Seismic Shift: Metrics, Media and Marketing and the changing world of journals

Taylor & Francis Workshop
3rd October 2013, National Railway Museum, York

Social Media and Metrics, an Author's view

Andy Miah, Director, Creative Futures Institute, University of the West of Scotland; Fellow, Institute for Ethics and Emerging, Technologies; Fellow, Foundation for Art and Creative Technology; Global Director, Centre for Policy and Emerging Technologies

TRANSCRIPT

Andy Miah

[START] I wanted to start with this title because of, well, actually the hashtag. We haven't really mentioned the hashtag but this is what we are using on twitter at the moment and in fact, if it's all a kind of foreign language to you, hopefully by the end of this it will be less so. If you want to just pull out your mobile phones and just lift them aloft for me so I can see what you have device-wise. So, from what I can see, nearly everybody has the capacity to be on twitter. So, if you want to spend your next 15 minutes setting up an account rather than listening to me, feel welcome. I'm sure the benefits will be far greater. But, I'll come back to this a little later. So, if you are tweeting and have the means then that's the hashtag we're using; there's already been quite a lot of content being shared.

The title that I have for the talk is "Everything Everywhere" and as an author that's the kind of manifesto for my own work; that I want anything I produce to be available to everybody wherever they are. And that's part of the challenge generally but it's also a challenge, particularly for an academic where you rely upon university systems that aren't particularly effective, and what's really shifted over this last few

years is we now have the tools within our hands to allow us to reach people much more effectively than our own university's websites, for example. So keep that in mind as I go through this.

But I want to give you a sense of my journey through this world, and it really began when I was a PhD student about 12 or 13 years ago and someone told me that the average article is cited six times and I felt that was pretty bad. **David Green**: Once a year. **Andy Miah**: Ah ok, once a year, that's a bit more reassuring. But, that was quite demoralizing I felt, so, as a kind of burgeoning writer, I wanted to make sure my work was found by more people. So I started designing websites for my school and set up my own website, and that's been quite crucial for me to be brought into this world of the internet and social media. I think one of the barriers to social media and seeing the value of it, is that initial hurdle of immersing yourself into it. It's much easier when you've already built up a space for yourself and you have blogged and published things, which I've done over the last ten years; then once you've done that you can fit into it relatively seamlessly and part of the way in which I've tried to do that is also on a personal level. I'm quite a keen photographer and I've used social media as a way of uploading my photography, but also that's bled into my professional life. The conferences that I go to I end up being the designated photographer because often academic conferences don't bother paying for one so I just do it for free; they get some great photographs out of it and that helps them develop a sense of activity around them at work. So developing those other ways in which we might generate content has been another way for me to feel part of things, to develop that presence within the social media world.

It's also been crucial as a networking tool and we've heard about twitter earlier already. To give you a sense of how I use Twitter, I tend to use it mainly to tweet things that are professional and one of the challenges people have is: where's my voice? You often meet people who have a personal twitter account and a professional twitter account. I say to people don't worry too much about that. As you start this, you'll kind of begin to feel your way through it and see which things you are comfortable sharing or not. And you shouldn't worry too much about people being fed up by your tweets; the fact is that if you have, say, 200 hundred followers on twitter they probably see around ten percent of your content at any one time. So, in fact, it's unlikely that you'll be really bombarding people with too much stuff. But one of the things you can really do is again convey what you're about, who you are, what sort of research you do, but you can also share the work that you have done with a network.

And one of the ways in which I've tried to use twitter most effectively is by using hashtags. Again, if that's still slightly unfamiliar for you, this is my desktop and this

screen shot was taken about 20 minutes ago, so this gives you a sense of what I look at when I open up my computer every morning. Let's just break that down for you. The hashtag from an event I was involved in last weekend in London, called "#futurefest" is still generating content even a few days after the event has finished. So that hashtag allows me to connect with the people that are part of that event. The next event I have is this one - "#TandFEditors" - and you can see the content has been created around it. This is an effective way to grow your network and grow the community around it. And what's particularly appealing about it, is that it's not just an audience anymore, it's a conversation. It's not just readers, it's people that are actively coproducing the content that relates to your brand or your product. So that's another shift in how you think about your community, beyond the fact that they are writers for you and how they might participate in this. And actually, the least effective campaigns around social media are those that neglect the personalisation of the content, which is why when you see heads of organisations with twitter accounts, they're often the most followed people within the organisation and it trickles down within the organisation. Later this week, I have another event - the "#AND2013" festival - which begins this evening in Liverpool. So again, my kind of daily life is structured around these hashtags which tell me what my community are interested in and what they're doing; I haven't shared naked selfies just in case you were interested – but it's still early. So that's my kind of gateway to the world. This is my desktop and if this still seems a bit like the Matrix in a way to you, then you can still do this in a way on your mobile phones by Googling. If you wanted to Google "#TandFEditors" you'll get a sense of what's already been produced today. So, beyond your own kind of issue publications, the kind of landmarks or milestones around a publication of individual volumes, you can generate content around the work, in between those periods; and this has been quite an effective way for me to extend my own network.

Now, as we mentioned at the start, the main reason I'm here is because of social media. I did some work for Kate Nuttall, Managing Editor at T&F, and produced a video alongside an editorial that I wrote for their theme of the month in sport and leisure. This is the video on YouTube, which as I think David mentioned earlier, having these additional products associated with the writing is another way in which you can increase the impact of it. So, I wrote an essay for them and I produced a video around it, and this generated, I believe, double the amount of downloads to the free content as any other month that year. So, when you think about your own work and the work of your authors, how can this be utilized more effectively?

