

## 2014 MARKETING AWARDS ENTRY - FACEBOOK FOR STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

This entry concerns my use of Facebook to support psychology students. As well as showing what I do, it will include some thoughts and information for other librarians who want to adopt this approach.

### INTRODUCTION

I'm the [psychology librarian](#) at Aberystwyth University. For some time I had been pondering the issue of student engagement. When I took on this role I had quickly made inroads with the department's staff, spending time with them, planning teaching sessions, discussing resources. I wanted to be approachable to the students too: to find out their information needs and how they could best be addressed; and for the students to know who I am, what my role is, and how I can help them. Generally my interventions with students were traditional, based around formal classes, one-to-one research support and drop-in support sessions. Creative thinking was required.

It struck me that making the students more aware of my services was a marketing issue.

Other factors were also on my mind:

- The [9K fee issue](#) - do we offer a 9K service? Looking at things from the student perspective, and what they both expect and would like us to do, is important.
- Were there any new activities I could offer? Or could I reach new students, such as those which don't read emails?
- Universities are concerned about NSS scores and how to increase them; how to show students all the services available. Again, this is a marketing issue.

I've always been keen on the idea that libraries should take information literacy out of the library and into the places where students go (e.g. offering support drop-in sessions in academic departments, or our [Mind The Gap event](#)). The physical is only one dimension though. Just as we have added online books and journals to physical ones, we should consider online spaces as well as physical ones. Basically, wherever the students gather.

The value of social media for collaboration is widely recognised now. No longer is Facebook just the place where librarians share photos of cute cats. In the excellent [Social Media: A Guide for Researchers](#) there are many examples of how social networking tools have serious collaborative uses. Some useful features:

- individuals have profiles identifying their interests and connections
- status updates can share news and links
- files and photos can be shared
- comments on updates can form into discussions and information sharing
- the technology enables one-to-one and one-to-many conversations
- there are public and private spaces
- groups can be created around a theme
- there are tools for both live conversation and noticeboard/forum functions.

The students of most departments have Facebook groups which are a hive of activity, a continuous social presence where they feel comfortable: a 24/7 supportive community that is obviously their favoured form of communication.

It struck me that institutions often exclude effective technologies like social media and only focus on technologies they feel more comfortable with or have more control over (e.g. email, Blackboard etc.) I decided that social media would be more suitable to my audience; there weren't any resources for other innovative marketing activities but this would be free; and I would reach more students with less work than just increasing face-to-face interventions, so this would be more efficient.

### WHAT I DID NEXT

Facebook has groups for many Aberystwyth-taught subjects. In the case of psychology there was not a specific departmental group, but there is the 'Aberystwyth University Psychology Society' group, and most of the department's students are part of it. As an example of the scale, there are over 380 members as of 5th February 2014. It made sense to use that portal.

Etiquette suggests not joining any student group without an invitation from the students. Remember it is *their* space, they have free discussions, and often don't even have departmental staff involved, so it is a privilege to be included. Therefore make sure you have permission from the groups you want to join.

First I proposed the idea to the student representatives at a Staff Student Consultative Committee. They were enthusiastic, and said that it would be really useful since the Facebook group is primarily for asking questions but when it is a resource or library question they don't always want to respond because they are not fully confident that they have the right answer themselves. Having me there could be valuable. I also cleared the idea with the Psychology Society (which was also supportive) and I was added as a member so that I could contribute to any resource- or skills-related questions as they arose.

At this point it is worth making an aside into one of the considerations when using Facebook. There are two types of Facebook account: a personal account and a Facebook page.

### **Facebook pages**

At first glance Facebook pages seem ideal for liaison with departments. A librarian would set up a Facebook page purely for that role, subsidiary to their personal account. This keeps the two separate without breaking Facebook guidelines that stipulate only having [one personal account](#). It offers some good features: students can visit the page, get contact details, like and receive updates, leave questions, do live chat etc. Unfortunately the main function I need is to be able to join groups (e.g. subject societies, SSCC groups etc.) and you cannot do that with a Facebook page. Only individual, personal accounts can do this.

