

<https://www.lib.sfu.ca/help/publications/scholarly-publishing/visibility>

Visibility: Build your online presence: Scholarly publishing



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Why have a web presence?

If you have a thoughtful, curated, and professional academic web presence, your research is more likely to be found, read, discussed, and shared online.

As there are no shortage of platforms and mediums for participation in online academic discourse, before you start building an academic web presence, consider:

- **Your objectives:** are you creating a web presence to promote your research, connect with collaborators, engage in scholarly discussion, or to find a job?
- **Your audience:** what communities do you wish to engage with, and what platforms are they on?
- **Your privacy:** What do you want current and future colleagues, supervisors, and students to find? How can you manage what information about you is available?
- **Your energy:** how much time do you want to devote to developing and maintaining your profile(s)?

When building your web presence, be sure to create a unique [research profile](#) to distinguish your work from that of others with the same or a similar name, and to make sure all your scholarly work is accessible in one place.

Promoting your work online

Researcher profiles such as ORCID

Creating a [researcher profile](#) in your name will help to distinguish your work from that of others who may have the same name. It also provides a persistent link back to your work. These platforms usually require limited upkeep as they automatically update when you publish new research.

Want to distinguish yourself from other researchers and automatically link your professional publications and activities?

[Distinguish yourself with ORCID, the Open Researcher and Contributor ID](#)

Personal websites

A personal website is an effective way to enhance your online presence and to share information about your professional and academic work and achievements. A well-designed, professional website will serve to demonstrate your work's impact and connect you with other researchers and professionals.

Information to include on your personal website

Your personal website can include a wide range of information about your personal and academic work and role, including your name, title, and affiliated research institution. You may wish to include the following sections in addition to other relevant information:

- Bio & professional photo
- CV
- Research interests
- Link to your ORCID record (not sure why you need an ORCID iD? [Learn more.](#))
- List of current or selected publications
- Personal or professional blog

Choosing a platform

Many website platforms allow you to build a basic website for free using simple tools. Examples such as [WordPress](#), [Weebly](#) and [Wix](#) use straightforward, non-technical interfaces while giving you flexibility with the design and content of your site.

If you are looking to host a site yourself, [Reclaim Hosting](#) is a relatively low-cost option, designed specifically for the education sector.

Example personal websites:

- [Erin Hogg, a PhD student in the SFU Department of Archaeology](#)
- [Dr. Juan Pablo Alperin, a faculty member in the SFU Publishing Department](#)

Alternatively, many faculty members and some graduate students are provided with a personal website on their departmental web portal, and may choose to update this website rather than duplicating their efforts.

Example departmental profiles:

- [SFU Department of English PhD Student Profiles](#)
- [Dr. Heesoon Bai, a faculty member in the SFU Faculty of Education](#)

Get started [creating your academic website!](#)

Blogging

Blogging is another way of increasing your online presence, and allows you to take a more informal approach to sharing your thoughts and observations on pertinent topics in your field of research. It can connect you with other researchers with similar interests and demonstrate your ongoing awareness and expertise in the field. Blog posts can be shared via social media channels and provide interesting content to enhance your social media presence.

While maintaining your own blog can be a rewarding experience, it can be challenging to keep your blog up-to-date. Depending on the amount of time you would like to commit to writing regular blog posts, you may find it less of a commitment to contribute guest posts to existing blogs either in your discipline or department.

Learn more about academic blogging with this 2013 article from The Guardian: [Academic blogging - 10 top tips](#).

Looking for an example? Why not check out [Radical Access: The SFU Scholarly Publishing Blog](#).

Social media

Participating in online scholarly communities such as Twitter or Facebook can increase the visibility of your work and can help you stay connected in your field of research.

Follow these steps to get started on Twitter

1. Create a [Twitter account](#)
2. Use [Twitter Lists](#) to organize information
3. Share your research, ideas, questions and updates
4. Follow other researchers and participate in discussions

5. Track shares of your research articles by searching for the title or DOI

The following resources can help you get started using social media in academia:

- Patel, S. (2011). [10 ways researchers can use Twitter](#) (Prezi presentation)
- Mollett, A., Moran, D., & Dunleavy, P. (2011). [Using Twitter in university research, teaching, and impact activities](#)
- Mollett, A., Brumley, C., Gilson, C., & Williams, S. (2017). [10 ways to use social media to get your research noticed](#)
- Neal, D.R. (ed.). [Social media for academics : a practical guide](#)
- Daniels, J. (2013). [From tweet to blog post to peer-reviewed article: How to be a scholar now](#)

Develop a unique voice

Why?

One advantage of personal websites, blogs, and social media profiles is that they give us an opportunity to be ourselves online. This authenticity is important, as often when potential collaborators, fellow colleagues, or current students seek out our online profiles it's to learn more about who we "really are," beyond what classes we are teaching or our most recent publication. To that extent, these forums usually have a more casual tone, are highly topical, and give researchers a chance to explore and express their passion. Showcasing a strong and recognizable voice and publicly establishing your expertise in a subject area may encourage others to consider you for collaboration opportunities or for such things as presenting as a conference keynote.

How?

- Take a class in plain language writing - try expressing your research for a Grade 9 reading level
- Check out other researcher's blogs or social media pages - see the links below for information on how to find your people
- Start a personal journal - your entries could form the basis of your blog post

A word of caution

"Remember: All social media posts are a form of publication. If you would not write it in an academic review, don't blog about it or post it on Twitter or Facebook" (Cain, 2017).

Online platforms are a source of inspiration, discovery, and delight, but they can also be a forum for hate, negativity, and exclusion. Do your part to ensure that you are contributing positively to the discourse.

Consider - is the content that you are creating, sharing, or contributing to:

- At least mostly relevant or of interest to your desired audience?
- Reflective of your personal (and/or professional) values and ethics?

- Something you would be happy for a potential collaborator, grant administrator, or current student to see?

The answer to all of these questions should be a vehement “yes.”

Commercial scholarly networking platforms

Many academics are members of popular commercial scholarly networking tools, such as Academia.edu or ResearchGate. These platforms are usually free to join, but charge fees for premium services that provide authors with information about who is reading their work. It is for this reason that while commercial scholarly networking platforms may seem like attractive tools for disseminating your research or locating prospective collaborators, we do not recommend using them. Consider selecting a free, not-for-profit alternative such as [ORCID](#).

It is important to note that posting your work to a commercial scholarly networking profile usually does not fulfill open access or knowledge mobilization grant requirements; these are fulfilled by depositing work in institutional or subject repositories (such as [Summit, SFU's research repository](#)). Depositing your work in a repository guarantees preservation and long-term access to your work, setting repositories apart from scholarly networking platforms. See [a social networking site is not an open access repository](#) for details about the differences between these resources.

Authors should always review their copyright transfer agreements before making their work available online. See [Know your rights as an author](#) for more information about author rights.

Knowledge mobilization: Extend the reach of your work

To learn more about knowledge mobilization, [check out our guide](#).

Contact us: For assistance with scholarly publishing, please contact digital-scholarship@sfu.ca.



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