

# Book Reviews

## Diane Rasmussen Neal (ed.): *Social Media for Academics: A Practical Guide*

### Reviewed by Jane Mansfield

Chandos Publishing Social Media Series No. 2, 2012. ISBN: 978 1 84334 681 4, 270pp

The book lives up to its subtitle (*A Practical Guide*). The first half, called *The Nuts and Bolts of Social Media*, contains chapters on blogging, social networking and academic communities, real-time teaching technologies, locating scholarly papers, tracking references, twitter, and mobile technologies. Each chapter provides guidance derived from experience and expertise in their subject areas. For instance, Carolyn Hank suggests that would-be bloggers check their university's guidelines for bloggers, and that writers incorporate a Creative Commons licence and a disclaimer on their blog page (pp. 9-10). These early chapters provide a wealth of knowledge, examples and tips. I found a mapping service that tracks scholarly users of Twitter across the world (p.24), reviews of academic networking sites (chapter 2), and comparisons of web-based writing tools (chapter 3). Maureen Henninger's chapter on Locating Scholarly papers is a must-read for anyone interested in bibliometrics and publishing.

The second half of the book, called *Putting Social Media into Practice*, is similarly well researched, and well written and provides knowledge, expertise and case study examples for using social media in teaching and for managing online presence. The chapters in this section cover: Incorporating Web-based engagement and participatory interaction into your courses, getting your work noticed online, managing online identity, social media for academic libraries and feedback from an online course in social media.

Methods of incorporating technology are discussed with the focus on engaging users, increasing participation and developing learning. Every chapter travels way beyond a superficial knowledge of new technologies. They provide in-depth appraisals of the choices available, and recognise that not all students will use online resources. There is also an acknowledgement that social identity, online security and interactions need careful management.

This is definitely a five-star book. Although it is a collection of edited chapters, submitted by ten different authors, each chapter tells us something

new and does not repeat information from the other chapters. This is a difficult task in edited works and credit must go to Rasmussen for her excellent editing skills.

The book was a pleasure to read and this short review cannot do it justice. The text is extremely informative and generous in its knowledge sharing and will be of value for those who wish to use social media for their teaching and research. While it is called *Social Media for Academics*, I would also recommend it for all librarians who

are interested in using social media to engage and develop their users.

Diane Rasmussen Neal has been using social media in her teaching since 2004. Her final words in this book highlight the point that you can incorporate social media into your courses without massive support from your IT team and without immense expenditure (p.255). Much of what is discussed in the text is also fairly easy to use.

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