

The Twitter logo, consisting of the word "twitter" in a lowercase, rounded, blue font with a white outline and a small trademark symbol.

# **Twitter is dead: reflections on student resistance to microblogging**

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Plymouth e-Learning Conference 2010, University of Plymouth

# Backchannel welcome

**#pelc10**

**@anthonymcneill**

OK, it's not exactly dead



# The 'VLE is dead' debate



# More evaluation needed



The image is a screenshot of a Twitter post. At the top left is the Twitter logo. To the right is a navigation bar with links for Home, Profile, Find People, Settings, Help, and Sign out. The main text of the tweet reads: "Instead of seeing another article re 200 ways 2 use Twitter in class- I wanna see an article talking about the delivery & assessment of 1way". To the right of the text is a yellow star icon. Below the text, it says "3:43 PM Dec 21st, 2009 via Echofon" and "Retweeted by 1 person". At the bottom left is a profile picture of a man and a woman. To the right of the profile picture is the name "mojo\_girl" in blue and "Tiffini Travis" in black. At the bottom right are links for "Reply" and "Retweet".

twitter

Home Profile Find People Settings Help Sign out

Instead of seeing another article re 200 ways 2 use Twitter in class- I wanna see an article talking about the delivery & assessment of 1way

3:43 PM Dec 21st, 2009 via Echofon

Retweeted by 1 person

Reply Retweet

 **mojo\_girl**  
Tiffini Travis

# My Twitter project



Learnhigher

Supporting student  
engagement with Twitter

3 projects: English Literature (18)

Media & Cultural Studies (80+)

Engineering (200+)

