

JustPublics@365 Toolkit

A Social Media Guide
for Academics



Just Publics @365

About JustPublics@365

The goal of JustPublics@365 is to transform scholarly communication in the digital era for the public good.

We do this through a variety of initiatives that help scholars create new, more open forms of knowledge using digital media and connect academics with journalists and activists to help foster transformation on issues of social justice.



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Table of Contents

Emerging Trends.....	1
Intro to Knowledge Streams	2
Visual	3
Audio	8
Tying it All Together: Digital Media Storytelling	11
Getting the Word Out: The Role of Social Media.....	13

Emerging Trends

The emerging trends highlighted here illustrate some of the ways that digital technologies are expanding the reach of and impact of academic research.

1. Increased Academia/Journalism Partnerships

There is a growing movement towards **knowledge-based journalism** that encourages journalists to be more deeply informed about the subjects they cover. This approach presents a fundamental shift in the way that media frames issues and gathers information. It also seeks to bridge a gap between academia and journalism. Digital technologies are helping to make academic research easier to find and interpret. The examples below utilize blogs, podcasts, video, and digital media storytelling, among other things to achieve this:

- ◆ **Harvard's Journalists' Resource Research Chat Series**
- ◆ **The Conversation:** *Academic rigor, journalistic flair.*

2. Academia Promoting Social Change

Academics engage in research and produce knowledge that, intentionally or not, may inform progressive social change. However, universities often discourage academics from actively participating in advocacy or policy making. Digital technologies are making it easier for academics to connect their research with movements and community groups who trying to bring about social change. Some online platforms that seek to elevate the exposure of academic scholarship are:

- ◆ **Futurity:** *Research News from Top Universities.*
- ◆ **Footnote1:** *Showcasing research with the power to change the world.*
- ◆ **Scholarly Strategy Network:** *Research to improve policy and enhance democracy*

3. Measuring Beyond Academic Impact: the Rise of Altmetrics

There is a growing movement towards measuring scholarly work beyond traditional academic circles and publishing outlets; hence, the emergence of altmetrics. Altmetrics looks beyond traditional publishing outlets and instead looks at metrics such as social media shares, citation counting, mentions or bookmarks, attention in high profile blogs, and in some cases Wikipedia posts – to capture how far a particular piece of scholarly work has traveled in the public sphere.

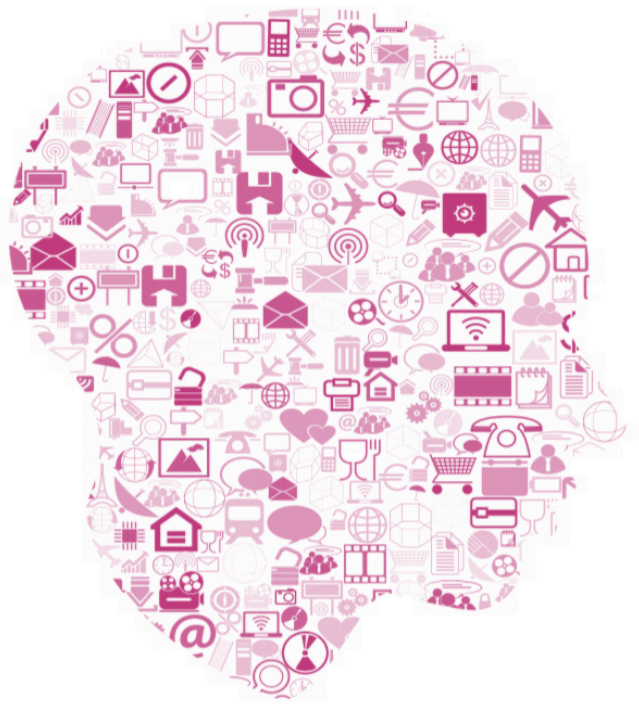
There are new tools emerging to assist academics in measuring the impact of their research. Here are some of the more common tools available:

- ◆ **Altmetric**
- ◆ **ImpactStory**
- ◆ **Plum Analytics**
- ◆ **Kudos**

Using technology for knowledge-sharing beyond academia

- ◆ **RSA Animate Videos:** “21st century enlightenment”. Sir Ken Robinson’s video about [changing education paradigms](#), Jeremy Rifkin’s talk on the [Empathic Civilization](#), & David Harvey’s talk on the [Crises of Capitalism](#)—have been viewed over a million times.
- ◆ **Apple Podcasts:** Apple’s podcast library features hundreds of free podcasts by professors from around the world.
- ◆ **Khanacademy.org:** The learning videos are intended for the general public. They have delivered 240 million lessons and have over 1 million subscribers.

