
Teaching by Twitter

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Who am I

- Lecturer in Networking
 - Also Author, Examiner, Qualification Developer
 - Primary research in network simulation
 - Secondary research in teaching by social media
 - I am affiliated with the Open University in the United Kingdom
 - I specialise in teaching Cisco CCNA and CCNP networking to undergraduate as well as postgraduate students
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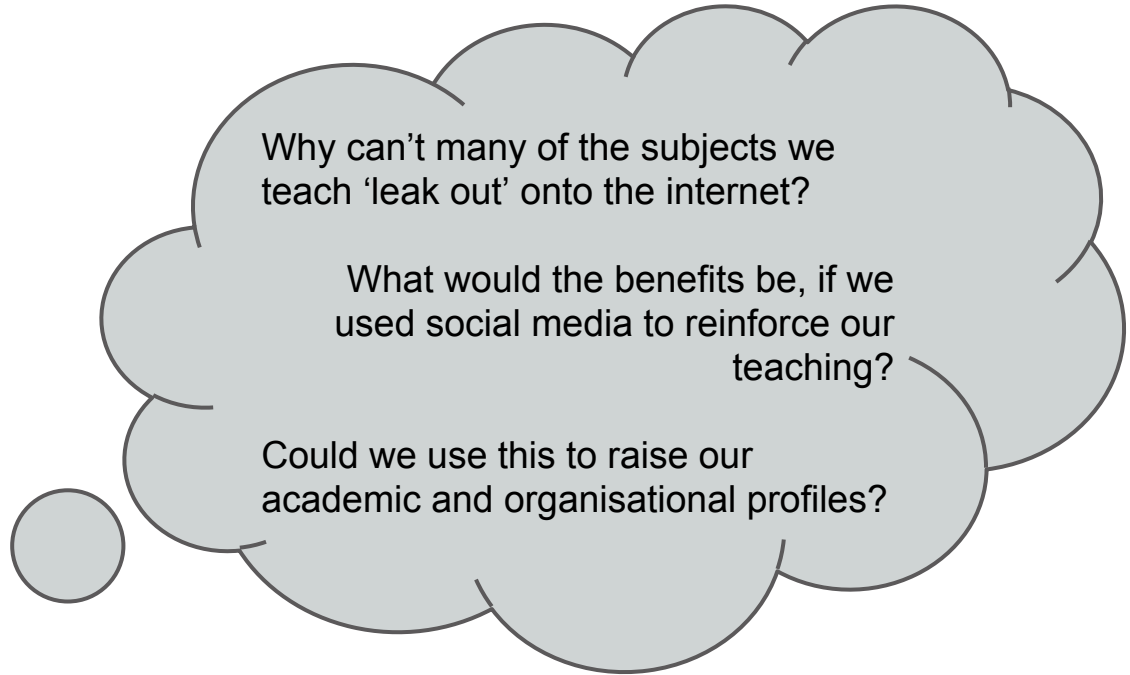
Context



Networking
Academy

- the Open University has c600-800 students every year studying CCNA or CCNP based modules
- we have reached 5000+ students since 2005
- social media activity since September 2013

First Thought



Free is a price I am willing to pay



- we cannot predict what platform our students/customers prefer to use
 - it could be a smart phone
 - or a web browser
 - or a specific application
- nor should we care
- developers everywhere have created the software for us
- so, lets use them all

And then comes the idea ...



Lets use social media to enhance the teaching of one of our Cisco modules. Ensuring that it leaks out onto the Internet as well as supports the learning of our current students.

A form of knowledge nugget or intellectual reinforcement technique.

So what platforms do we use (1)



- Creation of an 'Open University Cisco' group
- Currently 280 members
- Tends to attract a variety of professionals (which is obvious)
 - Cisco CCNA/CCNP engineers
 - Open University Cisco Alumni
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So what platforms do we use (2)



- Created a fan page (120+)
- Also specialist Packet Tracer >> Mac group (800)
 - Linked to my simulation work
- Very eclectic mix of members
- occasional questions come in via this route

So what platforms do we use (3)



- 140 followers
- many seem to be from within the course itself
- some we pick up from retweets and exchanges with @CiscoNetAcad
- we do get twitter exchanges with a small section (15-20) members of this community

