Social Media and the Department of Archaeology: A guide to using social media for staff and students

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Introduction
Social media – definitely a hot topic for the 2010s but what does it mean and how do busy academics make the most of it? The department has recently created presences on Twitter, Facebook and Google+ but many students and staff also have profiles. This guide will help you make the most of the department’s official presence and give some tips on using your own presence in a professional capacity.

A warning
Statements made on social media are (as celebrities and politicians often discover) more public and permanent than one might imagine, therefore, here is a one sentence rule for anything said online:

    *Never make any statement online you would not want repeated in a law court or at a job interview*

Though this is obvious it is worth bearing in mind when some enraging article or policy is published and the desire to vent can be pretty strong!

How to use this guide
This guide is intended as a reference for when you have queries about using social media. It is not exhaustive but contains advice and should answer most initial queries. The first section is introductory material for those unfamiliar with social media, the second is about maximising the department’s social media presences for your work, the third has some tips on using personal social media accounts and finally there is a glossary of social media terms (these and other key terms appear in **bold** throughout).
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Social media basics

The department is currently using the three most prominent social media services Twitter, Facebook and Google+. Many staff and students have personal accounts on these and on Academia.edu. Each service has a particular emphasis in terms of interface and user-base and is used differently by archaeologists and scholars. If people would like help setting up an account on any of these services (or others, e.g., Flickr, YouTube, Mendeley, Zotero or blogs) please get in touch.

Twitter

Twitter allows users to post 140 character messages (known as tweets) that are publicly viewable by anyone – including those not on twitter (a small number of users opt to make their tweets private). Users can then follow the tweets of others in whom they are interested – these lists of followers/followees are also almost always public. This creates very elastic communities and a range of use styles: some organisations that have large numbers of followers and only broadcast their messages rather than conversing, others only use the service to converse with small groups of friends. Most twitter users will only know a small portion of those they follow in real life.

There are a large number of archaeologists and academics using twitter and increasing numbers of professional bodies such as English Heritage, the Council for British Archaeology and the AHRC.

Facebook

Facebook is generally used to connect people who have met in real life. It requires reciprocity from those who want to share information with one another and most users are careful to ensure their content is kept private from others. Facebook contains an entire suite of tools that enable users to send one another private messages, share photographs and videos, create groups and even play games.

Organisations can create pages to broadcast their news and interact with their audiences. This service also provides detailed metrics on audience activities. There are a large number of archaeological organisations using this service, from national organisations to small amateur groups.

Google+

Google+ attempts to bridge the gap between Twitter’s emphasis on simple, short, public broadcasts and Facebook’s integrated tools for connecting real-life friends. It uses a system of circles to enable users to decide which of their contacts sees which kinds of messages: for example one circle for work and one for friends. The service integrates well with the new Google Apps suite the University is now using centrally.

Organisations can create profiles very similar to Facebook. A smaller number of archaeological organisations are using the service.

Academia.edu

Academia.edu is aimed specifically at scholars and enables users to follow other researchers, research interests and journals. It also has the facility for users to promote talks, post offprints of papers and ask questions to other users. Research areas within archaeology are unevenly represented with some sub-communities being more active than others. A large number of staff and students are already using the service.
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Getting the most out of the department’s social media

What social media does the department use?
There are official presences on Twitter (@UofYArchaeology), Facebook and Google+. These can all be reached from the Departmental Homepage. The department has an automatic presence on academia.edu.

Who is involved in the official social media presence (2010-2012)?*

* Note that the current administrative team is outlined at http://www.york.ac.uk/archaeology/contactus/social-media/#tab-2

The Facebook page is monitored by:

• Steve Ashby
• Pat Hadley
• Emily Rayner
• Julian Richards
• John Schofield
• Lisa Marie-Shillito

The Twitter account is monitored by:

• Pat Hadley
• Emily Rayner

The Google+ page is monitored by:

• Matthew Collins

If any members of staff or students have any concerns about the content, or the public connections of the Twitter and Facebook (i.e. pages followed and liked by the departmental pages), please do not hesitate to contact the Social Media Administrator: archaeologyyork.socialmedia@gmail.com

The accounts are checked by the Social Media Administrator at least three times a day to ensure there is no misuse.
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Why is the department using social media?

Twitter, Facebook and Google+ enable effective and measurable contact with large and diverse audiences. They are increasingly being used by professionals and organisations as forums for conversation. Using social media will enable the department to communicate activities, achievements and events to a wider audience and industry partners as well as reconnecting with former staff and students.

For example, the departmental Facebook page is currently liked by 303 users (see above). This may not sound like much but, between them, they have 73,752 friends. Similarly, though the department’s Twitter profile only has 94 followers the recent news of the Star Carr project’s funding was tweeted by many users, often several times removed from the official account. These included archaeological organisations with large numbers of followers. It also led to the press release being covered in several popular archaeology blogs.

