



Social Media for Career Development: A Door to Deeper Information Skills

By Meghann Kuhlmann - San José State University

Overview:

This one hour drop-in workshop teaches college students to use social media tools for career development by guiding them through the process of locating appropriate professional resources in their field and incorporating that information into original social media content—such as blog posts, twitter updates, or discussion boards—to strengthen their own professional presence online.



<http://www.smcvt.edu/On-Campus/Offices-and-Services/Information-Technology/Printing-and-Computing.aspx>



<http://www.thatcomputerguy.co.za/page.php?4>

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- Use online professional resources to identify current trends in their field
- Distribute original content incorporating that information through appropriate social media
- Identify major resources and begin creating their own libraries of important sources, RSS feeds, etc.

Key skills include: locating relevant sources, evaluating website credibility, evaluating social media platforms, and synthesis of information for a professional or scholarly audience

Emphasis is placed on the students' roles as content creators and contributors to professional knowledge.

Class Outline:

Introduction to online professional information sources—Professional associations, industry specific blogs, newsletters, wikis, list serves, discussion boards, etc.

Independent exploration of these sources from examples in research guide*

Students will identify one or two topics of interest in their field from this research

Small group or class discussion and reflection on searching professional information sources

Exploration of social media platforms in professional context. Specifically, Twitter, LinkedIn, Wordpress, and/or Facebook (ask students what sites they already use)

Students will develop their own professional communication incorporating the topic identified earlier and choose an appropriate platform to deliver it

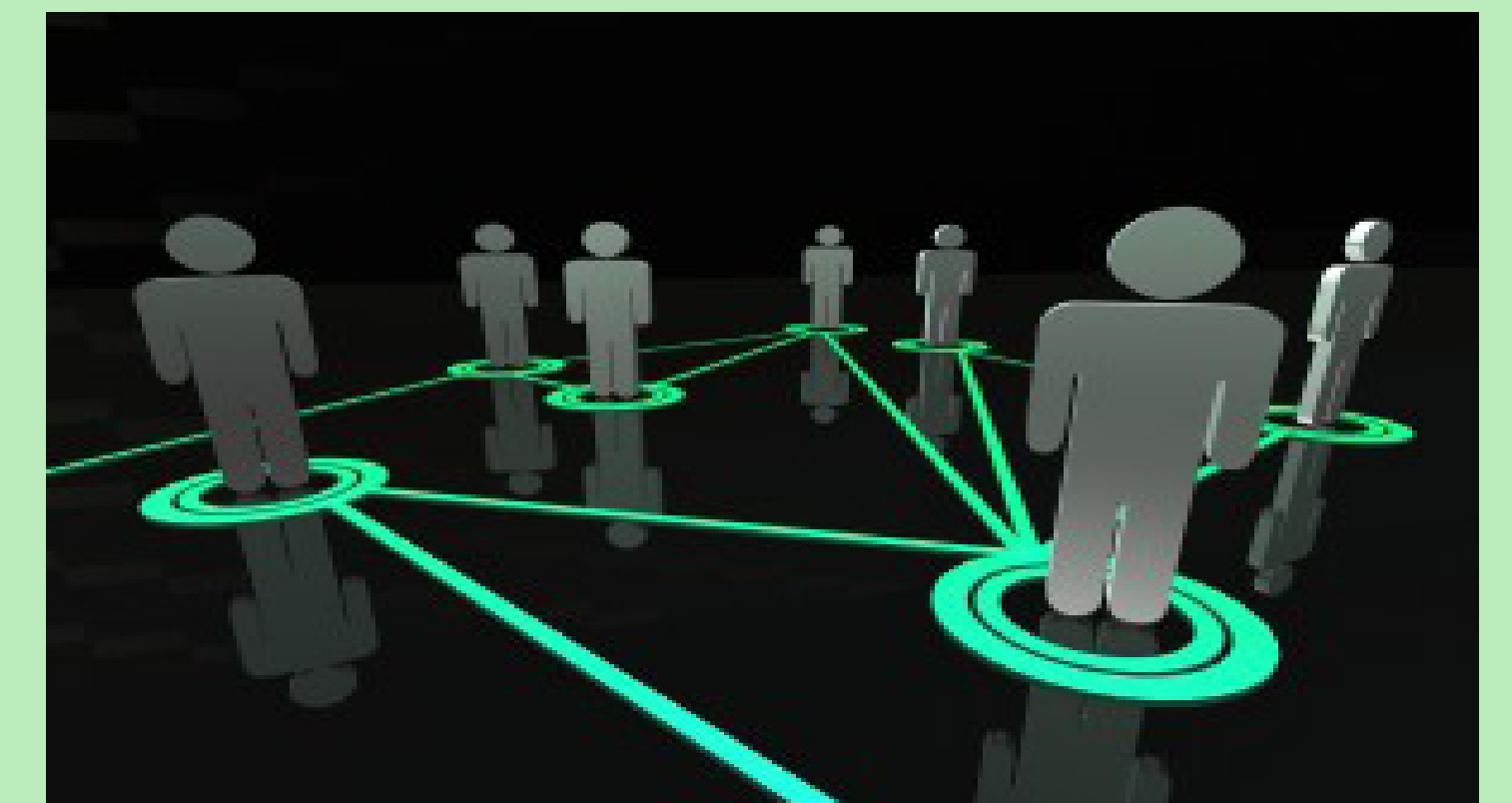
Wrap-up and big picture—From occasional post to professional online persona

Materials:

*It is essential to develop a thorough online research guide in conjunction with this class. It includes professional examples of each media type (blogs, discussion boards, Twitter news feeds, etc.) from each of the major disciplines on campus. Information about using RSS feeds is also helpful.

Collaboration:

It is important to design this course in collaboration with the campus career center because they know what services already exist and have the best understanding of students' needs in this area. Although some skills in this class overlap with those taught by the career center, it compliments rather than duplicates these services. The class heavily emphasizes research and information literacy rather than specific career resources so a librarian is the best choice for delivering the instruction. Promotion of the workshop through the career center's channels will also help ensure success.



<http://blogs.longwood.edu/mediacri/>

Discussion:

While college students consistently report feeling comfortable using social media to obtain and share information for personal use, their confidence about sharing information in academic and professional contexts is not as strong (Gross & Latham, 2011). This class bridges the gap by illustrating the process that links professional research to the creation of a professional identity.

References:

- Davis, B., & Pope, K. (2012). Job and Career Resources: Not Just for Public Libraries. *Georgia Library Quarterly*, 49(2), 18-20.
- Gross, M., & Latham, D. (2011). Experiences with and perceptions of information: A phenomenographic study of first-year college students. *Library Quarterly*, 81(2), 161-186.