### **Personal accounts**

There are different options: I won't list them all here. I decided to use my personal account for liaison, since that doesn't break Facebook rules. Students use their own accounts for all purposes, and don't see it as an issue. In fact, being a 'real person' adds to the liaison aspect. Two points of good practice:

- make sure the profile description includes the fact that you are a librarian at your university.
- change the [privacy settings](#) so that your personal posts are seen by friends only (which is good practice anyway!). This enables an easy way to keep the work and personal uses of the same account separate. Any of my posts to a group such as the Psychology Society aren't seen by my friends (unless they are also in that group); and any personal posts on my own wall aren't seen by students who click on my account.

So I was in. What is the group used for? It can sometimes feel like you've been invited to hover invisibly in a student common room, which is actually incredibly useful for understanding the user group. They mainly use it for crowdsourcing to find the answers to questions. Most of the content falls into three areas:

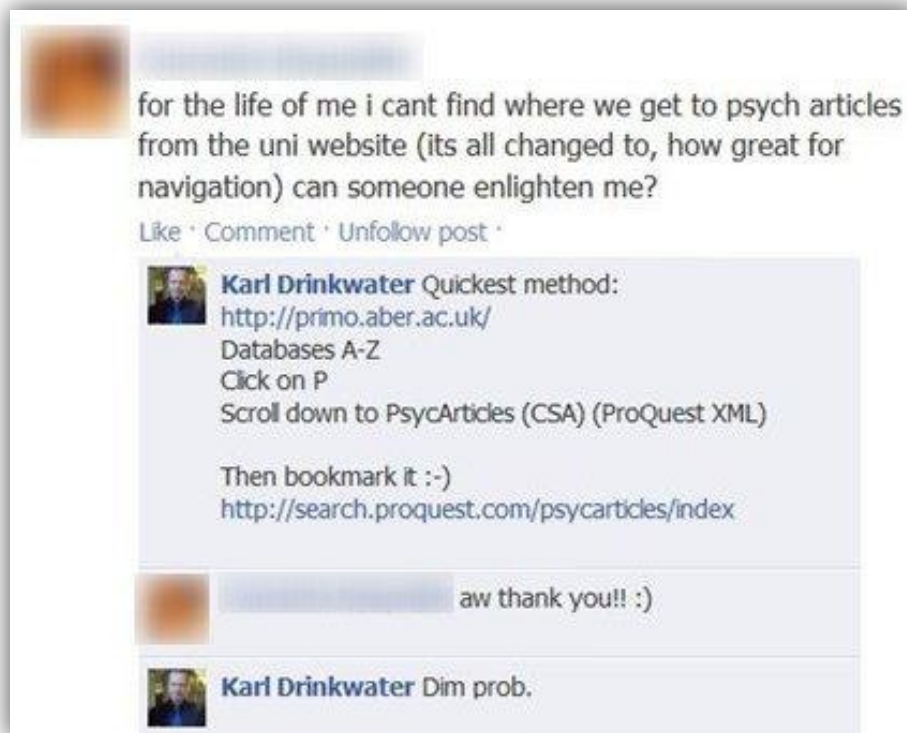
- Departmental issues (accreditation; uploading assignments; timetables and lectures)
- Information literacy/resource issues (citation; finding articles; sharing links; discussing their views on library services)
- Social

Although there is a lot of traffic in the group it is quite easy to filter out the social and focus on the areas where an intervention can be positive. My interventions are focussed on the information literacy/resource areas: answering questions, enhancing information skills, and letting students know what support is available. As well as helping the students reactively, it is a useful place to promote resources and events directly to the students.

A nice touch is that I don't have to monitor the group all the time, I get a notification in Facebook whenever there is a new post.

## EXAMPLES OF INTERVENTIONS (AND IMPACT)

These are just a few examples: I keep copies of most interactions, and there are many more than this sample.



*General quick help, save the student's time*



*Another general quick help example, helping students to access our services*



**Karl Drinkwater** Most of the psychology books are in the B's on Level F but some do appear in other areas such as biopsychology at QP360 (which means it is on Level E). I'm currently doing a review of your reading lists to identify these other areas and will update <http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/is/subject/psychology/> Also a BIG TIP! If a book is too big to fit on normal shelves it is called a quarto and QTO gets added after the classmark. These go in a separate section with bigger shelves. It just so happens that many psychology books are so packed with knowledge that they count as quartos! So you need to check BF QTO, QP360 QTO etc. Ask any librarian to show you where they are or check the floorplan.