# Project deliverables

- evaluation of Twitter in HE
- staff and student guides
- late May 2010

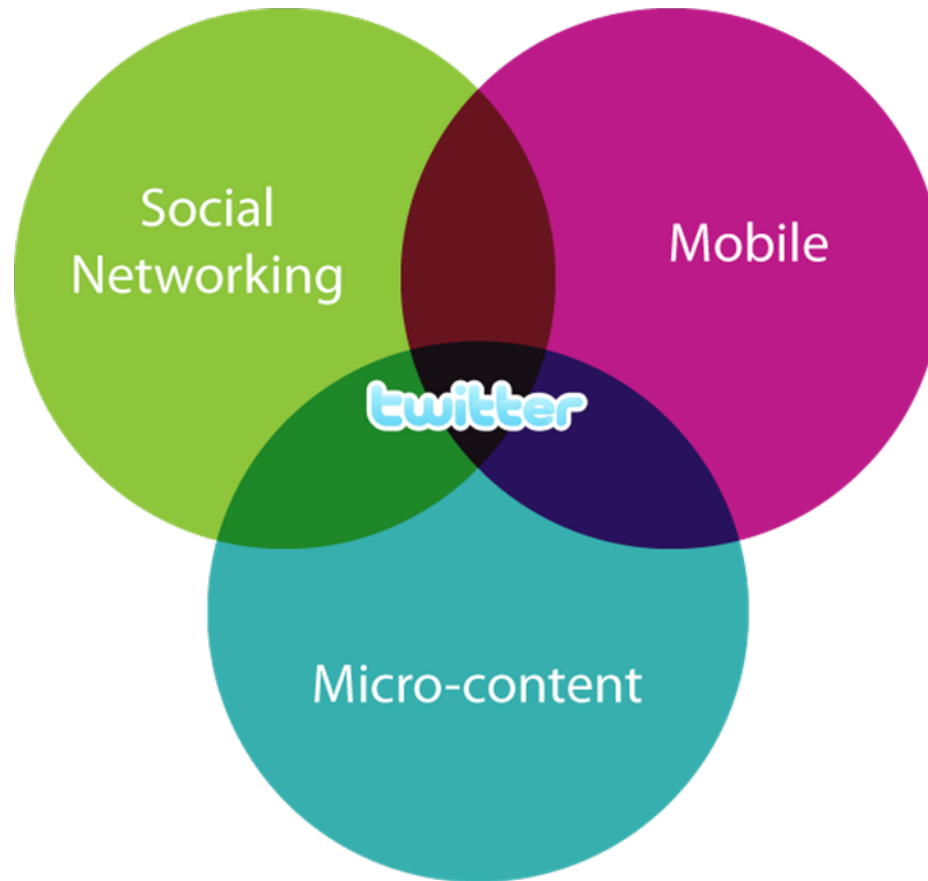


# Why Twitter?

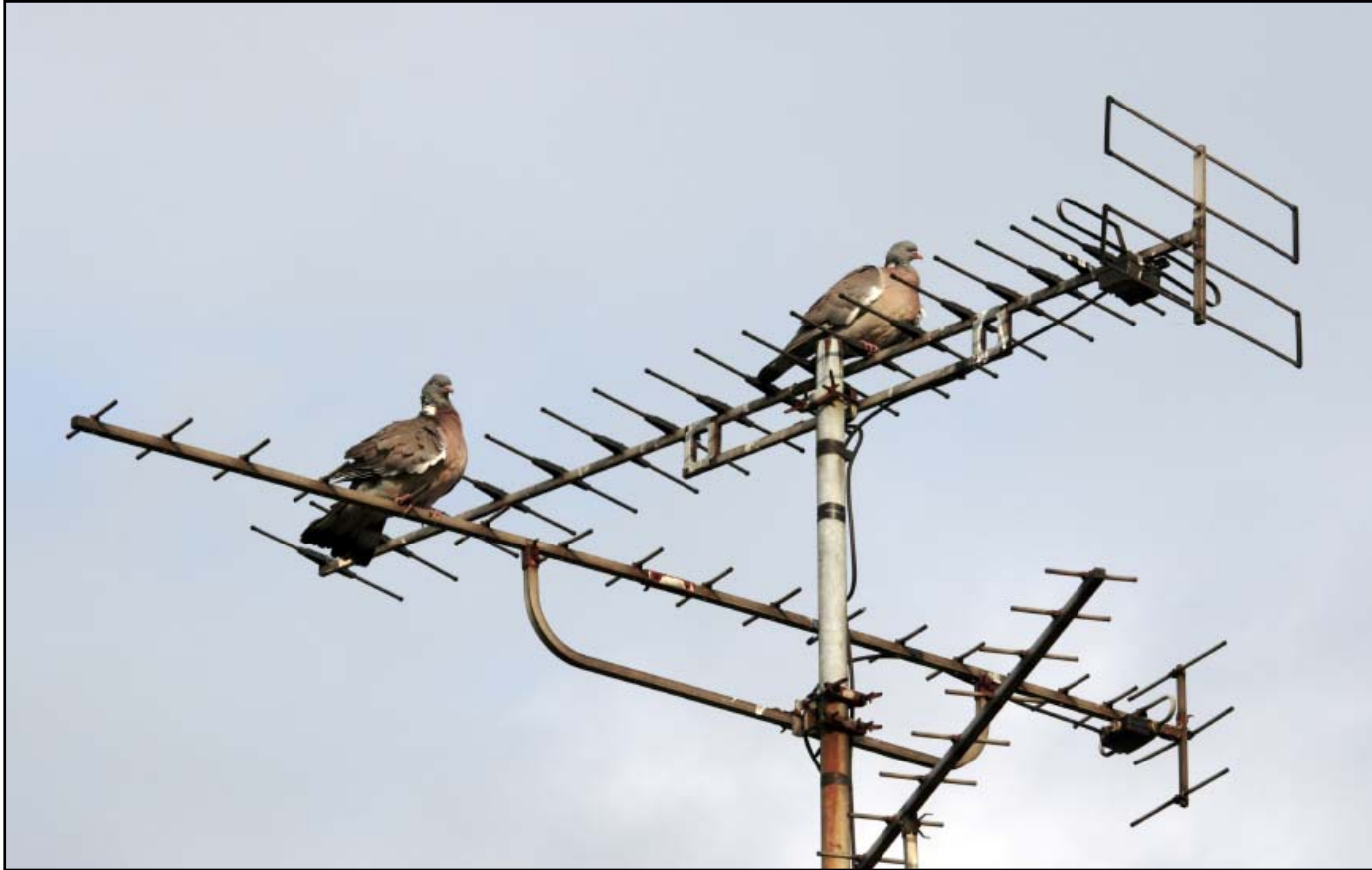




# The “on-trend” technology



# More than broadcasting?



# Lecture backchannels



# Learning communities?



So how did we get on?



# Staff keen; students less so



# No “digital natives” here



# Student email (Engineering)

Subject: RE: EG1085-A\_SEM1: Why are we using Twitter on this module?

Hello,

To briefly express my feelings, I think using a social networking site for an educational forum is a bad idea. Apart from anything I do not want to become a twit (a person who uses twitter, or has a twit profile). I do not want to be obliged to join these websites, which is exactly what you are doing with this pilot project. It's all very well for University Societies to use these facilities, they being socially founded and of little consequence. However to use them as a basis of collaborative learning is, in my opinion, unprofessional.



