

# Living Professionally Online – A Twitter Assignment

## Introduction

### Why?

- 🐦 People are increasingly expressing their professional identity and work online via social media. This is particularly relevant to academic scholarship as a community of practice on Twitter.

*“Your concepts of academic identity and academic reputation **do** need to expand. Twitter and social media are now a part of scholarship, as modes of communication and of scholarly practice.”*

- Bonnie Stewart, Coordinator of Adult Teaching, University of Prince Edward Island.  
[@bonstewart](#)

*“When we engage on Twitter as scholars and academics, we contribute to the growing field of knowledge about networked collaboration and learning.”*

- Jesse Stommel, Director of Teaching & Learning Technologies, University of Mary Washington. [@Jessifer](#)

- 🐦 Twitter presents us with an opportunity to collaborate and engage each other’s thoughts outside of the classroom or an online “discussion forum.”

- 🐦 Investigating working in public on social media can help us consider our own digital identities, interests, and comfort zones.

- 🐦 Twitter can be a tool for activism, networking, learning, and much more. It reminds us that our topics and conversations do not exist in a vacuum but extend outside the walls of our classroom. This is deeply in the spirit of learning at Kalamazoo College. Like K, Twitter is “comprehensively internationalized.”

- 🐦 Twitter can also be a valuable writing tool to practice clarity and concision. Don’t believe me...

- Warm-up exercise (in-class using Word).
  - Pick your favorite work of art – poem, film, song, painting, etc. Communicate what makes it exceptional in 140-characters.
  - Debrief

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## The Assignment

1. Research a professional and/or academic field of interest on Twitter. As we discussed in class, start by entering keywords or phrases, picking a relevant hashtag, or determining if individuals you are interested in have a Twitter account.\*
2. Choose either an individual account or a hashtag that is active in your field, meaning someone who reflects her/his “work” in the public sphere of Twitter. Follow the activity around this node of information in preparation for the due date next week. You may find something like [Tweetdeck](#) useful to organize the information, particularly if you’ve chosen a hashtag. If you have an account, you might also favorite tweets to track particularly relevant commentary.
3. Write a two page response in which you consider questions such as:
  - How do individuals in the conversations you followed express their professional work and personal identity? Are both roles present? Is there a blend? Are they seamless? Separate?
  - How do people on Twitter approach their field? What appears to be the purpose, focus, and response to their online activity?
  - What was unique about how people used Twitter as a medium instead of emails, blogs, articles, videos, etc.?
  - Does what you found connect to your own idea of professional identity? What resonated with you? What might you do differently?
4. As part of your essay, compose a 140-character digest of your research. Whether you choose to tweet this or not, compose it as a draft of an online post.

\*At this stage, you do not need to have a Twitter account of your own, though it may make things easier. This is an endeavor in understanding working/being in public so you are encouraged to reflect on how this might relate to your own activity. If you are interested, a first step might be to create an anonymous account that you can continue to use or discard at the conclusion of the course.

## Other Resources

“5 Tips for College Students Who Use Twitter”

<http://www.campusexplorer.com/college-advice-tips/356AEA74/5-Tips-for-College-Students-Who-Use-Twitter/>

“5 Reasons Twitter is Better for College Students than Facebook.”

<http://thesocialu101.com/5-reasons-twitter-is-better-for-college-students-than-facebook/>

“How to Balance Your Personal and Professional Identity on Social Media.”

<http://www.business.com/social-media-marketing/how-to-balance-your-personal-and-professional-identity-on-social-media/>