This is the year of micro video blogging. There are now handfuls of micro video blogging platforms and just to explain what that is; it's essentially very short videos, videos of 6 seconds, videos of 15 seconds, which have become very popular this

year. So, the challenge I think is again to be mindful of these emerging trends and figure out how you can be ahead of the curve. I also use platforms at the preprint stage to get feedback on work that I'm developing. Issuu is a platform that I use to share PDFs of things that I've been given permission to share or PDFs of preprints that I'm working on, and generally it's to build that personalisation into the process because I think what's really distinct about this period is this kind of attention to the individual, rather than the institution. So, the most effective social media campaigns figure out how to give the platform to the individual.

As a reader, as well as a researcher, publishers have also been effective in changing my way of accessing the information. So, whereas in a web 1.0 era, back around 10/12 years ago, you would go out and search for information, you would kind of be the active pioneer or go into that wild west of the internet and try to find out what's out there; now the internet comes to me and it does that through quite smart, intelligent searching. But it also does it through these other accounts, social media accounts, that organizations have set up. So, here's one example: this is a screen shot of an article I've published in the journal of sports sciences a few years ago and again through sport which is one of the lists I work with and follow Through this twitter account of that list which is sharing information about its work, talking about the journals themselves, helping editors to set up twitter accounts for their journals, I'm made aware of the kind of things that they're publishing, the kinds of campaigns that they have. But also, when thinking about your community, how you nurture upcoming researchers, new researchers, there are lots of things you can do. Here's one example: they have had what they call 'twinterviews', interviews with experts and tweeting very short comments about how to get published, advice to get into the journal which have been effective ways of trying to engage people around that journal experience. That wasn't around when I was a PhD student. I know people that have really benefitted from this and it helps them to get to know the people involved with the journals too, not just the editors, not just you guys, but also the managing editors who they can talk to directly.

So, at the point of post publication there's a series of things that I use as well and hopefully you're getting a sense of how this is a real ecosystem of publishing that works for me. By the time I get to post publication there are places like Academia.edu where you can post information about your publications, but also connect with people that are on that network too who may have similar kinds of interests; Academia.edu tells me about publications of my friends. We were talking yesterday about how email is still a very crucial way in which we share and we work with each other, but again that model I think is changing. We're no longer having to do that labor; it's already coming to us. So, these people's work, when it's published will automatically share that with me. Amazon has also recently developed author

profiles, so you can upload information about yourself and also upload multimedia content. So again, that phrase "everything everywhere" is, I think, what I'm getting at here. By having these presences you build both your own networks, but also the capacity for your work to affect and influence people. I use Google scholar as well – I have Google alerts for my own articles and the articles or the names of individuals I work closely with, and that helps me know what they're producing, how they're being cited, but it also allows me to manage my own profiles. Although I have to say, you might notice 'Genetically Modified Athletes…' was published by Routledge. I don't know what Psychology Press is, but maybe the system has changed what it's talking about earlier. **DG**: It's an imprint. **AM**: It's an imprint. Ok. Mendeley, of course, is a good example of how this all feeds back into the process of research beyond publication, where this bibliographic software becomes my database, my shared open database with other colleagues too.

This all sort of breaks down to this really, kind of, broad way in which social media is becoming the media; it's becoming the library, the gateway to your journals and to the research that's associated with them, and what I've tried to do over the years is to find most effectively how to make the most out of it and I think the only way you can really get convinced of this sort of thing is to dive in and have a go. I've given lots of workshops about this sort of thing and I've found the most effective thing is to help people set up accounts and they begin to see the value of it; I think one of the things to kind of bear in mind is that whilst we still rely a lot on email, I would say to you that not engaging with social media is akin to not having engaged with email 15 years ago. That's the sort of situation we're moving into.

So, try to allow your work to be found everywhere and help your authors do the same and that's pretty much where I'll end. I've got a few, principles that I think are key in terms of the seismic shifts, that is the title for today, that reveal what's really changing. So, just some, take home messages. As I mentioned, I think we're moving from this institution to the individual. How can you champion your authors' works more effectively? Including their accounts within tweets that you have, for example, is one way of doing that. I mentioned to David last night that another thing that publishers might want to think about is, whilst at the moment you submit an article and might include some keywords associated with it, what about picking out some key quotes that could be tweeted by accounts and generate interest around them? That might be one way in which, again, authors are invited to consider ways of making their work more meaningful. I think as well, the openness of data that David touched upon at the start is also crucial; people really value the openness of data, so there's, I think, a growing shift towards that and not paying hundreds of thousands of pounds for data that is closed and private. There's a kind of ideological reason why people, why academics value that. David mentioned the REF – I'm a REF unit

coordinator at my university and I know the target's 20% for this time round, and I've been told it's going to be higher next time round. The impact of our work is increasingly crucial and what's, I think, important to get across here is that the tweets that you have, the impact that you might have in social media terms is not the end of that journey. In fact, there is this feedback process where by being visible in those environments, it can develop new impact pathways and journeys for you. Academics often don't like to promote their own work, they are often quite modest people who feel it's sort of boastful to do so. Sadly, academics unlike other kinds of publishing systems don't have a lot of marketing around them; universities don't really have very good press officers so we kind of have to do it ourselves, and I'd say to you that one of the values of doing that is that it does, kind of, personalize the conversation. It's not about doing big press releases, but actually sharing the things that you have done with people that care about you and are interested in your work. And that example that we heard earlier from Catriona really reveals that; and that shift from searching to being discoverable is a crucial principle. So, that's really where I'd end and if we have the breakouts and you want to just figure out how to get on twitter, then let's just do that. Thanks very much. [FINISH]