

PTAS Report

Digital Footprint (Research Strand)

Research Team

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This report presents an overview of the research undertaken in 2014-2015.

Project aim and objectives

Aim: To work with students across current delivery modes (UG, PGT, ODL, PhD) in order to better understand how they manage their digital footprint, and to produce evidence-based guidance on this area for students and Schools.

Objectives:

1. To conduct research which generates a rich understanding of how students at the University of Edinburgh perceive digital footprint management, and to what extent they hold the necessary skills to effectively manage their digital identities.
 - a. **Analysing survey data:** Two surveys issued as part of the Digital Footprint campaign (Oct 2014 and May 2015) provided a rich understanding (1487 responses).
 - b. **'Digital footprint' lab-based focus groups** in which students spend time tracing their footprints and then contribute to discussion on this. Labs took place in April 2015.
 - c. **Ethnographic tracing** of a cluster of 6 individuals (15 interviews in total): mapping their various social media presences and conducting intensive one-to-one interviews with them.
2. To develop a workshop template for embedding digital footprint management within existing programmes of study.
 - a. **Standard powerpoint slide** issued to campaign collaborators and Schools.
 - b. **Careers Service** have embedded 'Digital Footprint' into their on-campus and online 'LinkedIn sessions'
 - c. **Digital Edge/Digital Ambassadors (Edinburgh Award)** embedded Digital Footprint into this initiative <http://yourdigitaledge.is.ed.ac.uk/wp/edinburgh-award/>
3. To critically analyse the discourses currently circulating in UK Universities around students' management of their digital footprint.
 - a. **Documentary analysis** of existing institutional (UoE and elsewhere) guidelines and policies for social media engagement (student-targeted) to try to map and critique the discourses circulating around this issue within institutions. This information has been used in the development of social media guidelines as well as various presentations & publications.
4. To work in partnership with EUSA to generate meaningful knowledge of this area and to co-produce research findings.
 - a. **EUSA Class Rep Training** 'Digital Footprint' session for Class Reps (various dates)
 - b. **Services Report** issued and recommendations discussed with campaign collaborators, including EUSA. Recommendations based on analysis of survey data.
5. To contribute to the wider research agenda in this area by producing a high quality academic publication on the basis of the project findings.
 - a. See next section on publications & conferences

6. To effectively disseminate project findings to the University, with the aim of supporting students and Schools in raising awareness of digital identity and e-professionalism across programmes of study.
 - a. Resources for educators Digital Footprint web page to launch Dec 2015, hosting various resources for Schools (license will be creative commons)
 - b. E-professionalism guidance
 - i. List of professional bodies' guidelines on www.ed.ac.uk/iad/digitalfootprint & promoted via social media
 - ii. E-professional guide produced (developed in consultation with staff and students) – to be issued Dec 2015
 - iii. Social media guidelines for handbooks and VLEs created and distributed (adapted from existing guidelines)
 - c. Delivery of a range of workshops & information sessions to
 - i. Counselling Service (Mar 2015)
 - ii. Careers Service (Aug 2015)
 - iii. Student Information Points
 - iv. Social Media Community Meet Up Group (various presentations)
 - v. Learning Technologies Advisory Group (LTAG)
 - vi. IAD Learning & Teaching team (various)
 - vii. PTAS: dissemination of findings (Oct 2015)
 - d. School specific workshops (staff & students)
 - i. Business School – MBA and PGT students (Oct 2014; Oct 2015)
 - ii. ECA – staff (Oct 2015)
 - iii. Nursing Studies (HiSS) – UG and PGT programmes (e-professionalism) (Mar 2015; Oct 2015; Jan 2016)
 - iv. Vet School – UG, PGT, online and staff (e-professionalism) (Nov 2015)

Publications and Conferences

The interest shown in this research topic has been immense (and unexpected) – both within the University and internationally.