So what platforms do we use (4)



- 70 followers
- the quietest of all
- but ... I use the Google to RSS site ...
 - <http://gplus-to-rss.appspot.com/>
 - this connects my external social output to our internal moodle content
 - it therefore actually reached 400 students in 2013/14

So what platforms do we use (5)



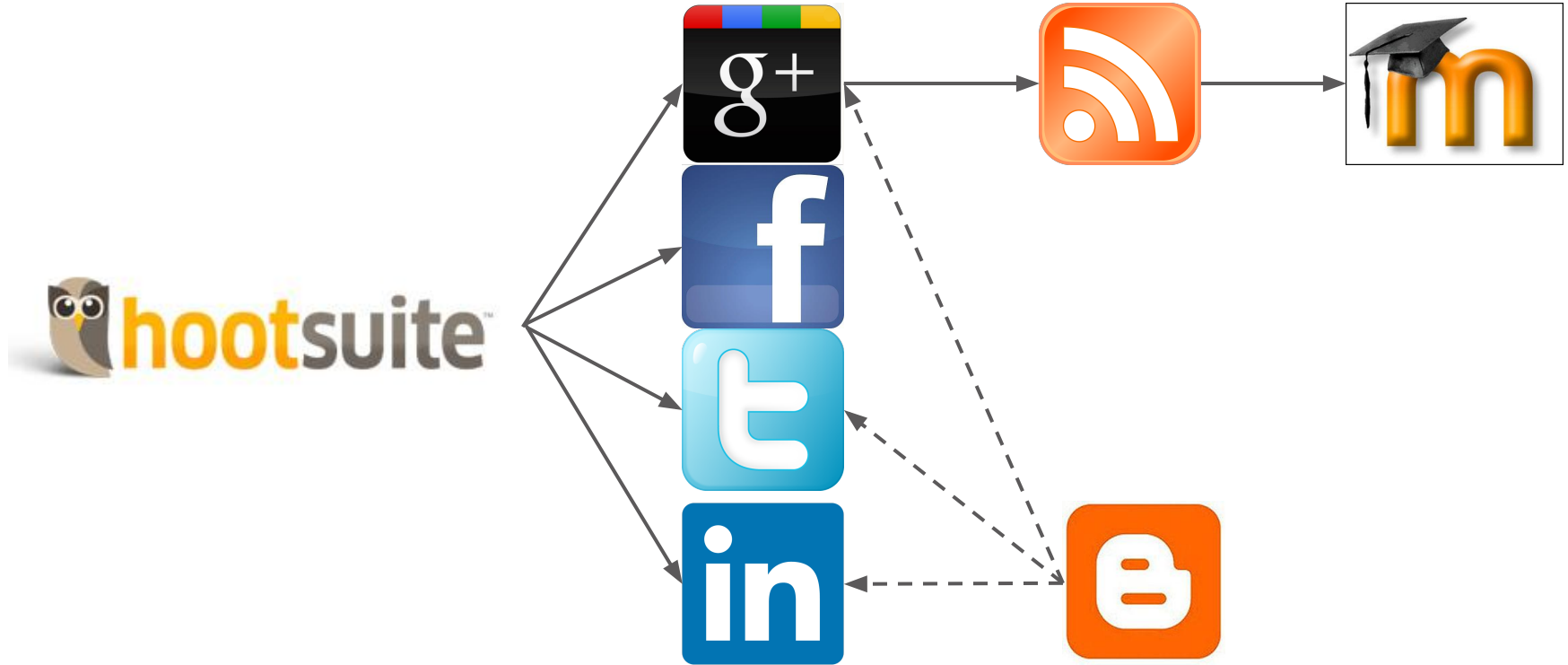
- Allows depth to some of the content
- has been useful in sharing some internal ideas, externally
- looking to evolve as a source of additional content

So what platforms do we use (6)



- we have some deliberate short URLs
- used when we link to internal content
- also used for occasional course promotion

Stringing it together



Engagement Methods (1)



- Sequential CSV's of Cisco related content
 - We know our study calendar (you may know this as a scheme of work)
 - We know more-or-less when students will be covering content
- Use a separate CSV with weekly reminders
 - what should you be studying
 - what assignments are due
 - day schools or other module events
- As we are externally facing, occasional information on the course opportunities we offer
 - Covert rather than overt