# Student tweet (Media)



[username deleted]

✓ Following 

Lists ▾



resents that he has to get Twitter as he kind of agrees with Cameron's "too many Tweets make a twat." Wow, 140 characters is actually a lot.

1:21 PM Oct 6th from web

# One working pilot (English)

- EL3668: Shakespeare and Popular Culture
- final-year special subject module
- 18 students enrolled



# Data from EL3668 pilot

- October 2009-January 2010
- student tweets: 104
- questionnaires: 16
- individual student interviews: 6
- interview with module leader

# So what did we do?



# We created an account



The image shows a screenshot of a Twitter profile page for the user 'el3668'. The profile is set against a dark purple background with a starry pattern. The user's name is 'SS Shakespeare', their location is 'Kingston upon Thames, UK', and their bio states: 'This twitter account is for EL3668 Special Study Shakespeare and Popular Culture. Module Leader: Erica Longfellow'. The profile shows 17 following, 17 followers, and 0 listed. The main content area displays a tweet from @simbakate dated 10:33 AM Dec 3rd, which reads: 'Kate, you can access journals by logging in to student space, clicking on the library, and using the electronic resources page.' Below this are several other tweets, including one about '2 new revisions of Romeo and Juliet' and another about a task to share a secondary source. The right-hand sidebar contains sections for 'Tweets' (31), 'Favorites', 'Following' (with a grid of profile pictures), and an 'RSS feed of el3668's tweets'.

twitter

Home Profile Find People Settings Help Sign out

**el3668**

Name SS Shakespeare  
Location Kingston upon Thames, UK  
Web <http://ms.kingst...>  
Bio This twitter account is for EL3668 Special Study Shakespeare and Popular Culture. Module Leader: Erica Longfellow

17 following 17 followers 0 listed

Tweets 31

Favorites

Following

RSS feed of el3668's tweets

**That's you!** Lists

**@simbakate** Kate, you can access journals by logging in to student space, clicking on the library, and using the electronic resources page.  
10:33 AM Dec 3rd from TwiBQ in reply to simbakate

2 new revisions of Romeo and Juliet: in a care home <http://bit.ly/7dpVM> and backwards: <http://bit.ly/YKMrV> #el3668  
1:45 PM Nov 18th from TwiBQ

Don't forget this week's task: share a helpful secondary source with your classmates! #el3668  
1:38 PM Nov 18th from web

Sorry I've been silent on twitter lately. Just rewatching Ros & Gil are Dead! #el3668  
1:38 PM Nov 18th from web

Don't forget to tweet as Kate for this week's task. #el3668  
2:50 PM Oct 21st from Twittelator

Exciting development! I have a cd of Hamlet! The Musical to share later this semester. #el3668  
2:48 PM Oct 21st from Twittelator

## ... a hashtag

**#e13668** Remember to use our hashtag **#e13668** in any module related tweets so that we can bring them together in a feed.

2:14 PM Oct 2nd, 2009 via TwitlQ

# ... a group



The screenshot shows the TweepML website interface. At the top left is the TweepML logo, which consists of a blue box with yellow chicks inside and the letters 'TML' on the side. To the right of the logo is the text 'TweepML' in a large, bold font, with 'Share groups of Twitter users' underneath it. In the top right corner, there are links for 'Sign in' and 'Sign up'. Below the header, there are navigation links: 'Home', 'View Lists', and 'Create a List'. The main content area features a list titled 'Shakespeare and Popular Culture' with the ID 'EL3668: Shakespeare and Popular Culture (Kingston University, UK)' and 'By anthonymcneill (unverified)'. Below the title is the instruction '1) Select the people you want to follow...'. There are two buttons: 'Select All' and 'Clear All'. A list of user avatars and names is shown, with checkboxes next to each. The first user's bio is visible: '20, kingston uni student from the valleys, trying very slowly to navigate twitter :-)'. On the right side of the page, there is a blue advertisement for '@dvent' with the text 'Train in IT and increase your earning potential'. Below the ad, there is a section titled 'Add List to Your Site' with the instruction 'To add this button to your site'. It shows a 'Follow us on Twitter' button and the text 'Copy and paste this HTML...'. Below this is a code snippet: `<img src="http://w`. At the bottom of this section, there is a link: 'View more buttons styles'.

