



Great jobs for bright people

The Digital Academic

Resources and information to help you enhance your research





Introduction

The way academic work is published is changing. Along with traditional publishing, academics are increasingly looking to digital channels to maximise the impact of their work. The dissemination and communication of research is changing with social media, MOOCs, open access, blogging and beyond.

You may already be on Twitter and LinkedIn but how can you use these and other tools to enhance your research and widen your public engagement? In this ebook, you will find out how becoming a Digital Academic can be a powerful tool that can potentially shape discussions in higher education and help you become a thought leader. This ebook will also offer guidance on tools and resources to use for your research and online that can help you save valuable time, as well as how to distribute your research to a wider audience in a number of creative ways.

This ebook will cover:

- [How to use a blog to increase your public engagement](#)
- [How to use social media to showcase your skills](#)
- [How to use digital research tools](#)



It is good to try and have a regular schedule for your blog, but blogging should never be a chore. If the quality of the content is good enough, people will be happy to wait and look forward to when your next blog post goes out.

“If you can write blog posts that solve people’s problems your blog will just take off, there is no better formula I know than that”

Dr Inger Mewburn



Use social media to showcase your skills

With social media now accounting for nearly [2.1 billion accounts](#), it is clear that social media is an important platform to raise your voice, potentially shape discussions in higher education, and initiate collaborations. Social media is a tool that can raise awareness of your work, let you engage with people you would not have otherwise reached, and make valuable connections across the world that you might not have had access to otherwise.

Social media is a great tool to showcase your writing skills, demonstrate your ability to be able to write and communicate for a variety of audiences, as well as showing your awareness of current issues in higher education. By interacting with others on social media, using networks, and showing recognition to others, you can also showcase that you have a collaborative work ethic. It allows people to see your work first-hand and allows you to establish your voice within your discipline. By interacting with other researchers within your academic circle, you can demonstrate that other people want to listen to you and that you are esteemed by others within your circle.

Social media is a great source of knowledge and discoveries that could benefit your career, because the more you know, the more of an advantageous position you are in compared to those not using social networks. Social media is a platform for you to potentially shape discussions in higher education as well as make contact with new audiences and collaborators.

However, social media can be very time consuming, with all the different platforms to use, so it is up to you to decide how much of your time you are willing to dedicate to increasing your digital profile. It is also important to consider all the different tools you can use for different connections as each social network offers different benefits.

Starting an academic blog

A great way to get your name out there is by running a blog. More and more academics are turning to social media and other online platforms to share their expertise online. Having a blog allows you to share your expertise and knowledge as well as to be a part of this online community.

If you are going to start a blog, the most important part of the blog is the ‘About Me’ page, and this is where you should start. Here you should leave important details such as who you are, what your blog is about, and what questions you will be answering in your blog. If you carefully map this out, this will help guide you in your blog post writing process, especially when you are starting out.

It is important to remember that other people’s blogs are not the competition, but can be beneficial to your blog or research. Collaboration is really important within academic blogging so you should encourage other bloggers to share ideas, and invite others to do guest blogging on your blog and vice versa.

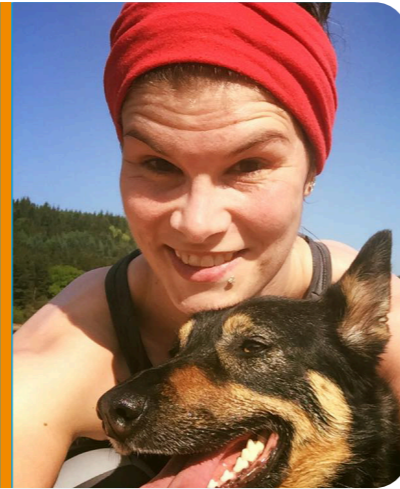
It is not necessarily the size of the audience reading your blog that matters, but the quality. If you have a niche blog that is specific to a field of research you may draw in a very specific audience, which could lead to collaborations and other opportunities. To have a blog that sticks, you need to be connected to a specific community and understand how to use your expertise to help that community.

Once you have your academic blog set up and running you can use tools like Google Analytics to see how many people are visiting your blog. As well as looking more in depth into what exactly people are searching for on your blog, [Google Analytics](#) can be beneficial in steering your future content.



“If you are actively engaged in social media, if you actually make use of your profiles, if you actually make the effort to talk to people, you can make things happen”

Nadine Muller



Research tools

The following section will look at just some of the research tools out there that can help manage your time online, as well as tips to improve productivity and ways to help disseminate your research in creative ways to reach a wider audience.

