

Social Networks and Communication Management

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Course description

Digital media and new technologies have radically transformed the way communication is managed. Social networks are nowadays the main channels for practitioners to establish interactions between organizations and other groups of people. Communication professionals work to publish the best contents, optimize their publics' engagement, create communities of interest, and improve, control and protect the organization's reputation. The aim of this course is twofold. Firstly, to introduce students into the field of digital networked communication, and into the main theories applied to strategic communication. Secondly, to take advantage of the academic contributions and apply results and conclusions to communication practices.

The subject starts with an **introduction to the fundamentals of social networks**, from Lazarsfeld's works and the concepts of diffusion, homophily or opinion leaders, Milgram's **small world**, or Granovetter's **strength of weak ties**, to the current approaches to social networks, that include concepts such as **graph theory**, **clusterization**, **polarization**, **echo chambers** or **filter bubbles**. Students will learn how to visualize social networks interactions, and how to learn knowledge that can be applied to the practice of managing communication.

The course will stress the **relevance of interactionism** in the analysis and practice of communication in social networks. Starting from Goffman's theories on the presentation of the self in everyday life and Meyrowitz's fundamental work *No sense of place*, students will learn how digital media situations and frames are defined. danah boyd's works will be used to understand the **consequences of context collapse in social networks**, and how communication professionals can overcome its **harmful impact on the publics**. Students will be asked to **construct their social media profiles** considering the literature about the question.

Content creation and curation, and communication strategies are one of the main focus of the course. Students are aimed to examine and discuss the **current trends in digital and social media contents**, as well as the current research on the impact of social media content on the publics. Students will be required to **propose content creation based on the knowledge about its influence on the publics**.

The definition and operationalization of **influence in social networks** is addressed. Students will be asked to **critically assess the role of the influencers in social media**, and the keys for their success. Influence in social networks is contrasted with the measurable effects of contents. The measure of influence is used as a trigger to discuss the datafication of everyday life, and the rise of decision-making based on data. Social media monitoring and listening is introduced, as well as the impact of user generated content on brands and organizations.

The following sessions are devoted to **agenda building and the use of social media for managing crisis**. It includes the analysis of digital media as sources of crisis communication, as well as their use as means for managing these crises. Particular **cases of crisis communication** in digital media will be analysed.

Finally, the **organization of a social media department** is discussed all throughout the course. Students are requested to organize their own social media department to carry out the projects and activities of the course.

Besides this, students will also learn about the main methods for **collecting, processing and analysing data from social networks**, and take **key decisions based on the results of the analysis**. The student will be asked to design a business communication plan in social networks and to develop communication strategies to improve the performing of social media in a business.

ECTS Credits

4 ECTS

Specific competences

- Apply communication research theories and methods.
- Use the main concepts, theories and methodologies of analysis related to social media and digital communication.

Learning outcomes

The student will learn:

- The main theories related to social networks and social media.
- Understanding the main concepts in social networks.
- Understand the fundamentals of the interaction in social media.
- Understand how digital and social media production is managed.

- How to make communicative decisions based on social media listening (collection, processing and analysis)
- How to use the tools for analysing social media (sentiment analysis)
- How to evaluate the impact of a campaign in social media.
- Design strategies for managing crisis in social media.
- Tracking traffic in social media. UTM codes
- Create a social media plan for managing communication in an organization
- Apply ethical principles within the context of social media.

Content

S1. Social Media as Environments. Introduction to Social Networks. Homophily in Social Networks. Strong and weak ties in Social Networks. Blogging, microblogging, and social networks. Community structure: clusters and polarisation. Types of structures. Social Network Sites. An Introduction to Social Network Sites. Towards a New Communication paradigm? Characteristics of SNS.

Readings:

boyd, d. and Ellison, N. (2007). **Social network sites: Definition, history, and scholarship.** Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 13(1).

