

Using Social Media as a Research Tool

Nina Bellisio

Assistant Professor of Visual Communications
St. Thomas Aquinas College, NY

Many social media platforms can be utilized as research tools in the classroom. This tutorial focus on three that I have utilized in college-level graphic design courses. Students use Twitter, Facebook and Evernote to collect and share research, to gather demographic information and to collect preference data from imagined clients or consumers.

TWITTER

Hashtags are used to categorize and sort tweets. Students search for relevant hashtags and use the responses to gather data.

Students can post a poll to ask for specific information. The poll can be read both by their followers and by other Twitter users searching for that hashtag.

Suggested starting points are **#edugraphic**, **#helpastudent** and the website *hashtag.org*.

FACEBOOK

Students post a poll to ask for specific information. The poll can be read by their Facebook friends and friends of friends (dependent on security settings).

Polls can be created within Facebook using the Poll app providing respondents with the results as well.

EVERNOTE

Students create notebooks that they share with the class, professor or the public.

Notes can be clipped through a browser or phone app and images can be added directly from a phone or drawing (Wacom) tablet.

Students can comment on and categorize each others notes for use in group project research.



AUDIENCE all twitter users, a student's twitter followers

RESEARCH USES extrapolating info from hashtags, polling followers and other twitter users

PRIVACY LEVEL LOW



AUDIENCE a student's facebook friends

RESEARCH USES polling friends

PRIVACY LEVEL MEDIUM



AUDIENCE a group of students or a class

RESEARCH USES collecting online data (images, articles, links), capturing drawings from a Wacom tablet, collecting photos shot with a phone

PRIVACY LEVEL HIGH