# ... tied it in with the VLE

The screenshot displays a VLE interface for a course titled "SPECIAL STUDY: SHAKESPEARE AND POPULAR CULTURE (EL3668-ALL SEM1)". The navigation menu on the left includes links for "My Home", "My Content", "Module Catalogue", "One Community", "Organisations", and "System Admin". The main content area shows a banner for "EL3668: Shakespeare and Popular Culture" with a portrait of Shakespeare. Below the banner, there are tabs for "VIEW TODAY", "VIEW LAST 7 DAYS", "VIEW LAST 30 DAYS", and "VIEW ALL". The "All Announcements" section lists three announcements:

- Thu, Nov 05, 2009 -- Shakespeare and Popular Culture**  
I've updated documents on StudySpace, including uploading handouts from the most recent sessions and the list of essay themes we discussed in the last session (under Assignments).  
**Course Link:** [Assignments](#)  
[/ Extended Essay Topics](#)  
Posted by: ERICA LONGFELLOW
- Thu, Jan 07, 2010 -- Thursday 7 January Office Hours**  
The University is open to day so I will be in my office, Holmwood House 28, from 11 AM; however, I'll be leaving at 3.30 instead of 4 because of the bad weather. Please do stop by if you want to chat about your work.  
Erica  
Posted by: ERICA LONGFELLOW
- Fri, Dec 11, 2009 -- Tutorials and January Office Hours**  
Posted by: ERICA LONGFELLOW




# ... provided guidance

The screenshot displays a learning management system (LMS) interface. At the top, there are navigation tabs: My Home, My Content, Module Catalogue, One Community, Organisations, and System Admin. Below these, a breadcrumb trail reads: SPECIAL STUDY: SHAKESPEARE AND POPULAR CULTURE (EL3668-ALL SEM1) > TWITTER. An [EDIT VIEW](#) link is visible in the top right.

The left sidebar contains a menu with the following items: Announcements, **Twitter** (highlighted), Module Guide, Handouts, Assignments, Recommended Reading, Videos, Online Submission, Other Cool Stuff, Tools (Communication, Course Tools, My Portfolios, Course Map), Control Panel, and Quick Unenroll.

The main content area is titled **Twitter** and includes the following sections:

- Special Subject: Shakespeare and Popular Culture**: A text block explaining that this is the Twitter site for the module and instructing users to follow the account.
- Follow your fellow students on Twitter**: A section with a "Follow us on Twitter" button.
- Twitter activities**: A table listing activities for three weeks.

Twitter activities	
	<b>Special Subject: Shakespeare and Popular Culture</b>
	<b>Week 1 (2 October): Introduction. Playing on Shakespeare's Stage</b>
	Twitter task: Set up your twitter account and follow the module feed
	<b>Week 2 (9 October): Staging Sexual Morality</b>
	Twitter task: Tweet an answer to the question, 'Is Isabella justified in her decision not to sleep with Angelo?' and justify your answer.
	<b>Week 3 (16 October): Wild Women</b>
	Twitter task: Tweet as if you are the character of Katherine responding to all of the critical debate about whether your final speech in the play (about submitting to your husband) is sincere or not. Did you really mean it?

# ... a schedule of activities

## weekly twitter tasks



### **Week 1 (2 October):**

*Introduction. Playing on Shakespeare's Stage*

Twitter task: Set up your twitter account and follow the module feed.

### **Week 2 (9 October):**

*Staging Sexual Morality*

Twitter task: Tweet an answer to the question, 'Is Isabella justified in her decision not to sleep with Angelo?' and justify your answer.

# Did the students tweet?



# Getting to grips with Twitter



**[Redacted]** trying to figure out how to work Twitter

10:08 AM Oct 9th, 2009 from web

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**[Redacted]** Huh. Fun times. Trying to find a profile picture where I don't look like a raving lunatic.

7:02 PM Oct 8th, 2009 from web

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**[Redacted]** Getting to grips with Twitter and Measure for Measure, i'm not sure which is more confusing!

9:20 PM Oct 6th, 2009 from web

# Social interaction



**[REDACTED]** @ **[REDACTED]** Heya, my lovely! Looking forward to the lecture tommorow? :)

7:18 PM Oct 8th, 2009 from web



**[REDACTED]** Link to Romeo & Juliet production in Barnet:  
<http://bit.ly/yOb6n>

6:22 PM Oct 19th, 2009 from web



**[REDACTED]** #e13668 – we can get free tickets from this website: <http://www.anightlessordinary.org.uk/>

6:17 PM Oct 19th, 2009 from web



**[REDACTED]** #e13668 <http://www.othellowestend.com/tickets/>  
– anyone fancy coming with me to see this?

6:15 PM Oct 19th, 2009 from web

# Engagement with activities



**[redacted] #el3668** Isabella's decision is logical, moral and justified. Her reason being, 'natural guiltiness'; can one crime be corrected by another?