Thanks for the contribution Karl... it's really good to have you on board in supporting the department with our library provision!



**Karl Drinkwater** I'm glad to help. It's a great department and brings my days of studying psychology back to me!



I think many students haven't yet discovered the Qto section yet. We had a core textbook last semester, which was only available in Qto section, everyone was complaining that they can't find it, but there were about 10 copies... This semester, there are only about 3-4 copies of core text book and they are mostly on short loan...

*Tackling a common cause of confusion and pointing to resources*

 **Aberystwyth University Psychology Society**

Any advice on how to gain access to journals that the university doesn't subscribe to? I need a couple of specific articles, and I can't seem to gain access. I don't think the journal is being published anymore, so it doesn't have a direct website either. But I reeeeeeally need these articles. Ta!

Like · Comment · Share · Yesterday at 11:22 · 🌐

 Send grovelling e-mails to the primary authors - simple yet effective 😊  
Yesterday at 11:29 · Like

 Haha. I'm not sure if they are still alive!  
Yesterday at 11:30 · Like

 Haha - google is your friend 😊  
Yesterday at 11:30 · Like

 The library can get them for you, but you have to pay a fee, I'm not sure how much though  
Yesterday at 12:11 · Like

 Haha. As I suspected. Thank you!  
Yesterday at 12:12 · Like

 **Karl Drinkwater** You'll find all that info here:  
<http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/is/library/documentsupply/>


**Aberystwyth University - Document Supply**  
[www.aber.ac.uk](http://www.aber.ac.uk)

The document supply service can be used to borrow books or journal articles which are not available at Aberystwyth University Library.

Yesterday at 12:13 · Like · Remove Preview

 Awesome. Thank you all! 😊  
Yesterday at 12:13 · Edited · Like

*Another example*

 **Karl Drinkwater**

Karl the librarian here... Just for information, Primo now displays new books in the library. You can scroll through the widget on the Primo homepage, but more useful is to click 'Search for more new books' below it.


On the next screen click 'Select / Deselect all' to untick everything, then just tick any classmark you're interested in (clue - there's a list at <http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/is/subject/psychology/>). B for psychology (well, 'Philosophy, Psychology, Religion') is your best bet. Then click 'Refresh' Voila!

Try changing the date to go back to 1st January, and display 200 records per page for an even bigger range of new books.

Have a good weekend!


Like · Comment · Unfollow post · 2 seconds ago


*Promoting useful new services, tailored to the particular student group*

 **Karl Drinkwater**  
 The Primo Roadshow will be in P5 again tomorrow, come along 10am-1pm if you want to discuss how you can make the most of Primo to find and manage resources.  
<http://aberssel.blogspot.com/>

**Academic Services Blog**  
 aberssel.blogspot.com

Like · Comment · Unfollow post · Share

 likes this.

 I recommend this to all students - I spent 10 minutes with Karl last week and was amazed by how much Primo can do.

*Promoting events – with unsolicited and positive student backup to reinforce the message!*

 **Karl Drinkwater**  
 Hi everyone, the department asks me to give a talk to new first years about plagiarism and good academic practice. I'm just wondering which would be more useful: a talk at the start of the year, or access to a learning object later on? (<http://www.inf.aber.ac.uk/lo/plagiarism/> is the English version, <http://www.inf.aber.ac.uk/lo/llemladrad/> is the Welsh.) I thought that with the object there is the advantage of it always being there; however, you're all busy, would anyone actually use it?

13  **A talk AND a learning object!** ...

3  **Prefer a talk at the start of the first year** ...

2  **Prefer access to a learning object** ...

0  **Neither, my academic practice is perfect already, thank you!** ...

+ Add an option...

Like · Comment · Unfollow post · 11 May at 14:50

View all 5 comments

 **Karl Drinkwater** Thanks Diane, it looks like the votes are heading that way too. I had been considering whether dropping the first year talk on plagiarism and replacing it with 'finding journal articles on Primo' might have been more useful, with the plagiarism learning object (perhaps embedded in Blackboard) being available instead of a talk. Looks like I will have to rethink!  
 12 May at 12:21 · Like

 **Karl Drinkwater** I should add that the objects are new and I've only just got them finished. I'm glad the red tip could be useful!  
 12 May at 12:21 · Like

Write a comment...

