

Social media and archaeological communication: an Australian survey

Sarah Colley

Zusammenfassung – Der Beitrag diskutiert die arbeitsbezogene Nutzung von Social-Media auf der Grundlage von umfassenden Interviews, die im Jahr 2011 mit dreißig australischen Archäologen und Denkmalpflegern geführt wurden. Die meisten Interviewpartner verwenden moderierte E-Mail-Listen und Diskussionsforen und waren in unterschiedlicher Intensität z. B. in Blogs, Wikis, professionellen Netzwerken und Content-Communities aktiv. Viele der Befragten gaben an, dass sie andere sozialen Medien wie z. B. Facebook oder Twitter nicht mögen und ihren Einsatz bei der beruflichen Arbeit vermeiden. Einflussfaktoren auf die Nutzung der Social Media waren auch die Unternehmenskommunikation und Arbeitsplatzregelungen, die unterschiedliche digitale Kompetenz, Fragen der notwendigen und verfügbaren Ressourcen (Kosten, Zeit, Mühen, IT-Unterstützung) sowie ethische Fragen, die mit einigen Unternehmen und Produkten verbunden sind. Die Verwendung von anderen digitalen Techniken der Kommunikation am Arbeitsplatz, die verfügbaren Mittel und die Haltung dazu, sowie die lokale, regionale und globale Interaktionen der Interviewten wird ebenfalls untersucht. Die Ergebnisse der Studie sind relevant für die Erforschung der Auswirkungen des digitalen Wandels auf die Archäologie, die politische Ökonomie der Archäologie und auf die Praxis der Denkmalpflege.

Schlüsselwörter – Archäologie und Social Media, archäologische Kommunikation, Anwendung digitaler Technologien, Australische Archäologie, politische Ökonomie der Archäologie

Abstract – The paper discusses work-related social media use based on in-depth interviews conducted in 2011 with thirty Australian archaeologists and cultural heritage professionals. Most people used moderated email lists and discussion forums and there was variable engagement with e.g. blogs, wikis, professional networking platforms and content communities. Many respondents said they disliked and avoided other social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter) at work. Factors influencing use included corporate communication and workplace policies; different levels and kinds of digital literacy and competency; resourcing issues (cost, time, effort, ICT support) and ethics and values associated with some businesses and products. Use of other digital technology, aims of and attitudes to workplace communication and local, regional and global interactions are also discussed. The results are important for research into the impacts of digital technology on archaeology and the political economy of archaeology and cultural heritage practice.

Keywords – archaeology and social media, archaeological communication, digital technology use, Australian archaeology and cultural heritage, political economy of archaeology

Introduction

In 2011 the author conducted in-depth interviews with thirty Australian-based archaeologists and heritage professionals about their work-related communication. Interviews topics included use of digital media technologies for communication as well as interactions between archaeologists and media professionals such as print and broadcast journalists, television and radio producers and public relations and marketing practitioners (Table 1). The study concerns the political economy of archaeology and heritage practice and is part of a wider programme of research to examine theoretical, ethical and practical impacts of using digital media technologies for archaeological communication (COLLEY & GIBBS 2013, COLLEY in press, COLLEY in preparation). Digital technologies, including social media platforms (e.g. WEBMOOR 2008), are often used to enhance research and support community engagement in archaeology. Yet technology may create problems and present challenges for archaeologists and others interested in material remains of the human past. Inappropriate application of some social media by museums for public engagement can prove costly and ineffective (RICHARDSON 2013). Technology use

assumes certain levels of funding, infrastructure, access and digital literacy. Individual and cultural attitudes towards digital technologies, and to major global companies that produce technology products, promote and market them as brands, impact on public use and reaction to them (e.g. LEVINE 2012). Technologies raise ethical, social and political questions for archaeology and cultural heritage that may need to be addressed (COLLEY, in press).

Communication and technology: a survey of Australian archaeologists

Thirty participants were recruited to the 2011 digital technology study through advertisements posted on email lists and moderated online forums operated by several Australian archaeology associations. Each participant was sent a form with 37 questions covering the topics listed in Table 1 and then interviewed face to face or by phone by the author for between 0.5 to 1 hour. Interviews were audio recorded. Answers to some questions (e.g. basic facts or ticks against boxes with pre-defined replies) were entered directly onto the forms. Replies to open-ended questions

received: 25 January 2014
accepted: 24 February 2014
published online: 14 April 2014

Archäologische Informationen 36, 65-80

Fokus: Using Social Media Technologies

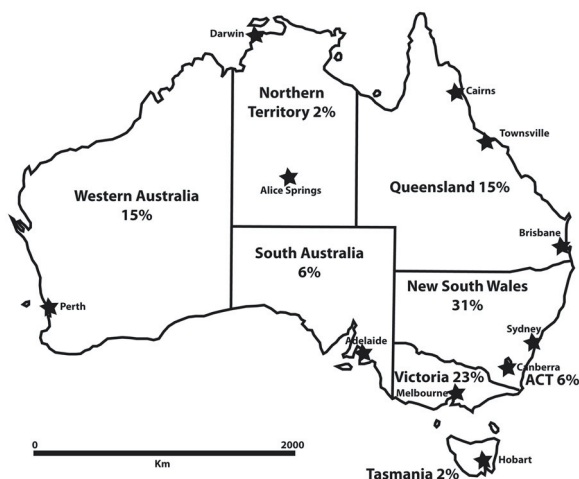


Figure 1 Map showing major cities and towns and location by state or territory of 390 Australian archaeologists surveyed by ULM ET. AL. (2013, 36).

and further discussion were transcribed in full from the recordings. Only questions and replies relevant to social media are discussed here. Results of the full survey are being analysed for future publication (COLLEY, in preparation). The survey did not record age, yet many people said age was relevant to technology use. Using other interview content and publicly available information it was estimated that 6 respondents (20%) were 21-34 years old, 12 (40%) were aged 35-50 and 12 (40%) were over 50. Sixteen (53.33%) were male and 14 (46.66%) were female. Survey participation was governed by University of Sydney research ethics protocols and interview content made public in this article has been edited to ensure anonymity.

Work and organisational context?

Type, content and context of communications?

Experiences of working with media professionals?

Use of digital technologies to communicate about archaeology and heritage?

Use of digital technologies to share information?

Benefits and challenges of using digital technologies?

Table 1 Topics covered by the interview survey.

The nature of the archaeological workplace is considered central to technology use in this study. A profile survey of the Australian archaeology profession by Ulm et. al. (2013) estimated that approximately 500-600 people work in Australian archaeology with 75% based in the eastern mainland states of Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and the Australian

Capital Territory (**Figure 1**). Most archaeologists (52%) were employed in private consulting work as part of the heritage industry with fewer in universities (25.3%), government organisations (15.9%) and museums (4.5%). The major focus of most respondents was on Australian Aboriginal archaeology (66.4%) with far fewer focused on Australian historical archaeology (19%), maritime archaeology (4%), Classical Mediterranean (3.3%) and other non-Australian archaeology (7.5%). When asked to nominate workplace skills considered most important, the top three replies were interpersonal communication, report writing and computer literacy. This indicates the central importance of at least some aspects of communication and digital technology use to Australian archaeological practice.

