

Maarit Jaakkola

The scholarly use of social media

How to make the most of it?

More and more scholars are using Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and other social networking sites to communicate their research to the larger audiences but also to connect with each other. Nordicom Information asked some academic users in the Nordic countries about their strategies and experiences in the most popular platforms of social media. They told us how to use – and not to use – Twitter, blogs, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, LinkedIn and Academia.edu. It seems that core issues are how to find time to produce content, keep yourself motivated and find networks relevant to your own research.

Mari K. Niemi:

“Twitter opens up career possibilities”

Postdoctoral researcher,
visiting researcher
University of Strathclyde,
the UK (2013-2016)



- On Twitter since 2013 (@marikniemi); 7,307 followers
- Started her current blog (in Finnish) in 2015
- On Facebook since 2007; 880 friends
- On Instagram since 2016; 318 followers

Why should academics tweet?

Once, when I had been selected Researcher of the Year in 2015 by the Finnish Union of University Researchers and Teachers, I introduced my speech by saying that I would feel worried if no one in the audience grabbed his or her mobile and started fingering it. Had I really said nothing worth tweeting?

I think that today tweeting is part of good social conduct. Spreading information and

impressions from an event you are taking part in implies saying thank you in public to those who have worked hard to make the event possible. It's also about sharing information, often in real time, to those who aren't able to attend.

What kind of strategies do you endorse in tweeting?

I tend to tweet regularly. I made it to the list of the top 100 influential Finnish tweeters, preceded by only one researcher, my colleague in political history, Erkka Railo (@ErkkaRailo). As many active tweeters, I couple tweeting with blogging. I tend to post about four times a month and in Finnish.

A researcher who goes online with an active input may soon find him- or herself in a situation where it takes a whole lot of your working time to reply to all contacts and requests. Then, it may be appropriate to tell your followers when you are available and when you are not. I myself make it very clear which political processes I follow, which signals to the journalists that I am available for commentaries and interviews. For example, the last time I visited Finland, I followed the selection of the leader of the Social Democratic Party and ended up in being interviewed by a number of journalists, including being on three on the spot live broadcasts. This year,

Maarit Jaakkola, Editor for Nordicom Information, Researcher at Nordicom.

I'm, due to my timetables, not able to follow the municipal elections.

Even an active tweeter can take breaks every now and then. I usually put a pinned tweet on my profile page that comes up as the first in the flow, telling people when I will next be available.

How has Twitter affected your personal career?

Many organisers of events are willing to invite presenters who are known to the public and who can contribute to the visibility of the event. I feel that through Twitter and having been active in the old media as well, I have managed to build up a certain public profile, which can be seen in by the fact that I tend to receive invitations from beyond my own research field as well. Event organisers, perhaps, regard me as some kind of an opinion leader. This means that there are lobby and interests groups which try to impact me.

Our recent article on populist parties' strategies in responding to racism accusations in the media¹ attracted some valuable retweets by other scholars in the field and has already been downloaded over 700 times. Another article on gendered expertise² was similarly tweeted and retweeted, and is now, according to Sage Altmetric, "In the top 5 % of all research outputs scored by Altmetric" and "Among the highest-scoring outputs from this source (#17 of 613)", the source being the aforementioned journal. As these are relatively recent publications, I firmly believe sharing our work via Twitter has been very useful in helping colleagues, journalists and members of the public to find our work.

1. Hatakka, Niko & Niemi, Mari K. & Välimäki, Matti (2017). Confrontational yet Submissive: Calculated Ambivalence and Populist Parties' Strategies of Responding to Racism Accusations in the Media. *Discourse & Society* 28(3), forthcoming.
2. Niemi, Mari K. & Pitkänen, Ville (2016). Gendered Use of Experts in the Media: Analysis of the Gender Gap in Finnish News Journalism. *Public Understanding of Science*, published online before print January 6, 2016.



Mari K. Niemi published her first tweet in July 2013.

In addition, social media have played a crucial role in the internationalizing of my career. It was through Facebook that I resumed my contact with Scotland where I have been doing research during the last three years.

What are your hints for beginners?

Search for your own niche: follow people who are interested in the same area, activate them by tagging and pinging, build up a profile by showing which topics are those you specialise in. Try out live tweeting and figure out new ways of tweeting.

Even if my research topic, populism in the media, is a sensitive one, I have not encountered hate speech. I follow political parties from the left to the right: politicians, political officers, and supporters. So tweeting does not necessarily need to end up in a hermetic bubble, but it can make you more conscious of the world.