1:56 PM Oct 15th, 2009 from web



**[redacted] #el3668** I think Isabella refused Angelo due to her fear of the implications of divine moral law, but this fear leads people to virtue

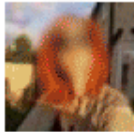
2:19 PM Oct 14th, 2009 from web



**[redacted] #el3668** I think that the decision proved the right one in the end, however seemed selfish to value her own place in heaven above her brothers

6:05 PM Oct 15th, 2009 from web

# Resource sharing (1)



<http://bit.ly/BWYlh> HILAROUS skit – The Beatles doing the play from Midsummer Nights Dream! Enjoy!! #el3668

 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DOpEZM6OEvl>



# Resource sharing (2)



~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ #e13668 Bill Bryson, Shakespeare

3:52 PM Nov 19th, 2009 from web



~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ #e13668 Douglas Brode 'Shakespeare in the movies'

12:51 PM Nov 19th, 2009 from web



~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ #e13668 Ann Thompson 'feminist theory and the editing of Shakespeare : the taming of the shrew revisited'

12:02 PM Nov 19th, 2009 from mobile web



# Peer acknowledgement



 @  Totally love the skit :D Ah  
my dear Beatles

9:45 PM Oct 17th, 2009 from web



 @  Brilliant song!!

3:03 PM Oct 9th, 2009 from web in reply to 

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# Discussion of assessment



[\[redacted\]](#) @ [\[redacted\]](#) Yep I believe we can. I'm basing mine on Romeo and Juliet, but it's not a written project

*2 months ago to [\[redacted\]](#)*






[\[redacted\]](#) #e13668 does anyone know if we can use texts from the module for our creative project: e.g. Romeo & Juliet?

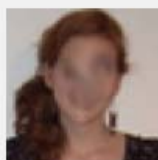
*2 months ago*


# Problems and queries



 @  , you can access journals by logging in to student space, clicking on the library, and using the electronic resources page.

*1 month ago to *



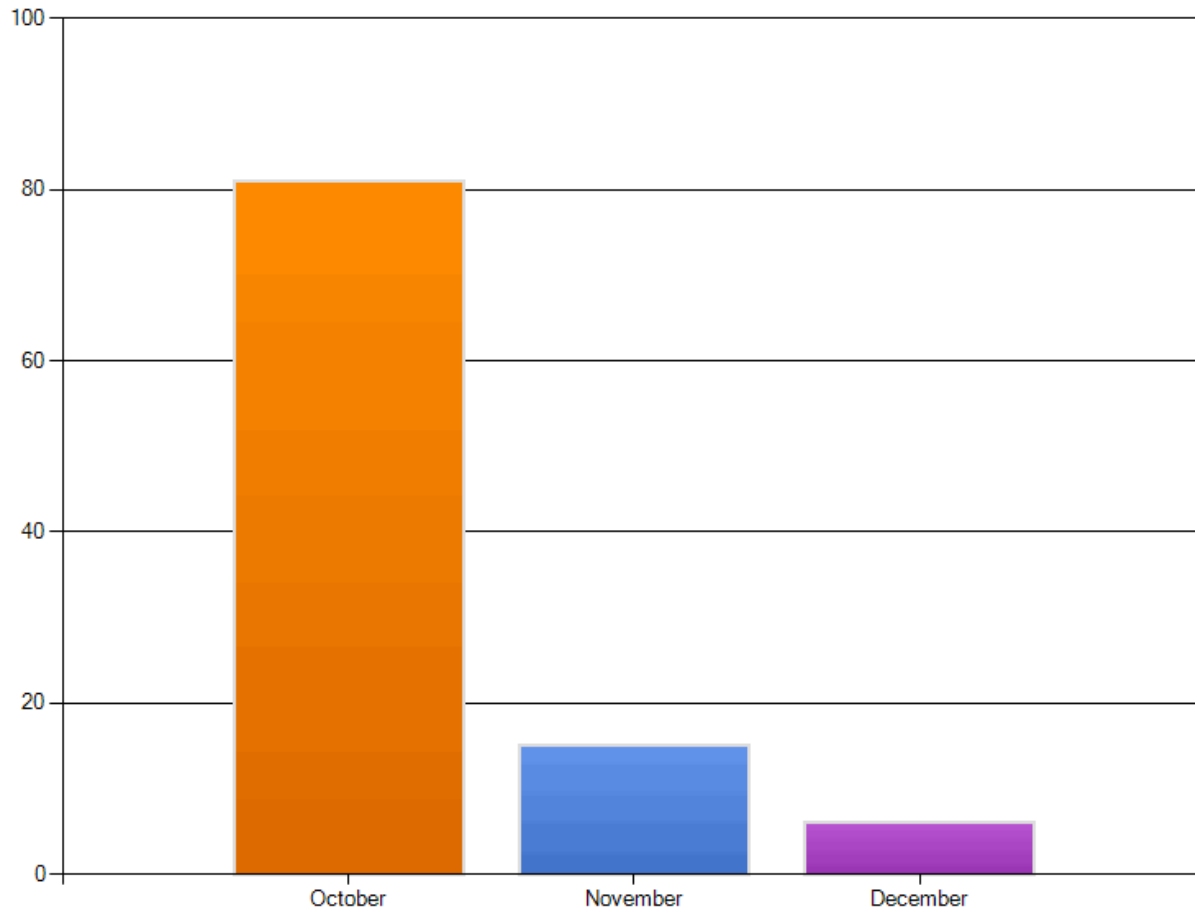
 [#el3668](#) is anyone having problems accessing journals? Athens has gone and the Uni password doesn't seem to work on any journal subscriptions