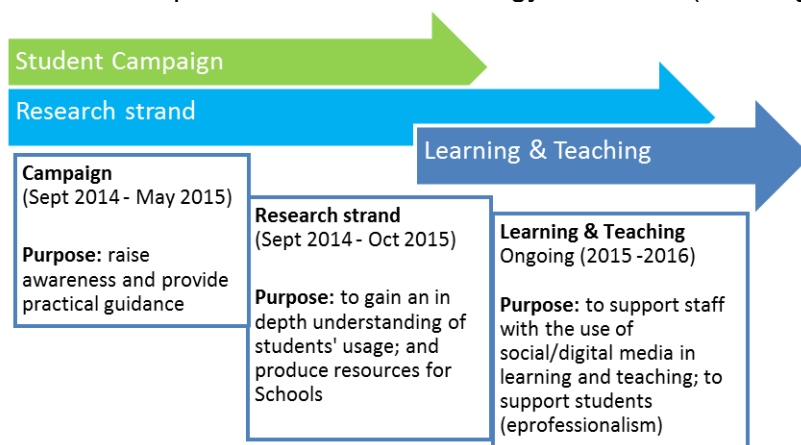
- PURE research project <http://www.research.ed.ac.uk/portal/en/projects/managing-your-digital-footprint-research-strand%28239b8e5b-c052-4681-9568-77aa02fa44fa%29.html>
- Enhancement Themes Conference (QAA) – poster presentation – June 2015
- Osborne, N and Connelly, L., 2015, Managing Your Digital Footprint: Possible Implications for Teaching and Learning, ed. A. Mesquita and P. Peres. In Proceedings of the 2nd European Conference on Social Media ECSM 2015, 9-10th July, School of Accounting and Administration at the Polytechnic Institute of Porto, Portugal. Academic Conferences and Publishing International Ltd., Reading, UK.
 - Presentation: <https://prezi.com/owkosbca4bio/ecsm-2015/>
 - Full paper is available (Research Explorer): [http://www.research.ed.ac.uk/portal/en/publications/managing-your-digital-footprint\(9c4a5cc7-c74f-4e26-b282-0ace71e55562\).html](http://www.research.ed.ac.uk/portal/en/publications/managing-your-digital-footprint(9c4a5cc7-c74f-4e26-b282-0ace71e55562).html)
- Conference: Social Media for Learning in Higher Education, Sheffield Hallam University, 18 Dec 2015 – paper, 'Student identities in transition: social media experiences, curation, and implications for higher education', presented by Nicola Osborne (Authors: Nicola Osborne and Louise Connelly)
- Osborne, N. & Connelly, L. 6 Nov 2015. 'Managing Your Digital Footprint'. ALISS Quarterly. 11, 1, p. 22-26
- Managing Your Digital Footprint – Campaign Overview. Presentation (Louise Connelly) to All Aboard! (Irish Higher Education) – Nov 2015.
- Abstract submitted to the journal of Cyberpsychology (Nov 2015) (awaiting outcome). 'Students' online privacy: challenges and behaviours', Louise Connelly & Nicola Osborne
- Abstract submitted to European Conference on Social Media 2016 (awaiting outcome). 'Students' Digital Footprints: curation of online presences, privacy and peer support'

Funding & linked awards

- Information Services Innovation Funding for a Digital Footprint external consultancy service (managed by EDINA)
- Submission for the Amber Miro Memorial Award
<http://www.ucisa.ac.uk/bestpractice/awards/amma/2015.aspx>

Future Plans

From 2016-17 – there will be greater emphasis on how social media, including risks, best practice, and supporting staff & students digital footprints in the learning & teaching context. This will align with the third phase of the overall strategy and vision (see diagram below).



- External Consultancy Service

Nicola Osborne (EDINA) received Information Services Innovation Funding to pilot an external digital footprint consultancy service. The service will use existing resources (some are on the IAD website) and will be underpinned by the research to support, advise and work with other HEIs or organisations.

- Digital Footprint MOOC

Academic team is Nicola Osborne & Louise Connelly. The MOOC is managed by EDINA. The Digital Footprint MOOC will provide further outreach and engagement. Expected launch: March/April 2016

- Future publications – a number of themes are being considered for future publication, including: E-professionalism – currently being written; Methodology; Yik Yak usage; and identity online.

Summary

We are extremely grateful for the PTAS funding. Without the funding, we would not have had the opportunity to undertake research which ran in parallel to the Digital Footprint student campaign. The research enabled us to gain a deeper understanding of how students are managing their digital footprint (online presence) and using social media. Furthermore, the success of the research project and campaign has underpinned the launch of the Digital Footprint Service (IAD) to all students, researchers and staff at the University of Edinburgh, as well as a pilot Digital Footprint external consultancy service (EDINA).

We will continue to analyse the data in order to publish further findings. The research will also be disseminated to University Services and Schools in order to continue to support students, researchers and staff with their effective management of their digital footprint.

Louise Connelly (24 Nov 2015)