Ulrika Hedman:

“Blogging must be fun”

Doctoral student
University of Gothenburg,
Department of
Journalism, Media and
Communication, Sweden



- Started her blog at www.eftertankt.com in 2010
- On Twitter since 2011 (@UlrikaMHedman); 1,919 followers
- On Facebook since 2008

How did you start blogging, and why?

I started my blog while working as an administrator for the SOM Institute at the University

of Gothenburg. As I was responsible for communication, I wanted to learn how the platform – Blogger – technically works. As a former journalist, I also felt a profound need to write. I had followed the blog *Ting & tankar* by Åsa M. Larsson (<http://tingotankar.blogspot.com>, Twitter @archasa), a Doctor in Archaeology who has written a lot about scholarly blogging, and found it very inspiring.

I think that a blog is always somewhat of an egoistic project. A blog enables you to position yourself towards the social field of research: the blog functions as a CV in which colleagues and interested others can see what you are doing. At the same time, it helps you to sort out your thoughts and get feedback. However, the feedback you receive is not always direct and visible, such as comments attached to your blog entry. Feedback also includes invitations to seminars and interview requests. In addition, I have found new colleagues by researching media and journalism through my blog and Twitter.

What are your blogging strategies?

Since the beginning, I wanted to keep blogging as an activity that is fun. I do not constantly keep an eye on statistics or try to reach out to as big an audience as possible. I typically get a couple of hundred of readers for a blog post. The unfortunate fact is that blogging is not officially included in my working hours but it is an extra task that I am not paid for. However, as long as it is meaningful to me it makes sense.

As I'm writing my doctoral thesis on the journalists' uses of social media, I also feel that by being there myself I can show the journalists that I am not that intimidating. In my blog, I am also able to write about my doings in a popular manner in Swedish, while most of the current scholarly work is conducted in English.

Why do the Swedish media scholars seem to be so active in blogging?

In Sweden, a number of blog posts by media scholars are gathered in a common blog portal, Medieforskarna.se, thanks to Peter M. Dahlgren (<http://www.backendmedia.se>, Twit-

ter @peterdalle), a PhD student who initiated it in 2014. There are 16 blogging researchers at this point. By using the same hashtag on Twitter, #medieforskning, and gathering postings under a common address, it is a lot easier to follow media researchers in the blogosphere.

I think there may be differences in traditions and cultures in how employees relate to the authorities. In Sweden we are lucky to be able to voice our opinions without being too anxious about the consequences.

Aske Kammer:

“On Twitter, I’m bilingual”

Assistant Professor
The IT University of
Copenhagen,
Department of Digital
Design



- Started his blog at www.askekammer.dk in 2011
- On Twitter since 2011 (@AskeKammer); 1,939 followers
- On Facebook since 2007; 308 friends

Why did you start blogging? How did your relationship with blogs develop?

I started blogging in 2011, but it's difficult for me to find time to write blog posts because they often require quite some work. I don't use the blog nearly as much as I would like to. Instead, Twitter is my platform of choice when it comes to contributing to the public discussion about media-related issues. I signed up for that social medium in 2011 as well and have used it since then. Today, it's one of my most important resources for staying updated about my field of research and for distributing my own work.

What kind of a communication strategy do you have? How often do you keep posting, to whom are you writing, and what do you not want to write about?

I use Twitter for sharing new – but sometimes also old – research that can inform and qualify the public discussion about the media, broadly speaking. My strategy, if I have one, is to use it as a professional platform; I'm there in my capacity as a researcher, and you won't find much personal or private information on my Twitter profile. My wife says it's a little boring, but I prefer to keep it that way in order not to compromise my research integrity; some of the issues I research are highly political, and if I started to express personal opinions, it would be harder to get the kinds of access I have now.

Last December, I did an "advent calendar" with links to open-access media studies every day from December 1st to the 24th. Because of the tight structure, the continuity and the high quality of the research I shared, it was quite popular among researchers, as well as practitioners in the media industry – and among people who just have an interest in my field.

On Twitter, I'm bilingual. Approximately two-thirds of my followers are Danish, so much of what I tweet is in Danish because it caters to this audience. However, many of my tweets are also relevant for people abroad, and these tweets are in English. The tweets in English are generally not tweeted before 2 p.m. when people on the American east coast are up. My Danish tweets always begin with the disclaimer [DK], so that my English-speaking followers can easily filter them out.

What do you experience as the most challenging thing in the scholarly use of social media?

