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# The Online Academic – 10 Easy Steps

A crash course for academics who want to  
build their digital media profile by Melissa De  
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# We live in a digital world.



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# 86%

Of U.S. adults are internet users

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# 20%

Of U.S. adults read a daily newspaper yesterday

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# 62%

Of U.S. adults get their news from social media

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**When you want to know more  
something or someone, what is  
the first thing you do?**

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# 93%

Of online experiences begin with a search engine

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# Who is Googling you?

- Fellow researchers
  - Conference organizers
  - People from a prospective institution
  - People from your current institution
  - Students
  - Potentially, journalists and bloggers
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**Scholars can no longer just  
publish and hope for the  
best.**

Scholarship is going digital too.



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# 1 in 40

Researchers are active on Twitter

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# 70-470

Research mentioned in a blog post received 70-470 more abstract views than the publications not discussed on social media

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# Benefits of an online presence

- Get your hard work “out there.”
- Boost readership and citations.
- Stay current on trends in your field.
- Make connections with colleagues and peers.
- Honor the UC mission to serve the public.



**There are many ways  
to transform yourself  
into a digital scholar.**

This might make it feel overwhelming.





**There are 10 things  
you can easily do right  
now.**

Follow these steps in order.

# Step 1. Do an online audit

→ **First, Google yourself**

→ **Update information**

Add your institution affiliation and work information on existing online profiles (even if they are private).

→ **Delete unused/old accounts**

Or start using them again.

→ **Check privacy settings**

Make sure personal posts are not unintentionally public.

## Things to consider:

You are already online, whether you like it or not. **Google yourself.** Do your search results identify you as a scholar? Do you like what you see? Is your information up-to-date?

## Step 2. Update the Campus Directory

→ Most likely, your institution automatically creates a directory listing on you.

Most likely, it's blank.

→ Fill out as many fields as you can

Include research interests, teaching experience, grants & honors, publications, presentations, and any other examples of your work.

# Step 3. Update your photo

## → Get a professional-looking photo

It does not need to be taken by a pro!

## → Find a buddy to take pictures with

Use the campus as your backdrop and set your camera phone on HD mode and you will be surprised!

### Tip

See my LinkedIn post about DIY headshots – you can find the link to it on my website: melissadewitte.com under the resources section.

# Step 4. Get your CV online

- LinkedIn, Google Scholar, or Academia.edu

Make your CV virtual on a professional network.

- Connect with your colleagues, contemporaries, and cohort

Support each other.

## Tip

“Redundancy is resistance.” – Office of scholarly Communication, University of California. Supercharge your online presence by creating several profiles and sharing content – if you commit to keeping them up to date.

# Step 5.

## Understand your academic brand

### → Why should I believe you?

What are your credentials? What is your experience?

### → What are you known for?

In your cohort, what are you the go to person for?

### → What do you want people to think you do?

What do you want to be known for?

### Tip

See my “Personal Branding” worksheet, which is an exercise to get you thinking about how you want to represent yourself to the academic community and wider audiences.

# Step 6. Write your bio

- Clear and concise
- Skip the jargon
- Consider writing bios of varying length

Your website, social media accounts, campus directory, a conference website, and others may have a variety of character limitations.

**First impressions matter.**

Less than 55% of web users spend 15 seconds on a web page. You have an incredibly short amount of time to show what you do.

# Step 7. Set up a website

## → See if your institution offers a free service

Your school may have a program to create individual website free of charge.

## → Something extra

SquareSpace, Wix, Wordpress - there are other platforms but be prepared to pay money for these.

## → It can be basic

Your website does not need to be complicated.

### Pro tip:

Buy the domain of you the name you publish under, and be consistent with your names.

Do you use a middle initial? Use it everywhere!  
Only use it sometimes?  
Skip it.

# Step 8. Start Tweeting

- One of the largest social media
- Connect with peers and a wider audience
- Used at conferences and other academic events
- Not sure if it's for you? Just keep it professional.

**Twitter is a lot of fun for grad students**

With hashtags like #phdchat, #PhDtopic #PhDlifehack, #PhDlife and account like @ShitAcademicsSay @WritethatPhD, there is a whole support system of peers who “get it.”

# What people are saying

**“Upon blogging and tweeting, within 24 hours, there were on average seventy downloads of my papers”** - Melissa Terras, Professor of Digital Humanities, University College London

**“Social media platforms can inform every step of the research process: helping faculty get a pulse on movement in their industry, providing feedback during research and then assisting in the promotion of the published work.”** - Amanda Alampi, NYU's Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service

Source: The Guardian, *Social media is more than simply a marketing tool for academic research*, 2012

# Step 9. Stay informed

→ **Educate yourself about online and social media.**

There are a variety of tips and tricks out there about how to use digital and social media, you don't have to reinvent the wheel.

→ **Lurk! See what your peers are doing in the online space and allow yourself to be inspired.**

## Resources available

There are entire blogs and website about public scholarship and social media for academics (LSE impact blog, Writing for Research, Guardian's Higher Education Network).

# Step 10. Put yourself out there

- Experiment with something new. Try it at least three times to get a feel.
- Find places and ways to share your stories.

Guest blog about a personal experience in the field, write a post for LinkedIn about being a graduate student, connect with your department about writing a story about a faculty member or a fellow student for the website.

## Tip

Again, it's better to be really awesome on one medium than spread yourself too thin.

# Finally, Follow the five C's:

- 1. Consistent**
- 2. Current**
- 3. Concise**
- 4. Credible**
- 5. Civil and considerate**

## **Front page rule:**

If you would not feel comfortable seeing your words quoted on the cover of a news paper, don't say it. It is not about censorship, it is about being respectful, courteous, professional to your peers.

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**Questions?  
Email me: [mdewitte@ucsc.edu](mailto:mdewitte@ucsc.edu)**

**More information:  
[melissadewitte.com/resources](http://melissadewitte.com/resources)**

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