
Twitter – a personal perspective



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I joined Twitter in March 2009, but like most people I spent the first few months wondering what on earth this strange new world was all about. As a devoted user of Multiply, then Bebo and later Facebook, I was no stranger to social networking, but Twitter was quite obviously something different.

I quickly realised the following:

- you need your tweets to be public
- the best way to get followers is to follow other people
- hashtags are a must if you want your voice to be heard amongst the millions of tweets.

I started out tweeting solely about work and had intended to have two accounts, one for work and a personal account (as I do with Facebook), but I quickly realised that many professionals on Twitter were tweeting about their work lives and their personal lives from the same account. This takes a bit of getting used to, but is very much the norm on Twitter.

I now tweet from my own account @catrionafisher and also on behalf of the University of Glasgow Library @uofglibrary, along with a group of staff from Library Services.

We've found Twitter to be a really powerful way of reaching out to students and other library users and it is now one of our primary channels of communication when we need to share information quickly. For example, we are using it to keep students up to date with any disruption during the work to re-clad the library building.

From a professional perspective, Twitter is most useful for finding out about developments at other libraries, for making contacts, for accessing

publications and for following what's happening at conferences and other professional events.

As well as following the tweets for conferences from a distance, it can be very interesting to follow the tweets from an event that you're actually at – quite often you find a wide range of perspectives and interpretations of the same speech or presentation. I followed the tweets from the RLUK Exchange of Experience Day in November via the hashtag #rluk_eff and while there were only a few of us tweeting, it was very worthwhile and provided food for thought on the train home afterwards.

While at the Sconul autumn conference I tweeted with the hashtag #sconul11, as did a number of other colleagues. Conferences like these are a great opportunity to share with colleagues via Twitter and I do hope that in the future more people will tweet their experiences for the benefit of others.

So is Twitter a meaningful, worthwhile professional tool? I believe so. As Gordon Hunt, University Librarian at the University of the West of Scotland (@glhunt31) put it: 'I think it just fits the librarian ethos so perfectly – information sharing and collegiality.'