Participants in the 2011 digital technology were asked about the location of their organisational workplaces and their work, the nature of their job and the broad purpose and size of their work organisation. 37% of respondents (11 people) worked for private archaeology and cultural heritage consultancy companies, 20% (6) for universities in research and/or teaching roles, 10% (3) for community heritage organisations, 6.6% (2) for state government heritage agencies and 6.6% (2) for museums. Other organisations (an energy company, a mining company, a professional heritage organisation, a private educational organisation, a heritage property and an Aboriginal community organisation) were each represented by one survey respondent. While the sample is small, the workplaces included examples from all Australian states and territories, and the jobs people did and the types of organisations they worked for represented a good cross-section of those typical of Australian archaeology more generally (ULM ET AL. 2013). Some survey participants had multiple jobs or worked for more than one organisation, including doing voluntary work or studying for part-time higher degrees. It was not unusual for heritage consultants and government employees to be also involved in some university research and teaching and for university staff to conduct some paid heritage consultancy work.

Who did the survey respondents communicate with and why?

Participants were asked if they *ever* communicated for work with *any* of an extensive list of groups including:

- Archaeologists working in e.g. museums, universities, consultancy companies
- Government departments and agencies involved in archaeology and heritage management
- Other professionals (e.g. architects, scientists, planners, anthropologists)
- School, university, college and/or adult education students
- Development, mining and other resource extraction companies
- Aboriginal communities
- Other members of the public (e.g. tourists, travellers, amateur archaeologists)
- Other businesses and organisations

Most respondents said they communicated with a wide and diverse set of stakeholders and audiences at least sometimes. When asked to nominate groups they *mostly* communicated with on a *daily basis* the replies indicated a much narrower focus, namely: other archaeologists (nominated by 17 of 30 respondents), Aboriginal community members (13 nominations), other professionals (11), developers and other cultural heritage project clients (9), the general public (7), students (7), government agencies (4) and other stakeholders (4). Some of this pattern may arise because most survey participants worked in cultural heritage management and, apart from mandatory consultation with Aboriginal communities for many projects, were generally less involved in formal public engagement or education than archaeologists based in museums, universities and elsewhere.

When asked about the general aims of their work-related communication (**Appendix 1**) the following kinds of reasons are apparent:

- contribute to archaeological research and professional practice
- facilitate cultural heritage management processes (e.g. environmental impact survey and archaeological excavation ahead of development) under specific state, territory or Commonwealth government legislation and policy
- advocate for Australian archaeology as something valuable, important and worthy of public interest and financial support
- support Indigenous and Aboriginal rights through archaeology (e.g. by publicising the existence and historical significance of indigenous places and cultural heritage)
- explain archaeology in general to interested

- members of the public for e.g. general education, tourism, travel, entertainment
- teach archaeology as part of formal and structured programmes of learning to school, university and other students
- train professionals
- networking, advertising, public relations, marketing and self-promotion.

Heritage consultants *mainly* communicated about legislation and compliance processes with e.g. mining companies, developers and Aboriginal community members. University staff *mainly* communicated about research with other researchers and students etc. Yet the survey data indicates significant fluidity and diversity of communication practice. Stated attitudes towards communication varied between individuals and sometimes between an archaeologist and the organisation they worked for. Some respondents clearly valued and enjoyed the communication aspect of their work while others accepted it as a necessary part of their work, even if they were less enthusiastic. Archaeological communication can be easy, straight forward and rewarding or difficult, frustrating, time-consuming and stressful depending on circumstances. For example:

I'm passionate about archaeology and I choose to communicate about archaeology with people who are also interested. (**Appendix 1, 1.1**)

[...] I think communicating archaeology [...] well brings its own rewards. (**Appendix 1, 1.7**)

[...] we work in areas that people walk past every day so [...] you have to talk to people. They're talking to you [...]. We are involved because we have to be. (**Appendix 1, 1.5**)

[...] communicating archaeological ideas about significance [is] very hard particularly when you're doing it with people with limited knowledge of archaeology or with limited education [...]. [It] can often be quite challenging. (**Appendix 1, 1.6**)

Further interview data about contexts of communication and the skills, aptitude and attitudes of people involved are being analysed (COLLEY, in preparation).

Using digital technologies for archaeological tasks and purposes

Participants were questioned about their use of digital technologies for work-related communication and/or data and information sharing and for examples of software or equipment used for key tasks. Between them the respondents used all categories of digital technology listed in **Table 2**, although Facebook and online games were only used privately by some respondents. Digital technology use defies simplistic categorisation. Many products are tools designed to perform or support multiple tasks in creative ways and cross-cut several use categories. Examples of proprietary brands and products in Table 2 are indicative only as the survey did not attempt to collect a comprehensive list. It was sometimes hard to separate discussion of particular products or technologies from generic tasks and processes they perform and the wider aims, use and meaning of particular projects. Discussing and analysing technology assumes common terminology and shared levels of digital literacy which was sometimes a barrier to clear communication. Table 2 also excludes technologies developed or increasingly popular since 2011 (e.g. smart phone and tablet applications and new forms of social media) and recent initiatives of the Australian-based Federated Archaeological Information Management System project (ROSS ET AL. 2013) which also surveyed technology use by Australian archaeologists to support design of new field-based data recording infrastructure.

customised websites with no or very limited interactivity (Web 1.0)

email, telephone, SMS, VoIP technologies (e.g. Skype)

document production, business and accountancy software (e.g. Word, Excel, Outlook)

image and audio-visual creation, editing and management tools (e.g. Adobe Creative Suite, Lightbox, CAD software, video and audio recording and editing software)

document scanning and digitisation technologies

presentation tools/software (e.g. PowerPoint)

collaborative projects (Wikipedia, customised wikis)

email lists to circulate information to members (e.g. ASHA, AACAI, AAA lists)

moderated discussion lists hosted on Google, Yahoo & university or other platforms/servers and managed by organisations/individuals (e.g. OzArch)

virtual learning environments (e.g. WebCT, Blackboard Learn, Moodle)

blogs (e.g. Wordpress) and microblogs (e.g. Twitter)

content communities (e.g. YouTube, Flickr)

social networking sites (e.g. Facebook)

virtual game worlds (e.g. World of Warcraft)

professional networking sites (e.g. LinkedIn, Academia.edu)

discovery platforms & content aggregation services (e.g. Google, the National Library of Australia's Trove system)

data sharing tools and services (e.g. Dropbox, YouSendIt, cloud applications/services)

mapping, survey and machine generated data capture (e.g. GPS, GIS and specialist technical survey technologies and applications, Google Maps, Google Earth)

online archives, library services and data sources, e-publications (e.g. journal articles, books)

data recording, management and analysis software, spreadsheets, databases, statistical analysis packages, customised museum collection management software

Table 2 Categories of digital technology use (after PULMAN 2009) mentioned or discussed by survey respondents.

Location and archaeological communication.

