Preface

Whether we like it or not, social media touches every aspect of the Higher Education (HE) student experience, across the whole lifecycle, from initial search, pre-entry, the education itself, job search, and as alumnus. HE organisations are using social media more for marketing as well as education, often without fully understanding the impact this may have on their operation or their students. The nature of students is also changing and, perhaps, being changed by technology and the increasingly large, always-on community, which is enabled through social media. Today’s Digital Natives are used to “bite-sized, on-demand” activities, but also increasingly collaborative and global communications (Okoro, Hauseman, & Washington, 2011). Since Prensky (2001) first came up with the term “digital natives,” the technology has changed dramatically and is indeed ubiquitous, changing the face of the learning landscape in almost every part of the globe.

Our own interest in this area has grown over the last five years as we have continued to research the student experience of social media, the links to social capital, and more recently, the use of mobile apps and the extended use of social media by HE organisations across the lifecycle (see for example Benson, Morgan, & Filippaios, 2013; Benson & Morgan, 2013; Benson, Morgan, & Hemamali, 2012).

All chapters in this book have been blind peer reviewed by at least two reviewers and have been chosen for their value to the subject and the responses of these peer reviewers. We have purposely sought views from a range of countries, including North America, Europe, Scandinavia, and Indonesia. They include a mix of practical, research-based, and theoretical approaches, and should be of interest to a wide range of readers working in, or interested in, Higher Education. However, each can be read as a stand-alone chapter, informing specific aspects of the social media landscape. The five dimensions outlined in the preface by Professor Ezingeard are all highlighted in various chapters. As a reminder, the dimensions of social media can fall into five areas: (1) serving as networking enabler, (2) a marketing and recruitment tool, (3) enhancing collaboration, (4) as a teaching and learning tool, and (5) social capital – a medium presenting career management and entrepreneurship opportunities. Some of the chapters in this book offer insight into more than one of these dimensions, but we have placed each within a core dimension to offer some structure to your reading.

We next give a synopsis of each chapter to enable readers to assess not only which chapters are of most interest to them but also why we felt they should be included.
DIMENSION 1: SOCIAL MEDIA AS A NETWORKING ENABLER

The first chapter titled “Facing Facebook in Higher Education: How and Why Students Use Facebook in College” draws on the findings of a study of the use of social media in college settings. The findings reveal that the sense of community is important to college students, and that they have specific tools and mechanisms at their employ to enhance their experience of community on campus. This research confirms that college students are creative and savvy, utilizing social networking sites toward a number of ends in serving their social and emotional needs. The participants in this study demonstrate that critique is alive and well in the minds of college students, and that even the most assimilating and accommodating of students maintain an interest in using technology to change the world. The contribution of this chapter lies in the rich discussion of the dimensions of technological mediation in students’ lives; this study can serve as a benchmark or a reference point for one of the first and most widespread social technological interfaces, and its affect and impact on residential student populations. The chapter concludes with the discussion of the changing landscape of the communication technology used by students in higher education, emphasizing that Facebook may be the first virtual social platform to be so universally accepted and utilized by college students, but it is clear it will not be the last.

However, social media will not enable networking or any other aspect of educational use if students are reluctant to use it due to privacy worries. The chapter titled “Students’ Privacy Concerns on the Use of Social Media in Higher Education” opens a discussion into the pressing need for higher education institutions to address the issues of privacy and data protection on social media sites used for university purposes. The chapter draws from a quantitative study of over 200 undergraduates conducted at a Spanish university. The results reveal that students generally accept using social media for instruction; however, their perception is that higher education institutions do little to address their privacy concerns. Educational institutions are encouraged to take steps to resolve these concerns. The chapter describes the applications specifically created for learning purposes and the process of developing practical guidelines for the appropriate implementation of social media resources for universities to follow in order to help protect students’ privacy and to alleviate learners’ concerns.

DIMENSION 2: MARKETING AND RECRUITMENT TOOLS

The use of social media in marketing and recruitment is fairly new in HE, and therefore, organizational change is a necessary part of implementation of such a strategy. The chapter titled “Overcoming Organizational Obstacles and Driving Change: The Implementation of Social Media” presents a case study of the strategy and planning process to gain support and resources for the organizational use of social media in college settings. The case history provides a useful lens on the organizational changes that occurred in order to enable organizational usage of social media for student engagement, advocacy, and marketing. In the case of the College of Professional Education, social media tools represented artifacts of organisational culture and change. Using Kotter’s 8-Step Change Model, the analysis sheds light on the experiences of change in the context of social media adoption and presents considerations of lessons learned and future research directions.
The chapter, “The Use of Social Media in the Networking Strategy of Higher Education Institutions: The Polish Experience”, presents the results of a comparative case study of the adoption of social media by Polish universities in communication with their stakeholders. The chapter reviews the opportunities that arise from the adoption of social media as a communication network between an educational institution and its stakeholders. Four examples of Polish tertiary institutions, which communicate via social media sites, are analysed in the comparative case study. A particular emphasis is placed on the “Connection” communication model used by the Faculty of International Relations and Political Science at the University of Lodz, which is one of the Polish institutions pioneering the use of social media. The study describes the implementation of a modern communications system that is based on a copyrighted social media site, whose objective is to integrate the environment surrounding the faculty, as well as providing a tool that enables easier communication between stakeholder groups identified in the study.