Introduction to Knowledge Streams



The concept of knowledge streams is derived from the belief that all scholars are knowledge producers. Academic research is often complex and largely confined by traditional methods of publishing scholarly work where specialized audiences of other academics are the only ones privy to this knowledge. Digital technologies have the potential to change this by providing academics with tools to create **supporting content** and to **cross-promote** their work. Infographics/data visualizations, podcasts, images, blog posts, etc. can help communicate important research outcomes, while **cross-promotion** of this information can take place across an array of social media platforms and channels. Together, these processes facilitate new knowledge streams that have the power to reach a wider audience. In promoting social justice, academics can use these tools to: (1) raise awareness and promote advocacy, (2) promote stakeholder engagement, (3) build capacity/instruct, and for (4) reporting and data collection.

Visualizing Data

Visual digital technologies provide versatile and powerful tools for communicating complex research findings, abstract concepts, or statistical information. These technologies are evolving traditional data visualizations such as graphs, maps, diagrams, charts, etc., into dynamic, colorful, and interactive representations of data. Visual digital technologies can also utilize and visualize any kind of data from across most academic disciplines; thereby, expanding data flexibility and applicability. As visualization tools become more sophisticated so will their ability to analyze and visualize relationships between data not previously considered together.

Although data visualizations can still feature simple web-based static representations of graphs, charts, etc., they are increasingly being utilized for their interactive and story-telling aspects. For example, data visualizations with interactive displays can help users see the data at different levels and interactively change the data presented. An example of this type of interactive data is the [NYC Homicides Map available on the NY Times](#):



In regards to story-telling, data visualizations can be transformed into simpler visuals and paired with text to tell a story or compelling narrative.

Visual

These types of visualizations are called information graphics (*aka infographics*). Below is an example of an infographic on [Maternal Health in the US](#) by Amnesty International:



These visuals can be used to highlight why an issue is important and change is needed. They are effective for data advocacy because they:

- ◆ **Make your message more compelling.** Visuals are simply much better at stimulating thought and conversation than traditional textual or numerical data!
- ◆ **Allow you to reach a wider and more diverse audience.** As stated earlier, visualizations allow you to convey complex data and abstract information in easily digestible and shareable formats.
- ◆ **Visualize information, systems, networks and flows,** which can be valuable for highlighting social problems and need for policy changes.
- ◆ **Illustrate timelines and relationships** that can help readers put the dots together in understanding a problem (["Data Visualization and Infographics: Using Data to Tell Your Story"](#)).

To learn more about data visualizations [Juice Analytics](#) offers these online guides:

- ◆ [Become a data visualization expert](#)
- ◆ [Data Storytelling: The Ultimate Collection of Resources](#)

Tips for Visualizations that Promote Social Change

1. Don't let the visualization distract from the message

In creating visualizations for advocacy and social change, it's critical to keep in mind your objective and to avoid visualizations which just offer eye-candy. You want the reader to be attracted to your message, not your methodology or the cool visual tools you used. So, ask yourself if you want your data to provide (a) description, (b) exploration, (c) tabulation, or (d) decoration (see Tufte's "The Visual Display of Quantitative Information.")

2. Prep your data

Every great visualization begins with a coherent and well-organized data set. As a result, it's important to clean your data and only leave the most essential variables organized in the best possible format to reveal the main relationships that you want to highlight between your variables.

Two free tools which can help you clean and prep your data for visualization are:

- ◆ [Data Wrangler](#)
- ◆ [Google Refine](#)

3. Ensure content focus

The best visualizations are transparent about the data used and display and make available the data used.

4. Reveal the data at several levels of detail

From a broad overview to the fine structure.

5. Avoid distorting the data

A good visualization should always showcase the data honestly. As a result, things such as pie graphs and charts are frowned upon because they of their distortion of the data and lack of clarity. This is what's often deemed as avoiding "chart junk" (Tufte).

6. Be memorable

[Studies have found](#) that memorability alone can enhance the effectiveness of visualizations. [A recent study](#), which is the most comprehensive study of visualizations to date, found that visualizations that were most memorable had:

- ◆ "Human recognizable objects", these were images with photographs, body parts, and icons--things that people regularly encounter in their daily lives.
- ◆ **Effective use of color**, specifically, visualizations with more than six colors were much more memorable than those with only a few colors or a black-and-white gradient.
- ◆ **Visual density**, meaning that visuals that had a lot going on were more memorable than minimalist approaches.