Engagement Methods (2)

 **OpenUniversity Cisco** @OUCisco 28/04/2014
NAT includes four types of addresses: Inside local address Inside global address Outside local address Outside global address

 **OpenUniversity Cisco** @OUCisco 27/04/2014
NAT has many uses but its primary use is to conserve public IPv4 addresses (or hide/scale networks)

 **OpenUniversity Cisco** @OUCisco 27/04/2014
There are not enough public IPv4 addresses to assign a unique address to each device connected to the Internet.£

 **OpenUniversity Cisco** @OUCisco 26/04/2014
With the NAT chapter for OU T216 students if you wish to skip for speed please consider this choice

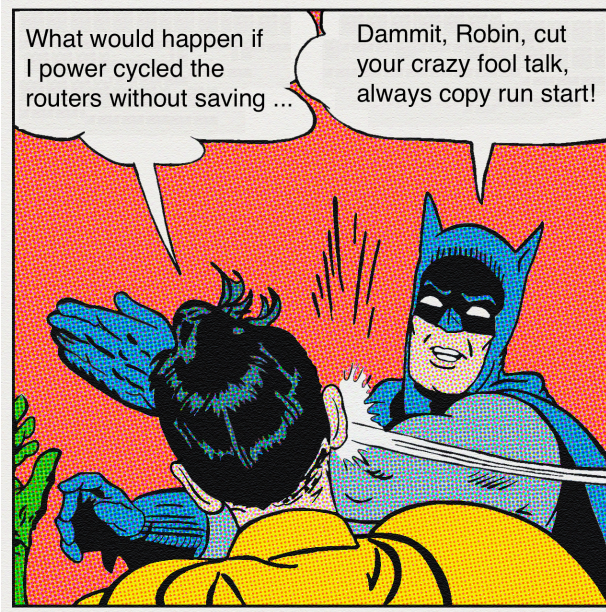
 **OpenUniversity Cisco** @OUCisco 26/04/2014
T216 : connecting networks chapter 8, are you working on TMA05?

 **OpenUniversity Cisco** @OUCisco 26/04/2014
@tech_net_guy @oustudents the worse thing you can do is then overdose and have a stinging headache during the exam

 **OpenUniversity Cisco** @OUCisco 26/04/2014
you can use sub-interfaces in a frame relay configuration for different PVC's on the same serial line

- Why CSV ...
 - They work with the Hootsuite publisher tools
 - no repetition, less than 140 characters, as Twitter is the lowest denominator
- We generated around 900 automated updates, which can be reused, amended, added to etc

Engagement Methods (3)



- Do not fear memes
- Use plenty of images
 - Humour is needed to break up the technical/academic content
 - You have to decide on what the right mix is
 - this is a module, where written word is priority, but images help

Engagement Methods (4)



- YouTube and other video sources
 - These consume time ... therefore for this run I focussed on humour
 - I used ...
 - the day the routers died
 - Mr Bean taking an exam
 - the medieval help desk
 - elders of the internet
- I am looking to expand these with some teccie vid's, I have already produced two with our Knowledge Media Institute to share in the next course

Engagement Methods (5)



- If it comes to mind or is current ... DO IT!
- News stories or popular themes, add them in.
- Articles published or other activities consider them

I write for 'The Conversation', it is their logo to the left ... adding in these articles helped readership and developing the wider community following the different social media platforms

Engagement Methods (6)



- Talk to them ... they do not bite!!!
- Questions do come in via the different social media outlets
 - Engage, but also allow others to engage as well
 - Encourage those who are also engaging, they are your greatest allies

Engagement Methods (7)



- Open questions work ... followers like to answer these
 - Enquiring about the opinion of the audience also gets a response.
 - Take note of which posts get a reaction, it will surprise you ... some of the tougher subjects are more likely to get a response
 - Be prepared to ditch posts or reuse posts
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Finding your allies



- There is nothing wrong with a getting a few 'friends' or 'colleagues' involved
- Very useful for ...
 - RT's in Twitter
 - Shares in Facebook

What Next?



- reiterate, build a new set of CSV's, curate the content
 - find some more allies and engage the community
 - we now have existing members and potential new members
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