**Role of Social Media in Sharing Research Information**

Social media is a series of websites and applications that facilitate interaction, content-sharing and collaboration among people quickly, efficiently and in real-time. Some prominent examples of social media are:

**Facebook** which is a popular free social networking website that allows registered users to create profiles, upload photos and video, send messages and keep in touch with friends, family and colleagues.

**Twitter** is a free microblogging service that allows registered members to broadcast short posts called tweets. Twitter members can broadcast tweets and follow other users' tweets by using multiple platforms and devices.

Google+ (pronounced *Google plus*) is Google's social networking project, designed to replicate the way people interact offline more closely than is the case in other social networking services. The project’s slogan is “Real-life sharing rethought for the web.”

[Wikipedia](https://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/Wikipedia) is a free, open content online encyclopedia created through the collaborative effort of a community of users known as Wikipedians. Anyone registered on the site can create an article for publication; registration is not required to edit articles. Wikipedia was founded in January of 2001.

[LinkedIn](https://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/LinkedIn) is a social networking site designed specifically for the business community. The goal of the site is to allow registered members to establish and document networks of people they know and trust professionally.

[Pinterest](https://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/Pinterest) is a social curation website for sharing and categorizing images found online. Pinterest requires brief descriptions but the main focus of the site is visual. Clicking on an image will take you to the original source, so, for example, if you click on a picture of a pair of shoes, you might be taken to a site where you can purchase them. An image of blueberry pancakes might take you to the recipe; a picture of a whimsical birdhouse might take you to the instructions.

Many social media services are beneficial for researchers, and they supplement the services offered by the university. The advantages include that they are free of charge and can be used as a common platform with researchers representing different organisations. Furthermore, social media offers opportunities for visibility and for raising awareness of one's own research. In social media, researchers can build their online identity and expert reputation.Opportunities offered by social media for researchers include the following.

**Collaboration and networking**

In social media, a community of researchers can emerge anywhere where the field's players are active. For example, a research group can create an online community or a group page in one of the social media services. Furthermore, many social media services have features that enable diverse interaction and communication, such as text, speech and video chats (E.g. Skype).

**Creating, saving and sharing documents**

In social media services, documents can be written collaboratively, and they can be saved and shared. Furthermore, there are many online image editing software and image banks that can be used for editing and sharing images. Social media services also enable an extensive sharing of conference materials. However, permission for the sharing of materials via social media services must be obtained from all conference speakers and presentation givers. Social bookmarks, on the other hand, are a way for researchers to share useful links and other content to their own network or to everyone interested.

**Researchers' responsibility in social media**

Use social media in research in an appropriate manner:

* Publish and share research finding in social media only after they have been officially published.
* Use the own organization’s systems for research in the first instance, as this will create back-up copies of the materials and the materials are safe own server. If research work on parts of your research in social media services, make sure that the materials do not contain anything that is private or secret.
* Carefully study the terms of use of social media services and check how the service provider defines privacy protection, information security, copyrights and copyright protection.

The researcher should always remember his/her responsibility towards the organization.

* When doing research, researchers always represent the organisation in which they conduct research.
* When they are in social media in the role of a researcher, remember to mention the background organisation.
* Always use organisation email address when representing the organisation.
* In workplace community, discuss the kinds of things a researcher can share about his or her research in, for example, a blog.