*The ability to poll students*

**Karl Drinkwater**  
 For anyone at my lecture on literature searching today, sorry for the tech problems at the start! The links will be going into Blackboard but the Prezi can be found at <http://prezi.com/j3nqmw8xejua/conducting-a-literature-review/>

 **Conducting a literature review by Karl Drinkwater on Prezi**  
prezi.com

Like · Comment · Unfollow post · Share · Monday at 20:16

**Karl Drinkwater** PS Any feedback would be appreciated, short survey here: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/RKTbZ6M>

**Conducting a literature review Survey**  
www.surveymonkey.com

Monday at 20:18 · Like · Remove Preview

**Karl Drinkwater** Hope the mints and alarm clocks are okay for those who contributed!

Monday at 20:18 · Like

Thanks 😊

Monday at 22:45 · Unlike · 👍 1

thanks Karl - just got your email. It didn't occur to me to look on facebook for any help with course content... Now I know better (:

about an hour ago · Unlike · 👍 1

Write a comment...

*Sharing resources and gathering feedback*

**Howdo**  
 Howdo, I have progressed well with my essay so far but still need help with finding the links to Pavlov's, Skinner's and Watson and Rayners original studies. Does anyone have any suggestions of where i can find these articles?

Like · Comment · Follow post · 16 hours ago

**[User]** Have you tried doing an advanced search on google scholar typing in skinner as author and conditioning in subject?

14 hours ago via mobile · Like

**[User]** I shall give that a go 😊 I never even considered the fact there was an advanced search there 😊 Thanks for the help.

14 hours ago · Like

**[User]** <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1633550> This is Pavlov's 1906 description of his experiements with dogs 😊 found on google scholar

8 hours ago · Like

**[User]** Thank you, that is a big help. I found all the others but for some reason I just couldn't find that. I may go and see Karl to see if I can better refine my searches. Thanks again 😊

7 hours ago · Like · 👍 1

**[User]** I have a few tricks I can pass on if Karl isn't available just pop in and see me

4 hours ago · Like

**Karl Drinkwater** JSTOR is great for historical/archival texts. Go to <http://www.jstor.org> (if off-campus, login to JSTOR). Search > Advanced. Type pavlov in the first box and change the 'full-text' drop-down to 'author'. In the Date Range box type 1936 into the 'To' date (when Pavlov died - I assume he published no articles after that!). Click Search. You'll get a few false positives but also some of his original articles. There were options to limit by subject but I'm not in work so don't want to overcomplicate it! Do the same for Skinner, 1990 date, maybe tick the 'psychology' subject further down to reduce false positives. And spare a thought for the poor dogs!

*Directing students to quality resources, plus tips on using them effectively.*

*Note that my support is mentioned by the students - online availability increases awareness, and therefore take-up.*



*Being friendly is important so they don't feel intimidated about contacting us for help, and so that – rightly or wrongly – they believe that librarians are human. Also an opportunity to demonstrate correct APA referencing.*



*This friendly approach is backed up by others: "They try to keep a friendly, conversational style and as a result the number of enquiries they receive via social media have built up as they are seen as approachable. Timothy emphasised that you need to think about listening to what students are saying and consider it as a conversation rather than sending out lots of information. [...] Management had been dubious initially and they had had to struggle to be allowed time to do things but they can now see the benefit."*

[Middlesex University](#)





### **Karl Drinkwater**

Quick tips for getting hold of articles:

- Start your literature search with the "Articles & more" tab in Primo. Every result you find there automatically has full text, and there are various ways of formulating and refining searches to make them more accurate.
- Ditto with PsycArticles (link from the "Electronic Resources" tab at <http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/is/subject/psychology/>).
- If you have found details of articles elsewhere then search the "Aber Collections" tab on Primo for the journal titles (not the article titles!)
- The next stage is to check if the National Library of Wales has the journal - if so, you can get a copy of the article by going there and photocopying it. (Search box at the top of <http://wales.aquabrowser.com/>).
- If none of those options worked out then the final option (apart from finding other articles which are available locally, or contacting the authors) is to get the item via an inter-library loan: <http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/is/library/documentsupply/> It is a service with a cost, e.g. an electronic copy of an article costs you £7.80 (the full cost is about £15 but the library pays half of it).