For inspiration on data visualizations that promote advocacy and social change visit:

- ◆ [Progressive Policy Infographics](#)
- ◆ [Social Change Infographics](#)

Using infographics to foster social justice

A collection of infographics produced either independently by academics or in collaboration with other community groups:

- ◆ [Justice Mapping Project](#): a non-profit collaboration with Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, & Preservation. They develop new visualizations of quantitative data regarding a variety of criminal justice, social welfare, and economic development policies representation challenges.
- ◆ [Racial Dot Map](#): produced by University of Virginia's Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service to show the geographic distribution, population density, and racial diversity of every US neighborhood.
- ◆ [Radical Cartography](#): a series of maps by Bill Rankin, Yale University, that highlight an array of issues including housing, income distribution, population density.

Comparing Visualization Tools

There are many data visualization tools that you can use to visualize data findings in compelling and accurate ways. We have provided information to help you make the best choice based on ease of use, cost, and functionalities available.

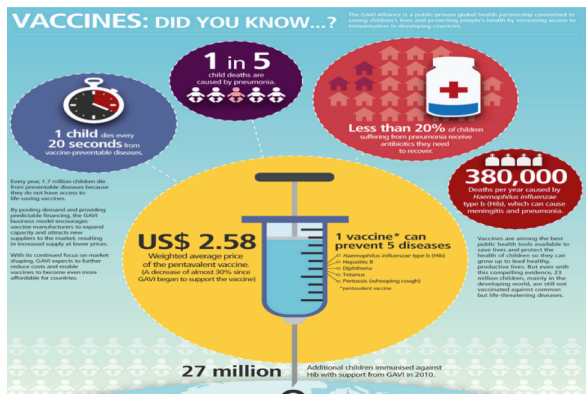
Please Note: [Freemium](#) refers to those programs which offer basic tools for free, but require you to pay in order to access more advance features. Tools highlighted as “requires programming skills,” require specialized technical and programming knowledge.

Tool	Easy to Use	Requires Programming Skills	Freemium	Open Source	Offers Multiple Visualization Tools
Infographics					
Visual.ly	X		X		
Piktochart	X		X		
Ease.ly	X				
Infoogr.am	X		X		
Mapping					
TileMill		X	X		
StatPlanet	X			X	
Worldmapper	X			X	
VIDI	X			X	X
OpenHeatMap	X			X	
Timelines					
Timeflow	X			X	
Xtimeline	X			X	
TimelineJS	X			X	
Timeline Setter		X		X	
TimePlot		X		X	X
Data Visualization					
Gap Minder	X			X	X
Many Eyes	X			X	X
Hohli	X			X	X
Tableau (Public)	X		X		X
D3.js		X		X	X
Circos		X		X	X
Juice Labs	X			X	X
Gephi		X		X	x
Prefuse		X		X	x
Pentaho	X		X		X
Saiku	X		X		X
VisIt		X		X	X
Paraview		X		X	X
Datawrapper	X			X	X
Diagrams/Charts					
Creately	X		X		X
Google Chart Tools	X			X	X
Dia		X		X	X
SmartDraw	X		X		X
Text Visuals					
Tagcrowd	X			X	X
Wordle	X			X	X
Network Analysis					
Networkx		X		X	
NetDraw	X	X		X	
InFlow	X	X	X		
BINViz		X		X	X
KeyLines	X		X		X
Sixdegrees		X		X	X
UCINET	X		X		

[Bamboo DIRT](#) provides the most comprehensive list of data visualization tools. For more information, references, and other resources visit:

- ◆ [Data Visualization](#), Swiss website presenting a collection of 39 data visualization tools (some require technical skills).
- ◆ [Data Visualization](#), ICTlogy website
- ◆ [Visualization Technologies](#), KM4Dev website

