

Symmons, J. (2013). *Twitter in Higher Education: Exploring how University Professors use Twitter as a Teaching Tool and for Praxis*. (Masters thesis). Brock University, St. Catharines.

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Abstract

Scant research has explored how professors in Canadian universities use Twitter as a teaching tool or to augment knowledge about their subject disciplines. This case study employed a mixed-method approach to examine how professors in an Ontario university use Twitter. Using a variation of the technology acceptance model, the survey ($n = 17$) found that professor participants — 41.2% of whom use Twitter — perceive Twitter as somewhat useful as a teaching tool, not useful for finding and sharing information, and not useful or personal use. Participants' gender and number of years teaching are not indicators of Twitter use. Furthermore, the level of support from peers and the university may be reasons why some do not use Twitter or have stopped using Twitter. Face-to-face interviews ($n = 3$) revealed that Twitter is not used in classrooms or lecture halls, but predominantly as a means of sharing information with students and colleagues. Another deterrent to using Twitter is not knowing who to follow. Findings indicate that some professors at this university embrace Twitter, but not necessarily as an in-class teaching

tool. The challenge and the advantage of using Twitter is to discover and follow people who tweet material and to select relevant material to pass along to students and colleagues. Professor participants in the study found a use for the social network as a means to increase student engagement, create virtual information - exchange communities, and enrich their own learning.