More cultural heritage is managed under state or territory than national legislation and many Australian archaeologists work overseas. When asked: *In which Australian state or territory a) is your main workplace located? and b) are the people you regularly communicate with about archaeology located?* most people said they worked out of New South Wales (11, 36.7%) followed by Queensland (5, 16.7%), the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) (4, 13.3%), Western Australia (3, 10%), the Northern Territory (2, 6.7%), South Australia (2, 6.7%) and one each in Victoria and Tasmania (see Figure 1 for locations). One person lived in New Zealand and some people travelled regularly overseas and/or between several states or territories. When asked: *If you regularly communicate about archaeology for your work with people outside Australia where are these people mainly located?* 12 said they only ever communicated with people in Australia. Eighteen people said they communicated internationally with people mainly located in North America, the UK and Europe, China, southeast Asia and a few other places (**Table 3**). One Australian-based blogger said their audience could be located 'anywhere'. Most international communication concerned research collaboration and information exchange. Other reasons include, for example, British and Irish archaeologists seeking work in Australia and genealogical and family history enquiries from people in the UK and elsewhere with ancestors buried in historic cemeteries in Australia. Such patterns are predictable given the

intertwined disciplinary history of e. g. Australian, British and North American archaeology (COLLEY 2002, 1-8). They also reflect Australia's geographical location, strategic interactions and research interests in Oceania, southeast and other parts of Asia. Larger samples and more carefully constructed surveys are needed to support fine-grained analysis of location, communication and technology use. For example, 97% of 274 respondents to a recent online survey of use of the Australian Archaeological Association's (AAA) website, social media and online content were located in Australia, with only 3% from New Zealand, the USA and UK. In contrast only 67% of 'likers' of the AAA Facebook page and 63% of AAA Twitter followers were Australian based (WALLIS & MATTHEWS 2013). Attitudes of professional Australian archaeologists to social media are relevant to understanding such patterns.

Region	Named location (number of times nominated)
Europe	UK (10), Ireland (2), Italy (2), France (2), Austria (2), Europe (2)
North America	USA (7), Canada (3)
South America	South America (2)
Asia	India (1), Russia (1), Mongolia (1), China (3), Japan (1), Thailand (2), Vietnam (1), Philippines (1)
Africa	Africa (1), South Africa (1)
Oceania	New Zealand (1), Papua New Guinea (1)

Table 3 Places respondents regularly communicate with outside Australia.

Attitudes to and use of social media for work

'Social media' is a currently popular terms for internet applications that support sharing of user generated content for social purposes such as collective action, communication, community building, networking, co-operation and collaboration (FUCHS 2014, 32-37). Some social media e.g. Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and various Google technologies are products developed and promoted by private businesses who profit from the labour of users who donate content of commercial value to advertisers. Other social media are commons-based technologies which rely on e.g. government funding, subscriptions and donations from supporters. Examples include Wikipedia, WikiLeaks and the many online lists, forums and blogs operated and

hosted by universities, professional organisations, libraries, museums and other public groups.

Answers to the 2011 survey question: *Do you use social media sites (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, blogs, wikis) as part of your work? Any comment (which ones, why, why not)?* produced interesting and useful information about social media use in general and some polarised and strongly expressed opinions (**Tables 4 and 5 and Appendix 2**). A better-designed survey is needed to collect more comprehensive and fine-grained information about different social media. The question included examples of some social media but excludes others. People tended to focus on specific social media (especially Facebook and Twitter) and follow-on questions and prompting were often needed to expand the conversation. Other survey information has been used to supplement direct replies to the question. The results are hard to quantify and categorise. In Tables 4 and 5 some social media are grouped together (e.g. LinkedIn and Academia.edu) while they operate in slightly differently ways.

Using a social media platform to survey people who already use it can only answer certain kinds of questions. Participants were recruited by adverts posted on professional lists and forums. It seems reasonable to assume that most people used these sometimes unless they specifically said they did not. The reliability of this assumption needs testing against independent data but it seems likely that the only social media used for work by most respondents (28 out of 30) were such commons-based, moderated discussion groups, list-serves and e-mail lists including OzArch on Google Groups and lists operated by key professional Australian archaeological associations (e.g. AAA, AACAI, ASHA) and a few other Australian and international groups. Only two people said they didn't use them at all and many people said they did and/or discussed them in reply to other survey questions. While a few people raised concerns about moderation, defamation and trolling (see **Appendix 2, 2.8 and 2.12**) the other comments were all about their value for accessing and exchanging useful information. Users of Australian Archaeological Association (AAA) websites and social media surveyed in 2013 also said they particularly valued exchange of practical information e.g. about conferences, research seminars, training opportunities and jobs (WALLIS & MATTHEWS 2013).

In stark contrast, only three of 30 respondents said they used Twitter for work and some people were very negative about Twitter. Facebook was

only marginally less unpopular for work though several respondents said they or members of their family used FB in a personal capacity. There was limited use of wikis, blogs, professional networking platforms (e.g. LinkedIn and Academia.edu) and content communities (e.g. YouTube, Flickr, Google Images) but these social media attracted little or no hostility from respondents and some positive comments (**Appendix 2, Tables 4 and 5**).

Platform/Product	Stated or inferred use	
	Yes - Use	Don't use
commons-based lists and forums	28	2
blogs	7	23
YouTube, Flickr & other content communities	7	23
Facebook	5	25
LinkedIn, Academia.edu	5	25
wikis	3	27
Twitter	3	27

Table 4 Work-related social media use (yes/no).

Table 5 categorises engagement among survey participants who did use some social media. The category 'some engagement' includes occasional or moderate use to e.g. access information, watch videos, participate in conversations and add comments (e.g. **Appendix 2, 2.13**). The category 'significant engagement' includes people who said they engaged in all of these activities frequently or regularly and those who blogged, ran or moderated discussion forums and wikis or were major producers, consumers and distributors of content across one or more social media platforms (e.g. **Appendix 2, 2.21 & 2.22**). People generally saw value or were interested in e.g. blogs and wikis, Google images, YouTube videos and a few other platforms even if they did not use them that much.

Platform/Product	Level of engagement	
	Some	Significant
commons-based lists and forums	24	4
blogs	3	4
YouTube, Flickr & other content communities	7	0
Facebook	3	2
LinkedIn, Academia.edu	4	1
wikis	1	2
Twitter	1	2

Table 5 Level of engagement in work-related social media use.

Challenges of using social media for work-related communication

Corporate communication policies

Several respondents said they did not use e.g. Facebook, Twitter or other social media for work but their organisation did. Some workplace policies discouraged or blocked social media use by archaeologists or required they seek permission from their organisation's media and public relations division before using social media for direct external communication. This applied to universities and museums as well as government departments and private businesses, although rules were variably enforced and enforceable (e.g. **Appendix 2, 2.17 & 2, 21**). Restrictions seemed to focus on e.g. Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and other popular commercial social media in situations where management wished to control communication with the wider public for reasons of public relations, marketing and or didactic communication. Online presence inevitably raises opportunities and challenges about self-representation, self-promotion, professional reputation, branding and marketing to potentially large audiences and needs to be approached strategically even by individuals and small organisations.

