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Design for Learning 4 - Community

Social Media for Online Learning: Participating and Evaluating (Week 2 Lesson)



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Welcome to Week 2!

This lesson includes:

- Advance Organizer for Week 2 (video)
- Elements of Social Media (video)
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- Teens Migrating from Facebook (video)
- Choosing Social Media (video)
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Advance Organizer for Week 2

Video Transcript:

“D4L Community Week 2: Advance Organizer”

<https://youtu.be/4kymjfudv7k>

Welcome back to week 2 of 4 for the Community module! This is Arden Kirkland.

Here’s what you can expect for this week:

This week’s lesson will take you through different aspects of using social media to support interaction among members of your online learning community.

All of you, and all of your eventual learners, may have very different comfort levels with social media, and varying levels of privacy for different platforms. Some will be resistant to the idea of using social media as part of their instruction, and perhaps for good reason! This should be a big part of the discussion.

So far in D4L we’ve been using the discussion forums within Moodle to communicate with each other. This is probably the most common form of social media for online learning, and a lot of the time it works just fine. But what if you don’t want to use an LMS for your project, or don’t have access to one? Or what if your learners aren’t as comfortable in such forums as they are in other online environments? Then it may be time to try other social media platforms. So, which ones to choose?

We’ll have several presentations and reflections in this week’s lesson to help you with those

choices. After this lesson, there's also a Book module with a guide to introduce a variety of social media platforms, grouped by platform type, with a collection of links and cheat sheets.

Then, the best way for you to fully appreciate the issues at hand is to experience them yourself as a student in this module, and then to think of the different ways your students might approach using social media as a part of your instruction. As in Week 1, you'll need to identify a partner or group to work with for this week's assignment. Together you will choose two different social media platforms that you will use to communicate with each other over the course of the week.

If you're already active with some social media platforms, I recommend that you try something new for this module, so your experience is closer to that of your less-experienced students. At the end of the week, you'll compare and contrast the two different platforms you tried, putting you in better shape to plan if and how you might use social media in your own instruction.

Remember, this is an opportunity to experiment. Depending on the platforms you choose to try, they will be more or less public. I want you to work with a partner so you make sure that someone is listening to you, responding, and helping you to get more comfortable. This is a chance to roleplay, posting discussion prompts and responding to each other as both teacher and student, so you can test out how that would work before you do it with "real" students. You might even have some fun!

Elements of Social Media

Video Transcript:

"D4L Community Week 2: Elements of Social Media"

https://youtu.be/iSrmUiwtc_g

Hello again! This is Arden Kirkland with our first presentation for week 2 of the D4L Community Module to highlight some of the most important elements to consider about social media.

Let's go ahead and define social media. Here's a good definition from Liz Kirchoff: "a rapidly expanding group of websites and apps that facilitate connections between people around the world."

Let's break all of this down a little bit more. I think of the first part of the Kirchoff definition, the part about websites and apps, as being the social media part. Then when you get to connections between people around the world, that's community. And the facilitating part? That's where we come in, as instructors and community managers.

And here's a great model from Colleen Dilenschneider that groups community management and social media measurement together with content creation as the pieces of the pie that

work together to create your successful learning community strategy. The measurement part can be an important assessment piece, as we'll look at more later.

This is not exactly new – here I've tried to relate each of the pieces of the pie to one of the steps in our seven step process for instructional design.

And if it helps to think about it really simply: Think about the community part as the who and why, the content as the what, and the social media part as the how, when, and where. In the community module I tried to get you thinking more about the who and the why, but now we'll be targeting that community with a specific how, when, and where.

Most important is how this ties logically into your instructional design. You'd have to have a very compelling pedagogical reason to use a particular social media platform as a part of the instruction with a group who does not participate in that social media platform to begin with. You also need to remember the “what” of the content you're creating or re-using for your instruction and what platform is most appropriate for sharing that content.

Related to that “What” and “How,” social media platforms can be grouped into some different major types. I like this graphic to start showing that, as it's focused on a teaching context and sorts the icons for the different platforms into the types of activities you might incorporate into instruction: collaboration, networking, image-sharing, video-sharing, blogging, or micro-blogging.

