

Using social media for communicating research: from dissemination to dialogue

William Solesbury
WSA consultancy/ KCL London

How to promote the use of research





If you build it, will they come? How researchers perceive and use web 2.0

A Research Information Network report

July 2010



www.rin.ac.uk

RIN report 'key finding'

“Our study indicates that a majority of researchers are making at least occasional use of one or more web 2.0 tools... But frequent or intensive use is rare, and some researchers regard blogs, wikis and other novel forms of communication as a waste of time or even dangerous.” RIN report p5

Whitehall Watch

A blog on the Whitehall Village and Public Management, edited by Colin Talbot



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Whitehall Watchers – email and meetings

Posted on [February 4, 2011](#) by [Colin Talbot](#)

I have had lots of people interested in helping to expand Whitehall Watch, so I have set up an email list to enable us to stay in contact more easily. [Continue reading →](#)

Posted in [Whitehall](#) | [2 Comments](#)

Who owns GP Consortia?

Posted on [January 31, 2011](#) by [Colin Talbot](#)

Pardon my ignorance, but I have been trying – and I confess failing – to try and get my head around a simple question: who owns (or rather will own) GP consortia? The legal status of these bodies may

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Colin Talbot is professor of public policy and management at [MBS](#). He writes 'Whitehall Watch' in a personal capacity.

Colin's latest book

NEWS Mark Easton's UK

Why are we so concerned about immigration?

Mark Easton | 14:00 UK time, Thursday, 3 February 2011

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An [international survey](#) of eight European and North American countries finds that the British are easily the most hostile on the question of immigration and immigrants - even though five of the nations polled have a greater proportion of foreigners in their population.

According to the research commissioned by US and European think-tanks, people in the UK are much more likely to say there are "too many" immigrants than comparable nations. In Britain the figure is 59% compared to 27% in Germany and the Netherlands - both countries with a higher level of foreign-born residents.

British respondents to the survey by [Transatlantic Trends](#) [[976KB PDF](#)] are the most likely to say that immigrants, both legal and illegal, are a burden on social services. Two-thirds of Britons see immigration as "more of a problem than an opportunity" compared to around 50% in the US and mainland Europe.

Around a quarter of Brits don't think any migrant should be allowed to access the NHS (25%) or state schools (22%), even if they are here legally. In other European countries with significant immigrant populations, the figure ranges from 1% to 5%.



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I'm [Mark Easton](#), the BBC's home editor. This is where I discuss [the way we live](#) in the ever-changing UK.

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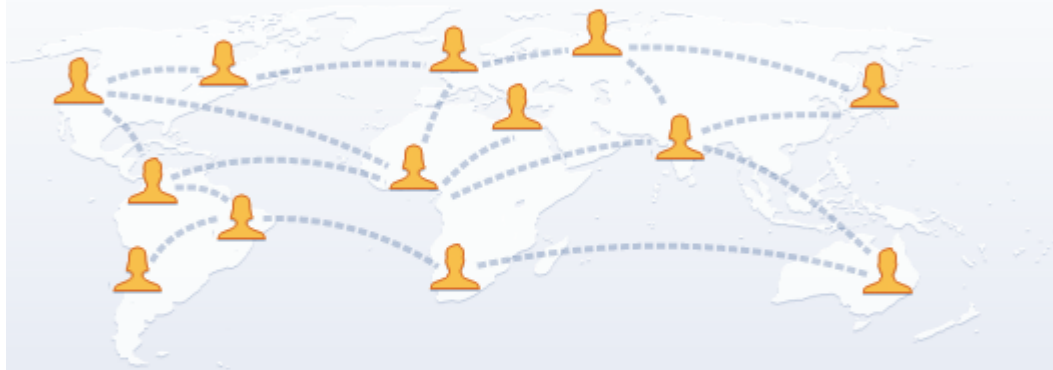
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social science **space**

A space to explore, share and shape the issues facing social scientists



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Why we have launched socialsciencespace

By **SAGE** | Published: February 1, 2011



Over the last year SAGE has devoted time and energy to celebrating the social sciences. We have done so by convening a series of workshops, author panels, conferences and public lectures around the world. Whether in California, Delhi, Beijing, London or Washington DC to name a few locations we have heard inspiring and passionate arguments for the importance of social science to healthy societies.

