

Tweets for newcomers: a social media approach to peer induction

This exemplar is relevant to Digital Student challenge:

Prepare and support students to study successfully with digital technologies

At the start of the academic year at City University London, students beginning two taught MA journalism programmes were asked to contribute tweets that might be useful to students starting out. These included practical advice and links to discipline-specific resources, extending discussions from lectures. A course-specific hashtag allowed relevant tweets to quickly be identified, without students having to join groups or reveal themselves online before they felt ready to do so. The aim was for students to recognise the value of social media, both as a professional tool and to support their experience at university by sharing resources, working collaboratively and giving and receiving support and suggestions.

Analysis of the tweets (more than 450 in the first iteration) found that new arrivals benefited from practical advice about the course and the university, as well as the chance to interact with other students and with lecturers in advance. There was also a range of unanticipated benefits for the students, including interactions with course alumni who were now practising journalists, a chance to share experiences, and engagement with lecturers they had not yet met.

How does this meet the challenge?

- This is a simple approach to using social media that requires a minimum of set-up by staff or students.
- Benefits to students include practical advice, extending discussions from lectures, and links to more academically oriented resources.
- Social media are established as a valuable learning and professional tool, in a situation where academic staff can model and guide the kind of interactions they expect.

Find out more

- [Student 'lightning talk'](#)

Contact: Jonathan Hewett <J.C.Hewett@city.ac.uk>