The most challenging thing about blogging is finding time to do the writing. I have a number of blog posts lying around – about issues such as ad-blocking, Twitter's problems in the stock market, advertisers' exodus from controversial "news" websites such as Breitbart, and the business of Danish newspapers) – but because I haven't found the time to finish them, they remain unpublished.

Twitter is easier: It's 140 characters, and then you can move on. The problem with Twitter is that there are so many conversations going on that it can be difficult to navigate and

keep an overview. For this reason, I try to keep the number of profiles that I follow to no more than 500. Currently, I'm at 574, so that's not working out as well as I had planned.

In your opinion, how do Danish journalists and media researchers engage in social media?

There are not many of us on Twitter, and I think that's a shame. A lot of the international researchers within the field are using this social medium to push high-quality content, so it can be a resource-efficient way to keep up with the latest research and discussions. Also, conferences often have a designated hashtag, and by following that hashtag you can get a lot of insights from conferences that you're not attending.

That said, I realize that Twitter is not super-easy to get started with – but on the other hand, it's not rocket science. A good start is to follow good people like Stine Liv Johansen (@StineLiv) from Aarhus University, Malene C. Larsen (@malenel) from Aalborg University, Luca Rossi (@LR) and Lisbeth Klastrup (@klast) from the IT University of Copenhagen and Filip Wallberg (@fiwa) from the University of Southern Denmark, and to just join the conversation.

Jill Walker Rettberg:

"Snapchat isn't just for kids!"

Professor in Digital Culture
University of Bergen,
Department of Linguistic,
Literary
and Aesthetic Studies



- On Snapchat since 2011 (active since 2016)
- Started her blog *jill/txt* in 2000
- On Twitter since 2007 (@jilltxt), 5,466 followers
- On Facebook since 2007; 708 friends

What kind of a relationship do you have with social media?

I started blogging as a PhD student in 2000. To begin with, I used it to share interesting links and to air ideas I was working on in con-

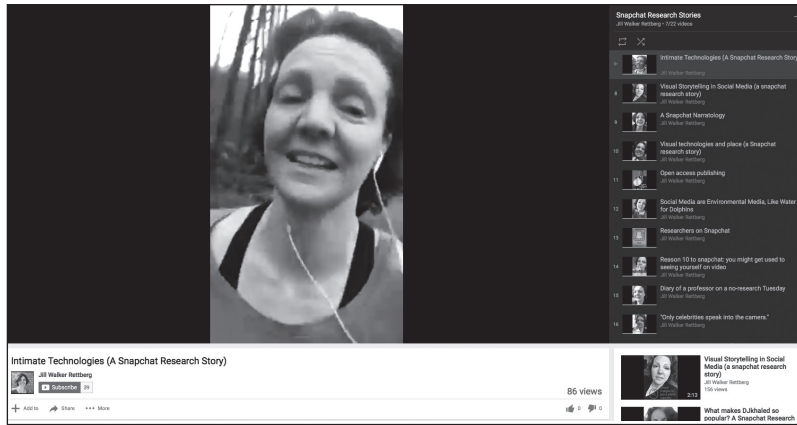
nection to my research. Soon, I realised that I was developing much more confidence in my own voice and daring to express clear opinions more easily than I had done previously.

Many other PhD scholars I had met at conferences, for example Lisbeth Klastrup (@klast) and Torill Mortensen (@torill), also began to blog and our blogs became a very useful tool for networking – we were all working on digital culture in various ways and, back then none of us had many local colleagues working directly in our field.

When I was hired as an associate professor in 2004, and especially when I became the head of my department a few years later, I found that blogging as an insider with some power is a very different thing to blogging as a PhD student. I used the blog to work through the transition, for instance writing about my anxiety in preparing to meet the dean to discuss challenges in my department, and I found that being honest about this and receiving support from others, helped me to grow in this new role.

With time, though, I found I was blogging less and less, in part because I had other outlets and was busy, but in part because there are many things you simply can't write about: workplace conflicts, student frustration, and the less appealing parts of your job. I wrote a chapter of the book *Uses of Blogs* (2006) about this. Here is an example of me trying to blog my way to being confident as a head of a (small) department: <http://jilltxt.net/?p=1231>.

I have found that blogging slows down; it



One of Jill Walker Rettberg's Snapchat Stories on YouTube.

moves in waves. But I always come back to it. In the periods that I am most productive as a researcher, I usually blog quite a lot. Blogging helps me think more consciously.

