

Twitter, Tweets and Tweeples

If you've been following news about social media lately, you'll probably have heard of Twitter. If not, you are probably wondering what on earth the title of this article means.

The growth of social media – i.e. online networks – such as MySpace, Facebook, LinkedIn and others has been phenomenal over the last year or two. Many thousands – indeed, millions – of folk are connecting with one another around the globe using these services.

Compared with these networks, Twitter is somewhat different. It's a *micro-blogging* service, allowing users to send and read other people's updates, which are text-based messages of no more than 140 characters in length.

To read others' updates, you *follow* them on twitter, and those people who choose to read your updates are known as your *followers*.

The terminology of Twitter does take a bit of getting used to. For example, the short text-

message updates are known as *tweets*, people who use Twitter are called *tweeps* or *tweeple* and are said to be hanging out in the *Twitterverse*.

So what's the point of all this? And why on earth would we want to add yet another information stream to the accumulation of email, online newsletters and other social network updates already taking our time?

About two weeks ago, I plunged into the *Twitterverse* to find out.

The first people I followed and who followed me back were a handful of folk I already knew. One day in and so far so good. Then over the next few days, I browsed several Twitter information sites and added to my "following" list more Twitter users whose tweets I found interesting. Most returned the favour and followed me back.

There was somewhat of a learning curve, as I figured out how to make the most of my Twitter experience. I read

several 'how to' tips and strategies on the web and learned more from Twitter users far more experienced than I.

Two weeks into Twitter now, and not only am I beginning to get the hang of how it all works, but I've met a number of very interesting people – and am also finding I'm discovering some great resources. This issue of Starlink is testament to that, as many of those resources have been included here or in the accompanying html email (for those on our electronic mailing list).

So if you're interested to check it out for yourself, visit www.twitter.com.

Chris and I are both on Twitter, so if you decide to sign up, send a tweet to @SueJ1 and @chrischats to say hello.

Cheers, Sue



Thank You!

For resources we've gathered for Starlink – either for this issue or the next – we would like to thank the following 'tweeple'. Apologies if you have been missed! If you DM SueJ1, we'll make sure this is rectified in the next Starlink issue!

Fiona Banjer, Brisbane, Australia (Mrs_Banjer)

Mandy Barrow, Kent, UK (mbarrow)

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Lynn Walsh, Sydney, Australia (lynnwalsh)

Brady Wood, California, USA (helloshmoop)

Twitter Tips



Here are some of the websites we have found very helpful when learning our way around Twitter. (URLs shortened to save space):

A Twitter Mini-Guide:
<http://sn.im/cxo40>

US Nightline interview:
<http://sn.im/d82vn>

Three very helpful articles by Barbara Gibson

<http://sn.im/cxo99>

<http://sn.im/d4c4ds>

<http://sn.im/d4ceh>

In addition to the above list – all of which comprise excellent tips, here is one more from personal experience:

As with any other online community, you'll find there are a handful of pushy marketers and even spammers around.



You will probably find some of them add themselves to your *followers* list. But don't feel you have to follow them back!

If you don't, you won't see their tweets in your *tweet stream* and they'll eventually *unfollow* you. If they are particularly 'spammy', you can also block them immediately so they can no longer follow you.

(Twitter bird images thanks to productivedreams.com)

Shmoop

www.shmoop.com

Shmoop is an excellent resource for teachers and students of literature, poetry or US History – and with no doubt more subject areas to come as it continues to grow.

Shmoop wants to make you a better lover (of literature, history, poetry and writing). See many sides to the argument. Find your writing groove. Understand how lit and history are relevant today. We want to show your brain a good time.

Our mission: To make learning and writing more fun and relevant for students in the digital age.

Shmoop is lovingly created by Ph.D. and Masters students from top universities - primarily Stanford and U.C. Berkeley. Many of us have taught at the college and high school levels.

While all content is rigorously prepared, researched and sourced by qualified scholars, the flavour of the site is bright and bubbly – using very accessible

language and humour to make learning fun for both students and teachers. Passion and the love of learning underpin all the material provided.

There is a special section of the shmoop site for professors, teachers and librarians at www.shmoop.com/teachers/

Read about their teaching philosophy and pedagogy at www.shmoop.com/teachers/teaching-philosophy.html

Launched in November 2008, Shmoop received a “Best of the Internet” mention in PC Magazine in January 2009.

As at the time of writing this piece, Australia is the fourth most frequent country for visitors to Shmoop after the US, UK and Canada. Given the relatively small size of our population, obviously



many teachers and students have already discovered the delights of Shmoop!

Even if you're not a teacher or student of literature, this site is a great example of how to pursue academic rigour while also making learning fun.



Reach Out! Resources for Teachers & Professionals



www.reachoutpro.com.au

Many Starlink readers will already be familiar with *Reach Out!*, a website of resources for young people going through 'tough times'.

(Note: If you've gone to Google to find the site recently, you may have received a

"This site may harm your computer" warning. Don't worry, the team are aware of the issue and it's being fixed asap!)

Reach Out! Is now expanding to provide a wide range of resources for teachers and other professionals who work with young people.

Reach Out! Pro and *Reach Out! Teachers Network* will be officially launched at the end of March:

Reach Out! Pro will be an online source of information, updates, best practice case studies and interactive features that will be enable a range of professionals to

engage young people in treatment and maintenance of better mental health outcomes.

The Reach Out! Teachers' Network will introduce secondary teachers to the Reach Out! service and provide them with tools for the classroom and wider school community to address mental health issues and build resiliency.

Prior to launch, the above link takes you to a page where you can register your interest for either service. There is also a "View Site" button where you can preview the site.