This leaves out some types, though, so also keep in mind social knowledge sharing, gaming, virtual worlds, bookmarking, rating, podcasts, live-streaming, geolocation, and the list goes on. After this lesson, be sure to look through the book module with the D4L Guide to Social Media, to help introduce you to a variety of platforms.

There are some contrasts to consider with different social media platforms. Some are synchronous (interacting in real time) vs. asynchronous (interacting at different times) – some tools can be used both ways, for example you can chat with someone in real time in Facebook, or respond later to one of their posts; you can view someone's YouTube video recorded earlier, or follow a livestream from a Hangout on Air.

Some are broadcast (more public) vs. narrowcast (more private) – again, in some cases this is just determined by how widely or narrowly you set your privacy settings in a particular application, and who can see your posts as a result. But some tools are designed for narrowcasting, such as messaging apps, or ones that set images to be automatically deleted right after they're viewed, in tools like Snapchat, so they're not intended for a more public audience.

Learning communities can congregate in all kinds of different platforms. But, regardless of the platform or type, always remember that community management takes time and effort.

I've identified at least 5 different uses of social media related to instruction:

- pedagogy - for a class assignment
- social presence - to support social interaction within a class community
- LMS alternative – multiple free tools instead of a single paid learning management system
- recruiting/marketing - reaching out to find participants, showing off achievements of participants
- personal learning network (PLN) - reaching out to a wider network beyond the class community to learn more related to the class subject

After this video, you'll have some time to reflect in your workbook about which of these may apply to your project.

Reflection 1

Please go to your workbook to complete this activity.

Check off any of the uses of social media that might be appropriate for your project:

- pedagogy - for a class assignment
- social presence - to support social interaction among class community
- LMS alternative – multiple free tools instead of a single learning management system
- recruiting/marketing - reaching out to find participants, showing off achievements of participants
- personal learning network (PLN) - reaching out to a wider network beyond the class community to learn more related to the class subject
- other?

Teens Migrating

Here's a parody video from The Onion to get us thinking about social media . . .

<https://youtu.be/a4mMY2KI3GY>

Choosing Social Media

Video Transcript:

“D4L Community Week 2: Choosing Social Media”

<https://youtu.be/Ot9AnGG-DO0>

Hello again! This is Arden Kirkland with another video for week 2 of the D4L Community Module to start choosing social media for your project.

Did you watch the satirical YouTube video from the Onion before you started watching this video, which I shared with you in this week’s Moodle lesson? If not, go back and watch it right now!

OK, so why did I have you watch that video from the Onion? Well, other than the fact that it’s just funny, I think it points out an important factor to consider when using social media – you have to be flexible. You never know what platform is going to become obsolete or unpopular, so you have to be ready to move to a platform that is popular and up to date. You may also need to cover your bases and use more than one platform at a time, to reach different community members that congregate naturally in different “places” online.

In an instructional setting you also have to think carefully about how social media does or doesn’t fit in to your pedagogy.

In choosing appropriate social media tools, it’s also important to note that each one has a different tone. Here’s a take on a classic way of explaining different social media platforms: how do you represent your donut on each one? You can also see this in this week’s additional resources.

This is somewhat tongue in cheek, but does give you a good sense of the differences, and may help make it more clear which is appropriate for the learning objectives you have in mind, when the “donut” is whatever your community is supposed to be learning about.

You will also need to phrase your discussion prompts and other posts differently for different platforms. We’ll come back to this toward the end of this lesson, but I think this is a helpful summary to share now.

So, how do you choose which platforms are most appropriate for your community?

One of the major sources of research in this area is the Pew Research Center, and I highly recommend that you visit their website and look at the reports this data is pulled from. They had done a table like this for their 2012 study but not for the 2015 or 2016 studies, so I had to take the data and make my own table. Since I first did this for 2015, the numbers are up and the demographics have changed a bit, so it’s a good idea to keep on top of this research from

year to year. Also, their sample size for 2016 was smaller than for 2015, so they didn't report breakdowns by race or ethnicity, so where those demographics are mentioned here it uses the 2015 data.

