

Title: #10DoT: Building Professional HE Learning Communities and Digital Literacy Through Teaching Twitter

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Session Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session, delegates will be able to:

- Understand the possibilities of social media (specifically, Twitter) in building a personal learning network for continuing professional or academic development
- Identify some of the issues, challenges and opportunities in teaching social media to staff and students
- Understand how varying levels of digital literacy can be introduced into teaching the use of social media platforms, in a way which allows participants to personalise their learning and develop a digital mindset as well as skillset
- Analyse the different approaches needed when teaching social media to different professional groups (including support staff, academics and students)
- Run a #10DoT course at their own institution or context

The session touches on the UK Professional Standards Framework dimensions K4 (the use and value of appropriate learning technologies) A4 (developing effective learning environments and approaches) and also A5 (engagement in continuing professional development).

Session Outline

This session explores a format for teaching Twitter as a medium for building a personal learning network and a community for continuing professional development. We will look at the various iterations of the #10DoT (Ten Days of Twitter) online course, which was tailored for various groups including research students, librarians, learning developers and academics, both within and across institutions, and the different needs and challenges associated with teaching social media and digital literacy to the different groups.

The course addressed several levels of digital literacy relevant to Higher Education, from basic technical skills to the principles of digital identity creation, information management and developing a participatory, 'open' approach. It also built on some of the strategies developed by MOOCs to create a format which would be convenient for busy participants

(ten minutes a day over ten days) but also result in the real time creation of a rich peer learning community which intersects with existing professional communities online and draws on open learning principles, thus embedding it in an authentic context. We will consider some of the issues raised by the clash of traditional academic values and identities, and online practices and cultures, such as openness, authority, interactive participation, ephemerality and genre.

Session Activities and Approximate Timings

- (If enough participants are on Twitter, there will be a demonstration of livetweeting throughout)
- **20 mins Small group discussion and feedback:**
 - What do you use an online community of practice for and how? Which online platforms do you use and what for?
 - How might our academics benefit from using social media platforms such as Twitter? What would be the challenges of persuading them of the value of social media, and of teaching them how to use it effectively?
- **30 mins Presentation:** Overview of the #10DoT format, and how it was developed (theoretical principles, practical approaches, infrastructure and content including the aspects tailored for different groups).
- **10 mins buzz exercise:** What do we mean by digital literacy? What exactly are we teaching when we teach social media?
- **20 mins Small Group Discussion and feedback** - SWOT exercise focussing specifically on the #10DoT format, looking at opportunities and barriers to engagement, especially those which arise from the clash of traditional academic professional identities and values, and those of online communities.
- **10 mins Plenary Group discussion and questions**– How might a #10DoT be used by participants and how would they approach running one for the different contexts they work in? What principles have they derived from the session for the issues, challenges and opportunities of teaching social media more broadly?

References

Meyers, E., Erickson, I. and Small, R.V. (2013). 'Digital Literacy and Informal Learning Environments: An introduction'. *Learning, Media And Technology* 38:4, 355-367.

Weller, Martin (2011). *The Digital Scholar: How Technology is Transforming Scholarly Practice*. London and New York: Bloomsbury.