Many organisations employ media, communication and public relations practitioners to manage at least some aspects of their online communication including web pages and social media. There were variable opinions about corporate media and public relations professions which were similar in some ways to opinions about 'old' media print and broadcast journalists and professional television and radio production companies (e.g. COLLEY 2002, 154-168; NICHOLS 2006; BRITAIN & CLACK 2007). These aspects of

the survey data are currently being analysed and will be reported elsewhere (COLLEY, in preparation). Some respondents valued input from communication professionals and regarded them as essential for designing, implementing and managing effective social media and public outreach programmes (e.g. **Appendix 2, 2.2**). There were also examples of unsatisfactory engagement with some corporate public relations and media practitioners who were regarded as hindering rather than enhancing communication between archaeologists and the public (e.g. **Appendix 2, 2.21**). Some of this is about professional skills and expectations, but there are strong elements of neoliberal managerialism which governs organisations that employ archaeologists in many countries (e.g. KRISTIANSEN 2009). Corporate communication and public relations practices (WOOD 2014) may constrain professional and public engagement (COLLEY, in preparation).

Limited infrastructure and ICT support

Elsewhere in the survey some respondents reported variable access to quality and appropriate ICT support and high-speed broadband internet especially in smaller organisations and in rural areas (COLLEY, in preparation).

The 'why bother?' factor

Lack of interest or motivation was a key reason for not using social media if they did not seem to offer any particular benefit over e.g. email and other interactive technologies people already used for work or other communication methods.

I just don't see enough use [...] with all technology it needs to reach a threshold of how good it is for you before you embark on the learning that it takes [...] So GIS you have to sort of leap in and get into it. Social media for me - not yet [...] (**Appendix 2, 2.5**).

I'd rather send a letter in the mail or ring [...] because trying to communicate cultural heritage information via words, via a truncated Twitter message, or even an email message - you lose so much of the meaning (**Appendix 2, 2.6**).

Unsatisfactory experiences

Some respondents reported unsatisfactory prior experiences with social media for work projects e.g. lack of public response to Facebook pages, wikis, blogs and instances where social media had blocked or inhibited rather than supported good work-related communication.

The company's got a blog but I think it's pretty quiet. There was a Facebook page [...] I think it might have been taken down as we didn't have any Friends and it was embarrassing. (**Appendix 2, 2.2**)

The other side of that Twitter and email thing is that people expect responses immediately because you are available 24/7 [...] and the] view that if someone is emailing me I have to respond immediately because it's expected. Then you get a lot of half-considered communications that appear blunt or rude or short or abrupt when they are not intended to be. (**Appendix 1, 2:12**)

Digital literacy

Some archaeologists with less experience or interest in digital technologies avoided some social media as they didn't know how to use them properly (e.g. **Appendix 2:2.11 & 2.18**). Some people with a lot of experience and understanding of digital technologies made well-informed decisions to not use some social media they judged likely to be ineffective or inappropriate (e.g. **Appendix 2, 2.6 & 2.9**).

Costs in time and money

The time required to learn, steep learning curves, too many changes to keep up with and the need to frequently monitor and update social media was considered prohibitive by some people (e.g. **Appendix 2, 2.14**). Some did not want to pay extra for e.g. mobile data access and buying and updating smart phones and new software.

The 'Facebook generation' factor

Several people said they were 'too old' for e.g. Facebook and Twitter which they thought were aimed at and used mainly by younger people (e.g. **Appendix 2, 2.4, 2.5 & 2.9**). These technologies were considered particularly suitable for projects that required engagement with younger audiences. As some professional archaeology and heritage projects mainly involved older people, FB and Twitter were thought to be inappropriate. Globally in 2013 Twitter users were mostly aged between 18-34, held a university degree and had no children (FUCHS 2014, 190) but Procter et. al. (2010) found no strong link between age and use of Web 2.0 technologies for collaboration and communication by UK researchers. Many older respondents used FB and other social media outside work and at least two of the Twitter users were known to the author as being over forty. That many people were familiar with FB because

their children used it may account for some of these attitudes.

Work-life balance, privacy and business ethics

Several respondents avoided Facebook in particular from a desire to separate work-related and personal online communication. Some said they did not want to be flooded with online information 24/7 and that emails were already enough.

I do use Facebook but [not for] work. [...] I don't like to have [work and private] worlds too intermingled. I don't use Twitter [...]. I don't want to be constantly connected either to people I know or to work colleagues. I like to have a degree of separation. (**Appendix 2, 2.13**)

Annoying trivia or fun and entertainment?

Facebook was considered to have an unprofessional image as it is promoted or perceived as being primarily about fun and entertainment rather than work. Some people dislike the exchange of high volumes of online content on FB or Twitter which they regard as meaningless trivia (e.g. **Appendix 2, 2.10, 2.16**).

Commercial pressure, peer-obligation and Friends vs. friends

There were objections to frequent and unwelcome email marketing by social media companies and some commons-based organisations wishing to recruit more people to sign-up or engage with their products and projects. Respondents reported social and professional pressure from colleagues and organisations to use social media they were not necessarily interested in.

[...] Was a great nightmare getting off [Facebook. I] kept on getting letters despite the fact that I tell FB all the time 'Get away!' 'Pxxx off' and they keep dropping – you know – 'So and so would like to communicate with you' 'You know this person' 'Just press and link' [...]. I keep away [...] and I [...] advise my children [...] do not put your photographs on FB because I think it's really bad. [Q: *Do your children use FB?*] Yes they do. Constantly. Addictively. #15

[...] on one of the mailing lists recently someone commenting on social media and using the term 'if people are intimidated by' FB, Twitter or whatever it was. And I was thinking 'That's such a sales and marketing turn of phrase [...]. You've bought into seeing that's useful without

actually demonstrating any efficacy in using it'. (**Appendix 2, 2.16**)

Some people did not want to communicate online with people they had never met or hardly knew, with whom they had nothing in common or even disliked, or who they regarded as time-wasting or seeking favours or attention (e.g. **Appendix 2, 2.15, 2.16**). Active dislike and objection to particular brands and the business models and ethics of the companies that develop and promote them was expressed or implied by some people (**Appendix 2, 2.7, 2.11**). There were also concerns about negative aspects of some social media widely report in professional media about e.g. trolling, lack of privacy, online surveillance and internet addiction.

In direct contrast, one experienced social media user (e.g. **Appendix 2, 2.22**) made insightful comments about why they valued the extensive 'superficial' communication afforded by platforms like Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Academia.edu, Google products and blogs. They used different social media in sophisticated ways to support their research and professional networking. That many social media are linked together was regarded as particularly advantageous.

[2.22] [I like social media] because it's a very low key, casual, light-hearted interaction with people that in fact is quite impersonal. In a sense it doesn't mean anything. [...] It enables you to make a connection with someone with a very low investment but you are still connected. (**Appendix 2, 2.22**)

This raises questions about personal styles of networking, communication and collaboration that have age, gender and other social characteristics. A study by Richardson (n.d.) discussed how archaeological Twitter users mainly communicated by Twitter with people they already knew or had met in other contexts. There are also questions about sharing and/or withholding of information and resources with private, commercial or public value which are relevant to e.g. issues about open-access online professional publications, tools and services (KANSA 2007, GIBBS & COLLEY 2012, COLLEY, in press).

Public engagement and 'key performance indicators'

Public engagement and research made public via social media technologies without the normal peer-review process are currently not acknowledged or especially credited for purposes of academic tenure, promotion etc. by government research auditing instruments e.g. the Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) Initiative linked to higher education funding.

