**Make Facebook Your Friend**

**Expanding the Classroom with social media**

**Why use social media?**

* [More than half of all Internet users](http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2011/Technology-and-social-networks/Summary/Findings.aspx) log-on to a social networking site daily.
* Social media can be used to waste time, but so can television, email, and the telephone.
* [Study shows](http://reyjunco.com/wordpress/pdf/JuncoCHBFacebookGrades.pdf) that Facebook use is not a negative influence on grades, but how it is used makes a big difference.
* Social media is just another communication tool, to be used for good or ill.

**What are the major platforms?**

* **Facebook**: very familiar with short learning curve, but not very flexible.
* **Twitter**: expands connections to transcend, not just replicate, your face-to-face network with a wide range of expert commentaries and perspectives.
* **YouTube**: only does one thing, but does it well, so integrate its videos with other social network platforms.
* **WordPress**: a blogging platform at its core, but incredibly versatile with enough plug-ins to create an interactive class website without knowing any code.
* **Google+**: offers the most privacy controls for sharing content and also has powerful video-chat feature, but can be tricky to learn at first.

**How can it be deployed?**

* A Facebook group looks, feels, and functions the same as normal Facebook, but all sharing is done in a private space.
* A Twitter hashtag (#topic) categorizes posts, making it easy to search the platform for specific topics or filter out anything not related to a certain category.
* A WordPress blog allows for discussion threads that incorporate multimedia, custom designs, and pages of static content.
* A Google+ page allows for selective sharing, hiding content from one group while making it visible to others.
* YouTube offers a number of ways to embed videos directly onto each social media platform without having to send visitors directly to YouTube’s site.

**When can it enhance learning?**

* Through social media, [a large class can have a real-time discussion](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6WPVWDkF7U8&feature=player_embedded#!) where everyone can contribute before, after or during a lecture.
* Twitter and Google+ make it easy to find and subscribe to sources of knowledge on specific topics, providing daily updates on how the subject matter relates to current events.
* Historical characters or academic concepts [can be personified and brought to life](https://twitter.com/#!/RealTimeWWII) with their own social media accounts, encouraging student creativity.
* A shared space on social media creates a sense of community among a class, which facilitates collaboration and engagement for group projects.

**Questions?**

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