Infographics that support social change



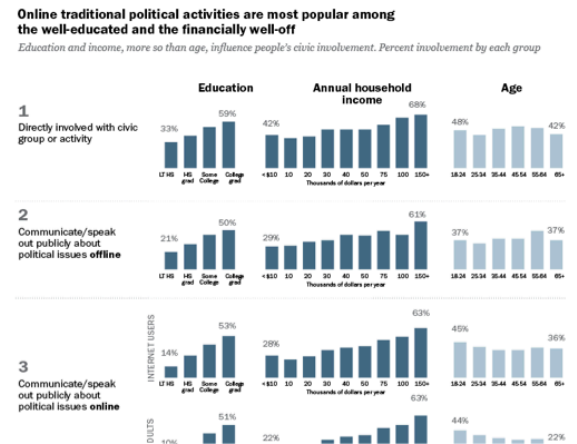
Credit: GAVI Alliance



Credit: Collaboration between GOOD and Column



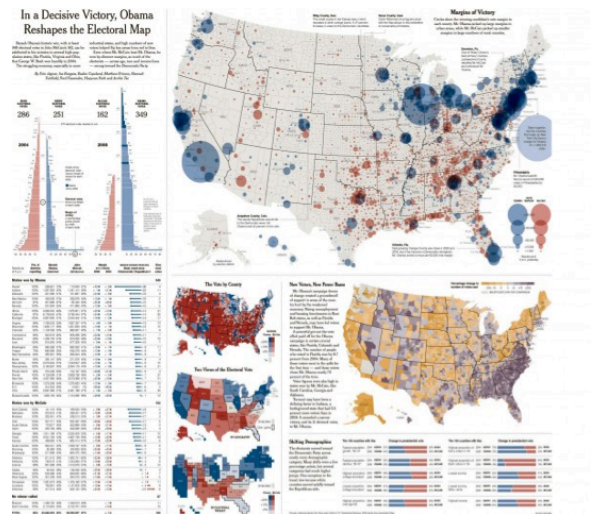
Credit: Many Eyes Moneuk - Brown vs Board of Education



Credit: Pew Research Center



Credit: GOOD and University of Phoenix Education



Credit: NY Times

Traditional Visuals 2.0: Revisiting Video and Photos

Academics have much to gain by tech advances that have made video and smartphone photography more accessible. These advances are not only useful for gathering information during field research but also powerful mediums upon which to share research findings. The addition of online video networks such as YouTube and Vimeo, Instagram, etc., also provide platforms upon which to easily share our content with the world.

If you don't want to invest in an expensive video camera, you may be pleasantly surprised to find out that you can record videos or take photos on your smartphone of good to excellent quality. If you have a computer, chances are that you may already have video creation and editing tools built into the software in your computer. If you have a Mac, you can use [iMovie](#). If you have a PC, you may have [Windows Movie Maker](#).

There are many free video recording and photography apps you can download to your phone. Here's a collection of some of the best.

Video Apps

- ◆ [Cinegram](#) (IOS, ANDROID) - Allows you to create short videos.
- ◆ [Vine](#) (IOS, ANDROID) – to create short looping videos which you can then instantly post on Twitter.
- ◆ [iPhoto](#) (IOS) – If taking videos with your Iphone or Ipad this is the best way to edit and manage these pics. Also offers iCloud support.
- ◆ [8mm Vintage Camera](#) (IOS) – it comes with many retro filters that you can apply to your video. Useful if you want your video to have a vintage feel.
- ◆ [Viddy](#) (IOS) – If you are looking for quick and easy ways to record, edit, and share videos, this app integrates with Facebook, YouTube and Twitter.
- ◆ [Vyclone](#) (IOS) – lets you create video remixes by allowing you to combine your own video with others to create complex collaborative projects.
- ◆ [Clinch](#) (IOS, ANDROID) - creates a movie about the area around you from Instagram, Google, Tweets and more. Everything based on your location and sent instantly.

Photography Apps

- ◆ [Snapseed](#) (IOS, ANDROID) – the best photo editing app available for smartphones. It has special settings which allow you to get greater control over the image. For example, it lets you set separate focus and exposure targets among other things.
- ◆ [Camera+](#) (IOS) – Offers many editing effects, filters, and frames to make your image clear and professional looking.
- ◆ [Adobe Photoshop Express](#) (IOS, ANDROID) – Not as powerful as the full Adobe Photoshop software, but still offers some of the best effects and editing capabilities at your fingertips.
- ◆ [Instagram](#) (IOS, ANDROID) – offers a small yet powerful set of editing options compared to some of the other apps, however, it comes with a popular and large social network which is a great platform to share your photos with others.
- ◆ [Photoroom](#) (WINDOWS PHONE) – one of the better photo editing tools for the Windows Phone. Also lets you create short, animated, shareable GIFs in a matter of seconds.
- ◆ [Pixlr Express](#) (IOS, ANDROID) – Lets you take panoramic or 360-degree “sphere” images.