[Q: *Does your university employer give you credit for your social media profile?*] Well I've talked about it in things like my tenure application and interestingly with the new [government research assessment process] communicating with the public in this way counts for nothing. (**Appendix 2, 2.22**)

Orange (2013) discusses similar challenges facing public engagement in commercial archaeology in the UK.

Discussion and conclusions

Only a few of the survey respondents made significant use of a wide range of social media for archaeological communication. The study provides most insight into why many respondents avoided or disliked some social media, especially Facebook and Twitter. Limited uptake and use of social media for research collaboration and scholarly communication by UK researchers across disciplines (PROCTOR ET AL. 2010) suggests the survey results are valid despite the small sample size. Social media use seems to be influenced by corporate communication policies, digital literacy, costs, ICT infrastructure, ethical issues and individual aptitudes for and attitudes to communication.

The aims, content and context of archaeological communication are also important. As discussed, archaeologists in this survey most frequently communicated with professional colleagues and Aboriginal community members involved in cultural heritage management or research projects. Fewer survey participants were employed in roles involving structured programmes of public engagement with younger audiences where social media might have more obvious benefit. That 40% of respondents said they only ever communicated about archaeology with others located in Australia also reflects the strong representation of regionally focused cultural heritage management

communication in this survey. Social media are less useful in such circumstances than e-mail, phone, face to face meetings and other communication methods.

Digital technologies offer significant opportunity for archaeologists to connect with audiences regardless of physical location (HENSON & SCHERZLER 2013). Yet notions of unhindered communication within a 'global village' wrought by technology change ignore cultural, social and political factors that influence technology use in practice (FUCHS 2014; LISTER ET AL. 2009, 181-7) as shown by this survey. Regional traditions of archaeological practice also influence the content and quality of archaeological communication with or without technology. Australian archaeology remains strongly influenced by legacies of colonial history (e.g. McNIVEN & RUSSELL 2005). One outcome is that Australian governments generally mandate communication with Aboriginal communities for any archaeology involving indigenous heritage, which explains some patterns of communication and digital technology use noted above. Economics is also important. For example, mining company funding for heritage-industry based archaeology in parts of Australia during a resources boom resulted in growth in jobs in cultural heritage management in the last decade. Reductions in public funding for museums and universities during a recession have led to cuts in education and research. Such factors influence the resources available to archaeologist to advance and promote their discipline and the kinds of messages and content they produce.

Social media change and evolve rapidly. The author is aware from personal observation that while there was very limited use of professional networking sites (LinkedIn, Academia.edu) in 2011 many people have since joined. This is likely to be true of other social media and further research would be useful. Fuchs (2014, 4-7) notes that all media technologies are social in the sense that they are integrated into human communication and sociality. He suggests that critique of the political economy of social media is best served through analysis of forms of sociality associated with their use e.g. cognition and/or information processing, communication, community building, collaboration and co-operative work. Work in progress (COLLEY, in preparation) and future studies could usefully investigate different forms of sociality in archaeology which are variably afforded or inhibited by digital technology and media including cognition & analysis, collaboration, information exchange, community

building and professional and social networking. Such an approach has potential to produce better understandings of the political economy and other aspects of archaeology and ultimately the way people come to understand and value the material remains of the past and why this is important.

Acknowledgements

I especially thank the thirty people I interviewed for their time, thoughts and good humour. Comments have been edited to protect the identity of individuals and organisations and to comply with University of Sydney human ethics protocols tied to the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences Small Research Support Grant (2010) which seed-funded the work. Anonymity was useful when participants felt able to share thoughts and opinions but means I can't properly acknowledge the significant input of people who contributed ideas and research content. Some participants said they were happy to put their name to their opinions subject to editorial input to avoid misrepresentation. This is an option for future publications. I can openly thank some others including Rowan Brownlee, Val Attenbrow and Denis Gojak (questionnaire testing), Kate da Costa (invaluable research assistance) and Lorna Richardson (useful additional references). Thanks to Don Henson and Diane Scherzler for organising the EAA 2013 session in which this version of the paper was presented. Earlier versions of the paper were presented at a 2011 research colloquium convened by Elizabeth Bonshek and Tracy Ireland (University of Canberra) and at the 2012 Digital Humanities Australasia Conference in Canberra. Thanks to Doug Rocks-Macqueen and an anonymous reviewer for useful comments on the first draft of this paper. I acknowledge in-kind support from the University of Sydney where I am now an Honorary Affiliate in Archaeology (School of Philosophical and Historical Inquiry). Thanks also to Penelope Allison and the University of Leicester, School of Archaeology and Ancient History for an Honorary Research Fellowship which has significantly supported write-up of this research.

References

- Brittain, M. & Clack, T. (2007). Introduction: Archaeology and the Media. In T. Clack & M. Brittain (eds.), *Archaeology and the Media* (pp. 11-65). Walnut Creek, California: Left Coast Press.
- Colley, S. (2002). *Uncovering Australia. Archaeology, Indigenous people and the public*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin; and Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution Press.
- Colley, S. (in press). Ethics and digital heritage. In T. Ireland, J. Schofield & S. Loring (eds.), *The Ethics of Cultural Heritage: Memory, Management and Museums*. New York: Springer.
- Colley, S. (in preparation). *Archaeological Communication and Digital Technology Use*.
- Colley, S. & Gibbs, M. (2013). Capturing archaeological performance on digital video: implications for teaching and learning archaeology. *Australian Archaeology* 77, 120-126.
- Fuchs, C. (2014). *Social Media: A Critical Introduction*. London: Sage.
- Gibbs, M. & Colley, S. (2012). Digital preservation, online access and historical archaeology 'grey literature' from New South Wales, Australia. *Australian Archaeology* 75, 95-103.
- Henson, D. & Scherzler, D. (2013). Digital heritage: cross cultural conversations of nationally embedded soliloquies? Session Abstract. 19th European Association of Archaeologists (EAA) Annual Meeting, 4.-8. September 2013, Pilsen, Czech Republic. <http://proposal.eaa2013.cz/programme/session-abstract.php?id=46>. [Accessed 10th March 2014].
- Kansa, E. (2007). Publishing primary data on the World Wide Web: Opencontext.org and an open future for the past. *Technical Briefs in Historical Archaeology* 2, 1-11.
- Kristiansen, K. (2009). Contract archaeology in Europe: an experiment in diversity. *World Archaeology* 41(4), 641-648.
- Levine, R. (2012). *Free Ride. How the Internet is Destroying the Culture Business and How it Can Fight Back*. London: Vintage Books.
- Lister, M., Dovey, J. Giddings, S. Grant I. & Kelly, K. (2009). *New Media: A Critical Introduction Second Edition*. London & New York: Routledge.
- McNiven, I. J. & Russell, L. (2005). *Appropriated Pasts: Indigenous Peoples and the Colonial Culture of Archaeology*. Oxford: Altamira.

Nichols, S. (2006). Out of the Box: Popular notions of archaeology in documentary programmes on Australian television. *Australian Archaeology* 63, 35-46.

