

Lecture notes for “Creating and Managing Your Online Scholarly Presence”

Slide 1 - Intro

In this session we will be discussing a few of the tools and techniques that can be used to create and manage your online scholarly identity. Maintaining an online identity has become an important component of the career of a researcher because it helps make you, and your work, more widely visible to the larger research community. With increased visibility comes better odds that your work will make an impact in your field, which in addition to being intellectually gratifying can be helpful when it comes to more practical things like getting a job, applying for grants, earning tenure, or achieving other forms of career advancement.

So I’m going to be talking about two different components of an online identity. First is the parts that highlights you as a person and a researcher, while the second consists in getting your actual work out there. Later, I’ll also touch on some things you can do to track the impact of your work, which can be helpful in terms of evaluating whether your online presence is supporting the goals you want it to.

Slide 2 – What Is

So let’s begin with a simple question, “what is an online identity?” I’m not aware of any authoritative answer to this question, but I like to think of your online identity as the collection of everything on the internet that mentions or refers to you, whatever form that might take. Parts of this identity might be publicly available, and other parts may be under different types of access restrictions. For instance, you may have your Facebook profile set up so only your friends can see certain information about you.

We could also think about online identities in the plural form. For instance, you may have a personal online identity and a professional online identity that are very distinct from one another. Or they may overlap, or you may have the personal and professional all wrapped up in a single persona. I mention this, because as you develop and manage your online scholarly identity, it’s important to think about whether you want to compartmentalize this from other areas of your online presence. This will probably depend both on your specific area of research and your career goals.

Slide 3 – Not Optional

While this might sound alarmist or fake, having an online identity isn’t really optional these days. If you don’t create and manage one for yourself, then sooner or later one will be created for you in some fashion. You may be listed in some kind of online directory or departmental profile page, or listed on an online conference program. This can happen with very little involvement from you. And while this isn’t necessarily a bad thing, being passive about your online presence means you have little to no influence regarding what people see when they look you up. So the reasoning is why leave things to chance when you have the option to exert some control over the situation.

In short, if having an online identity isn't optional, at the least you can work to take control of your identity and be proactive in managing it so that it ideally consists of things you want people to see when they search for you.

Slide 4 – Self Assessment

If you have never done so, or at least not recently, it might be a good idea to Google yourself. This allows you to get some sense of the current status of your online presence. You can also try adding “WVU” to your search, or the names of any other institutions or jobs with which you've been affiliated. Try a few different searches with your name and maybe other keywords to see what comes up, and if it all seems to link together.

So take a minute and do this. Are you satisfied with the results? Do the results portray you, and your scholarly activity, in the ways you want to be perceived? Are you showing up in the first page of results?

Slide 5 – 3 Ways

Now that we have covered some basics, let's move into the how-to. As you might imagine, managing an online presence has the potential to be a never-ending task (as the phenomenon of the influencer illustrates), so today we're going to focus on three core activities to try to make things manageable.

First, we're going to discuss a few different scholar profile systems and some of the pros and cons of using them. Second, we'll talk about the idea of making your scholarly work accessible in order to maximize your potential readership. And then finally, we'll look at some ways in which you can evaluate the effectiveness of the first two by examining the role of impact metrics.

Slide 6 – Profile Systems

So let's begin with scholar profile systems. These systems can take lots of different forms, from dedicated platforms to simply having a website or portfolio that highlights your research and other scholarly activities.

Slide 7 – Common Systems

Here I've listed some of the most commonly used platforms for online scholarly profiles, each with their own pros and cons. ORCID, Google Scholar, Academia.edu, ResearchGate, and even LinkedIn and Twitter. These last two aren't just used by academics, but they can be useful depending on how widely they are used by members of your discipline. Today I'm going to focus primarily on ORCID and Google Scholar, but I'd encourage you to think about whether these other platforms may be of use to use. Before getting into these, I will say a bit about the other items listed.

Academia.edu and ResearchGate are two of the most popular scholarly profile systems. They both offer a sort of social network setup for academics. While these platforms can be useful, it is important to be aware that they are both for-profit, commercial entities and they have

been criticized for being non-transparent about their business models, in particular what they do with user data. They can be used to share papers, follow other researchers, and obtain full text copies of articles (sometimes in violation of copyright and publication contracts). Academia.edu offers both free and premium versions and both platforms tend to send lots of spam-like emails to account holders. This isn't to say you shouldn't use these platforms, but it's just important to be aware of all of the relevant considerations. They can be useful for getting your name out there and establishing a reputation in your field.

LinkedIn and Twitter are other platforms that may be useful. As you know, neither of these are dedicated to academics, but researchers in some disciplines are quite active on them. While I am not active on Twitter professionally, I have colleagues and others that use it as a resource for their fields. Not listed, but also potentially used, would be things like Artstation or Soundcloud for creative arts researchers, as they can tie your professional researcher profile to your actual creative outputs.

Slide 8 - Orcid

First up, let's talk about ORCID. ORCID is a bit different than academia.edu and researchgate in that it's not set up as a social network. It stands for Open Researcher & Contributor ID and is a 16-digit sequence used to uniquely and persistently identify individual researchers. One of the main benefits of having an ORCID is that it helps solve the problem of name ambiguity. For instance, if you have the same name as other researchers, having an ORCID can help distinguish you from them. Or if your name changes at some point in your career, or if you publish under your name in different ways (e.g. Jeff Werst, Jeffrey Werst, Jeffrey D. Werst, etc.) your ORCID will help ensure that you get credit for all of your work. Moreover, your ORCID stays with you permanently even if you change institutions, disciplines, or locations.

