**Coffee & Bagels with a Mentor**

January 10th, 2019

9-10 am HSEB 2958

**Discussion around online presence for Postdocs with Dr. Sarah Diefendorf, Scholars Strategy Network Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Utah**

Dr Diefendorf discussed about how to cultivate an online presence, the pros & cons of having one, and how to have an effective and appropriate online presence.

Having an online presence is a way to establish yourself as an expert. It is also an opportunity to network or to advertise a new paper you published. But it requires to spend time on it, there is a privacy issue, and you need to define what content you can, or you can’t share.

If you want to start your online presence, first clean up your act- Google yourself. You want to make sure only professional content shows up. Do it on a regular basis and in a private mode to avoid google algorithms to bias the results. Permit to check your previous online history. Then Build. Figure out on which platform are the people you want to contact and your preferred audience. There is a cultural preference depending on discipline and field of study.

**Academia.edu**

Permits to upload a PDF of your articles. Check what is the policy of the journal on the subject. A lot of people get around this by posting the page proof, which permits to make available not the final version, but a version good enough to be of interest. Academia permits to track your citations (Google Scholar too), and alert you. You also have analytical data on your publications.

**Twitter**

Useful tool to network, meet new people and help with a first interaction in person (at a conference for example).

It is a way to share your work online. You can pin a tweet (like your latest article), so it stays on top of your profile and get more views.

It is a great tool during conferences. Most conferences have their own hashtag, and people are discussing presentations live on Twitter. It is a way to have feedback on how your presentation was received and who was in the crowd. You can contact them and thanks them afterwards, it is a great starting point to connect.

But also, be a good colleague: promote the work of others (retweet), follow the academics on your area.

Tips:

* You can set your tweets to be deleted after some time.
* You have analytical information on your tweets.
* To find people to follow, you can find lists of people in your area of interest. Twitter will also suggest people to you.

**Personal website**

Advised if you are on the job market. It can depend on your field (LinkedIn might be a better platform for some fields). A good template is a landing page with a paragraph on what you are doing, without jargon, then links to your CV (up to date), your publications, press around your work, articles about your research, teaching experience and contact info. It helps to have everything about you in one space. It can get pricey, a way to do it could be to have one only while being on job market or to use a discount. One platform possible is squarespace.

**Facebook**

If you decided to switch Facebook from a personal to a professional platform, delete old content.

A lot of people use it, like academics to share content, groups are created on Facebook to motivate each other or to organize themselves. It can be a great resource for teaching. In the same time a lot of people are leaving Facebook.

A way to separate private from professional life is to create lists of contacts and decide which list can see the content you are posting.

**Blog**

A personal blog is an option, but it can be time consuming. If it is your thing go for it. Another way is to write articles for other blogs, like the Monkey Cage from The Washington Post or The Conversation. It gets your work online and a wider audience. The Conversation is a good venue since it’s mission is to connect academics and their research with the public.

Final Tips and Get away

* Don’t say anything online you are not ready to discuss in person
* Google yourself
* Build a schedule
* Be a good colleague online: think of it as entering a conversation
* Only do what feels good and is manageable to you
* If your research (and teaching, depending on the field) is strong, having an online presence is a plus, it builds your network and increases your visibility, but you need everything else to be solid (or people will think you are spending too much time on it).