And yet, despite the power of these arguments, their 'impact', for want of a better word, has been diffuse. In the UK we start this year in the knowledge of an astonishing fact: in future not a single penny of state funding will go to support any student studying for an undergraduate degree in the social sciences (or in the arts and humanities for that matter).

Part of the problem comes from the wide-ranging nature of the arguments presented. Social science ranges in subject matter from evolutionary psychology to

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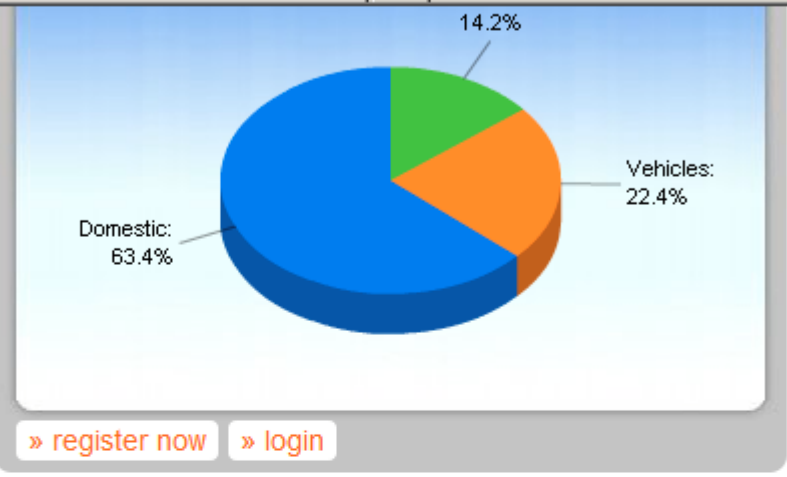
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 Rockstar Games
 Grand Theft Auto V is the most expansive
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 Grand Theft Auto V is a story-driven
 action-adventure game set in the
 fictional city of Los Santos, a
 vibrant and sprawling metropolis
 based on Los Angeles. Grand Theft
 Auto V follows the story of three
 criminals who are forced to work
 together to pull off a series of
 heists and other crimes.
 Grand Theft Auto V is a
 single-player game, but it also
 features an online multiplayer
 mode called Grand Theft Auto
 Online. Grand Theft Auto V
 is available on PlayStation 3,
 PlayStation 4, Xbox 360, Xbox
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 Grand Theft Auto V is a
 must-have for fans of the
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RSS


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Key features of social media

Technologies that

- create data sources that get richer as more people use them
- trust users as contributors
- harness collective intelligence – ‘the wisdom of crowds’
- above all are interactive – allow Q&A

.

Knowledge exchange

‘Strategies for promoting research use should focus...on...interaction, social influence and facilitation...’

Nutley et al (2007), Using Evidence: How research can inform public services, page 192

Key characteristics of dissemination and dialogue

Dissemination

content

statement

useful

when ready

available

one to many

Dialogue

relationship

Q & A

useable

when needed

accessible

one to one, one to many, many to many

Three challenges for researchers

- My place or yours?
- How to get heard among the crowd?
- Whose voice counts?

1. My place or yours?

Where does the online research/practice interaction take place?

- on researcher's sites?
- on practitioner's sites?
- or in intermediary territory?

2. How to get heard among the crowd?

How can the research contribution to practice compete for attention?

- forms of information seeking
- search engines and strategies
- tags, feeds, aggregators etc

Forms of information seeking

from Marcia Bates, UCLA Professor of Information Studies

	Active	Passive
Directed	<i>Searching</i>	<i>Monitoring</i>
Undirected	<i>Browsing</i>	<i>Being aware</i>

3. Whose voice counts?

Fewer gatekeepers - peer reviewers, editors, intermediaries...

But value assessable by

- provenance?
- salience?
- popularity?

Two conclusions

In communicating your research social media can help you to

- diversify your messages
- diversify your 'platforms'

1. Diversifying messages

As well, as

- reporting research

think about

- alerting
- briefing
- applying

Social media can do some of these very effectively

2. Diversifying platforms

Different platforms

- reach and engage different audiences
- suit different messages

“It seems most likely that web 2.0 [*aka social media*] services will continue to evolve as supplements to – not replacements for – existing channels of communication...’

RIN report p8

Thanks

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