Orange, H. (2013). Mismatched parents: public engagement with the commercial sector. In 'Paying dividends: securing the impact of development-led archaeological work' Session organised by Roger Thomas. Institute for Archaeologists Conference, Aston University, April 17 2013. https://www.academia.edu/3334324/Mismatched_parents_Public_engagement_within_the_commercial_sector. [Accessed 12th January 2014].

Proctor, R., Williams, R., Stewart J., Poschen, M., Snee, H. Voss, A. & Asgari-Targhi, M. (2010). Adoption and use of Web 2.0 in scholarly communications. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society A*. 368:4039-56. doi:10.1098/rsta.2010.0155.

Pulman, A. (2009). *Blogs Wikis Podcasts & More*. Palgrave: Macmillan.

Richardson, L. (2013). Connecting with Collections at the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge. Paper presented at 19th European Association of Archaeologists (EAA) Annual Meeting, 4-8 September 2013, Pilsen, Czech Republic. <http://proposal.eaa2013.cz>. [Accessed 05th March 2014].

Richardson, L. (n.d.) Twitter & Archaeology. An Archaeological Network in 140 Characters or Less. https://www.academia.edu/2492383/Twitter_and_Archaeology_An_Archaeological_Network_in_140_Characters_or_Less. [Accessed 12th January 2014].

Ross, S., Sobotkova, A., Ballsun-Stanton, B. & Crook, P. (2013). Creating eResearch Tools for Archaeologists: The Federated Archaeological Management System project. *Australian Archaeology* 77, 107-119.

Ulm, S., Mate, G., Dalley, C. & Nichols, S. (2013). A working profile: the changing face of professional archaeology in Australia. *Australian Archaeology* 76, 34-43.

Wallis, L. & Matthews. J. (2013). *Is social media just for laughs? Insights from AAA's 2013 social media survey*. <http://www.australianarchaeology.com/2013/11/is-social-media-just-for-laughs-insights-from-aaas-2013-social-media-survey/>. [Accessed 13th January 2014].

Webmore, T. (2008). From Silicon Valley to the Valley of Teotihuacan: the "Yahoo!" of New Media and Digital Heritage. *Visual Anthropology Review* 24, 183-200.

Wood, E. (2014). Corporate Communication. In R. Tench & L. Yeomans (eds.), *Exploring Public Relations*. Third Edition. (pp. 447-463). Pearson.

Appendix 1.

In broad terms, why are you and/or your organisation involved in communicating archaeology? Selected [edited] replies.

[1.1] I'm passionate about archaeology and I choose to communicate about archaeology with people who are also interested. I also have to explain what I'm doing for clients where my project manager doesn't know much about historical archaeology. (Principle Archaeologist, Small Heritage Consultancy Business)

[1.2] Attract more students. Influence young minds to come to my university. Training professional archaeologists to a high standard. Promoting Aboriginal rights to the wider public by explaining archaeological evidence for the age and complexity of Aboriginal culture and history. (University Lecturer, Research & Teaching)

[1.3] I'm paid to communicate sometimes as a consultancy. I want the money, fame and fortune [laughs]. Publicity is usually positive and useful ... you are better known. Good for business. I also have a genuine interest in disseminating information and knowledge. And putting my point of view across as well. (Principle, Small Heritage Consultancy & Independent Researcher).

[1.4] [My organisation] has a conservation agreement with the [government agency] in relation to the [...] listing of the [archaeological heritage of a particular region of Australia] and part of that is a responsibility to communicate the values of the [archaeology] to the general public. Also [the organisation] does it just to show that they are a good corporate citizen. But in my case in addition to those aspects I certainly get involved to try and counter government or other industry issues that are being covered that are detrimental to the archaeology. (Cultural Heritage Manager, Large Development Company)

[1.5] I think it's just good PR in general. [...] because we work in commercial archaeology we work in areas that people walk past every day so you don't have a lot of.. you know.. you have to talk to people. They're talking to you (laughs). [...] So yeah we do. We are involved because we have to be. (PhD Student and Employee, Medium-Sized Heritage Consultancy Company).

[1.6] [...] to explain the results of surveys or excavations [...] and the significance of heritage items or heritage places. That's obviously necessary in terms of the process to manage places. Also for outside of archaeology I guess I'm explaining management strategy - things that we are doing to manage sites or salvage them or things that we've put in place. I guess if you need to attend to something or not attend to something. Those sorts of things. They are not really archaeological issues, they're management issues but they're easier to communicate in my experience than communicating archaeological ideas about significance. It's very hard particularly when you're doing it with people with limited knowledge of archaeology or with limited education like landowners and Aboriginal people. Can often be quite challenging. [Principal, Small Heritage Consultancy Company]

[1.7] [...] I want to encourage public interest in archaeology basically to help support the discipline. I think it's really important to give the general public a real sense of what the intellectual programme of work is here, the issues at stake, the conversation that archaeologists are having with the evidence and amongst each other as part of communicating the thrill of the subject and the importance of archaeological sites as really quite important and irreplaceable archives of information. And I think communicating archaeology also - communicating it well - brings its own rewards. Certainly at [the museum] it brings almost a barrage of opportunities from private donors [and in-kind support from members of the public] for research and fieldwork. But generally I think it's very important to talk up the discipline, to promote the work, to increase public understanding of the field. (Museum Researcher)

[1.8] Well I guess it's a bit of the nature of the beast for the research in the context that if you have external funding bodies sometimes there's a price to be paid for that in media communication. And actually in a consulting context I found that it was often a requirement of the project particularly for community consultation both in the Aboriginal community sense but also in the broader community consultative sense when they have exhibitions and open days at sites and those sorts of things. (PhD Student and Employee of Medium-Sized Heritage Consultancy Company)

[1.9] Because I don't see the point in doing research if you are not going to share it. [...] Because [a

heritage agency I work for] are government funded they want to share the knowledge they collect and the stories because then people feel they are getting some value for their money that's being spent. I think there's a bit of that with the university [but they] also have this unfortunate approach where they want to be branded and they want to be seen as this good place to come to or where there's dynamic research happening or something. So having people in the media is a way of selling their product. (University Researcher, Contract Lecturer, Heritage Consultant)

Appendix 2

Do you use social media sites (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, blogs, wikis) as part of your work? Any comment (which ones, why, why not)? Selected [edited] responses. #=respondent identification number.

[2.1] The organisation does but I haven't yet. Facebook, Twitter and I think we are on YouTube. #01.

[2.2] The company's got a blog but I think it's pretty quiet. There was a Facebook page [...] I think it might have been taken down as we didn't have any Friends and it was embarrassing [laughs]. #06

[2.3] No although I'm finding that, increasingly, work-related things are asking for Facebook. #07

[2.4] No. Bit too old for that [laughs]. [My children] are into that sort of thing. I'm going to try and get them [to help set up social media for my work]. But one thing that's been holding me back is that [our organisation] doesn't really have anything for children. We did a mock dig and it just turned into treasure hunting - stabbing with trowels. It was - you know [laughs]. Until there is something we can do that will amuse kids or interest or educate them I'm not keen to get into [Facebook and Twitter]. #05

[2.5] Er, no. [Q: *But are you on archaeological discussion lists?*] Oh yes - I suppose discussion groups, but none of those young people things. I could see they could potentially be very useful. I just don't see enough use to get into them. It's that thing with all technology - it needs to reach a threshold of how good it is for you before you embark on the learning that it takes to do it.

