

TECHNOLOGY IN PEDAGOGY Series



Enhancing Your Academic Reputation with Social Media By Adjunct Professor Casey Chan

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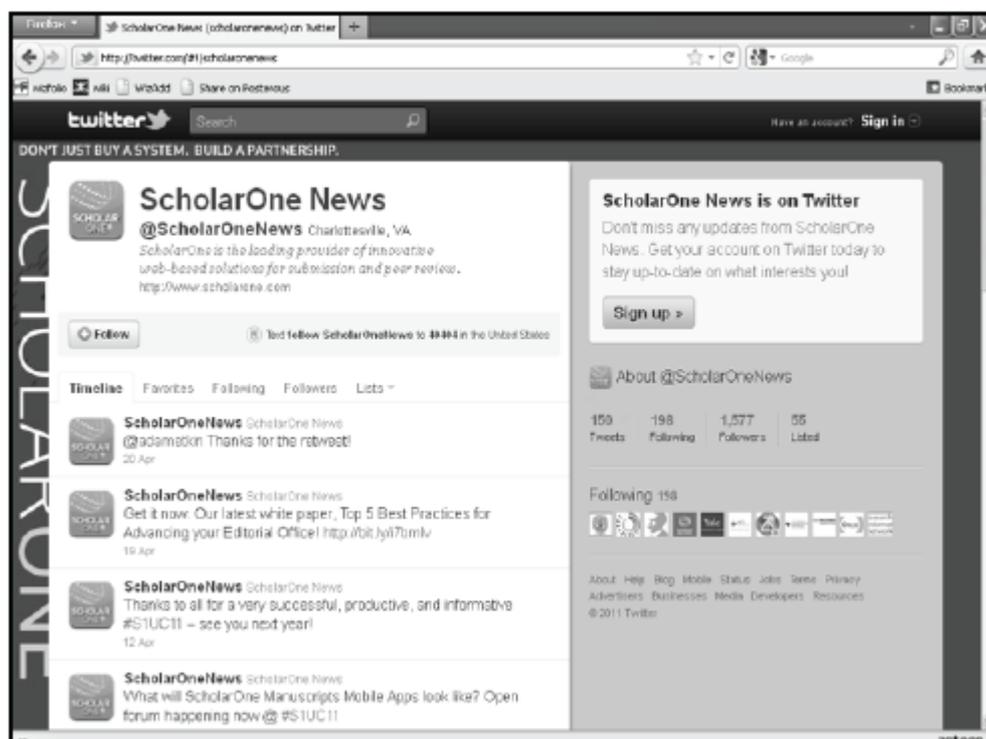
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Social media are “web-based services that allow individuals to establish a public profile and articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection. Social media can help facilitate the meeting of strangers but also allows individuals to maintain and/or strengthen their current, off line social networks (Boyd & Ellison, 2008). In the session, A/P Chan talked specifically about exploiting the power of social media to enhance one’s research and academic reputation.

A/P Chan started his session highlighting how social media has quickly becoming ubiquitous online and that the biggest penetrations are Facebook and Twitter. Social media has been widely used for advertising. It allows you to interact not only with the advertisers but also with your friends. Prof Chan pointed out tweets as an example that allows individuals to hold discussions on the tweeted message. Thus, Facebook and Twitter allows the cyber-word of mouth propagation.

What about academics? How can they exploit this cyber-word of mouth propagation? Prof Chan cited two examples on how academics can use social media to their advantage.

1. Firstly, he pointed out that academics have realised that they need not wait years to get their publications cited. These days, all major academic publishers have a strong presence on Twitter. This enables publishers to review the publications on Twitter and thereby create a lot of response on the publication.



- The second example he cited was on how social media helped a doctorate student in his research work. The student uploaded photos of fishes onto his Facebook page and got his friends and others to help identify the fishes.