VICSRC Congress 2009

www.vicsrc.org.au

Dates have now been set for the VicSRC Congress 2009. It will be held on Friday July 31 + Saturday August 1st at Oasis Camp Mt Evelyn - the same venue as in 2008.

The Congress is a gathering of SRC representatives from across Victoria and forms

the peak decision making body of the VicSRC. Further information and registration forms will be available from the start of term 2. Keep an eye on the above website for further details.

(Sources: VicSRC and YacVic Announce)

There is so much power in what happens in schools with the connection between learning and social and emotional development. If we can get it right, we can change the lives of kids forever.

(Kimberly Hoagwood)

Gen C

Most of us have heard of Builders, Boomers, Gen Y, Gen X – and even Gen Z.

But there's another 'gen definition' you may not know – Gen C!

Jake Pierce (www.jakepearce.com) defines Gen C as a generation that's not defined by age but rather by activity. Empowered, participative, and thriving on inter-relationships.

As Jake says: *Gen C is a psychographic group – that means, strictly speaking, they are ageless. However there are two types of Gen C - born Gen C and adopted Gen C. Adopted Gen C are people not born Gen C but who choose to be active 'digital natives' who love digital media. This is a paradigm shift. It is the first time in history that being part of a generation is a choice versus a function of when you were born. It's like being able to choose a tribe. It marks the beginning of a new way in which generations will evolve.*

From the Creative Generalist blog at www.creativegeneralist.com/ comes further explanation: *Gen C make their own content. Gen C form strong communities, and care about communication. They want to be connected. Gen C take on broadcast media on their own terms: They get involved, and are happy to make their own celebrities. Gen C control their own lives; they're happy with complexity and continuous partial attention. Gen C work and live creativity: they work in creative industries, don't look down on making and crafting, and want to adapt mass market products in acts of co-creation.*

So there you have it folks ... a inter-generational definition, defying the myth that our lives are defined by chronological age! :-)



GROWING OLDER? DON'T WORRY ...

Don't think you're exactly a Gen C candidate? No matter! Aging is certainly no barrier to living life to the full!

YOU CAN STILL "GROW BOLDER" ...

Check out the stories on this site: <http://growingbolder.com/>

AND "DANCE ON" ...

Watch the Video Highlight on our home page at www.bjseminars.com.au Even if we can't salsa like that at 80, let's resolve to keep dancing. ☺

Gateways: International Journal of Community Research & Engagement

<http://epress.lib.uts.edu.au/ojs/index.php/ijcre/index>

Gateways is a refereed journal concerned with the practice and processes of community research and other forms of engagement. It provides a forum for academics, practitioners and community representatives to pursue issues and reflect on practices related to interactions between tertiary institutions and community organizations: academic interventions in community; community-based projects with links to the tertiary sector; and community initiatives.

It is a joint initiative of the Shopfront at the University of Technology, Sydney UTS and the Center for Urban Research and Learning CURL at Loyola University, Chicago.

All abstracts as well as complete articles are freely available for download in pdf format.

The inaugural issue Volume #1 2008 demonstrates the diversity of the work being undertaken in the area of community engagement.



Relationship Matters

Relationship Matters: Not-for-profit Community Organisations and Corporate Community Investment

www.facsia.gov.au/communities/relationship_matters/default.htm

This October 2008 report from the Centre for Corporate Public Affairs examines barriers to corporate community partnerships developing further in Australia, examines differences between not-for-profit organisations (NFPs) and

corporations, identifies positive and negative factors at play in these partnerships, and focuses also on trends and developments. It looks also at how to best leverage the operations and activities of NFP organisations to enhance interactions with large businesses.

(Source: Pro Bono, Australia)



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Bug Guide & Australian Insects

Fiery Skimmer, Australia



<http://bugguide.net> (USA and Canada)

<http://www.australian-insects.com/>

Worldwide, it is estimated that there are 30 million different species of insects, making up to almost 90% of all living things on the planet.

So whether you are fascinated by insects and spiders or shudder at the thought of all small wriggly things with more than four legs, you may find these websites useful. They are treasure-houses if information about bugs of all kinds.

Drop in if you want to learn more about these amazing creatures, or simply identify that horrible creepy-crawly thing that just ventured across your foot and stung you on the toe!

An Unwelcome Welcome



Reflections
CHRIS BENNETT

I recently went to a club to learn more about a new hobby of mine and I was struck by the dynamics of the group as I entered the room. It had a friendly buzz about it with people scooting around engaged in their own little world, not aware there was a visitor standing at the door.

I stood around for a while but no one greeted me, so I walked over to the row of chairs and sat down. There was a brief introduction and the MC nervously asked 'are there any visitors?' I put my hand up, as did a couple of other people, and he then quickly went on to club business.

After that, as I sat and listened to the guest speaker, I wanted to dart out of the

room and not come back. But I forced myself to stay until the break.

During the break I moved to the back of the room and got a cup of tea and a soggy dark chocolate cake. At that point, one of the members came up to me and introduced himself. We had a very pleasant chat and he introduced me to two other members.

The two halves of that evening were such a contrast! Before the break I felt on my own and wanted to go home. Afterwards I felt welcomed and wanted to come back. I was glad I had stayed after all.

It's so easy to get lost in the crowd when you go to any new club. Unless you're assertive you can disappear into a vacuum and leave disappointed. And the club loses a potential member.

All any visitors need to hear when they turn up to a new club are the words,

'Hello my name is -----, welcome to -----.'. And then to be looked after during the occasion.

I suppose to feel really welcomed in any situation we all need at least one person there who will step up and take the time to engage us and look after us.

