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Social Media and Open Social Scholarship

by Caroline Winter | 29 November 2019 | English, Observations, Observations and Responses | 0 comments



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This observation was written by Caroline Winter.

At a glance:

Title	Social Media and Open Social Scholarship
Creator	n/a
Publication date	n/a
Keywords	INKE partner activities, social media, scholarly communication

Social Media for the Scholarly Community

As a tool for sharing knowledge and building networks among researchers and the public, social media plays an important role in open social scholarship. For the scholarly community, participating in social media can be an effective way to discover research, build professional networks, and engage with the broader community. It is also a space in which scholars can construct and curate their digital identity (Hildebrandt and Couros; Marshall 2015; Willinsky 2010).

In addition to social media platforms with a broad, public user base—primarily **Twitter**, but also

Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Tumblr, Pinterest, and YouTube—many researchers use platforms designed for academic social networking, including commercial sites like Academia and ResearchGate, non-commercial sites like Humanities Commons, and social reference managers like Zotero and Mendeley. Google Scholar, Github, and Hypothesis are other widely used research tools with some social networking features.

Social Media and the INKE Partnership

Social media plays an important role for the INKE Partnership as a means of enacting open social scholarship and a tool for building our community.

Many INKE Partnership members are active on Twitter. INKE partners use Twitter to share organizational news, promote upcoming events, disseminate research, build awareness of archives and collections, and build community. Twitter is also a platform for discussion of topics of interest to the community and the public (e.g., #OpenScholarship) and for live-tweeting talks and conferences using event hashtags (e.g., #INKEVictoria20). Some partners who are active on Twitter include

- CARL-ABRC, @carlabrc
- CRKN-RCRD, @CRKN_RCDR
- Compute Canada, @ComputeCanada
- CRIHN, @crihunum
- CWRC-CSÉC, @CWRCproject
- DHSI, @DHInstitute
- Digital Humanities Research Group, @DH_Western
- ETCL, @ETCLatUVic
- INKE Partnership, @INKEproject
- Iter, @iter_community
- Érudit, @eruditorg
- Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences, @ideas_idees
- Public Knowledge Project (PKP), @pkp
- Simon Fraser University Library, @sfu_library
- University of Victoria Libraries, @UVicLib
- Voyant, @VoyantTools

To find and connect with all INKE Partnership members and researchers active on Twitter, or to read their posts, see the [INKE Partnership Twitter list](#).

Social media is also foundational to [A Social Edition of the Devonshire Manuscript](#), one of INKE's featured prototypes, and the [Social Media Engine](#) and [Canadian HSS Commons](#), both initiatives of the [Canadian Social Knowledge Institute \(C-SKI\)](#).

Many INKE partners have also examined social media as a new knowledge environment. In "The Connected Librarian: Using Social Media for 'Do It Yourself' Professional Development," for instance, Kevin Stranack argues that social media, and Twitter in particular, is a valuable source of professional development opportunities for librarians and others in the scholarly community and an important element of a personal learning network (PLN) (2012).

In the article "An Entity by Any Other Name: Linked Open Data as a basis for a Decentered, Dynamic Scholarly Publishing Ecology," Susan Brown and John Simpson examine the role of linked open data in breaking down information siloes within the scholarly publishing ecosystem, which includes social media (2015).

Paul Arthur argues in "Engaging Collections and Communities: Technology and Interactivity in Museums" that social media has radically altered the relationship between museums and the public by enabling two-

way communication (2018).

At [Beyond Open: Implementing Social Scholarship](#), the 2018 INKE Gathering in Victoria, Aimée Morrison discussed social media and open scholarship in her paper “Public / Scholarship and Transformative Social Media in Research,” as did Kim O’Donnell in her paper “Hivemind v Crowdsourcing: Generosity and Informal Collective Labour on Social Media.” Luis Meneses and the Social Media Engine team shared the paper “Aligning Social Media Indicators with the Documents in an Open Access Repository.”

Social media is also a topic of interest at DHSI, with the workshop [Twitter Basics: An Introduction to Social Media](#) by Nicholas Cline and Leanne Mobley in 2016 and one on [Social Media Research in the Humanities](#) by Grant Glass in 2018. Social media will also be part of the discussion at the [DHIS@MLA 2020: Digital Humanities and Open Scholarship](#) event in January 2020.