With Facebook, people blog less, though. I use an RSS reader (Bit.ly), which sucks in data from Feed.ly to follow blogs, but today there is an expectation that blog posts should be longer and more carefully edited, and so there is a higher threshold – people blog less. Ten to fifteen years ago, a blog post could be a single line or two with a link, so we used blogs similarly to the way we use Facebook and Twitter now. I end up posting a lot to Facebook and Twitter that would have gone on my blog previously – this is a pity because it is much less searchable. In ten years, I probably won't be able to find my old Facebook posts, but I can easily find a blog post from 2002 – and quite often I do remember writing something about that, and I can find my old blog post about it.

I've dabbled in Instagram, Reddit and Tumblr for academic use, but not much, and other platforms just for private use or testing to see how they work.

You are one of the few scholars using Snapchat. How did you discover this multimedia messaging application?

I signed up for Snapchat when it was launched, because I study social media. But, I didn't have any friends there and didn't get the point of the personal messages.

In April 2016, I was watching my 19-year-old daughter use Snapchat and realised it had

changed a lot. Now Snapchat has stories, so you can follow celebrities or people you know a little and see their public posts, even if you don't use the messages much.

Another friend, who works with social media for a university college, showed me how they used it for recruiting students, by letting different students post stories about their daily life. I realised that this could be used for sharing research, so I spent a few weeks learning everything I could about Snapchat, and following lots of celebrities and marketers, and then I carefully storyboarded my first research story and recorded it.

I found it really enjoyable, and so I decided to set myself a goal of creating one research story on Snapchat every day for a month. Because not many people were doing that at the time, I got quite a lot of attention, which is fun, of course – but to be honest, I've always found it exhilarating to figure out how to use new social media in new ways.

I also think you need to really use a technology to really understand it. And, since I conduct research on social media, understanding Snapchat, which is immensely popular, is obviously a good thing. Seven out of ten Norwegians with a Snapchat account use it daily. Also, 54 percent of Norwegians over 18 have Snapchat profiles, so 38 percent of Norwegians must use it daily.³ That is a lot! This is not just something kids use.

Tell me three different ways to use Snapchat for scholarly purposes.

First, make short research stories about a specific topic. If you're happy with them, save them and post them to YouTube or your blog so they are available after the 24 hours they are on Snapchat.

I've gathered some of mine on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL46Xs2itPIMIDBL0tPfg-2WzXwZrnTePh> (short link: <http://bit.ly/2mA3Uin>).

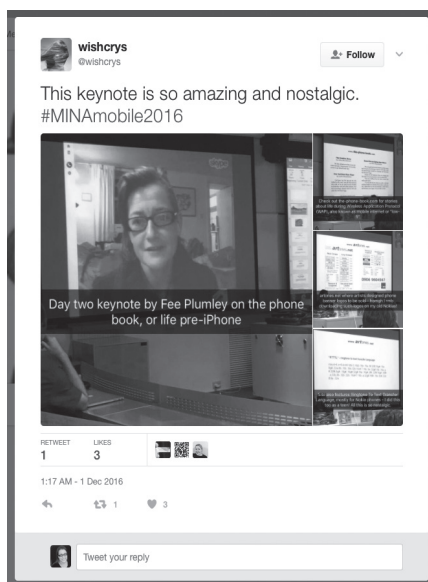
Second, report from conferences, lectures or the lab – videos or images with overlaid

text format can work very well for sharing key ideas from a talk or an event.

Here are some examples by me:

- **Post-Screen Festival 2016** (24 November 2016): <https://youtu.be/1GAV5NGi91g?list=PL46Xs2itPIMIDBL0tPfg-2WzXwZrnTePh> (**short link**: <http://bit.ly/2mzSHP2>)
- **Open Access Publishing** (27 April 2016): <https://youtu.be/c2Ap1YZV-Neo?list=PL46Xs2itPIMIDBL0tPfg-2WzXwZrnTePh> (**short link**: <http://bit.ly/2n5ZVxO>)

Snapchat images from talks can also be great to share on Twitter. The Internet ethnographer Crystal Abidin (@wishcrys) often does this. For example:⁴



Third, share behind-the-scenes moments. Sunniva Rose (@SunnivaRose), a Norwegian nuclear physicist, does this a lot, and I really love getting to see the lab and the late night experiments she has to monitor, or watching her try to finish her PhD. She's going to defend her PhD very soon. She has also written about Snapchat in her blog: <http://rose-blogg.blogspot.no/2015/04/snapchat.html>.

