

**Title:** Using social media to develop your own professional learning network

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### **Abstract:**

#### **Session Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this session, delegates will be able to:

- Identify different types of social media and consider how these can be applied in a learning context.
- Understand how such tools could be used to best effect to develop a personal learning network
- Draw upon those tools which would be of value to themselves and know how they could be used to develop an online CPD reflective portfolio/blog.

#### **Session Outline**

Key issues to be addressed are:

The growth of social media has been exponential. Technological advancements have seen an unprecedented increase in the use of both smart phones and tablets and the development of user generated media has become increasingly easy to both create and share. The likes of LinkedIn with over 100 million members and Twitter with over 200 million users have enabled global wide connections to engage in social dialogues.

The potential to use these tools to create a Personal Learning Network (PLN) tailored to individual needs within your own chosen online personal learning spaces are vast; as is the bringing together of both informal and self organised learning (Wheeler 2009). The notion of connectivism, where the process of learning involves the people we are connected with, acknowledges that learning is no longer confined to the formal classroom. Our communities of practice and social networks play a large part in the way we are able to learn (Siemans 2004, Wenger 2007).

During this session we look at how we can develop a personal learning network by making use of social media to develop learning, share information and crowd source ideas in the context of our own continuous professional development (CPD).

This session is aimed at those who may be familiar with the concept of social media but as yet not implemented any of the tools to use as part of their own personal learning network and continuous professional development. It will be both discursive and practical in nature, so that

irrespective of prior experience, all attendees will have the opportunity to go away with skills they have either learnt or shared.

### **Session Activities and Approximate Timings**

- The session will begin with defining what is meant by social media and how this can be considered in the context of higher education. A range of social media tools that could be used as part of Personal Learning Network (PLN) will then be explored and discussed. (20 mins)
- A short discussion in groups about how individuals have developed their own CPD and how they currently organise this. (10 mins)
- Delegates will share their practice of reflection and ideas of how this could be captured within an online blog in preparation for planning CPD. (15 mins)

### **References**

*LinkedIn* (2001) [online] Last accessed 13 May 2011 at:

<http://blog.linkedin.com/2011/03/22/linkedin-100-million/>

Sieman, G. (2004) elearn space: everything elearning [online] Last accessed 13 May 2011 at:

<http://www.elearnspace.org/Articles/connectivism.htm>

*Twitter* (2011) [online] Last accessed 13 May 2011 at:

<http://business.twitter.com/basics/what-is-twitter>

Wenger, E. (2007) *Communities of Practice: Learning Meaning and Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Wheeler, S. (2009) 'It's Personal: Learning Spaces, Learning Webs'. *PLE/PLN Online Symposium*. The University of Manitoba, Canada. [online] Last accessed 13 May 2011 at:

<http://steve-wheeler.blogspot.com/2009/10/its-personal-learning-spaces-learning.html>