These last 3 slides have all given you some things to reflect upon for your own project, so let's take a break here so you can get into your workbook and take some notes about how all of this relates to your library community and your intended audience for your instruction.

Reflection 2

In your workbook there's a copy of the chart in the last video presentation about the demographic research by the Pew Research Center about social media usage.

How does your community fit into this chart for the top 5 social media platforms (or not)?

More Social Media Considerations

Video Transcript:

"D4L Community Week 2: More Social Media Considerations"

https://youtu.be/xXGYL_1Q4W4

Hello again! This is Arden Kirkland with another video for week 2 of the D4L Community Module to share some more aspects to consider when choosing social media platforms for community discussions.

For another side of the story, I need to define another term: "social density." I really liked this definition from a blog post by Katie Bapple, so let me just read it here:

"Ideal social density occurs when a critical mass has been reached – the number of active participants concentrated in one defined social space is high enough to provide a constant flow of activity, but low enough that the level of activity doesn't feel inundating. Or, for an offline perspective, it's the balance between standing in an empty room and getting caught in a mosh pit – just the right amount of human interaction."

So, if you're considering more than one different platform, how many should you use? Spreading out over too many social media platforms can decrease your social density on each, so the sense of community is small. Prioritize which platforms are most relevant and stick to one or just a few.

So, we'll keep narrowing down through your different options. Here's a table for you to choose which level of privacy is most appropriate for your project – this is also in your workbook for you to highlight your choice.

Next is a table for you to choose which level of activity is most appropriate for your project. This is also in your workbook. The more actively you'll be participating yourself, the more important it will be to choose a platform that makes it easy to follow the discussion of your entire community.

Take a moment to reflect on these choices and then we'll return with the next presentation.

Challenge yourself!

1. Which of the following would have the worst social density?

A. An instructor posting discussion prompts only in a Moodle forum where all participants are subscribed.

B. An instructor posting the same discussion prompts in 2 different places: a Facebook group (followed by 40% of the group) and an LMS forum (60% have enabled forum notifications)

C. An instructor posting the same discussion prompts in 4 different places: a Facebook group (followed by 35% of the group), a Twitter account (followed by 25% of the group), a Google Plus Community followed by (followed by 15% of the group), and an Instagram account (followed by 25% of the group).

Reflection 3

In your workbook there are 2 charts for you to choose your ideal privacy settings and activity levels for your project. Please take a look at those and highlight your choice, and then answer a few questions there about your choices and how to implement them.

Social Media Listening

Video Transcript:

"D4L Community Week 2: Social Media Listening"

<https://youtu.be/pttWsJINowQ>

Hello again! This is Arden Kirkland with another video for week 2 of the D4L Community Module to talk about the idea of Social Media Listening.

Hopefully after the last couple of videos you've started to narrow down which social media

platforms might work for discussions among your community members.

But what if your community isn't represented in the demographics of that chart about the research from the Pew Research Center, or you think less popular social media platforms may be appropriate for what you have in mind, how can you find out more details about how your community interacts with social media?

This is where Social Media Listening comes in. Now, in a business setting, the term social listening is also known as social media monitoring, and often involves using a variety of applications to alert marketers when anyone is talking about their company online, tracking which could be difficult for one person to do without such tools.

Here's an example of one application, Hootsuite, that can help by creating a social media listening dashboard where you can view posts from several different platforms within one app, follow different keywords, different people or groups, etc. But in our scenarios, any tool like that is optional - you can think of this as a much more low tech activity.

When you're considering using a particular platform as a part of your strategy, you should always start by choosing a few different platforms to listen to, based on the Pew Research or what you already know about your community, or what you've learned from the different guides this week.

In order to start exploring those platforms to find out if they really are appropriate, you need to listen to the conversation that's already happening there. Start by searching for relevant people to follow, such as leaders in a field, or your peers who you know are interested in this topic, or institutions that share their resources related to that subject.

You can also search for relevant subjects to follow. Most social media platforms have their own search engines not unlike what you'd use for any other kind of research. You can start searching for different keywords, or in some platforms these are referred to as hashtags, when the pound sign, called a hash, precedes the keyword so people can quickly include keyword tags in their posts for others to find later.

