

Another thing I like about Jarvis is that he puts his money where his mouth is. In his book, and on his companion blog Buzzfeed, he shares many facets of his personal life and discloses all of his financial investments that could imply a conflict of interests. And he is very forthright about his own beliefs and tastes. I don't care that he listens to Joni Mitchell, watches porn occasionally, or owns shares in Google. What matters is his larger point: that many of us would be stronger friends, citizens, and colleagues if we were less stringent about what we chose to disclose about ourselves. Still, while Public Parts makes a compelling argument for why readers should re-think the relationship between public and private, Jarvis' thesis is to a degree limited by the scope and relevance of its examples. Jarvis references his own experience with prostate cancer, recalling how his graphic narrative of his prostate removal surgery—what he refers to as the “penis post” on his blog—put him in touch with many people who helped him heal. He learned from others what to expect in the recovery process, and he in turn was able to help other readers who shared his plight. The anecdote bears out his point that sharing personal information can yield great personal and social benefits, but Jarvis returns to it too often. At these junctures, I would have liked to see more critical reflection and less anecdotal narrative about the benefits of publicness. In the end, this is a minor caveat in a book that will reframe our understanding of social media networks.

References

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Kyeong-Ju Seo, K. (2013). Using Social media Effectively in the Classroom: Blogs, Wikis, Twitter, and More. New York, NY: Routledge. 240 pp. ISBN: 0415896800.

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In October 2012, Facebook reported having more than one billion active users per month. Countless social media sites exist to provide an outlet for people to connect, create, and share. It is no

wonder that educators are looking to social media to see what these tools have to offer in the classroom environment. *Using Social Media Effectively in the Classroom: Blogs, Wikis, Twitter and More*, edited by Kay Kyeong-Ju Seo, assistant professor of instructional design and technology at the University of Cincinnati, is a collection of thirteen articles intended to offer educators and instructional designers a window into the uses, benefits and concerns of incorporating social media into their courses. Kyeong-Ju Seo sets the tone of the book in the preface by noting that emerging social media technologies “are more than ever empowering students to create, customize and share content online” (p. xiii). With these new tools, educators have begun to explore ways to engage their students’ collective knowledge through “socially enriched pedagogies” (p. xiii).

If you are looking for a thorough guide on how to use the full range of available social media tools, you won’t find that in Kyeong-Ju Seo’s book. Social media sites are created and become defunct rapidly. Wikipedia, a social media site that encourages users to contribute to and validate information, contains a disclaimer that its list of more than 200 social networking sites is “not exhaustive, and is limited to notable, well-known sites” (Wikipedia, 2012). Likewise, what you will find in *Using Social Media Effectively in the Classroom* is a significant amount of detail about some of the well-known tools like Second Life, Twitter, and VoiceThread.

Using Social Media Effectively in the Classroom is divided into four units based on the major stages of design: planning, developing, teaching, and assessing. The authors provide practical advice supported by research and case studies, which instructors and designers can use throughout all of the stages of their course design process. While incorporating social media into classrooms may be the trendy thing to do, effectively structuring the use of social media requires a significant amount of inquiry and preparation. Research throughout the book places a strong emphasis on taking the necessary measures to clearly understand students’ technical abilities and perceptions of technology.

It seems natural to assume students would easily be able to transition to using these new technologies for educational purposes because they are skilled at using them for social purposes; however, several authors warn this simply is not a safe assumption. In particular, the authors of Chapter 3 encourage instructors to avoid using a

tool unfamiliar to students because they consequently spend more time learning how to use the tool than they do learning the course content. According to several authors in the book, the best way to avoid this situation is to consider students' experience and ability with the chosen technology and conduct a survey to gather information from students prior to engaging them in using the technology. Another important layer of the initial analysis process is the careful evaluation of system and hardware requirements of certain technology. Insufficient understanding of the requirements and testing of the technology can lead to technical issues that also distract from the learning objectives.

If you are looking to increase interaction, collaboration, a sense of community and create a space where students can build their knowledge through the sharing of knowledge and experience, the research in this book indicates social media can accommodate and enhance these instructional practices. As opposed to text-based interaction, Warren and Wakefield note in Chapter 7 that many social media tools allow for more dynamic communication, which seems to increase students' social presence or sense of "being there together" online (p. 99). Not only do students get the opportunity to connect with each other, the nature of the Internet opens up access to experts in their field and allows students to learn "from professionals and academics all over the world" (p. 107). The exposure of their thoughts and work to a global audience may be intimidating for some students; however, some researchers argue it makes learning "more authentic" (p. 104). Plus, one unintended outcome seems to be that students may be more contemplative about the work they produce online knowing it could be viewed by almost anyone in the world.

The use of social media in the classroom not only extends students' connections beyond their classmates, it also expands the opportunity to engage students with course content outside of the classroom. Using social media to provide students with the content and information necessary to establish a foundational understanding of the material allows instructors to restructure how they use in-class time. By reducing or, in some cases, eliminating the need for in-class lecture, educators can do what Bowen (2012) has coined "teaching naked." Through the use of technology outside of the classroom, instructors are freed up to teach without technology in the classroom, which means more time for active learning and ultimately provid-

ing students with deeper and more meaningful educational experiences. However, as noted by one teacher's narrative in Chapter 2, the 24/7 nature of social media also seems to extend the workday to one, which has no clear end.

In summary, *Using Social Media Effectively in the Classroom* provides insight into specific social media tools, best practices and items to consider when incorporating these new tools into the learning process. Resistance, fear and uncertainty are common reactions to change. Instructors may feel these emotions themselves or they may be faced with managing the pushback from their students as they become comfortable with this new way of learning. In Chapter 8, Kruger-Ross, Waters, and Farwell warn educators to be prepared for discouraging feedback, but they encourage instructors to "not let the naysayers win" (p. 130). Although there are challenges to overcome, the authors of this book see social media as the next logical step in education's evolution in order to "meet the needs of diverse students in today's classrooms" (p. 188).

References

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