*1 month ago*

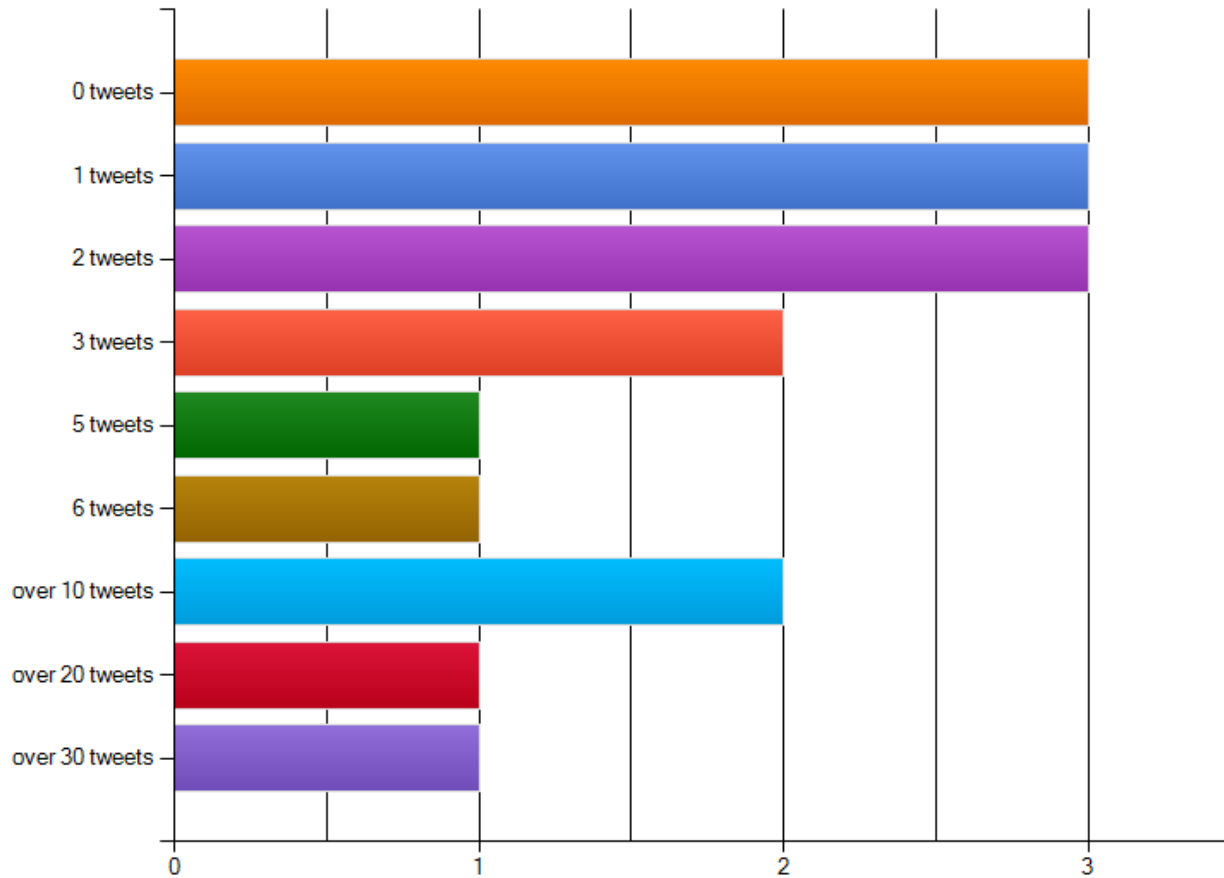
# Was the pilot a success?