I hope some of that is useful, I've had a few queries on that topic recently!

Like · Comment · Share · Unfollow Post · 2 seconds ago

*One of a series of tips I sent throughout the year*



### **Karl Drinkwater**

Last tip! Did you know you can check where there is a free computer here: <http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/is/computers/rooms/availability/>  
A lifesaver when you really need access to a PC to print, for example.

Like · Comment · Share · Unfollow Post · 2 seconds ago

*Another*



### **Karl Drinkwater**

If you are after APA journals make sure you access them via PsycArticles (the link from the Electronic Resources tab at <http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/is/subject/psychology/>). That's the resource we pay for and should give full access to all APA journals via the Proquest platform.

The direct URL is <http://search.proquest.com/psycarticles/index>. If you are on campus or connected to VPN then there will be no authentication issues, you should go straight through. Either search for what you want or go to 'Publications' at the top and find the particular journal you require.

I know a few of you have tried to get them from the APA site, but that won't work as Aber Uni don't pay the APA directly. I hope that helps!

Like · Comment · Share · Unfollow Post · A few seconds ago

*A chance to deal with issues that come up during the year*



**Karl Drinkwater**

Karl the Librarian with a quick bit of info! I've had a few people asking me about e-books recently, these FAQs might be useful.

How do I find and open e-books in Primo?  
<http://www.inf.aber.ac.uk/advisory/faq/998/>

How do I read and print from an e-book I've found in Primo?  
<http://www.inf.aber.ac.uk/advisory/faq/1161/>

There was even a complaint that we had too many e-books now, and people missed the experience of the real thing. Therefore we bought fifteen cans of "Smell of Books" to enhance the e-book experience.  
<http://smellofbooks.com/>

Like · Comment · Share · Unfollow Post · 20 hours ago



likes this.



Seen by 28

*Another one. Includes a spray of humour.*



**Karl Drinkwater**

Hi, Karl the Psychology Librarian here. I just wanted to promote the free undergraduate Study Practices Programme - get a head start on many study and research skills! Log in to Blackboard and enrol via the Study Skills tab (see image). There are more sessions this afternoon.



Like · Comment · Unfollow Post · Share · 9 October at 10:55



likes this.



Seen by 36

*Promoting various skills programmes*

## IMPACT

As the examples show, this is often direct. The intervention is immediate, and has widespread visibility. It also enters the general consciousness of students. The following screenshot is a good example – it shows that the things I have been teaching have been internalised by students (the advice about saving records into Primo folders followed a one-to-one session with that student where I had shown them that feature!), and they are now much more aware of the help available, even directing each other to my services. I've managed to get them to do my job for me, which is a success in my book!



The screenshot shows a Facebook post and its comments. The post is from a user with a blurred profile picture and is titled "Google scholar. Use it. It's much better than Primo :P". The post has 2 likes and was made 19 hours ago near Aberystwyth. The comments are as follows:

- Comment 1: "or use both as well as pub med, proquest, web of knowledge 😊" (19 hours ago, 2 likes)
- Comment 2: "I find Primo a bit rubbish to be fair :S I haven't really found anything on it worthwhile..." (19 hours ago, 1 like)
- Comment 3: "unless I'm just using it wrong" (19 hours ago, 1 like)
- Comment 4: "go and see Karl Drinkwater he'll help you use primo 😊" (19 hours ago, 5 likes)
- Comment 5: "ah damn it ! you beat me to it 😊" (19 hours ago, 3 likes)
- Comment 6: "Hee Hee 😊" (19 hours ago, 1 like)
- Comment 7: "I find that PRIMO's the best way to get full on-line access to a lot of stuff - you just need to know how to use it! 10 minutes with Karl will save you so much time in the future." (18 hours ago, 2 likes)
- Comment 8: "ScienceDirect isn't too bad either 😊 But Primo is great, you've just got to learn to use it properly. Like [blurred] said, it has a lot of access. I find it's really good for when you've found an article you like the sound of, and need to find a way of viewing it." (18 hours ago, 3 likes)
- Comment 9: "PRIMO also has a facility where you can save everything you have found into 'folders' - really useful if you are juggling a number of pieces of work." (18 hours ago, 2 likes)
- Comment 10: "Karl Drinkwater Hi [blurred], one of the neat things about Google Scholar is when it gives you the full text, though in some cases it only does that because the library has set up connections to our resources, which we can't do for everything (unlike with Primo). Maybe come to 0.11 in P5 next Wednesday anytime between 2 and 4pm, I could cover the Primo basics and we could compare search results between Primo and Google Scholar as an experiment. Google Scholar might even win, we'd see! If anyone else you know wants Primo help just bring them with you, we'll all look at it together. As with most things there are multiple technologies that can be used for the same function, the trick is to understand each one, then use whichever fit your needs best. I bet if I polled all you psychology students there would be 101 different research techniques. 😊" (A few seconds ago, 1 like)