S2. The presentation of the self online. How online situations are defined? How the organizations and the brands present themselves online? What is the impact of self-presentation on reputation and brand equity? What is the context collapse, and what are its harmful effects? How public relations professionals manage these effects?

Readings:

Gil-Lopez, T., Shen, C., Benefield, G. A., Palomares, N. A., Kosinski, M., & Stillwell, D. (2018). One size fits all: Context collapse, self-presentation strategies and language styles on Facebook. Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jcmc/zmy006>

S3. Social Media. Benchmarking and content creation.

Readings:

Kilgour, M., Sasser, S.L. and Larke, R. (2015), "The social media transformation process: curating content into strategy", Corporate Communications: An

International Journal, Vol. 20 No. 3, pp. 326-343. <https://doi.org/10.1108/CCIJ-07-2014-0046>.

S4. Content creation and curation in social networks.

Readings:

Kilgour, M., Sasser, S.L. and Larke, R. (2015), "The social media transformation process: curating content into strategy", *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, Vol. 20 No. 3, pp. 326-343. <https://doi.org/10.1108/CCIJ-07-2014-0046>.

S5. Agenda and frame building in social networks.

Readings:

Kroon, A.C. & Van der Meer (2018) Who takes the lead? Investigating the reciprocal relationship between organizations and the news agenda. *Communication Research* (online first) 1-18.

S6. Influence in social media. Key lessons for communication management. Social media listening. Tracking and reaching digital publics. Social Media ROI and Metrics. eWoM. Academic tools: Netvizz for Facebook; TAGS for Twitter: API /Keys; Programming; Collecting data; Data processing and Data analysis. Data visualisation.

Readings:

Davies, C., & Hobbs, M. (2020). Irresistible possibilities: Examining the uses and consequences of social media influencers for contemporary public relations. *Public Relations Review*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2020.101983>

S7. Social Media Effects: Parasocial Interaction.

Readings:

Rasmussen, L. (2018). Parasocial Interaction in the Digital Age: An Examination of Relationship Building and the Effectiveness of YouTube Celebrities. *The Journal of Social Media in Society* Spring.

S8. **Crisis management in social networks.** Cases. Crisis communication plan for social media.

Readings:

DiStaso, M. W., Vafeiadis, M., & Amaral, C. (2015). Managing a health crisis on Facebook: How the response strategies of apology, sympathy, and information influence public relations. *Public Relations Review*, 41(2), 222-231. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2014.11.014>

S9. **New rules of communication in the age of social media.** Social Media Ethics. Relations with news media in a digital environment.

Readings:

Motion, J., Heath, R. L., & Leitch, S. (2016). Social media and public relations: Fake friends and powerful publics.

S10. **Social media and emerging technologies.** The Role of Algorithms in Communication Management. Communication management and IA.

Readings:

Valentini, C. (2015). Is using social media “good” for the public relations profession? A critical reflection. *Public Relations Review*, 41(2), 170–177. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2014.11.009>

ST. **Organizing a social media department.**

Cover, Lauren (2020). Bring it in: How to build an all-star social media team. <https://sproutsocial.com/insights/social-media-team/>

Editorial calendar.

Method of presentation

The teaching methodology of this module will be:

—About 90 minutes lectures in classroom per session. Presentation of the main theoretical concepts and contents.

- Activities.
- Case studies to foster debates about the use of social media by companies and organizations.
- Workshops to put in practice topics on social media.
- Individual tutoring.

Course assessment

- In-class group activities (40% of the final grade, 5% each activity submitted after the end of the session).
- Social Media Communication Strategy project (40% of the final grade).
- Attendance and participation in class (10%).
- Final presentation (10% of the final grade).