# Tweets by month



# Tweets per student



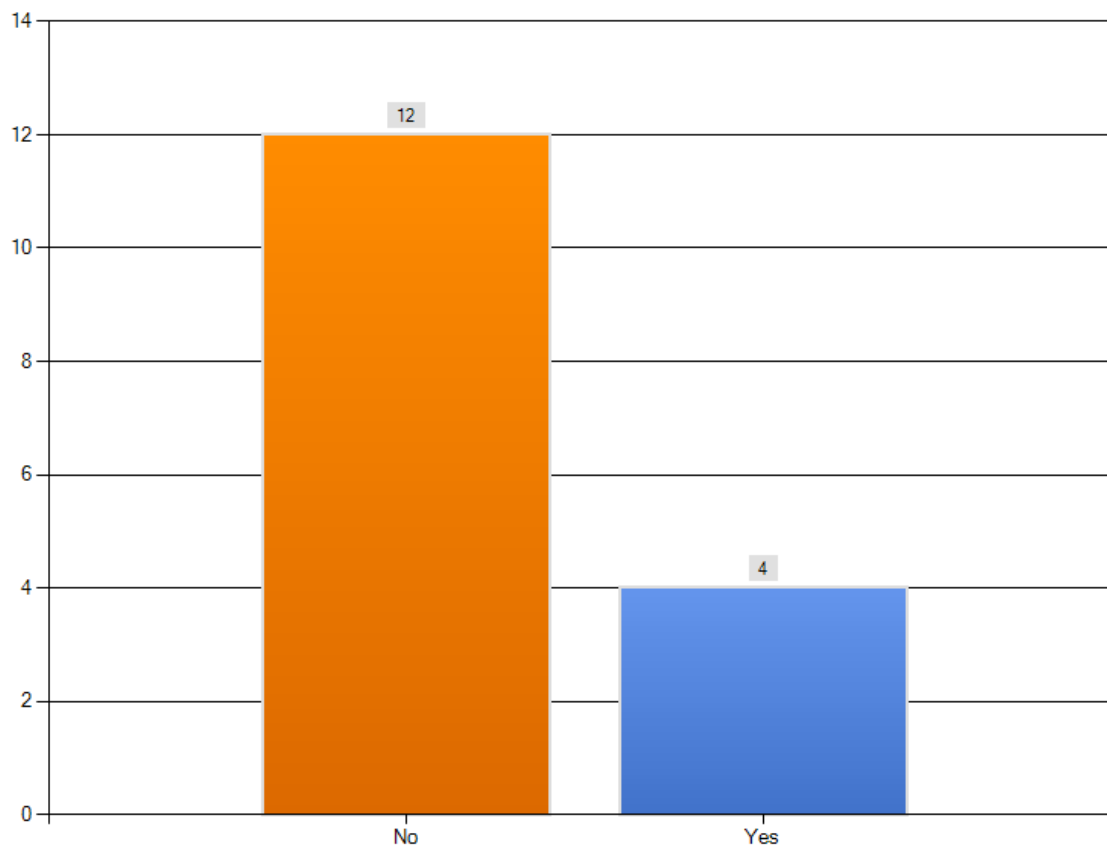
# Data collection 1: survey

Twitter survey

EL3668: Shakespeare  
and Popular Culture



# Twitter accounts pre-module





# Two positive views

- I was already addicted to it - I use it as a way of keeping in touch quickly and conveniently with people.
- It is ok - good way of keeping in contact with some people.

# Four negative views

- Much prefer Facebook as you're not restricted on the word count. And more applications.
- Was not interested, seemed complicated.
- Slightly self indulgent ...
- ... boring compared to MySpace and Facebook.