Radio Documentaries and Podcasts

Radio documentaries are audio recordings that explore one topic or many themes in depth usually through a mix of audio and visuals. Radio documentaries can feature many different styles such as interviews and Q&A style, online lecture, or storytelling. They can also elicit many moods—they can be investigative, intimate, or light-hearted narrative documentaries. In general, radio documentaries can sometimes take many months of research and interviews to create and put together. As a result, each segment can be over 30 minutes long and can cover a single theme for a long period of time or episodes. For more instructions on the planning required recording your own radio documentary, look over this guide: [Record your own radio documentary](#).

Podcasts are the most common type of radio documentaries and are especially popular among academics. “[P]odcasts are a natural fit for communication of academic ideas.”¹ Podcasts can also be used as participatory research method (see [Reading Riots](#)—collaboration between the London School of Economics and the Guardian).

To reach the widest audience possible, each podcast episode should aim to be no longer than **10 minutes.**

Whether you aim for producing a radio documentary or a podcast, the basic equipment you need includes:



Credit: Center for Teaching and Learning at Indiana University—Purdue University

¹ Mark Carrigan, [Podcasts are a natural fit for communication of academic ideas](#), London School of Economics and Political Science, 6/10/2013.

You don't need advanced tech skills to develop your own podcast. However, it does require good planning and knowledge of the equipment you will need to see it through. Below are the major considerations in planning a podcast:

1. Recording

You can record a podcast either by: voice recorder, smartphone, microphone, or through Skype.

Below are some of the main things you should consider for each:

- ◆ **Voice recorder:** Surprisingly, you can record a podcast with a basic voice recorder. Therefore, if you don't have one, ask around your department. Getting your hands on a voice recorder may be easier than you expect!
- ◆ **Smartphone:** If you have a smartphone, you can download apps such as www.audioboo.fm, a mobile and web platform that let you record, edit, publish, and share podcasts. If you have an iPhone, you can also download the [iPhone PCM Recorder](#). Whichever, app you chose make sure to test it out and play around with the settings before you set out to record a full podcast.
- ◆ **Microphone:** Before selecting a microphone, you should consider what format most of your podcasts will be. The reason for this is that certain microphones work best for certain formats.

For example, unidirectional mikes which filter surrounding sound are good for Q&A formats and online lectures. On the other hand, omnidirectional mikes work well for storytelling interviews where you may want to capture some of the surrounding ambient sounds, especially if you are interviewing someone out in the field. Another key thing about selecting a mike is that you don't have to spend a lot of money to get a good quality mic. For more information about how to select a microphone for podcasting, you can refer to [this article](#). Lastly, before going out and buying a microphone check in with your school to see if they have a microphone that you may be able to use.

- ◆ **Skype:** not only offers you the flexibility to call-in and record speakers from around the world but there are also several free or low-cost recording software for Skype. These are: [Vod Burner](#), [Call Recorder](#), [IM Capture](#), [Pamela](#), [Skype Audio Recorder](#) (for Windows), [Piezo](#) (for Mac), [Wire Tap Studio](#) (for Mac), and [Audacity](#).

2. Editing the Recording

- ◆ [Audacity](#) is one of the easiest and best free tool to edit your audio files. Audacity includes features that let you adjust the volume, remove static or background noises, correct the pitch and others that will help make your audio more clear and professional sounding. Search in YouTube for quick video lessons on how to use many of these features.
- ◆ If you own a Mac, you can also use [Garage Band](#), which comes free with most Mac computers.

3. Hosting the Podcast

- ◆ If you want to host your podcast on your own site, first check with the tech department in your university regarding uploading the audio onto your site. If you don't have a website, you can create a blog with Wordpress and upload the audio there.
- ◆ [Sound Cloud](#) allows you to embed your player into a non-static web page on your blog or website.
- ◆ If you do not mind hosting your blog on an outside site, you should check if your university is registered at [iTunes U](#) and host it there. iTunes also has a [useful guide on how to get your podcasts onto iTunes](#).



Tying it All Together: Digital Media Storytelling

Digital storytelling is the application of technology to the age-old experience of sharing personal stories. What's unique from traditional storytelling is the growing availability of sophisticated digital tools to help us tell and share our stories. Digital storytelling entails combining narrative with digital media such as images, sound, spoken word, music, text, and video in order to tell a story (Robin, 2008). In digital media storytelling, the same elements of traditional storytelling style apply - you should focus on a particular topic and have a beginning, middle, and ending. Therefore, the technology is secondary to the *narrative*.