Course schedule

Week Content

| | |
|---|------------------|
| 1 | S1 |
| 2 | S2 |
| 3 | S3 |
| 4 | S4 |
| 5 | S5 |
| 6 | Tutoring session |
| 7 | S6/S7 |
| 8 | S8 |

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| 9 | S9/S10 |
| 10 | Presentation of final works |

References

Blanchard, Olivier (2011). *Social Media ROI. Managing and Measuring Social Media Efforts in Your Organization*. Boston: Pearson Education.

boyd, d., & Ellison, N. B. (2008). Social Network Sites: Definition, History, and Scholarship. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 13(1), 210–230. doi:10.1111/j.1083-6101.2007.00393.x

Christakis, N. A., & Fowler, J. H. (2010). Connected: the amazing power of social networks and how they shape our lives. *Journal of Family Theory Review* (Vol. 3). Retrieved from <http://www.worldcat.org/isbn/9780007347438>.

Guerrero-Solé, Frederic (2016). Community detection in political discussions on Twitter. An application of the Retweet Overlap Network method to the Catalan process towards independence. *Social Science Computer Review*. doi:10.1177/0894439315617254

Ihm, J. (2015). Network measures to evaluate stakeholder engagement with nonprofit organizations on social networking sites. *Public Relations Review*, 41, 501-503. DOI: 10.1016/j.pubrev.2015.06.018

Ruehl, C. H., & Ingenhoff, D. (2015). Communication management on social networking sites. *Journal of Communication Management*, 19(3), 288–302. <http://doi.org/10.1108/JCOM-04-2015-0025>

Recommended reading

Angelo, T & Boehrer, J. (2002). Case learning: How does it work? Why is it effective? Case Method Website: How to Teach with Cases, University of California, Santa Barbara. <http://www.soc.ucsb.edu/projects/casemethod/teaching.html>

Weintraub, M., & Litwinka, L. (2013). *The Complete Social Media Community Manager's Guide*. Canada. Wiley & Sons. <https://sproutsocial.com/insights/social-media-campaign-tracking/>

Recommended tools

| Name | URL | Platform (if >4, "many") | |
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| Amazon tools (2) | https://wiki.digitalmethods.net/Dmi/ToolDatabase | Amazon | analytics for Amazon.com's book search and enter a (set of) ASIN(s) and crawl its recommendations up till a user-specified depth |
| catwalk | https://medialab.github.io/catwalk/ | Twitter | A tweet curation tool for humanities. Takes output from Gazouilloire or TCAT and lets one easily browse all tweets to select them qualitatively. |
| data.world | https://data.world/socialmediadata | many | Data sets from different social media channels |
| Digital Methods Initiative | https://wiki.digitalmethods.net/Dmi/ToolDatabase | many | huge variety of tools for many platforms |
| DiscoverText | https://discovertext.com/ | many | cloud-based software tools to quickly evaluate large amounts of text, survey, public comment, and Twitter data |
| Discus Scraper | Comment https://wiki.digitalmethods.net/Dmi/ToolDisqusScraper | Disqus | This tool scrapes threads and comments from websites implementing the Disqus commenting system. |
| F(b)arc | https://github.com/justinlittman/fbarc | Facebook | commandline tool and Python library for archiving data from Facebook using the Graph API. |
| Gephi | https://gephi.org/ | n/a | visualization and exploration software for all kinds of graphs and networks |
| Github Tools (6) | https://wiki.digitalmethods.net/Dmi/ToolDatabase | Github | meta-data of organizations on Github, repositories, and users; Scrape Github for forks of projects, user interactions and user to repository relations; Find out which users contributed source code to Github repositories |
| Google Autocomplete | https://wiki.digitalmethods.net/Dmi/ToolGoogleAutocomplete | Google | Retrieves autocomplete suggestions from Google |
| Google Books Ngram Viewer | https://books.google.com/ngrams | | Graph these comma-separated phrases between date 1 and date 2 in a textual corpus |
| Google Image Scraper | https://wiki.digitalmethods.net/Dmi/ToolGoogleImageScraper | Google | Query images.google.com with one or more keywords, and/or use images.google.com to query specific sites for images. |
| Google Reverse Image scraper | https://wiki.digitalmethods.net/Dmi/ToolGoogleReverseImages | Google | Scrape Google for occurrence of images |
| Google Cloud Vision API | https://cloud.google.com/vision/ | images | Analyse images uploaded in the request or integrate with your image storage on Google Cloud Storage |
| Hyphe | http://hyphe.medialab.sciences-po.fr/ | web | crawl data from the web to generate networks between what we call WebEntities, which can be single |