Crowdsourcing Science on Facebook

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- Employment Opportunities
- Current Students
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- Future Students
- Giving
- U of T Homepage
- U of T Mississauga

Crowdsourcing science: PhD student uses Facebook to identify thousands of fish

Apr 19, 2011
A. Weislat

Devin Bloom is not your typical Facebook user. The Ph.D. candidate in evolutionary biology at the University of Toronto Scarborough (UTSC) only posts sporadically to the site, and he wouldn't even have a personal Facebook page if his little sister hadn't secretly set one up for him. But recently, while on a scientific expedition to the remote jungles of Guyana, Bloom helped illuminate a powerful new use for the social networking tool. As a result, technology-averse biologists around the world may soon be flocking to the site.

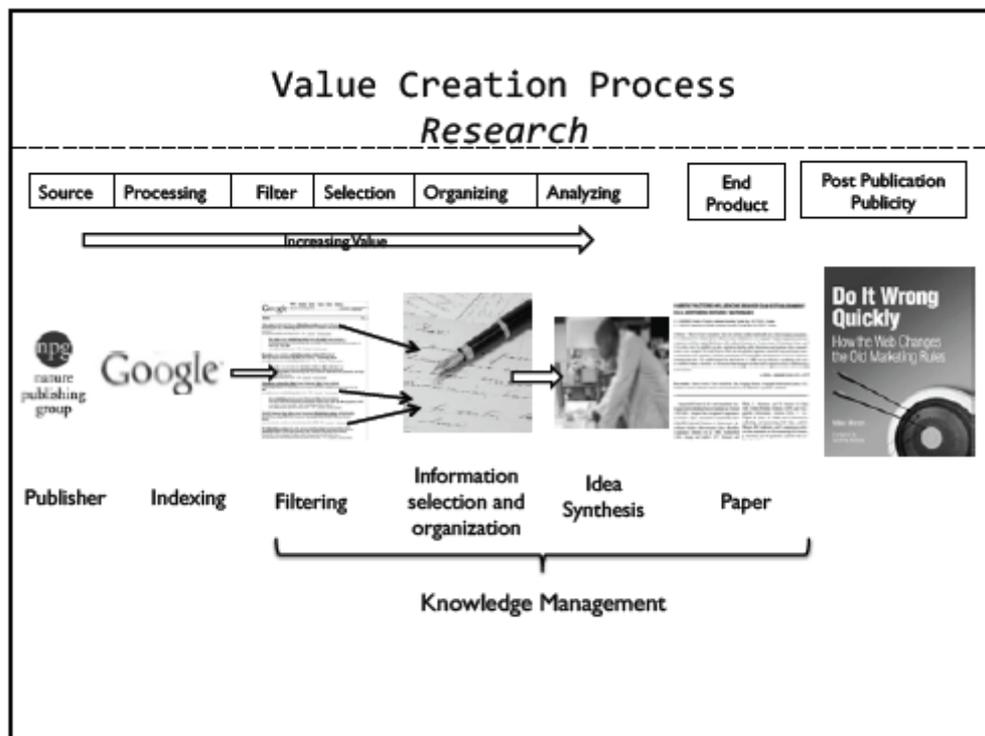
In January and February, Bloom helped conduct the first ichthyological survey on Guyana's Cuyuni River. The trip was funded through the Biological Diversity of the Guiana Shield program at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History and was led by Dr. Brian Sidlauskas, assistant professor of fisheries at Oregon State University (OSU). The goal was to find out which species of fish live in the Cuyuni and get a good estimate of their abundance.

The Cuyuni is bisected by the Guyana/Venezuela border and extends 210 kilometers into the thick jungles of western Guyana. The region is under intense ecological pressure from the artisanal gold mining operations that pepper the Guyanese hinterland. This mining has terrible impacts on the surrounding environment. Chief among these are the increase in sedimentation in the rivers and the release of elemental mercury directly into the food chain. "That's why it's important we get there now, to find out what's there," says Bloom. "Because in 30 years, who knows what the Cuyuni will look like?"