Central to digital storytelling is the notion that by examining our own experiences and stories, we can come to better understand ourselves and the world we live in. As a result, digital storytelling can be a catalysts for personal and community change. For academics, digital media storytelling can help "humanize" research questions and findings that are often too complex or dry for the wider audience.

This [Digital Story-Telling Guide by Adobe Systems](#) offers a good starting point to helping you plan out your digital media story.

In digital media storytelling, technology should be secondary to the narrative.

Tools for Combining Multimedia for Digital Storytelling

There are tools available online that allow you to upload pics and audio in order to put together your digital stories.

Some of the best free and online digital media storytelling tools are:

- ◆ [Storify](#): is an online platform that lets pull in photos, videos, text, and other social media components to tell a story. You can also drag and drop information from various sources into a timeline.
- ◆ [Meograph](#): is an online platform which offers one of the easiest way to create multimedia stories. It allows you to combine video, audio, pictures, text, links, maps, and timelines into your digital story. It also allows you to embed your story anywhere on the web.
- ◆ [Cowbird](#): if you have a few images you want to share and do not want to deal with more sophisticated digital tools, Cowbird is a fairly recent yet powerful tool for creating simple and intimate stories.
- ◆ [Popcorn Maker](#): Designed by Mozilla, Popcorn Maker allows you to add interactive features to videos, such as maps, photos, slides, social media, and links. It can be used for clear cut instructional videos or more creative remixes of images and sound.
- ◆ [Creativist](#): is an online storytelling platform that lets you incorporate text, audio, and animation to create visually attractive online stories.
- ◆ [Projqt](#): an online platform that lets you create dynamic multi-media presentations.
- ◆ [Zeega](#): is a new form of interactive media, enabling anyone to express themselves by easily combining media from the cloud and sharing these creations with the world.

Reading the Riots provides one example of combining a range of digital tools—infographics, maps, podcasts, photos, and videos—to tell a story.

Case Study

[Reading the Riots](#) project was a joint effort between the London School of Economics and The Guardian. The purpose of this project was to produce evidence-based research that would help explain why the rioting spread across England in the summer of 2011. The slides are below and the [full podcast](#) of the event is available.

the guardian

News | US | World | Sports | Comment | Culture | Business | Money | Environment | Science | Travel | Tech | Media | Life & style | Data


News > UK news > **Reading the Riots** > Behind the riots | UK riots | Young people | Riots news | Riots comment | Video

Reading the Riots

Investigating England's summer of disorder


In partnership with the London School of Economics
Supported by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and the Open Society Foundations

Phase one: the rioters



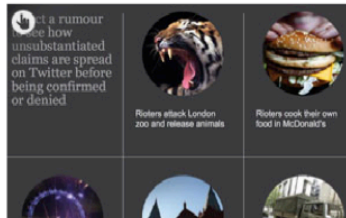
Rioters say anger with police fuelled summer unrest

Guardian-LSE study of riots – involving hundreds of



A fire lit in Tottenham that burned Manchester: the rioters' story

Rioters from across England describe how it felt to be



How riot rumours spread on Twitter

Analysis of 2.6 million tweets shows Twitter is adept at correcting misinformation - particularly if the claim is that a riot is on the loose in Britain. Lill

Next Steps: increase traffic and encourage participation for your podcast.

- ◆ Once you've gotten your podcast up and running you should set up a **Feedburner feed** so that listeners can subscribe to your blog and be alerted when you publish a new podcast episode.
- ◆ Use **SpeakPipe** to get feedback from podcast listeners or blog readers.

Getting the Word Out: The Role of Social Media

The benefits of using social media for communicating academic research have been cited as contributing towards greater democratization, widening participation, and engaging new audiences on a global scale. Below is an outline of some of the best social media networks for academics, along with a quick summary of social media tips on how to best use each.

Before getting started make sure to consider:

1. What is your goal(s)

Common goals for academics or university research departments may be:

- a. To raise awareness about your research and scholars, by generating positive media coverage.
- b. To create an online forum for conversations about relevant issues.
- c. To reach previously underserved audiences with key messages, news and information.
- d. Build new audiences by providing increased access to faculty, student and administrative voices.