*Students defending Primo*

As other examples showed, I have clarified causes of confusion, corrected misunderstandings, answered queries, and promoted events and new resources. The impact is therefore always greater than just the student you help, an advantage of one-to-many over one-to-one support. Students have told me that they like seeing the answers to questions, because they often wondered the same thing themselves but were afraid to ask! (To which I point out that part of the advantage of being at university is that you should ask questions about – and challenge – *everything*.)

Access to the Facebook group has proved useful in other ways: for example, I saw some complaint from a student about not being able to find a library resource. The comment would have looked to other students as if we didn't have the resource, which is the kind of thing that gradually dampens opinion if left unchallenged and may in the long-term affect NSS scores, since NSS scores come from user impressions as much as from reality, and the impressions build up out of many small instances that accrue over time. However, I was able to point out how to find and use the resource on a public forum, which the student was very grateful for, and as a result we looked responsive and helpful – a slight increase in perception, as well as sharing knowledge with the other students. The same applies to any negative (and often incorrect) posts. Being able to turn some of those small instances from negative to positive is one of the areas where participating in the students' social media spaces can be a powerful ally.

The use of Facebook to support psychology students has been a success, with all the feedback being positive. I have recently expanded the service since psychology now has groups specifically for freshers: I was invited onto that group in September 2013, and have been able to use my presence to support their transition into HE.

**Karl Drinkwater**  
Quick question: do you find it useful having your psychology librarian here to pick up on any resource or information skills-related queries? I might be writing a case study on librarians supporting departments via social media, so need to see if I can gather any evidence of impact. It'd be handy to have any quantitative data from a poll or qualitative comments to throw into the proposal. (You can add options or comment.)

**Very useful** +8

**I liked seeing the answers to other people's questions** +7

**It was okay**

**Librarians, get out of my space!**

+ Add an option...

Like · Comment · Unfollow Post · Share

**Karl Drinkwater** (Obviously Facebook was only one aspect, and it was secondary to lectures/web pages/drop-in sessions/1-to-1 sessions).

*Quick informal poll - do students find the service useful? 16 positive responses might not seem much but compared to the usual number of comments on a post it is quite a lot, especially during exam time!*

The low barriers to access make the project sustainable, and since I began this a few other social-media-savvy librarians have begun to follow this pattern and use it to offer extra support to their departments.



*Students promoting my drop-ins: the support has entered their general consciousness.  
This suggests that I was successful in making them feel I am approachable and human.*

There is one final measure of success I should mention. The Psychology Department at Aberystwyth University had been seeking accreditation from their professional body, the [British Psychological Society](#) (BPS). I had been involved with providing evidence for the submission (detailing the vast number of resources and services available to psychology students at Aberystwyth). Then on 19th June 2013 it was the accreditation day when the BPS came to the department. I was at the main session with all the academics since I was considered as being on the program team, something the BPS said they didn't normally encounter (I don't think any of the accreditors had attended a session where a librarian gave evidence before). I was one of the first to speak, since one of the 'unique selling points' was the good relationship between the department and the library. One of the things I spoke about was my focus on supporting transition to HE with responsive help from as many angles as possible, and support via Facebook was one of the main pieces of evidence I gave. That same afternoon the department was successfully (and deservedly) accredited, which was a huge cause for celebration, even though the excellent staff, students and teaching in the department should have made it a foregone conclusion. I like to think that my small contribution helped, at least a little bit.