Like it, tweet it, gram it, pin it: Designing and Implementing a Social Media Boot Camp for Graduate Students and Postdoctoral Scholars
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Isn’t Social Media a Time Waster?
- Like it, tweet it, gram it, pin it: the rise in social media has opened the door to new communication possibilities. Social media is no longer simply just a place for friends to connect.
- People can now create their “personal brand” on social media platforms and use it to build businesses, form connections, attract employers, and let their voice be heard.

Background
- UC Davis is a hub of innovative research and creative minds.
- Social media can be used as a tool to circulate research findings, cultivate teachable moments, and expand the UC Davis footprint.
- This social media boot camp was designed to give graduate students, postdoctoral scholars, and junior faculty more avenues for disseminating research to the general public and building an online community.
- The social media boot camp comprised of a series of three, one-hour long workshops.
- Each session invited an expert in the topic area to speak in an informal format with plenty of time for Q & A and discussion.
- The topics chosen were based on a needs assessment survey that was sent out to UC Davis graduate students and postdoctoral scholars.

Objective
- To design and implement a social media boot camp series where participants can learn new skills related to social media.

Developing the Boot Camp
- Met with social media experts to gather more information.
- Audited CMN 174: Social Media.
- Developed and disseminated a needs assessment survey.
- Chose three topics and invited experts in the topic area to speak.

Needs Assessment
Evaluation
- A needs assessment was put together and disseminated through email list servs to gauge interest in attending a social media boot camp series and what topics would be useful to potential participants.

Needs Assessment Results
- 34 responded to the survey.

Boot Camp #1: Intro & Branding
- Dr. Andy Jones spoke to the participants about the importance of social media about how to effectively brand yourself online.

Boot Camp #2: Finding Your Audience
- Sallie Poggi from the Office of Strategic Communications spoke to the participants about how to find and connect with your virtual audience.

Boot Camp #3: Communicating Research
- Professor Jonathan Eisen spoke to the participants about how to communicate and promote their research on social media, as well as how to harness teachable moments online.

Conclusions
- Participants responded favorably to the social media boot camp series.
- Participants enjoyed the selected speakers and felt like the sessions were relevant for their career development.
- On the feedback form, participants indicated they felt that social media can be a valuable tool.

Future Directions
- Would like to collaborate with organizations on campus, such as the Office of Strategic Communications, to help sustain the social media boot camp for future years.
- Offer additional topics, such as writing for social media.
- Have in-depth, longer sessions where participants can build their social media presence in the training.

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