# Students mainly indifferent

- Didn't think about using it as I was already on Facebook.
- Same ideas as Facebook.
- ... just another social networking site. Nothing special. Celebrities used it.
- I felt it was a celebrity marketing tool.

# Data collection 2: interviews



# Twitter as PLN

Part of my semester-long study, the creative project, I'm doing a cartoon about Hamlet, so what I was often doing was tweeting ideas out on that one where I knew I had a lot more people who would respond and say 'does this idea sound like it works and what do you think?' (Jenny)

## “I wasn't a user”

I had an account, but I didn't ever really use it. I followed quite a few people, sort of celebrities and stuff, but I didn't check it every day. [...] I wasn't a user but I did have an account so I was very aware of it. (Amelia)

# Celebrity stalking

I've actually got a Twitter account - I set up a different one for the module - but I never used it, all I did was follow celebrities. When Katie and Peter were splitting up it was quite handy 'cos I could see what was going on.(Roz)



# Twitter & broadcast culture

I joined about six months before the module started just because I heard a lot of hype about it. A couple of friends had joined and I heard about it on Radio 1 and things so I wanted to see what it was about. I was following some of the main people like Chris Moyles and Stephen Fry, people like that, people I knew tweeted a lot. (Sarah)



## “It stayed dormant”

Well, I think I started off ... myself and my dad joined at the same time out of interest and we just tested it by saying hello. And then, really, we didn't know what to do with it after that. And it kind of stayed dormant for six months really. I didn't really use it. (Sarah)

# Not “second nature”

Because I don't go on Twitter a lot, I didn't become second nature to me just to go on it; it was something I had to think about. (Roz)

## “off my radar”

Starting the module, I was quite interested to see how it would work. I started, I did use it, and then it sort of dropped off my radar just ‘cos I wasn’t using it everyday or whatever. (Amelia)

# On not using Twitter

None of my friends were on it.

[...]

I love the idea of Twitter but I guess it's almost entirely because my close friends and family don't use it. (Amelia)

## “it’s like a routine”

... it’s like a routine: you check your emails and you check your Facebook. You get distracted for about an hour and then you start doing your work. But you always leave Facebook on in the corner just in case someone might want to get in contact with you. (Roz)

## “I’m on it all the time”

I’m on it about twice a day ... it’s more for communication. So, rather than emailing somebody, or phoning somebody, or texting somebody, it’s a free way of communicating with a friend. So, I’ll go on to check Facebook chat, I’ll see if there’s somebody there that I can ask about are you going out tonight or this, that and the other. (Sarah)

# “facebooking everyday”

I was probably a bit keener and I did my picture and everything as well ... I suppose life took over a bit. I think it [Facebook] would have worked a whole lot better; I think you would have had tweeting every day ... well, not tweeting, facebooking everyday, commenting everyday. (Roz)

# Facebook for uni activity

The year reps, we've created a separate section where we update them about things that are going on in terms of the year rep meetings, any messages from the lecturers. [...] So, we organise the meetings, we organised a party before Christmas through that. (Sarah)



# Summary of student use

- Twitter use not widespread (25%?)
  - their friends aren't on it
  - Facebook super-dominant SNS
- those on it don't use it as an SNS
  - part of celebrity broadcast culture
  - they don't get it as participatory medium
  - Facebook offers greater functionality

# Spheres of practice

Curricular Sphere

Personal Sphere



# Be where it's working



The image shows a screenshot of a Twitter post. At the top, the Twitter logo is on the left, and navigation links for Home, Profile, Find People, Settings, Help, and Sign out are on the right. The main text of the tweet reads: "Social Media - don't try to do it all, be where you need to be and where it's working <http://bit.ly/aOG4bt>". Below the text, it says "11:03 AM Mar 15th via web" and "Retweeted by 1 person". On the right side of the tweet, there is a yellow star icon and icons for Reply and Retweet. At the bottom, the user's profile picture and name "lindsaydavies" are shown, along with the name "Lindsay Davies".

twitter Home Profile Find People Settings Help Sign out

Social Media - don't try to do it all, be where you need to be and where it's working <http://bit.ly/aOG4bt>

11:03 AM Mar 15th via web  
Retweeted by 1 person

Reply Retweet

 **lindsaydavies**  
Lindsay Davies

# Follow me/read my stuff

[anthonymcneill](#)



<http://www.scribd.com/Tony McNeill>

<http://www.slideshare.net/amcneill/>

<http://blogs.kingston.ac.uk/twitter/>