The Academic Community’s Response

Tweeting at conferences, including live-tweeting talks, has been widely discussed over the last several years, but has become accepted practice in many scholarly communities (Berlatsky 2017; Field 2019; Kimmons and Veletsianos 2019). Some scholarly organizations, such as the [American Historical Association](#), have developed community guidelines for tweeting at conferences.

Criticisms about academic social networking within the scholarly community often relate to the commercial nature of some platforms and the potential for user data to be monitored and sold (Bond 2017). Mendeley, for example, began as an open-source platform but was bought by Elsevier in 2013 (Chignell 2019).

Social Media and Open Social Scholarship

Social media provides an infrastructure for researchers to share their work. As a tool for publicly engaged scholarship, it is most effective for sharing research that is published openly. For this reason, open access can be considered a starting point for open, publicly engaged scholarship (Arbuckle 2018). The popularity of commercial research-sharing platforms as well as open subject repositories like [arXiv.org](#) and [Humanities Commons’ CORE](#) suggests that researchers—including emerging scholars proficient in social media—are eager to share their work openly and participate in online communities (Lovett et al 2017; Nicholas et al. 2019).


The widespread sharing of research on social media has led to the development of alternative metrics for tracking the reach and influence of open scholarship not represented by citation analytics (Ovadia 2013; Sugimoto et al. 2017). By measuring the impact of open, publicly engaged scholarship, alternative metrics allow institutions to evaluate this kind of work, including for [review, promotion, and tenure](#) purposes.

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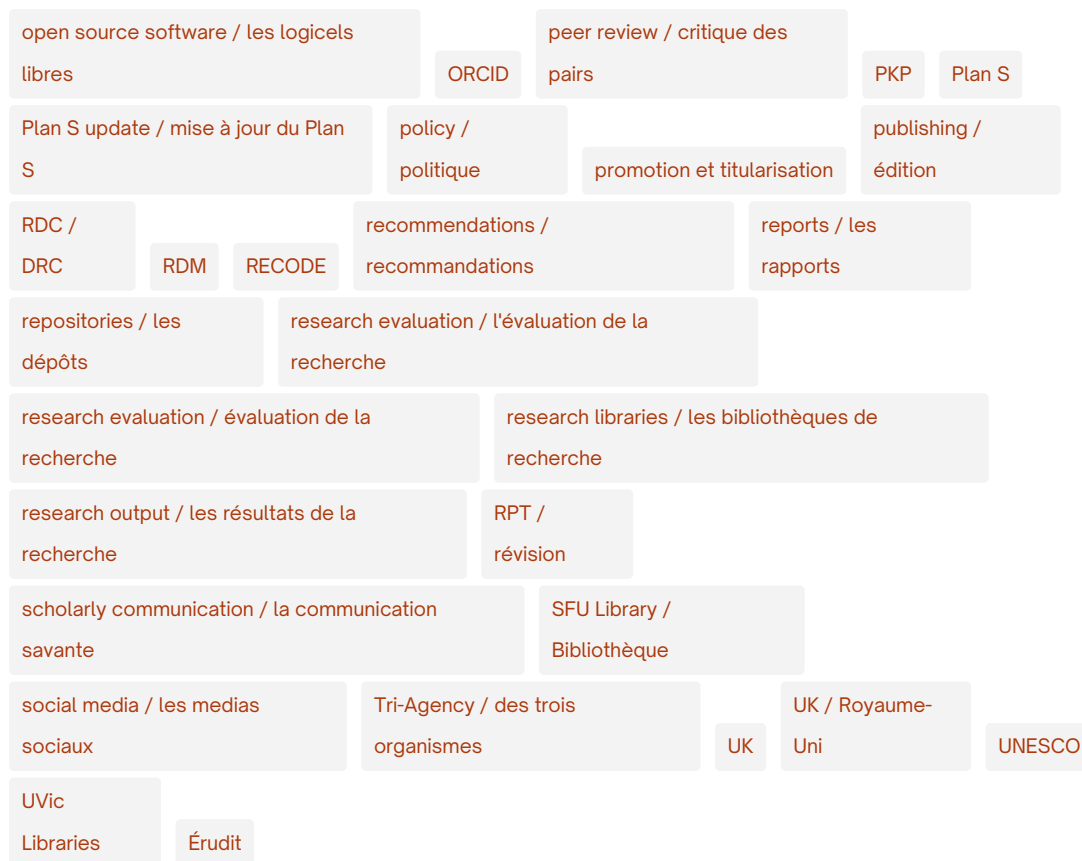
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