3. Ipsos' tracker om sosiale medier Q4'16, 16 February 2017, <http://ipsos-mmi.no/some-tracker>. Accessed 25 March 2017.

4. Further examples: <https://twitter.com/wishcrys/status/821304435217268738> and https://twitter.com/Viktor_Baskin/status/809239943159500801.

Finally, what are your tips to those unfamiliar with the professional uses of social media?

Just start! Begin by reading and watching others and thinking about what you like or dislike about how others present themselves. Then simply try it out.

Don't worry too much: blog posts can be deleted or edited if you get cold feet, and Snapchat stories only stay for 24 hours. Share a link to your Snapchat user or your blog post on Twitter and other social media you are on. Sharing your research in social media is a great way to think through new ideas more clearly and to get feedback on your research.

Pelle Snickars:

“I'm a typical lurker on Twitter”

Professor in Media and Communication Studies
Umeå University,
Department of Culture and Media Studies



- On Twitter since 2009 (@pellesnickars); 1,264 followers
- Started his blog at pellesnickars.se in 2009
- Does not use Facebook

How did you discover the social media as a platform for mediating research?

I basically started using social media and my blog, or better put, my site, when I worked on the anthology *The YouTube Reader* in 2009. It then made sense to actively use and get practically acquainted with the kind of media that we had a scholarly interest in.

Initially, I started my site not as a blogging tool – although I occasionally posted comments and drafts to the site (and still do) – but more as a kind of open archive of my own publications. I add, on average, five to seven posts a month. I don't know anything about my readers; Google Analytics displays a mod-

est number of them.

With a few exceptions, everything I publish gets uploaded onto my site, including all my books and articles – in pirated or manuscript versions if there might be IPR restrictions or problems (which I honestly don't really care about since I have written the texts, and I should stress that I have not had any problems with publishers).

All material on my site is CC licensed, and anyone who is interested can read and use my material. I usually put my lecture slides online in PDF format as well, and, essentially, since 2010 my site has grown considerably. I perceive this activity as a way of communicating my research to anyone interested.

Since I worked for more than a decade within the heritage sector, interested users are not only fellow academics but also people working within the cultural heritage domain and the library sector, and journalists.

In 2013 I started being active on Twitter, having been passive the first years. I usually tweet a few times a week, occasionally every day. I only tweet work-related links and stuff. During recent years my “social media practice” has involved me writing something on my site or uploading an article or a draft that I am working on – and then tweeting about it. Hence, Twitter works as a way to try to promote and highlight what I do. On Twitter, I mainly tweet links to material that I am interested in; mostly articles in the daily press, less frequently academic work.

I engage in dialogue with others on Twitter very infrequently. I am a typical lurker.

How do you decide what you want to post and when?

I don't have a strategy at all – and I will write or post whatever I find interesting or seems to work. During recent years I have predominantly posted texts on my site that I am currently working on, as a kind of work in progress. Alternatively, I have declared that I have published something, sometimes with a comment on the publication. If I am attending a conference, I usually upload my lecture and slides before my talk. Sometimes I might link to interviews I have made, or to the media

where I have made an appearance. Therefore, my blog works as a kind of scholarly diary on my academic whereabouts.

What have you experienced as the biggest challenges in being present as a researcher in the social media?

I don't know about challenges – apart from the fact that one needs to put an effort into trying to regularly post material to the site and keep up a moderate activity on Twitter. I don't know, however, if this “perceived activity” makes any difference, but at least for myself, I want to continuously and actively communicate about research.

You seem to have an ambivalent relationship with being online.

Yes, I don't see myself as an engaged researcher in social media – I occasionally post, link or retweet. To be honest, it's an activity that doesn't take up my time in any considerable way. I am simply present in social media – restricted to Twitter and my personal site – and I find it important and will continue to do so.

Lars Holmgaard Christensen:

“Curating a Facebook group is similar to writing a blog”

Associate Professor
Department of Communication and Psychology,
Aalborg University, Copenhagen



- On Facebook since 2008
- On Twitter since 2009 (@MediaTwitTwat); 187 followers

You are moderating an open Facebook group called *Nyhedernes sociale ansigt* (“The social face of news”) which had over 660 members in the beginning of April. Why and how did you originally start the group?

I started the group in 2010 as part of a netnographic research project on Facebook and

journalism. At that time, I was Head of Research for Digital Media at the Danish School of Journalism. As part of the netnography, creating a group to explore group dynamics on Facebook seemed a must. In the beginning, it was my own research I posted about. In 2014, I worked as a research consultant, so the group was also used to push more popular conceptual thinking.