Because it can be quite a big investment of time and effort – new technology – it needs to have a clear outcome for you. So GIS you have to sort of leap in and get into it. Social media for me – not yet, not to say that it won't come at some stage. #03

[2.6] [My organisation uses them] internally and to communicate with the public but I don't. I'm finding that with Aboriginal groups they try to use these media but they don't use them effectively enough yet and they're somewhat unreliable. I tend to avoid them as a method of communication. I'd rather send a letter in the mail or ring them up or go and see them because trying to communicate cultural heritage information via words, via a truncated Twitter message, or even an email message – you lose so much of the meaning [...] and the interaction that's important even when you're talking to someone over the phone. So I'm a bit of a Luddite about these things. I think they are good in their place but I try not to use them even if they are available because I don't think they communicate. #04

[2.7] I'm not interested in bloggers. [Q: *Do you use social media?*] No I hate them. I hate Facebook because I don't want them to get all my personal information. Whenever people ask me to be a Friend on Facebook I [...] I say no. [Q: *And Twitter?*] I read things on sites like the ABC TV news [...] and I see all these Twitter things and I don't want to know anything about it and I don't want to do it. [Q: *Professional discussion lists and forums?*] Yes [...] a lot. I look at that all the time. I'm on several [...]. I send a lot of stuff and I reply to a lot of stuff and I read it all. #08

[2.8] [...] we're fairly up with using the current technology but we refuse to use Twitter[...] because it just seems pointless. And besides - you know me – can you imagine me being confined to 150 characters? Although I did hear somebody on the radio say even 150 characters can land a huge judgement against you in the Supreme Court for defamation [laughs]. #01

[2.9] No. Not at all. I don't like it [for lots of reasons]. I've got too much to do in my life to learn something new. I'm getting too old. I couldn't be bothered. I get very concerned at some of the things I hear that go wrong with social media, particularly Facebook, and I'm glad I don't have to worry about that sort of thing. I don't have a mobile phone that would allow me to Tweet so I

don't have Twitter and what's the point of having Twitter if you've already got email? The nearest thing that I would have – and I don't have yet – is I'm considering putting up a blog on my [research project] website – but that would be it. #09

[2.10] No. [Q: *Why not?*]. That's a billion dollar question. I don't think their format is really suitable for a professional image. I understand they are very popular. I think my boss is quite resistant and I don't think any of us really have the time to update and use them effectively. #10

[2.11] No I don't [emphatic]. Partly because I don't understand them. Also I don't think we have access, They're blocked sites at work. And also I've found – I do personally have a Facebook address but I never use it because I don't know who is actually listening to me. I get shocked when I find anybody can log on. I tend not to use them. I must admit I've had a request for that LinkedIn or whatever it's called. Someone's asked me and I just keep ignoring it. I've never been on Twitter. I have seen some YouTube things when people have said there's something on but the others – no. Never even looked at them. #11

[2.12] No. I work for government. When I worked [elsewhere] we had a Facebook Page. The government does use social media but in [my current job] we haven't yet. There is a recognition we should investigate it but we don't [partly through lack of] IT support and a publications team [...] to research and monitor it. But [after a planned restructure] we hope we can hook in with [another department's] IT and web people and other support and properly go down that path. [Q: *You mentioned something about forums?*] Every two months I [send] an email about what's been happening in [our heritage] programme [...] to an outreach list [of] everyone who has [attended one of our public events]. It's just our little group of [heritage] friendly people. It goes to all [interested private and public organisations] in the state [...] and we've started posting it onto [a community forum]. But we post and when people respond negatively we don't reply. [We have to get approval from our media people] because it's another form of external media use. [Q: *Why don't you reply to negative posts on public forums?*] [Previously community members opposed to government heritage policy] would post things that were quite derogatory and staff [...] would respond and [the community member] would respond [and so on...] and [...] it never ended

in a good place. [Discusses trolling]. People feel they can hide behind the anonymity of a forum and just say whatever they want. They don't have to face the people they are saying it to. The other side of that Twitter and email thing is that people expect responses immediately because you are available 24/7 [...and the] view that if someone is emailing me I have to respond immediately because it's expected. Then you get a lot of half-considered communications that appear blunt or rude or short or abrupt when they are not intended to be. People don't stop long enough to censor themselves and they press the button. #13

[2.13] I access stuff [via social media] but I don't often contribute. I'm not really a blogger or [...] not in terms of my archaeological work or my [other professional practice]. [...] I use Academia.edu but I don't use LinkedIn. [...] I do use Facebook but [not for] work. And I really don't use it much personally either. Why I don't use it for work is – particularly – I don't like to have those two worlds too intermingled. I don't use Twitter because it's a waste of time in my opinion. I don't want to be constantly connected either to people I know or to work colleagues. I like to have a degree of separation. I think there's a sense of obligation to use it that comes [...] like a forceful sense that you *should* be using it but not really enjoy using it. #24

[2.14] I'm told [the heritage project I manage voluntarily] needs a Facebook page but I haven't gone down that road yet mainly because [of time]. Once you set something up you really need to maintain it. I'm trying to get a couple of younger people more involved in the organisation – say a couple of archaeology students [as volunteers] and to say right and so we would have a FB page for the [site]. I'm a reluctant FB user. I'm only on it because [a comparable heritage group] out of the US uses FB quite a bit for its communication and you can do a couple of virtual run conferences on FB. But we get 20 to 30 emails a week to deal with [on a voluntary basis]. That's enough. #14

[2.15] Definitely not but I did at one stage when I was very naïve register for Facebook and it was a great nightmare getting off it. And I keep on getting letters despite the fact that I tell FB all the time 'Get away!' 'Piss off' and they keep dropping – you know – 'So and so would like to communicate with you' 'You know this person' 'Just press and link' you know. And you know I got one from [Person X] saying they want to be my Friend and

one from [Person Y]. Now you don't know [Person Y]. [Q: *No I don't should I?*] He's a [...] guy from [...] and he has a temper 'anger management' problem. He wants to be my Friend [laughs] after abusing my client. My client had to hang up on him. [Laughs]. He wants to be my Friend. So – no – I keep away from [social networking platforms] and I try to advise my children – do not – do not put your photographs on FB because I think it's really bad. [Q: *Do your children use FB?*] Yes they do. Constantly. Addictively. #15

[2.16] No. I don't like people to know what I'm doing really to that level of thing [laughs]. I know that some of my colleagues, I think, use Facebook. Actually I was on LinkedIn. I think I put my name on it years ago. But I don't use it in any way. I keep getting things to link up to people that I don't know. [...] I don't see any benefit to me in using [social media] and I don't find them that interesting. No. I had seen on one of the mailing lists recently someone commenting on social media and using the term 'if people are intimidated by' FB, Twitter or whatever it was. And I was thinking that's such a sales and marketing turn of phrase even though it was a person who normally puts up reasonably funny things. I was thinking 'You've bought into seeing that's useful without actually demonstrating any efficacy in using it'. That's [...] where I am at the moment. Like we use email, various things, I don't know – I have a video phone and I think I've made two video calls in four years. They are completely useless. But with this social media from what I'm seeing of it – because my wife's got FB and stuff – is there's an [expletive deleted] load of rubbish from people with nothing better to do than comment. You know. And you can quote me on the [expletive deleted]. A 'tsunami' of rubbish might be more academic [laughs]. #19

