The What, Who, Why, How and How Much of Twitter and Facebook

If you’ve ever wondered about social media and don’t know where to start, please join us for a social media bootcamp focused on Twitter and Facebook. This session will begin by discussing the theory behind Twitter and Facebook and why we should pay attention. The rest of the session will provide information for how you can use social media to increase site traffic, share information and expand the walls of your classroom.

Part I. Twitter

1. What is it?
   a. Hivemind: A type of collective consciousness
   b. Life stream: An aggregate of thought, experience and action online that can be thought of as a time ordered digital diary
   c. Smart mod: A group that, contrary to the usual connotations of a mob, behaves intelligently or efficiently because of its exponentially increasing network links. A self-organizing structure through emergent technologies that empower the user.
   d. Twitter is NOT a true social network. Reciprocation is necessary to be a true social network.

2. Who uses it?
   a. According to Nielsen:
      i. Twitter is the fastest growing member community destination with a 1382% growth rate. Users in Feb. 2008 – 475,000. Users in Feb. 2009 – 7,038,000.
      ii. Unique visitors by Age Demographic:
          1. 2-17: 250,000 comp: 3.6%
          2. 18-24: ** comp: **
          3. 25-34: 1,379,000 comp: 19.6%
          4. 35-49: 2,935,000 comp: 41.7%
          5. 55+: 1,165,000 comp: 16.6%
          6. 65+: 477,000 comp: 6.8%
             • stats cover PC Web usage only and not mobile web or text messaging which is the driving factor in Twitter’s success.
      iii. U.S. Mobile Web Content Stats according to comScore 2009
          3. The most popular content + percentage change since 2008:
             • News and Information growth: 107%
• Social Networking site or blog growth: 427%
• Traded Stocks or financial accounts growth: 188%
• Movie Information growth: 185%
• Business Directories growth: 161%
• Entertainment News growth: 160%

4. Mobile Internet User by Age according to Nielsen
• 13-17: 12.7%
• 18-24: 11.8%
• 25-34: 27.4%
• 35-54: 37%
• 55-64: 9.1%
• 65+: 1.7%

3. Why should we pay attention?
   a. One of Twitter’s by-products is a form of real-time search
      i. Search a term by:
         1. Emotion or intent
         2. Location
         3. Time
      ii. This form of search (while still crude as Google’s was a decade ago) is here to stay and potentially append or enrich authority based static search provided by search engines like Google, Yahoo and Ask.
   b. Ambient Awareness: “I’m So Totally, Digitally Close to You” – Clive Thompson
      i. Social media creates a feeling of closeness that one might feel if they were sitting in a room with someone else quietly.
   c. Data-weaving
      i. Users weave threads of data to customize their awareness of news, friends, entertainment and the world.

4. Why should we use Twitter?
   a. It is evolving into a news outlet.
   b. Traditional advertising continues to decline. We need to participate in channels that speak to a diverse and decentralized audience working through the endorsements of an individuals personalized network.
   c. It represents a new type of search and to be relevant in the search we need to participate in the conversation.
   d. Expands the walls of the institution.
   e. We become a relevant part of the communities formed by students, faculty, staff, alumni or life long learners that use twitter on a daily basis.

5. How do we use Twitter?
a. News and Events
   i. Aggregate all news from the news homepage.
   ii. Aggregate Great events or cover special events
b. Sports
   i. Aggregate all sports news to a sports twitter channel
   ii. Cover a few high profile sporting events tweet by tweet
c. Recruitment - There is not enough accurate data on undergraduate usage to heavily use twitter as a recruitment tool. The only thing we know is the undergraduate demographic is a high growth demographic for mobile computing and at this time there is no accurate data as to how many people use twitter solely through a mobile device. A small pilot project is in order to see how it works for our admissions community.
   i. Have admissions counselors use twitter as a substitute for instant messaging
   ii. Use it as an ongoing question and answer session.
   iii. Use twitter during orientation for audience polls or scavenger hunts
d. Drive Site visits
   i. Announce when a new magazine, alumni newsletter or other document is available to view.
   ii. Point to new site features
   iii. Point to new media such as photos, video and blog posts

6. How much will it take?
   a. This is a daily commitment of 15 to 30 minutes a day:
      i. To follow good etiquette and thank a user for following even if you do not return the follow
      ii. To decide who you will follow
      iii. To retweet appropriate messages or questions from your twitter community
      iv. To “listen” to what’s happening in the conversation
      v. To post at least 1-3 messages daily for each twitter account
      vi. Use a genuine voice to find the right balance between mixing personal conversation with formal notices and automated feeds.

Part II. Facebook

1. What is it?
   a. Social Network: social structure made of nodes (which are generally individuals or organizations) that are tied by one or more specific types of interdependency, such as values, visions, ideas, financial exchange, friendship, sexual relationships, kinship, dislike, conflict or trade.
   b. Replacement: Facebook communication is becoming the norm in many demographics over email, IM and phone calls as it acts as
“one stop shopping” for online interaction. Those that are social recluses in the flesh can have rewarding interactions online.
c. The poster child for ambient awareness.

2. Who uses it?
   a. According to Nielsen:
      i. Facebook is growing as a member community desitination with a 228% growth rate. Users in Jan. 2009 – 42,089,200.
   b. According to iStrategyLabs-Unique visitors by Age Demographic:
      i. 0-17: 5,451,620 comp: 13.5% growth: 29.6%
      ii. 18-24: 19,319,820 comp: 40.8% growth: 20.6%
      iii. 25-34: 10,707,500 comp: 26.7% growth: 101.5%
      iv. 35-54: 6,303,580 comp: 16.6% growth: 276%
      v. 55+: 954,680 comp: 2.3% growth: 194.3%

3. Why should we use Facebook?
   a. Interaction: provides an additional forum for dialogue between the University and perspective students, current students, perspective employees and current employees in a location they visit daily.
   b. Acquisition: Each time a Facebook user becomes a fan of a Facebookpage, a notice is posted as a news item for all of that user’s friends to see. This creates an opportunity for a Facebook page to go viral and reach new viewers.
   c. Drive Web Traffic: As a Facebook page grows its fan base, traffic to the University website will increase.
   d. It is beginning to replace other forms of communication like email and IM for certain audiences.
   e. We need to participate in the conversation.
   f. Expands the walls of the institution.
   g. We become a relevant part of the communities formed by students, faculty, staff, alumni or life long learners that use Facebook on a daily basis.

4. How do we use Facebook?
   a. News and Events
      i. Post stories geared towards students.
   b. Share Photos and video
      i. Post event photos and video directly to Facebook (once again geared towards students).
   c. Sports
      i. Aggregate all sports news to the page.
      ii. Offer fan specials through the fanpage.
   d. Recruitment
      i. Have a single “I'm interested in coming to Michigan Tech” fan-page. Share admissions information, deadlines, financial aid, blogs and vlogs.
ii. Have admissions counselors link their profiles to the fan page.
iii. Use it as an ongoing question and answer session.

5. Drive Site visits
   i. Announce when a new magazine, alumni newsletter or other document is available to view.
   ii. Point to new site features
   iii. Point to new media such as photos, video and blog posts

6. How much will it take?
   a. This is a daily commitment of 30 to 60 minutes a day:
      i. To follow up with answers, wall posts and comments.
      ii. To “listen” to what’s happening in the conversation
      iii. To post at least 1-3 items daily for each Facebook page including events, stories or general announcements.