I am now back in academia and use the group like a blog for curating relevant news and for promoting my own work. Over the past two years, posts updated by others, comments, shares and likes have increased immensely.

Over the years, my professional Facebook use has developed along with this group, making my personal Facebook profile less about my work life.

In Denmark, there are a number of Facebook groups in different fields of communication for “nørdere” (nerds), with the description “den hårde kerne” (“the hard core”) – for example, the group *Kommunikationsnørdere – den hårde kerne*. The Facebook users in the communications field seem to be relatively organized – is that true?

I think there are distinctions between the communications professionals' use of Facebook groups. That tradition is mostly for the sharing of hands-on knowledge or tips and tricks for toolbox thinking. Academically, we have Videnskab.dk as a popular outlet for stories about research, but, otherwise, the knowledge sharing takes place in organized research associations and smaller groups, typically tuned towards specific conferences within national boundaries.

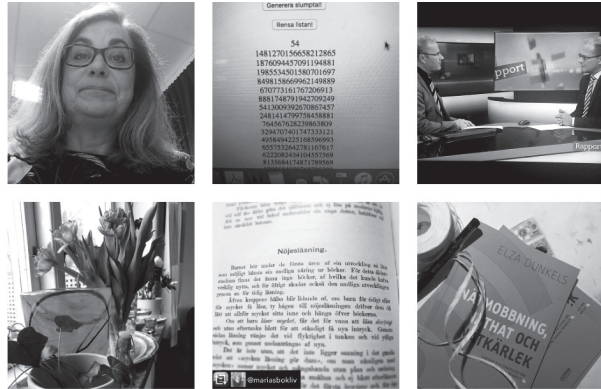
The group *Nyhedernes sociale ansigt* tries to connect specific profession-based interest groups. It's more issue-focused, emphasizing the impact of social media on journalism and news production. This attracts not only researchers and communication professionals but also educators, students, journalists and others.

Based on your observations, how has the scholars' relationship with Facebook devel-

oped and changed during the recent years?

I think more and more scholars find good use for Facebook, be it conference calls, group discussions, sharing knowledge, spreading of the results of research or following others' work and keeping one updated.

I think Facebook is very well-suited to academic communication, but, when it comes to more generally popular communication about research findings, it is important not to think of your communication in terms of where it fits in within the disciplinary boundaries of the academic world but a lot more on what existing issues the research is part of and how it can contribute to making people think of the world attentively and differently.



Some moments in Elza Dunkels's Instagram feed.

Elza Dunkels:

“I feel a need to support the selfies genre”

University Lecturer in Pedagogic Work
Umeå University,
Department of Applied Educational Science



- On Instagram since 2012 (@dunkels); 1,212 followers
- Started her blog at www.kulturer.net in 2004
- On Twitter since 2009 (@dunkels); 5,950 followers
- On Facebook since 2007; 892 friends

Tell me briefly about your relationship with the social media tools you are using the most and how your relationship to them has developed.

It's not really that strange that I'm so immersed in social media as my research is con-

cerned with young people's online cultures. So, it was quite natural for me to engage in early social media in the late 1990's. Now, I see only benefits in having these channels to communicate with the surrounding world.

What kind of a communication strategy do you have on Instagram? How do you decide what you want to post and when? Are there themes you do not want to address?

I try to be bold and courageous when it comes to posting on all my channels. I think the world will be a better place if we share experiences and thoughts quite freely. However, I'm careful not to post about other people without their consent.

The channels differ in character, and I attempt to act accordingly. On Instagram I post pictures, of course, but they are always accompanied by comments, short or long. I have a photo project on Instagram, called #skärmtid which is Swedish term for "screen time". In this project I depict positive screen time, mostly with kids as models but I sometimes include adults.

I also post loads of selfies as a part of my activism for children's rights. I see the need to support the selfies genre and help elevate it to a more reasonable position than it has today. Because the art of selfies was initiated by young girls, it has been frowned upon. My aim on Instagram is to show solidarity with young girls and to educate adults on the subject.

Other subjects that recur on my Instagram are sexism and childism, which I understand

as the oppression of the young. I also use Instagram to share my work life: travels, conferences, media appearances, publications and so on.

As any woman who dares to claim a position in the public debate, I receive a lot of hate speech because of my posts. So, I always have a plan for any social media posting or media appearance: I need to make sure I have company and that someone can screen my inboxes if I touch any sensitive subjects. Unfortunately, today, we who receive hate mail have to fend for ourselves. Hopefully, it will change over time.