[2.17] We don't use social media sites because we are not allowed to. Our government department stops us. We have them on our computers at work but we can't use them on the website. That is something we are lobbying them about as if we are going to revamp our [museum] website and put our collections online and expand our interaction with the public we'd really like to. #23

[2.18] Not really but I do follow one blog and have the capacity to submit the information – I've just never taken it up. [Q: *Why don't you use social media much?*] I deal so much with [school and university] students I'm a bit leery about using Facebook. I've

heard of LinkedIn but I've no idea how to use it [laughs]. I keep getting people asking me to be linked up with them and I'm actually clueless. I can't remember my password and I signed in years ago and I get those useless messages all the time about 'So and so is now connected with so and so'. I don't know who they are and I don't care [laughs] and I wonder why I'm there. I once joined a [government-run research social media site] and I found it would send me emails saying 'Someone wants to talk to you' on this site. And you'd have to log in – it would take hours – and you would discover it was some student wanting you to help them with their research or something – it was very time consuming and irritating so I actually started ignoring it and I think I must have fallen off it. So I haven't done it for years. So that's the reason I don't do that. #30

[2.19] I started to. A friend of mine that teaches at [a university] has been haranguing me about this Academia.edu so recently I've put a page up. I've actually found it extremely useful. I quite like it because I don't like Twitter or Facebook. I don't use Twitter – but FB to me is like a personal domain. I put pictures of my kid on there – so I don't have work people on it. And LinkedIn I find is much more a kind of business environment. So I found Academia.edu was really suitable for the purpose I wanted. It's sort of a more academic context. It's a great resource [for expanded networking and sharing research content]. I think [social media use] is a bit of a generational thing. New guys are right up and want to get onto it and older people are not really interested or... #28

[2.20] I haven't used YouTube or LinkedIn. Wikis – yes [...] and a blog [I run]. I've done a Twitter link on the blog page but not many people seem to have clicked it. We do have a [professional association] Twitter group which hasn't got very many members yet and a [similar] Facebook group which don't get many posts. It's got a few members but most of the posts are a bit strange I must admit [laughs]. Which ones work? Wikis work, blogs work. Twitter and FB I'm not convinced about yet. We don't seem to have got much leverage out of those yet – traction – so we don't. [Q: Why do you think that is?]. I'm sufficiently old that I don't really fully understand why people would like FB and Twitter quite so much. I mean I have my own FB account but it's mainly to find out what my children are up to [laughs]. I'm fairly negative about FB because the stuff just disappears off it. It's really ephemeral. If

I'm going to put the effort into creating something that has got some content in it I'd much rather put it into much more permanent media. #21

[2.21] I've used [...] blogs for teaching [for] flexible delivery. [Q: Do you use official university learning management systems e.g. Blackboard?] No I shy away from those because they are clunky and slow and prone to being changed quite regularly. That's not useful when you invest a lot of time into a piece of technology to learn and then it changes each year. So I can't be bothered [...] and it sits there with no content. We have Facebook and Twitter accounts for the department I set up. We've also got a blog for the whole department which is flying under the radar of the [university] media and marketing people for now. [Q: Aren't you allowed to do that?] It's a grey area. I think they are aware of it and don't have too many concerns but we did formally ask them last year and they told us we shouldn't do it so – so maybe that will come back. I took some advice from some wiser senior staff in the department [laughs] and just ignored them. [Q: Is this about university branding?]. That's all it is – entirely what it is. They want to make sure they've got the right colours and logos [laughs]. [Q: You said social media is good for contacting students. Is that the main reason you use it?]. Yes [...] it's a lot easier to get information out and to communicate with [students] if you can put it in the right format to produce a product they're going to want to look at and absorb. The blog I developed for one of my online topics this semester was a trial I'd not tried before. I didn't really think about it as another form of communication but just delivered the same kind of flexible delivery and content that I would ordinarily give to students in hard copy. It didn't go down very well with the students. I don't think because it was too formal [but because] it was too structured and didn't suit the medium. So I think if you can produce a message that's inline with what students expect from a particular medium it can be a very effective form of communication. But you have to understand the technology, and the purpose and how students use it. [Q: In my experience students are variably techno-involved. What do you think?]. We've found that with our students too in a sense. They don't often have clue about blogs or Twitter. Or FB is as far as they extend into the web often. That's a real shame. So I guess I take it as part of my job to tell them these tools are important for archaeologists. They're not just fun and entertainment. They have a serious benefit. It's in their interests to learn them and it's in our interests to teach them how to use them

[...] to do archaeology. #18

[2.22] I personally use Facebook. I'm not Friends with students on FB but I am Friends with many colleagues. I use FB to communicate with [research group X] more than any other medium. And [my department] has its own FB page. I use Twitter purely professionally not personally. You can do that because Twitter's not you. Twitter can be an organisation or whatever. YouTube I don't really use [much]. I use LinkedIn [professionally] and I don't really do anything with it. FB, Twitter and LinkedIn are very different. There's some overlap in the people I communicate with on each but they're completely different in terms of the nature of the interaction and the outcomes. [There's also] Academia.edu - basically like Facebook for academics. It's fantastic - you can link it to your Facebook and Twitter. So every time [a key contact] Tweets or writes a new blog post or says anything on Academia.edu it will come straight to Facebook so the linking in of these is quite significant. Professionally [I like social media] because it's a very low key, casual, light-hearted interaction with people that in fact is quite impersonal. In a sense it doesn't mean anything. It's not like stalking someone. It enables you to make a connection with someone with a very low investment but you are still connected. I do have to mention my blog here as my blog is quite influential. [Q: Any problems with using social media?]. [...] I'm addicted to several Facebook games. [Q: Does your university employer give you credit for your social media profile?] Well I've talked about it in things like my tenure application and interestingly with the new [government research assessment process] communicating with the public in this way counts for nothing. #12

Author Biography

Sarah Colley conducts research about digital communication technologies in archaeology and is collaborating on projects involving digital archives and video in Australia and the UK. She completed a PhD in Archaeology at the University of Southampton and postdoctoral research at the Australian National University. She lectured in Archaeology at the University of Sydney for many years, where she also obtained a Graduate Certificate in Higher Education. Sarah's main interests are in public archaeology and cultural heritage management with focus on communication, education and ethics. She has expertise in Aboriginal archaeology and colonial historical archaeology of the Sydney region and NSW, Australia, and in archaeological fish and other faunal remains. Sarah now holds honorary positions in the School of Archaeology and Ancient History at the University of Leicester and in Archaeology at the University of Sydney and runs a consultancy business from the West Midlands UK.

Sarah Colley

*SMC Research and Consultancy, Rugby,
West Midlands, UK. Honorary Research Fellow,
School of Archaeology and Ancient History,
University of Leicester.
email: sc532@leicester.ac.uk*