How is the department using social media?

Broadcast

As an official body, the department mostly uses social media to broadcast information and announcements. Staff and students are encouraged to share any news or events not on the department’s webpage that might interest to our social media audiences. These must be related to the Department of Archaeology at York in some way, and must contain content which would be deemed acceptable if linked to the departmental pages. Such material will be synchronised across all three services.

RSS feeds are used to automatically rebroadcast any announcements from the departmental News or Events webpages through Facebook and Twitter.

The department’s social media presences are managed through the email account:

archaeologyyork.socialmedia@gmail.com
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Please email any content to this address. If possible write a brief message aimed at a general audience and include any relevant links. Remember, this content will be going to a global audience and may be copied and pasted without proper attribution.

Conversation

A bigger challenge is presented by the opportunity for conversation through social media. Queries from prospective students, news from partner organisations and discussion of professional issues: these are potential topics where social media has a unique ability to give the department a strong voice.

Individual decisions will have to be made as to what is relevant and advantageous for the department to officially respond to but general guidelines. Generally, relevant news from other bodies in the University or heritage agencies might be shared through the department’s pages.

Staff or students may choose to share content or respond to queries from third parties through their personal social media accounts, using the departmental presences as a forum (i.e., posting on the Facebook or Google+ page or tweeting using @UofYArchaeology). This is strongly encouraged, as it shows an active online community and can encourage users outside of the department to ask questions.

This can be done by individual users filling in the comment box below a post on the wall of the Facebook page. These will be monitored closely, and users should be made aware of the public nature of these comments. Any views expressed should be considered, as any other form of academic feedback, and any content deemed to be inflammatory or offensive will be immediately deleted by the Social Media Administrator and all other admin will be made aware of such content. To encourage discussion on Twitter, any users wishing to include the department in discussions should include @UofYArchaeology within their tweets. This will allow the Social Media Rep to see questions and comments on tweets which need replying to.

If content requires a more official responses they can email the above address and use the department as a mouthpiece.

Who are we engaging with?

Though they have slightly different constituents, the department’s Twitter, Facebook and Google+ generally follows organisations or professional accounts in the following groups:

- University of York (other departments, related staff members, students)
- Yorkshire heritage/archaeology (museums, units and professionals in the local area)
- Media agencies (York-based, national, or archaeology/heritage specific)
- UK Higher Education bodies
- Significant heritage/archaeology bodies (Nationally or internationally important organisations or professionals)

It is hoped that users around the department will become activity engaged with the online community focused around the departmental pages. With rare exceptions, students, recent alumni or those who use their account for personal messages will not be followed.

The department expects to be followed by similar organisations in addition to current and former students, other professional and amateur archaeologists. The ‘ripples’ created by each post are less predictable (but often the most exciting) these can very quickly reach large, international audiences, or be passed on to those with specific interests: for example the recent Star Carr news being read by prehistorians in many countries.
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Advertising the Departmental pages

To stimulate discussion and encourage engagement with the department’s Facebook and Google+ pages and Twitter account it is hoped that staff and students will encourage others to use the departmental pages by advertising their use.

Facebook, Google+ and Twitter have a number of downloadable logos for advertising. Staff and students are encouraged to use these at public events. For example, at the beginning of a lecture, staff could provide a hashtag (#) to allow debate to continue on Twitter after the lecture has finished. A slide at the end of a lecture, particularly public lectures could include buttons and icons. Some examples of these are included below for staff and students to use, alternatively these can be found easily through Facebook and Twitter support pages or by searching through Google.

If these images are copied and pasted into PowerPoint presentations they should automatically link to the relevant page.

To advertise the department’s Facebook page:

To advertise the department’s Google+ page:

To advertise the department’s Twitter feed:

To provide a hashtag for Twitter perhaps something like this:

#KingsManor

Or use a hashtag with a shortened version of the module title.

This document has outlined some basic guidelines for the use of Twitter and Facebook within the Department of Archaeology and York. There is a wealth of information online about innovative uses of social media in higher education, public engagement and professional conversations. If there are any further questions about the use of these, please do not hesitate to contact the Social Media Administrator for more guidance.
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Professional use of personal accounts

Many staff and students now have a presence on these services and use them for a mixture of personal and professional communication.

Glossary

General

Blog: A contraction of web-log, blogs provide free and easy-to-use means of online publishing. They are increasingly valuable media form on every subject imaginable. There are now large numbers of archaeologists using blogs and the small number of high profile examples (such as PastHorizons or DayOfArchaeology) get large numbers of visitors.

RSS: This technology allows users or website developers to automatically subscribe to new material as it is posted on a site or blog. It can be seen as a sort of subscription service, but rather than just receive emails with each piece of new content it can be automatically tweeted, sent to another website and so on.