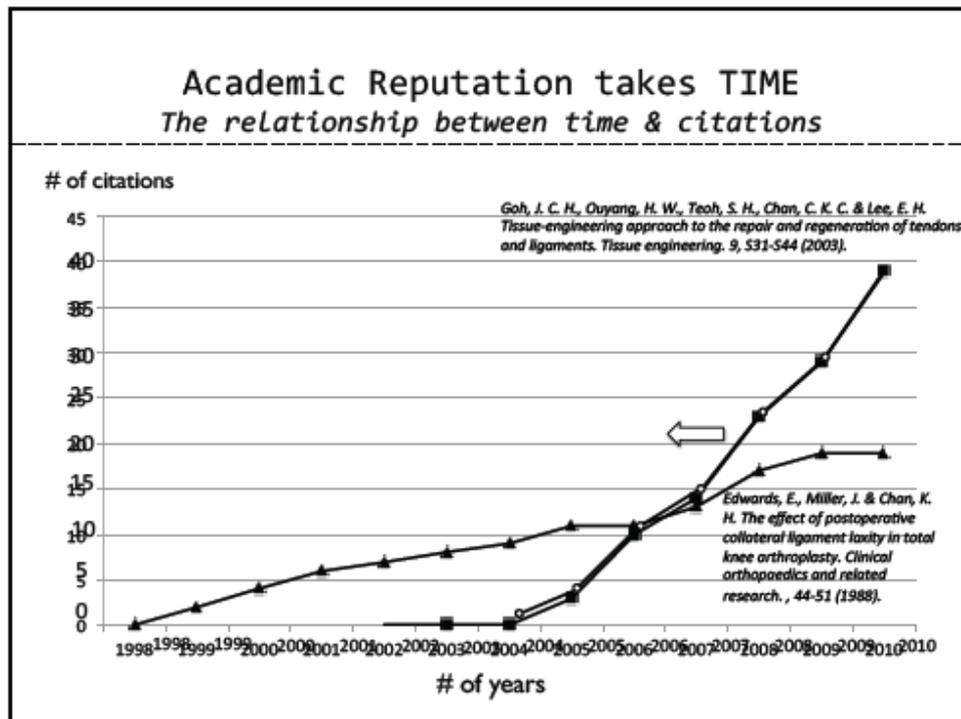


PhD student Devin Bloom holds a specimen of *Pseudoplatystoma fasciatum*, one of over 5,000 fish Bloom and his colleagues caught earlier this year during the first ichthyological survey of Guyana's Cuyuni River. (photo: Whit Bronaugh)

A/P Chan focused mainly on how academic reputation can be achieved through research – recognition of work, number of times publication/work is cited, invitations to give talks at conferences, invitations to editorial board and Research grants.



It is common to do the research, publish the work and wait for others to cite the work. However, this takes a long time though it is very important to get the publications published and cited early. This is where social media can help.



Wizfolio has two components where you have a My Wizfolio and a Public Profile page. My Wizfolio is a private page where you can share to a selected group of people and the Public Profile is open to the Public. You can share the information with one-click using the Facebook or Twitter icons. After you share, you can view the number of times the information is viewed by others.

Q & A Session

Following the presentation by Adjunct Professor Casey Chan, a discussion session followed. Listed below are some questions from the subsequent Q & A session.

Q: You main focus today was on how to enhance academic reputation by promoting one's own publications. Do you have any thoughts on how this can promote interactions with our students?

CC: My focus today was on enhancing your academic reputation by promoting your publications to enable it to be cited more frequently and at a faster pace. However, the earlier sessions in this Technology in Pedagogy Series on Facebook, Blogs and GoogleDocs focused on promoting interaction with the students.

Q: How effective is WizFolio when it is combined with LinkedIn?

CC: LinkedIn is like a professional version of Facebook but Wizfolio does not have a built-in link to LinkedIn yet. However, you could use your profile page as a home page that can be but there are some limitations, as LinkedIn does not allow you to leave their page.