ORCIDs are also interoperable among a number of different systems and platforms. This means that, with your permission, your ORCID record can connect with other systems to help keep your profile up to date. For instance, if you publish a new paper in a database that is linked to ORCID, your new publication will be added to your ORCID record. In this sense, ORCID can serve as a semi-automatically updating CV, and a hub from which people can explore your scholarly activity.

Slide 9 – Setup Orcid

Setting up your ORCID account is quick and simple, and I'd like to give you all a chance to set one up right now, if you don't already have one. To do so, follow the steps on this slide.

Start by going to orcid.org, and then click the "Register now" link. After you are registered, you can begin adding information to your profile. Try adding education information to your profile. You can also add publications, funding, professional memberships, and employment information if applicable. After you've added all of your information to your ORCID account, you can start using it in various ways, such as including it on your email signature or on your website.

Slide 10 – Google Scholar

The next platform we'll look at is Google Scholar Profiles, sometimes called Google Scholar Citations. Many of you are probably familiar with Google Scholar and have used it to conduct research. In addition to being useful for finding articles and other sources, Google Scholar can be used to create a profile in which you can showcase a list of your papers and track your citations over time. As you might guess, in order to have a Google Scholar profile you have to have a Google account, so you'll need to register for one if you don't already have one.

Setting up a minimal profile is pretty quick. To get started, go to scholar.google.com. Make sure you're signed into your Google account. Next, click on My profile at the top of the page. You'll then be able to enter your basic information. Note that you'll need to enter your WVU email account for verification. After you click next, Google Scholar may offer some article suggestions to be added to your profile. You can choose to add these to your profile, and then go to the next step - choosing whether to allow Google to automatically update your profile. I recommended saying no so that you can verify any articles added to your profile are yours, not someone else who has the same name as you. After this, your basic profile should be set up. You can also manually add articles to your profile, and add a profile picture.

As more publications get added to your profile, you'll begin to get some useful analytics regarding your work, such as the number of times cited and your personal h-index.

Slide 11 - Sharing

The next component of your online scholarly identity that I want to touch on is your research itself, specifically sharing it and making it accessible. The idea here is to think about the idea of maximizing your potential readership. Many researchers assume that publishing in the top journals in their field means that anyone who might be interested in reading their work will have the ability to do so. But a significant percentage of potential readers may not have access to the journals in which research is published. You've all probably encountered this issue yourselves at some point when you've run across a paper that you don't have access to through the library, so it is also possible that potential readers of your work can run into paywalls as well. So making your work as widely accessible as possible can result in an increase in your readers and citations. Moreover, it helps promote a more inclusive and equitable scholarly communications system.

Slide 12 - Accessible

There are a few different things you can do to maximize your potential readership. The first is to publish your work in open access journals. To find open access journals in your field, visit the Directory of Open Access Journals. You can browse the directory by subject area and filter by a number of different parameters.

That said, there can be a lot of pressure to publish in the top journals in your area, and many of these are probably subscription journals. In many of these cases, you can still make your work open access by depositing a version of your article (often the author's accepted manuscript) into an open access repository. The WVU libraries manage a local institutional repository, called

the Research Repository, and many disciplines also have established repositories as well. To find an open access repository in your area, you can visit the Directory of Open Access Repositories.

Your publication agreement should spell out your publisher's policies for sharing your work online in open repositories. SHERPA/RoMEO is a database that allows you to look up journal and publisher policies for sharing your work, so this can be a great way to look up the policies for a journal ahead of time. Finally, If your publication agreement doesn't permit you to share your work in open access repositories, you may be able to negotiate to change the terms of the agreement.

Slide 13 - Tracking

The last strategy I'm going to discuss today is tracking your scholarly impact metrics. Becoming familiar with these metrics can provide you with some information regarding the extent to which your work is making an impact. This can be helpful in determining whether your current publishing strategy is working, and can give you some sense of the extent to which your online scholarly presence is effective. These metrics can also be beneficial when it comes time to writing a research statement for a job application, or a narrative for a tenure dossier. Citation analysis and other metrics can help demonstrate the impact of your work qualitatively and quantitatively.

Slide 14 - Metrics

Broadly speaking we can divide metrics into two categories - traditional metrics and alternative metric or "altmetrics" for short.

Traditional measures include things such as citation metrics, which is how often a work is cited in other works. These vary a lot from discipline to discipline and how many people are working in a particular area. Another traditional measure is called the H-index. Whereas citation counts are article-level metrics, an H-index is a researcher-level metric that indicates both the number of publications an individual has, and the number of citations per publication. You can get citation metrics and your H-index using Google scholar, as well as several library databases, including Scopus and Web of Science.

Altmetrics provide a somewhat different way of looking at research impact, as they are often use to measure societal impact rather than intellectual impact within the community of one's own discipline. They often reflect online discussions of research, such as Wikipedia citations or mentions on social media. Impactstory and Almetric are the name of two platforms that can be used to get a sense of one's altmetrics.

Slide 15 - Fin

That concludes my presentation, but I have here my contact information and a few more pieces of useful information related to this.

I will admit that I am not the expert in these fields, but the library is here to help if you have any questions about these, or other topics.