Again, as you'd do with any other kind of research, let each post/person/subject lead you to others. You may notice that someone influential in the field commonly uses a specific hashtag, and that can lead you to others using the same hashtag who you should also be following.

Make sure you listen to what's being said but also read between the lines and listen to what isn't being said. Use this listening to identify your community's learning needs and figure out what you can provide that they're lacking, and what platform they're most likely to use to listen to YOU.

If you're still wondering where and how to best reach your community, why don't you just ask

them? This screen shows some questions from the Montana State University Library Social Media Survey.

Before you offer an instructional module, you may want to survey your intended community to ask them about their social media usage. Or, at the very beginning of a series of instructional modules, you could ask your students to take such a survey. Then you can base your social media strategy accordingly. I've made a survey for us, and I hope you'll participate in it: about the social media platforms you already use, and the social media platforms you think may be appropriate for your capstone project.

Summing up Week 2

To finish your work for this week:

OK – another week's lesson almost at an end. After you take a look at the additional resources on the next page, then complete the lesson and return to the main course page.

There you will find the book module with the D4L Guide to Social Media. Skim through that to get a sense of what's there, and then you can return to it throughout the module to find out more about different platforms or try them out.

There's also a brief survey for you to indicate which social media platforms you already use, and which you might use for your project.

Then comes your assignment for this week: another partner or small group activity for interaction on at least 2 different social media platforms. You can read more about this assignment in your workbook or on the page for the forum for that assignment, where you will post a summary of your activity at the end of the week. Have fun with that – try something new!

Additional Resources

For this week's instruction, you may find the following resources helpful.

References:

Here are citations to sources mentioned in this module:

Bapple, K. (2014, September 30). Growing an Online Community: A Case Study on Social Density and Ongoing Analysis. Retrieved April 3, 2016, from

<http://blog.socious.com/bid/72714/Growing-an-Online-Community-A-Case-Study-on-Social-Density-and-Ongoing-Analysis>

Dilenschneider, C. (2013, February 19). The New Normal: Three Elements of Social Media Success for Nonprofit Organizations. Know Your Own Bone. Retrieved February 28, 2016, from <http://colleendilen.com/2013/02/19/the-new-normal-three-elements-of-social-media-success-for-nonprofit-organizations/>

Duggan, M. (2015, August 19). The Demographics of Social Media Users. Retrieved from <http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/08/19/the-demographics-of-social-media-users/>

Greenwood, S., Perrin, A., & Duggan, M. (2016, November 11). Social Media Update 2016. Retrieved May 22, 2017, from <http://www.pewinternet.org/2016/11/11/social-media-update-2016/>

Kirchhoff, L. (2014). Teaching social media: the can-do guide. Santa Barbara, California: Libraries Unlimited.p. vii.

Montana State University Library Social Media Survey. (n.d.). [Form]. Retrieved April 16, 2016, from <http://lib.montana.edu/social-media-survey/>

Visuals:

Here are citations to visual resources mentioned in this module:

Albaih, K. (2011). A Conversation [Photo]. Retrieved from <https://www.flickr.com/photos/khalidalbaih/5653817859/>

The Onion. (2014). Teens Migrating From Facebook To Comments Section Of Slow-Motion Deer Video. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a4mMY2KI3GY>

NZ Education Council. (n.d.). What is Social Media [Infographic]. Retrieved from <http://www.teachersandsocialmedia.co.nz>

Roux, S. (2012). Social Media Via Donuts [Photo]. Retrieved from <https://www.flickr.com/photos/sioenroux/6926060867/>

Videos:

All of this week's videos are available on a playlist at YouTube:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLw6HBD7UyT3ng5FwezE3G0IH74tbm_b-e

Answer Key:

1. C. An instructor posting the same discussion prompts in 4 different places

When the discussion is spread across too many social media platforms, the discussion can suffer. While everyone may see the initial prompt, they'll only see the responses of others on that particular platform, so they're only experiencing a part of the full discussion. Statistically, only a few are likely to post replies on each platform, so the discussion in each place will be short. Even if the full discussion across all platforms is more complete, no one participant is likely to check them all.