How well does research as a topic suit the visual tools of communications?

For me, this has never been a problem. In fact, it would be harder to communicate my research if I could not use visual media. I need to visualise a lot of my research results, such as the problematisation of the discourse around girls posting selfies. I also often post media headlines that illustrate emotional reactions towards young people's Internet use.

But, of course, you need to practice. Just as you need to learn how to do research, you need to learn how to communicate it.

In your opinion, what have been the biggest benefits of being an engaged researcher in social media?

It's hard to imagine what my professional life would be like without social media, since I have never tried it. But I suppose it would have been hard, maybe impossible, to reach all the interesting and interested people I have reached now.

Right now, I am part of the #blogg100 project, so I post every day for 100 days, ending in June. The #blogg100 is a yearly campaign initiated by Fredrik Wass (<http://bisonblog.se>, Twitter @fredrikwass), a social media veteran. It encourages bloggers to post once a day from March 1st every year. For me, this works as an incentive to disseminate stuff that's been standing in the pipeline for too long.

I can give my followers daily updates on

what is happening in my research field. I take the responsibility to communicate my research very seriously. Universities are publicly funded, and we are obligated to pay back by disseminating our results.

Arne H. Krumsvik:

“LinkedIn killed the business card”

Head of Department,
Professor
University of Oslo,
Department of Media and
Communication



- On LinkedIn since 2004; 2,031 contacts
- On Twitter since 2009 (@arnehk); 2,245 followers
- On Facebook since 2007; 1,896 friends

How and when did you originally discover LinkedIn?

I used SixDegrees.com until it was closed down in 2001, and I found it to be a powerful tool for professional networking. I continue to use LinkedIn in the same way. If someone gives me his or her business card, I send him or her a request on LinkedIn and throw away the paper.

In my opinion, instead of LinkedIn, Academia.edu, ResearchGate and Google Scholar are the three most important social networks for scholars. If you want to communicate about your research to larger audiences, it's fine to use Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, but to reach colleagues and to increase the number of citations, you should use these three services. I have written about this before.⁵

When it comes to the academic use of social media, I also use Podbean and iTunes for the podcast *Krumsvik & co.*: <https://krumsvik.podbean.com>.

5. Krumsvik, Arne K. (2016). Gløym Facebook! Her er sosiale media for forskarar! *Khrono*, 8 January 2016. Accessed 25 March 2017.

Have you, as an academic, profited from using LinkedIn?

My professional network on LinkedIn has been important to gain access to organizations for both myself and my students. I rarely share postings or engage in discussions on LinkedIn.

As to sharing personal postings, a blog is a good tool for it. I used to blog regularly; I run the blog *Bestem deg!* (“Decide!”) at <http://www.bestemdeg.no>. However, I lost my subscriber database the same week Facebook changed their algorithms some time ago, and after that I needed a long break. However, I might make a blogging comeback!

Are there any reasons for using LinkedIn when we have Facebook?

I use both, for different reasons. The fact that LinkedIn is a professional social network means that there are no cats and grandchildren in the news feed. However, unfortunately, I do not know all my 1900 friends on Facebook personally; hence, I do not expect postings there to be in a private setting either.

Nico Carpentier:

“My enthusiasm for Academia.edu has cooled down considerably”

Professor
Uppsala University,
Department of Informatics and Media,
Sweden



- On Academia.edu since 2009; uploaded 28 books and 169 papers; 5,108 followers
- On Facebook since 2008
- Personal homepage at <http://nicocarpentier.net>

Why did you initially start using Academia.edu?

Initially, both Academia and ResearchGate offered a good way to share some of my texts and to gain access to publications of my colleagues. I got to know ResearchGate a bit because we – I was at that time working at the Bureau of ECREA, the European Communication Research and Education Association – were investigating a collaboration with ResearchGate (which ultimately didn’t materialize).

Even if both Academia and ResearchGate still serve this basic function, more and more critical analyses have surfaced, and the platforms have changed over time, as well. My enthusiasm has cooled down considerably.

What, in your opinion, are the biggest advantages of academic social networking sites such as Academia.edu and ResearchGate?

The main advantages are visibility and accessibility.

What kind of criticism do you, then, see as relevant regarding Academia.edu?

There are considerable problems with this company. There is a lack of clarity about its business model, and about the company itself (apart from the announcement that its aim is “to accelerate the world’s research”). Questions need to be asked about the desirability of academics using these kinds of for-profit tools, especially now when Academia.edu has become much more assertive in promoting its “Premium” account.