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| | | | | pages as well as a website or a combination of such. |
| igraph | | http://igraph.org/ | n/a | network analysis tools with the emphasis on efficiency, portability and ease of use |
| Instagram Explorer | Hashtag | https://wiki.digitalmethods.net/Dmi/ToolInstagramHashtagExplorer | Instagram | Retrieve either the latest media tagged with a specified term or the media around a particular location. |
| iTunes Store | | https://wiki.digitalmethods.net/Dmi/TooliTunesStore | iTunes | This tool queries http://itunes.apple.com/linkmaker/ , retrieves all available results and outputs a csv file, as well as a gexf file containing the relations between items in the iTunes stores and their categories |
| MAXQDA | | https://www.maxqda.com/ | n/a | helps you collect, organize, analyse, visualize and publish your data in various methodological frameworks |
| Netlytic | | https://netlytic.org/ | Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Facebook | text and social networks analyser that can automatically summarize and discover communication networks from publicly available social media posts |
| Netvizz | | https://wiki.digitalmethods.net/Dmi/ToolNetvizz | Facebook | extracts data from different sections of the Facebook platform (groups, pages, search) |
| News Agencies Scraper | | https://wiki.digitalmethods.net/Dmi/ToolNewsAgencies | News Agencies | Scrape various news agencies for particular keywords and extract titles, images, dates and full text. |
| NodeXL | | https://www.smrfoundation.org/nodexl/ | Twitter, Facebook, Youtube, Flickr | collect, analyse and visualize complex social networks |
| Seealsology | | http://tools.medialab.sciences-po.fr/seealsology/ | Wikipedia | explore in a quick and dirty way the semantic area related to any Wikipedia Page |
| Socilab | | http://socilab.com/#home | LinkedIn | allows users to visualize and analyze their LinkedIn network |
| Tumblr | | https://wiki.digitalmethods.net/Dmi/ToolTumblr | Tumblr | co-hashtag and post data tool for Tumblr |
| twarc | | https://github.com/docnow/twarc | Twitter | a command line tool and Python library for archiving Twitter JSON data |
| Twitter Capture and Analysis Toolset (DMI-TCAT) | | https://wiki.digitalmethods.net/Dmi/ToolDmiTcat | Twitter | Captures tweets and allows for multiple analyses (hashtags, mentions, users, search, ...) |
| Wikipedia Tools (6) | | https://wiki.digitalmethods.net/Dmi/ToolDatabase | Wikipedia | Makes the images of all language versions of a Wikipedia article comparable; Scrape Wikipedia history and does IP to Geo for anonymous edits, Table of Contents for revisions of a Wikipedia page and explore the results by moving a slider to browse across chronologically ordered TOC, categories of articles and the categories of related articles in different languages; Checks if the issues exist as a Wikipedia page, i.e., an article. If it exists it checks whether |

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| YouTube Data Tools | https://wiki.digitalmethods.net/Dmi/ToolYouTubeDataTools | YouTube | the organization is mentioned on that page; specify a range of Wikipedia revisions for use with the History Flow visualization; A collection of simple tools for extracting data from the YouTube platform via the YouTube API v3. |
| Social Feed Manager | https://github.com/gwu-libraries/sfm-ui/ | | It's useful mainly for collecting data, and then exporting to CSV or JSON for analysis. Best for Twitter, also has Flickr and Tumblr options. |
| STACK | https://github.com/bitslabs/yr/stack | Twitter | |