Presentation tools

Making your presentations visible online enables you to reach different audiences and engage with these audiences on the work you are doing. Everyone has an attention span, so it is important to look into ways that can break down your research into bitesize content that will be more accessible and digestible to a wider audience. For example, you could creatively present your research through videos or animations. Haiku Deck (<https://www.haikudeck.com/>) is an example of a great tool to make visual mobile presentations.



[JoVe \(Journal of Visualised Experiments\)](#) is the world's first peer-reviewed scientific video journal, allowing peers to watch the entire process of an experiment, which is helping researchers overcome issues such as poor reproducibility when following written instructions.

The 'About Me' (<https://about.me/>) personal page is a great tool for collating all your social networks and blogs, and acts as a hub to showcase your presence.

Collaborate on your work

There are hacks if you are struggling on an area of a paper, for example you can use Google Docs as a means of collaboratively writing with other researchers, which is an excellent motivator as well as offering a peer support network.

Productivity tools on the go

Mendeley

If you want to research on the go, [Mendeley](#) is a free reference manager and academic social network that can help you organise research, collaborate with others, showcase your research and discover the latest research.

Evernote

[Evernote](#) is a great tool on the tablet that allows you to take notes, record sound-bytes and watch videos on the go, allowing you to create scrapbooks of information. Listen to podcasts, iTunes U, Futurelearn, Tedx, and Ted Talks on the go, and develop and build your knowledge base on the go.

Measuring research

Altmetric.com

[Altmetric](#) looks at over 500 sites, social media networks, blogs and shows you how your research is being shared and where, which could lead to potential collaborations globally.

Altmetric allows you to identify things that we wouldn't have been able to do before like finding out who is reading your blog, who is citing your paper; helping people understand how research is being received and used, and by who. Altmetric can help provide further evidence of engagement and 'societal impact.' It allows you to get instant feedback that you wouldn't have been able to get before.

Impact Story

[Impact Story](#) is a tool that uses alternative indicators, showing you where research is being shared.

Figshare

[Figshare](#) is an online digital repository, allowing researchers to upload their research outputs, making them publically available.

“Social networks are not just about who you know, it's what they know as well. It's helping your career because you'll know more and more about what's going on and your colleagues who aren't using it won't.”

Andy Tattersall



Summary

This ebook has shown how academic publishing is changing with the introduction of new digital technologies bringing people together from all over the world to discuss and share research in ways that did not previously exist.

Social media can seem a little daunting to some with all the different channels to choose between and volume of activity, but remember you are only one person so you have to decide for yourself how much of your time you are willing to invest in social media.

However, there are so many benefits that you can reap from being a part of this online community from showcasing your research, your skills, connecting with other researchers, finding collaborators to potentially becoming a thought leader and shaping higher education discussions.

About this ebook

The content from this ebook is taken from the jobs.ac.uk **'The Digital Academic: Tools and Tips for Research Impact and ECR Employability'** workshop in March 2015, with thanks to the speakers from the workshop.

Dr Inger Mewburn, Director of Research Training, Australian National University

Inger specialises in the study of research education and research student support and is also the editor of popular blog 'newspaper', [The Thesis Whisperer](#) which has over 25,000 subscribers and around 80,000 visits a week.

Andy Tattersall, Information Specialist at SCHARR, University of Sheffield

Andy's role at [University of Sheffield](#) is to scan the horizon for opportunities relating to research, teaching and collaboration and maintain networks that support this. Andy has a keen interest in new ways of working by employing Web 2.0 and Social Media, including video.

Nadine Muller, Senior Lecturer in English Literature and Cultural History, Liverpool John Moores University

Nadine was awarded her doctorate in February 2012, and she took up her post as Lecturer in English Literature and Cultural History six months later. Nadine has a particular interest in postgraduate and early-career development, including the training needs of doctoral students and early-career researchers and is the creator of [The New Academic](#).



Dr. Inger Mewburn speaks at jobs.ac.uk's The Digital Academic event. See more on our [Resources page](#).

Recommended reading

[How to be a Successful Digital Academic to Boost Your Career – Google+ Hangout on Air Summary](#)

Recommended viewing

[How to be a Successful Digital Academic to Boost Your Career – Google+ Hangout on Air](#)

[Making Your Mark: Academia, Social Media, & Employability](#)

[Starting an Academic Blog](#)

[Research Hacks: How to Hack Your Research](#)



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