Also, we should raise questions about the risks to the open access model which is under threat from many sides which include, first, the “open access gold” model of mainstream academic publishers; second, the abuse by predator journals and publishers; and, third, the financial exploitation by leaching journals and publishers who require high publication fees from authors.

These arguments have been mentioned by others, for instance, by Kathleen Fitzpatrick,

in her post *Academia, Not Edu*.⁶ She raises “questions about the best means of accomplishing that sharing”, provides us with a pretty compelling analysis, and, most importantly, points to alternative models such as the discipline-based arXiv.org and mla.hcommons.org. The conference *Why Are We Not Boycotting Academia.edu?*, with its only slightly provocative title, is yet another way to reiterate the question.⁷

Literature on the scholars’ use of social media

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6. Fitzpatrick, Kathleen (2015). *Academia, not Edu. Planned Obsolescence*, 26 October 2015, <http://www.plannedobsolescence.net/academia-not-edu/>. Accessed 25 March 2017.

7. See Penny Andrews’s conference report (2016) at <https://thewinnower.com/papers/5014-event-report-why-are-we-not-boycotting-academia-edu>. Accessed 25 March 2017.

Social media platforms

Snapchat



- Image messaging and multimedia application
- Communication based on image and video entries (“snaps” and “stories”)
- Launched in 2011 by Evan Spiegel, Bobby Murphy and Reggie Brown
- 158 million daily active users worldwide
- **How to get started:** *The Beginner’s Guide to Snapchat* by Mashable, <http://mashable.com/2014/08/04/snapchat-for-beginners/>

Facebook



- Social networking site
- Communication based on status updates, discussions in open and closed groups
- Launched in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg, Dustin Moskovitz, Matt Cohler, Chris Hughes and Eduardo Saverin
- 1,87 billion monthly active users worldwide (2017)
- **How to get started:** *Tutorial: Facebook* by GCFLearnFree.org, <http://www.gcflearnfree.org/facebook101/>

Instagram



- Mobile image sharing application
- Communication based on images with captions and discussions
- Launched in 2010 by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger
- 600 million monthly active users worldwide (2016)
- **How to get started:** *How to Start in Instagram* at Instagramers, <http://instagramers.com/destacados/instagram-3-0-english-how-to-start-in-instagram/>

Twitter

- Microblogging service
- Communication based on entries with a maximum of 140 characters
- Launched in 2006 by Jack Dorsey, Noah Glass, Biz Stone and Evan Williams
- 317,000 monthly active users worldwide (2017)
- **How to get started:** *A five-Part Guide to Using Twitter as an Academic* by Josephine Scoble, The Online Academic, <https://onlineacademic.wordpress.com/social-media-for-academics/twitter-for-academics/>

LinkedIn

- Business and employment-oriented social networking site
- Communication based on a personal CV page and networking, open and closed groups
- Launched in 2003 by Reid Hoffman, Allen Blue, Konstantin Guericke, Eric Ly and Jean-Luc Vaillant
- 467 million registered users worldwide (2017)
- **How to get started:** *8 Steps to Creating a Powerful LinkedIn Profile* at Business Insider, <http://www.businessinsider.com/8-steps-to-creating-a-powerful-linkedin-profile-2013-12>

Academia.edu

- Social networking site for academics
- Communication based on uploading academic papers and feedback sessions of paper drafts
- Launched in 2008 by Richard Price
- Almost 50 million registered users worldwide (2017)
- **How to get started:** November Impact Challenge Day 1: Make a Profile on Academia.edu by Impactstory blog, <http://blog.impactstory.org/impact-challenge-day-1-academia-edu/>

ResearchGate

- Social networking site for scientists and researchers
- Communication based on uploading academic papers
- Launched in 2008 by Ijad Madisch, Sören Hofmayer and Horst Fickenscher
- More than 11 million registered users worldwide (2016)
- **How to get started:** Review of ResearchGate: Pros and Cons and Recommendations by the University of Exeter, <http://blogs.exeter.ac.uk/openresearchexeter/2013/11/06/74/>

Google Scholar

- Web search engine and literature database
- Communication based on searches in the database, indexing papers and tracking of citations, author profile pages for self-promotion
- Launched in 2004 by Google Inc.
- **How to get started:** How to Get Indexed by Google Scholar? <http://openscience.com/get-indexed-google-scholar/>