DIMENSION 3: ENHANCING COLLABORATION

The chapter “Reaching Them Where They Live: Effectively Utilizing the Social Media Literacy of C-Borgs in Higher Education and Beyond” explores the interconnected nature of social media use in higher education and business, assessing how educators and employers should use the social media literacy of the current generation of technology-savvy students as a means of communication as well as a tool for allowing them to do what they do best – consume, create, collaborate, and connect with content. The chapter presents key issues educators and employers face when working to effectively harness the social media literacy of students: how their social media use differs according to their “mode” (work/personal/educational), how to strategically incorporate social media use into educational and business contexts, and how to utilize students’ natural inclination toward a connected, content-centric lifestyle to facilitate educational and corporate engagement. The chapter concludes by discussing key social media strategies educators and employers can use for harnessing the creative, collaborative, and communicative power of C-borgs.

However, collaboration can also be extended to become activism in a range of contexts. The chapter titled “#OccupyWallStreet: Social Media, Education, and the Occupy Movement” reviews the roles of social media in the student activist movement. An interesting parallel to the Arabic Spring movement and uprisings is drawn through the discussion of the changes in communication methods and patterns amongst students. The chapter makes its contribution through an in-depth review of extant literature on social media as a force in activism and the place of social activism in American higher education. Understanding how students may use social media in these circumstances will be vital for those involved in supporting students in Higher Education.
DIMENSION 4: TEACHING AND LEARNING

Increasingly social media itself is being used to facilitate and enhance teaching and learning. The chapter titled “The Roadmap for Experimental Teaching of Science and Engineering Based Subjects” explores the challenges of social media applications in engineering education. UK-based academics make an interesting point about the changing traits and expectations of students. Technology has changed students, as learning requires less and less writing, and students expect their learning to happen on-demand. Read on for a further insight into the drivers for the implementation of hands-on teaching methods, incorporating industry standard software and hardware. The chapter raises the question of whether social media will satisfy the “on-demand learning” expectations computer-savvy students impose on the higher education of today.

The chapter titled “Leveraging Facebook as a Peer-Support Group for Students” presents a case study of social media adoption for student-to-student assistance on a Digital Marketing course in a Finnish Business School. The context and the objectives of the course make it an ideal setting for integrating social media as an educational tool. The study presented in this chapter provides a useful classification of the student generation content on peer support social media groups, which differed markedly from the traditional virtual learning environment-hosted communities. The findings of the study show that barriers of peer support relate to social issues and expertise – the students must differ in their knowledge to a degree where peer support becomes possible, and feel comfortable in both asking and providing help. This offers a very practical insight into instructional integration of Facebook in educational settings.

The chapter titled “Social Media as Technologies for Asynchronous Formal Writing and Synchronous Paragraph Writing in the South African Higher Education Context” provides an insight into the multi-site adoption of social media in South Africa. The chapter presents the results of a study of undergraduate students who were required to utilize Facebook and MXit on their mobile phones to engage in both asynchronous formal writing and synchronous paragraph writing outside of the tutorial time. In the context of this study, social media technologies helped facilitate virtual incidental learning and socially situated online learning for participants. The research findings suggest that the self-same social media technologies helped participants engage in Presence Awareness Learning (PAL), narrative learning trails, and learning as a conversation. Besides social media serving as an effective virtual learning platform, the chapter reviews the benefits afforded by social networking sites, including opportunities for supplemental teaching and learning; cloud storage for teaching and learning materials (in the case of Facebook); virtual platforms for revision; digital platforms for micro-teaching and micro-learning (in respect of MXit); and value-added platforms for just-in-time mobile teaching and learning.

Finally for this section, we take a look at the role social media can play in learning about and enhancing creativity. The chapter “Recognized Creativity: The Influence of Process, Social Needs, and the Third Drive on Creative Individuals’ Work through Social Media” reviews the theory of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and their application in creative industry. The cases from Finland presented in the chapter show that the intrinsic need to be creative is crucial and necessary when creating a new product, idea, or company. Without an intrinsic drive, it would not be possible for entrepreneurs to set up their companies. Extrinsic motivation such as money, rewards, bonuses, or competition, on the other hand, can decrease creativity, and thus production of products. The chapter concludes that the social media plays a crucial role in the creative industries (i.e. social media is a platform, which allows customers and companies to talk to each other). The case study presented in the chapter shows that the acknowledgement of creativity through social media is the reason why creative individuals pursue their project and innovative ideas.
DIMENSION 5: SOCIAL CAPITAL, CAREER MANAGEMENT, AND EMPLOYABILITY

The chapter “The Use of Social Media in College Recruiting and the Student Job Search” provides a fresh insight into the changing nature of the recruitment dynamics in college settings. Whilst in the past on-campus recruitment drives used to serve as a primary employer-graduate contact opportunity, social media sites are replacing face-to-face and preliminary recruitment screening. The chapter addresses the gap in the literature regarding the current trends in student recruitment practices. The discussion opens with a review of traditional recruiting strategies followed by the consideration of how the social media skills of millennial college students should address the job search process and appropriate communication strategies. This chapter includes analysis of a U.S.-based employer survey about how they utilize, or do not utilize, social media in their recruiting and hiring practices. The chapter draws important conclusions, which should inform decisions and planning of career offices and those responsible for student recruitment and delivery of employability skills.

