

Book Review

Social Media for Educators: Strategies and Best Practices

Wiley/Jossey-Bass; 2012; 144 Pages; ISBN: 1118118286

Social Media for Educators

Social media is a growing topic in various fields of education, training, and development. Although *Social Media for Educators* is directed at faculty and instructors in higher education, much of the book is very applicable to educational administrators, higher education professionals and others beyond the campus environment. This is a very timely publication that identifies the needs, issues, and learning strategies for social media use in a variety of learning models. Beyond higher education, there are a number of valuable social media insights and strategies which could easily apply to other industries beyond campus, such as organization learning specialists, training facilitators, human resource development, and professional association education sectors. Tanya Joosten provides a solid background, technological implementation, and evaluation for utilizing social media resources for richer learning environments.

The book is subdivided into three sections that deal with social media, specifically its background, learning pedagogical practices, and other considerations for learning and effective use. The initial section of the text sets the foundation and outlines the background of how social media is defined by the author: "A virtual place where people share; *everybody and anybody can share anything anywhere anytime*" (Joosten, 2012, p. 6). Social media encompasses Web 2.0 tools, social networking sites, and user generated content where individuals engage and contribute to these digital spaces. There are a number of historical underpinnings and considerations to online interaction and digital learning that connect to social media. The author provides common characteristics and attributes of social media to help build a learning network, support community development, and engage learners in their educational environment. Joosten provides a number of practical tips for initiating use and professional development suggestions that would enhance any educators' personal learning network.

The next section of the book discusses implications and suggested practices for educators and learners who utilize social media in instructional curriculum. There are a number of helpful examples and "how to" guides using social media to create richer learning environments that support the 21st century learner. Joosten demonstrates, through visuals and case study examples, how a learning community can form within a course, shared learning space, or even among a professional online group. The author identifies the importance of a pedagogical needs assessment and specific learning outcomes prior to the infusion of social media into any curriculum. To accompany these considerations, the book provides useful strategies for social media implementation such as communication updates, collaborative discussions, social responsibility for contributions to group, digital identity development, and improved attitudes for learning.

There are a number of case studies in the book which include ideas about how to build a professional online network for educators, building social media into class requirements, or identifying aggregated channels of communication. Examples of social media spaces like

Book Review

Social Media for Educators: Strategies and Best Practices

Wiley/Jossey-Bass; 2012; 144 Pages; ISBN: 1118118286

Twitter, YouTube, Flickr, and Facebook are used to encourage connected learning environments. By involving educators in professional learning networks, many discover the benefits of a virtual support system to build relationships, share ideas, and learn about instructional design applications of the social web.

Social media provides value and added benefits for both educators and learners. With enhanced communication and on-going interactions in social media, more learners feel connected to the curriculum materials, instructor, and one another. Social media has the potential to increase learner performance through timely feedback, personalized instruction, and learning satisfaction. Joosten provides useful considerations in designing social media platforms to structure a course, support connected communication streams, and identify digital content delivery methods that are appropriate for the desired learning outcomes.

There are a number of social media tools to support current content, curation, and management for multiple platforms. With evolving aspects to social media, there are a number of concerns, questions, and areas that organizations should consider according to the final section of the book. Social media often prompts discussion about appropriate policies, privacy needs, learner use, structural guidance, potential costs, technical support, and sustainability. This section of the book provides a starting point for addressing common concerns such as organizational ownership, user-generated media, IT questions, administrative support, policy development, social media training, and aggregation of platforms or accounts. Joosten also provides suggestions for evaluating social media audience, establishing social media purpose, and assessment of social media in practice with a helpful set of evaluation questions included in the appendix.

Social Media for Educators is an excellent textbook that interweaves theory, applications, and current pedagogical experiences for learning environments. For those in the learning and performance industry, this book provides insights and ideas to help guide social media use for both educators and learners. Joosten provides current examples, benefits and considerations throughout each chapter to help educators. Whether educators are beginning to design a learning curriculum or learners are considering social media for organizational development, this book presents helpful insights and experiences that will potentially influence and shape effective engagement and learning with social media.

Laura A. Pasquini is a Ph.D. Student in the Department of Learning Technologies and Academic Counselor/Instructor for the Office for Exploring Majors, Undergraduate Studies at the University of North Texas, Denton, TX. When she is not reading books or editing articles, she can found being social with her media on Twitter ([@laurapasquini](https://twitter.com/laurapasquini)) and via [her blog](#).