2. Who is your audience?

Every social media tool has a different audience. Therefore, consider who your main audiences are and then select the social media tools that would best allow you to reach that audience. If you are trying to reach various constituencies that you may have to use a variety of social-media platforms. However, if you have only one or two key audiences, then you may want to concentrate on one or two main social media tools.

3. How much time and who will do it?

Diligence and consistency are essential for social media success. Therefore, you want to identify the number of hours you can realistically spend on social media in the long term, rather than a week by week approach. At the same time, if you will have others maintain your social media profile, it's important to be consistent in style and approaches to social media across all platforms.

Additional Recommendations

Have a communication and press strategy in place. Your social media strategy should build upon and not replace your existing communication strategy.

Make your content interactive. The various digital tools discussed in this toolkit can help you produce content that is both engaging and interactive. These elements are important because they help promote the “social” aspect of these online interactions and engage your visitors.

Blogging or Personal Webpage

Academic blogs can serve different purposes, such as helping to promote your research, brainstorming platform, to engage with policy issues or with the general public directly, to talk about personal experiences in academia, to advance a particular field of study, engage with other academics.

Whichever, purpose you chose, you should be prepared for opening up your thoughts and research to a wider audience.

[Wordpress.com](https://wordpress.com) or [Wordpress.org](https://wordpress.org) is the most popular blogging platform because it has an extensive library of settings, plugins, and features which let you customize your website the most out of all other blogging platforms. However, you can also use [Blogger](https://www.blogger.com), [Tumblr](https://www.tumblr.com), and [Medium](https://medium.com), as alternative platforms, which can still help create an attractive platform for your digital content. Whichever of these programs you chose make sure to add plugins that will allow you to feature videos, photo gallery, audio, etc. These features will make your site more interactive and greatly enhance the feel of your site. Wordpress has the most comprehensive list of plugins, which you can find here: [Wordpress plugins library](https://wordpress.org/plugins/).

Other Useful Sites

- ◆ [Slideshare](https://slideshare.net): Could serve as a good medium to upload presentations, academic research, etc. It also allows you to have followers.
- ◆ [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/c/CitizenTube): Once opening a Youtube account, academics may be interested in posting videos on to the [CitizenTube](https://www.youtube.com/c/CitizenTube) section of YouTube. CitizenTube is a special YouTube blog devoted to chronicling the way that people are using video to change the world.

It is estimated that [one-third of all scholars are now active on Twitter](#). This means that conversations that previously took place within tight academic circles are now open for the general public to pitch in. The London School of Economics has produced a useful guide on *Twitter for Academics*. [You can download the guide here](#).

One of the most important aspects of Twitter is the power of hashtags (#). Hashtags originated in Twitter; however, they are now used in most other popular social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest, and Flickr. In a nutshell, hashtags are being used as powerful aggregators of information, movement supporters, and more.

Here are some of the ways academics and activists use hashtags:

- ◆ Support or contribute a dialogue for protest movements (e.g., #Iran (Bastos, et al 2013), #occupy (Milberry, 2013).
- ◆ Aggregate critical oppositional theory and politics (e.g., #RaceFail (Rambukkana, 2013), #feminism, #anticapitalism, #homophobia, #equality, #IdleNoMode).

- ◆ Target specific news or political issues (e.g., #climatechange, #robocalls, #shitharperdid, #RobFord).
- ◆ Link and raise the profile of subaltern publics and/or collective identities (e.g., #polyamory, #trans*, #desi, #goth, #metal, #comiccon, #fanfiction, #slash).
- ◆ Create both physical and virtual common spaces through practices such as live-tweeting conferences, protests, events, live news, etc.

Therefore, when you open up your Twitter account, don't just follow people and instead seek to curate your own thematic lists and follow hashtags that are relevant to your research. You can also consider creating a new hashtag. If you chose to do this, you can create and register a new Twitter hashtag at [Twubs](#). In this website you can search if your hashtag exists and if not, register it.

Lastly, register your Twitter Account with [Academia Map](#), a website administered by The Social Media Lab at Dalhousie University. This website serves as the home for scholars to discover and connect.

[Topsy](#) is a social media index and now lets you search through every single tweet sent since 2006. As a result, it's the best place to research what people are saying about a given topic. It lets you search for tweets, photos, and videos. It also includes a free analytics tool that allows you to compare trends and mentions of subjects which can be useful in identifying what people are interested in and which topics are hitting the news agenda.