, Pennsylvania State University

“At last, a book that explains social media as well as how to use it effectively in an educational setting! Tanya Joosten provides a straightforward discussion of the pedagogical reasons to use social media, and explains how to effectively use the tools to enhance learning experiences. A practical must-have!”—Rita-Marie Conrad, instructional strategist and technologist, Duke University School of Nursing, and coauthor, *Engaging the Online Learner* and *The Online Teaching Survival Guide*

“If you’ve thought about using social media in your online courses but don’t know where to begin, there’s no need to ask this question again. Tanya Joosten’s comprehensive hands-on book answers it by describing step-by-step how social media can add richness to your course content and have a positive impact on student outcomes. *Social Media for Educators* spans the spectrum of understanding and selecting social media, integrating them into course design, and evaluating their use. Filled with practical examples of social media use, descriptive tables, how-to graphics, and—a valuable plus—a guide for your institution in developing policies, support, and cost considerations, *Social Media for Educators* is a must-have!”—Rosemary Lehman and Simone Conceição, eInterface, and coauthors, *Creating a Sense of Presence in Online Teaching* and *Managing Online Instructor Workload*

“An insightful and in-depth exploration of social media, *Social Media for Educators* effectively makes a case for embracing the best characteristics of social media to communicate with students, foster deeper learning experiences, promote collaboration, and provide timely feedback to students. This book, replete with images and case studies, is a can’t-miss for educators.”—Amy M. Collier, Ph.D., associate director for technology and teaching, Center for Teaching and Learning, Stanford University

“Many higher education faculty are hesitant to incorporate social media into their teaching for fear that it will be a distraction or too time consuming. Tanya Joosten has done a remarkable job outlining the benefits—and considerations—of doing so. Faculty who read this book will be able to make informed, educated decisions about the best approach to take.”—John Dolan, director of digital media and pedagogy, College of the Liberal Arts, Penn State University



SOCIAL MEDIA FOR EDUCATORS

Strategies and Best Practices

Tanya Joosten

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*To my daughters and every young woman for inspiring me
to lead and to all of my mentors for showing me the way.*

PREFACE

Social media tools, such as Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube, are changing the way that people across the globe communicate, share ideas, and build networks. Social media include web-based internet sites that facilitate social interaction in many ways, including social networking; social bookmarking; microblogging; video, image, and audio sharing; virtual worlds; and much more. There are several reasons why social media are gaining popularity in education: social media sites continue to see growth and popularity; they are being used by our students and throughout our societies; they offer media characteristics not offered by other learning technologies; and they are further transforming our values and how we think about student learning.

Interest in social media has surged over the last few years, as illustrated at professional conferences and reports from the field. Professional conferences are often where the most prevalent and emerging technology trends are showcased. In late 2009, conversations about the use of social media for teaching and learning first surfaced at education conferences throughout the United States and across the globe. By early 2011, discussions of the educational use of social media at these conferences were peppered throughout the schedule of conference events. For example, at the first EDUCAUSE social networking discussion in Denver in November 2009 the standing-room-only crowd evidenced the overwhelming popularity of the topic. However, participants reported there was a lack of planned implementations or data supporting social media use in the classroom. These initial discussions were an indicator of the unrefined nature of the solution. Educators could see the

value in implementing social media in the classroom, but very few models had been developed. As is the case with many other technologies, the educational community is looking to harness the potential of these technologies to overcome challenges in the classroom and on campus.

In the first quarter of 2010, not only was there additional evidence of the popularity of social media at conferences, but notable publications were also reporting such interest. From mainstream media to higher education sources, social media interest was developing further. For instance, Google lost its position as the most visited site on the Web, a position it had held for several years, to the social media phenomenon Facebook (see Worthen, 2010). More individuals were visiting Facebook on the Web than any other site. Also, social media experiences and considerations were shared and discussed at professional conferences (e.g., EDUCAUSE, Sloan-C Emerging Technology, Sloan-C International Conference for Online Learning, New Media Consortium). Also in 2010, leading publications in the fields of higher education and technology were paying attention to the interest and began highlighting social media in education (see *Horizon Report*, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, *Ed Tech Magazine*, *eCampus News*, and *EDUCAUSE Quarterly*). As this suggests, social media are becoming the most popular sites on the Internet and the educational community is taking notice.

By 2011, there was evidence that social media were changing the way we communicated in our professional lives, both within our institutions and with colleagues worldwide. More specifically, these tools were transforming our pedagogy, our higher education communication strategies, and our perception of instruction-based technologies such as course management systems. For instance, the EDUCAUSE social media constituent group meeting at the 2011 Midwest Regional conference in

Chicago had well over 50 people. This attendance level is amazing for a regional constituent group meeting, which is usually about half that figure. Also, events that in the recent past had seen little to no social media use among participants (i.e., Twitter) or presentations on social media research, like the Sloan-C Blended conference, were experiencing a change. Attendees were actively participating in backchannel conversations (see #blend11), conducting social media preconference workshops, and presenting on the use of social media for teaching, learning, and student support. Further, in the plenary address social media was mentioned as transforming educators' view of how students learn, what is needed for effective teaching, and how we view other learning technologies (e.g., course management systems). The popularity of and interest in social media are evident at professional conferences and in notable mainstream and higher education publications, and although educators are beginning to integrate social media into their professional lives and into the curricula, sound pedagogical best practices and research supporting effective uses of social media are lacking.

An implementation is never effective unless users know why they are using the technology. This book emphasizes the importance in identifying one's pedagogical need or reason for using social media. Due to the limitations of social media research and practice in teaching and learning, the book will contribute a theoretical foundation (e.g., Short, Williams, & Christie, 1976; Daft & Lengel, 1986; Fulk, Steinfield, Schmitz, & Power, 1987) for identifying media characteristics and making decisions about social media use. In examining the media characteristics needed in order to provide a solution, several potential social media will be highlighted. Specifically, while outlining the requirements of instructors (e.g., increasing instructor-student contact or providing twenty-first-century literacy skills), I will discuss