Equality, diversion, and inclusion are crucial to all HE organizations, and there are implications for this with the use of social media. The chapter titled “Leveraging New Media as Social Capital for Diversity Officers: A How-To Guide for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Professionals Seeking to Use Social Media to Carve a Niche in the Social Networking Space” provides a US/Canadian perspective on the role of social media in career management in the changing landscape of technologies leveraged in higher education. The chapter serves as a practitioner’s guide for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) professionals seeking to use social media to carve a niche in the social networking arena. The author explores how EDI professionals can benefit from utilizing new media marketing tools to position themselves as subject-matter experts and use this authority to create engaged communities surrounding the topics of equity, diversity, and inclusion in higher education. The chapter opens with a current review of new media technologies and emerging strategies in the social media field and then describes the approaches needed to develop and implement a successful social media marketing strategy. The true value of this chapter lies in the opportunity for the reader to identify the right combination of tools and how to tailor them to specific contexts and leverage social media more effectively.

The chapter “Teaching Students about Online Professionalism: Enhancing Student Employability through Social Media” draws attention to the importance and challenges of teaching university students about creating and managing a professional presence on social media. The author emphasizes the growing role of social media in professional settings and employability and provides a review on how social media is becoming an important part of higher-level education for UK students. Based on the review of extant research into the role of social networking in career planning and employability, the chapter calls for further development of the teaching models, which can be used to develop social media professional presences within educational courses. The conclusions of the chapter present a valuable insight into the subject-specific nature of social presence for professionals and the challenges, which higher education instructors face in the fast pace changing technology landscape.
The chapter “The Utilization of Online Boundaries: Facebook, Higher Education, and Social Capital” investigates the relation between social capital and the use of social media in higher education. The chapter examines how students use Facebook to communicate with others strategically to build and maintain social ties. This study models the online world, offline world, and the world of higher education using a notion of direct and indirect boundaries in an extensive trust-based network in the higher education context. Findings of the study reveal that undergraduates spend larger amounts of time using the social networking service than any other student segment. Facebook as a social network presents students with an opportunity to utilize direct and indirect boundaries strategically, but student personality plays a significant role. Through social media, students in traditionally low social capital communities may have access to individuals in positions of power, a resource that was not previously possible to the extent it is now. This means that low social capital community students may have access to an increasing number of opportunities than those traditionally available to their community. The chapter calls for further research into measuring interactions and the boundaries that exist across social networks and online services for evaluation of social capital in student and employer networking.

The chapter “Social Media for Knowledge Workers” provides an Indonesian perspective into the use of social media platforms for connecting workers in the knowledge economy. The author argues that despite its limitation and potential distraction social media can be beneficial for knowledge workers. While serving as a relatively limited source of Know-What and Know-Why, social networks can provide users with a rich information of Know-Who. The chapter emphasizes that the unique role and specialization of Know-Who gained from social media is the personal information, which in physical socialization only close friends have. It also allows users to develop social bonds with people who are difficult to reach through conventional media.

“Justifying the ROI of Social Media Investment in Education” sets the agenda for future research into the methods of measuring the effectiveness of social media applications in Higher Education. Drawing on a rich account of social media applications throughout the entire student lifecycle, the chapter identifies common objectives of social media campaigns and their uses in educational settings. A framework for social strategy adoption by HE institutions is proposed for further empirical testing for those institutions adopting social media as well as those who have an extensive experience of using social media. The chapter concludes with a consideration of ROI metrics used in social media campaigns in the private sector and suggests a set of relevant indicators applicable for HE institutions in their multifaceted use of social media. The chapter provides an account for measuring effectiveness of social media use in higher education and offers practical recommendations and identifies areas needing future research.

The chapters all emphasize one thing, that this is a fast moving field! However, many of the aspects discussed—the increased use of social media, the changing demands of students, and the ubiquitous use of technology—are important to understand now, if we are to ensure that our students achieve the best they can from Higher Education. HE administrators and academics need to be aware of the impact of these changes and what actions they need to take to utilize social media and ensure we do not fall behind our peers or disappoint our students.

There are many aspects of this changing landscape that we do not fully understand. Clearly, more research is needed to assess the extent to which, and in which contexts, various aspects of social media affect learning, social capital, collaboration, diversity, and indeed, HE marketing efforts. Furthermore, the landscape will continue to change. The latest MOOC to be announced states as a specific purpose to make use of social media (Gibney, p.12). The impact of these new modes of learning is not yet known (see BIC, 2013), but we are convinced that social media will be one of the key influencers in education worldwide.
We hope that you enjoy reading this book, and that you are encouraged to critically assess, and perhaps research, the many areas covered.

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