Facebook terms

Event: Event pages are set up by individual members to provide details such as times, locations and information about upcoming events. These can be posted on Pages and will then appear in the notifications for these pages. Invites can also be sent to individuals or lists of individuals from the event page.

Friend: A friend is someone who has access to your page. In the case of an individual this is your personal profile page. For organisations, once your page has been liked, that individual is effectively a friend. Friend’s will receive any of your activity on Facebook within their News Feed (unless they choose to Hide posts from you).

Group: Many group pages are currently being archived by Facebook, as pages are now replacing the role that groups used to provide. Groups were set up by groups of individuals who might wish to keep in contact for example, to share information about a specific project or as a group of alumni. These could be made public, or private by invite by the administrator/creator of the group only.

Likes: People can like content of many forms – from a friend’s comment to an organisations page.

Lists: Lists can be created by individuals to organise the contacts they have. This allows group messages to be sent more efficiently and effectively are used the same way as an email list.

Message: Facebook messages provide individual users and organisations a means by which to communicate privately. These arrive, and can be sent from, your Facebook inbox, just like emails. These provide an additional way of communicating to writing on the walls of specific pages or individual profile pages.

News Feed: This is the page which first appears when you log into Facebook. As long as an individual is logged in, this feed will continually update with activity from friend’s pages. Individual users can choose to Hide posts, or delete individual posts from this page.

Page: A page is usually created by a business, organisation or group and has come to replace the Group pages which existed before changes were made to Facebook in 2011. These pages can be Liked by members of
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Facebook. In Liking a page, members will then receive notifications of any updates to the group. These are public pages which can be accessed by any members of Facebook and will appear on search results.

Profile: An individual’s page is called a profile. This will display an individual’s wall, info, photos and notes, to tell you more about the individual. Privacy settings can mean that very little is displayed, except to their chosen friends.

Wall: A Facebook wall is the space on a page (either belonging to an organisation or an individual profile page) where messages can be written, and links, pictures and videos can be posted. These are public for all friends of this page to see.

Twitter terms

Profile: On Twitter your profile page displays information about yourself or your organisation, the people and organisations you follow and your tweets. The information about yourself or your organisation consists of a short bio of 160 characters or less, a profile picture and website address. The messages displayed on your profile are your own tweets and messages which you have Retweeted.

Tweet(ing): A tweet is a short message composed of 140 characters or less. These messages are publicly displayed to all the Twitter users who follow your profile.

Retweeting: (aka RT): If you find one of your followers tweets interesting you can Retweet this so that your followers can also this message. This is done by clicking the retweet (RT) button at the bottom of the message you would like to retweet.

Following: Twitter allows you or your organisation to connect to other twitter users around the world. You can do this by following someone else’s profile. Once you are following a profile you will then receive any tweets by them on your homepage. They will be notified that you are following their profile and this often leads to them then becoming one of your followers.

Followers: A follower is someone or an organisation which is following you. The will see your tweets on their homepage.

Listed: Members of Twitter can create lists. This lists group

Message: A message allows individual users and organisations a means by which to communicate privately with you. These messages will appear in your Messages inbox which can be accessed by the top menu bar.

Hash Tag (aka #): When composing a tweet, you can include hash tags to allow people to easily move between tweets which are discussing the same topic. This keeps a thread of conversation easily accessible and searchable which can be useful if you are discussing a variety of subjects with different users. Events, campaigns and areas of study are often hash tagged. An example of using a Hash Tag might be: “Exciting new evidence of #mesolithic housing at Star Carr found #archaeology”. Twitter recommends that hash tags are not overused and suggests using no more than 3 per tweet.

Mentions and @reply: To alert a specific person or organisation to one of your tweets you can mention them in a tweet. This is done by including their profile name preceded by a ‘@’ sign. For example @UoFArchaeology. This can help spread messages to wider audiences as anyone following the person or organisation you have mentioned will also see your tweet. You can also reply to someone else’s tweet by using the @ and profile name within your own tweet or simply by clicking the reply button on the message you wish to reply to. This is useful if you wish to begin a conversation with an individual/organisation.
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**Timeline**: Much like a homepage, the Timeline is the first thing you see as you log in to Twitter. This displays all your followers tweets and will update as new messages are posted.

**Google+ terms**

**Circles**: These are used to organise your contacts. For example, you could share archaeology content with an *Archaeology Circle* and personal messages with a *Friends Circle*.

**Hangouts**: These video chat rooms are similar to [Skype](https://www.skype.com) but allow multiple participants and the sharing of documents.

**Profile**: Equivalent to a [Facebook profile](https://www.facebook.com).

**Stream**: Equivalent to the [Facebook News Feed](https://www.facebook.com).