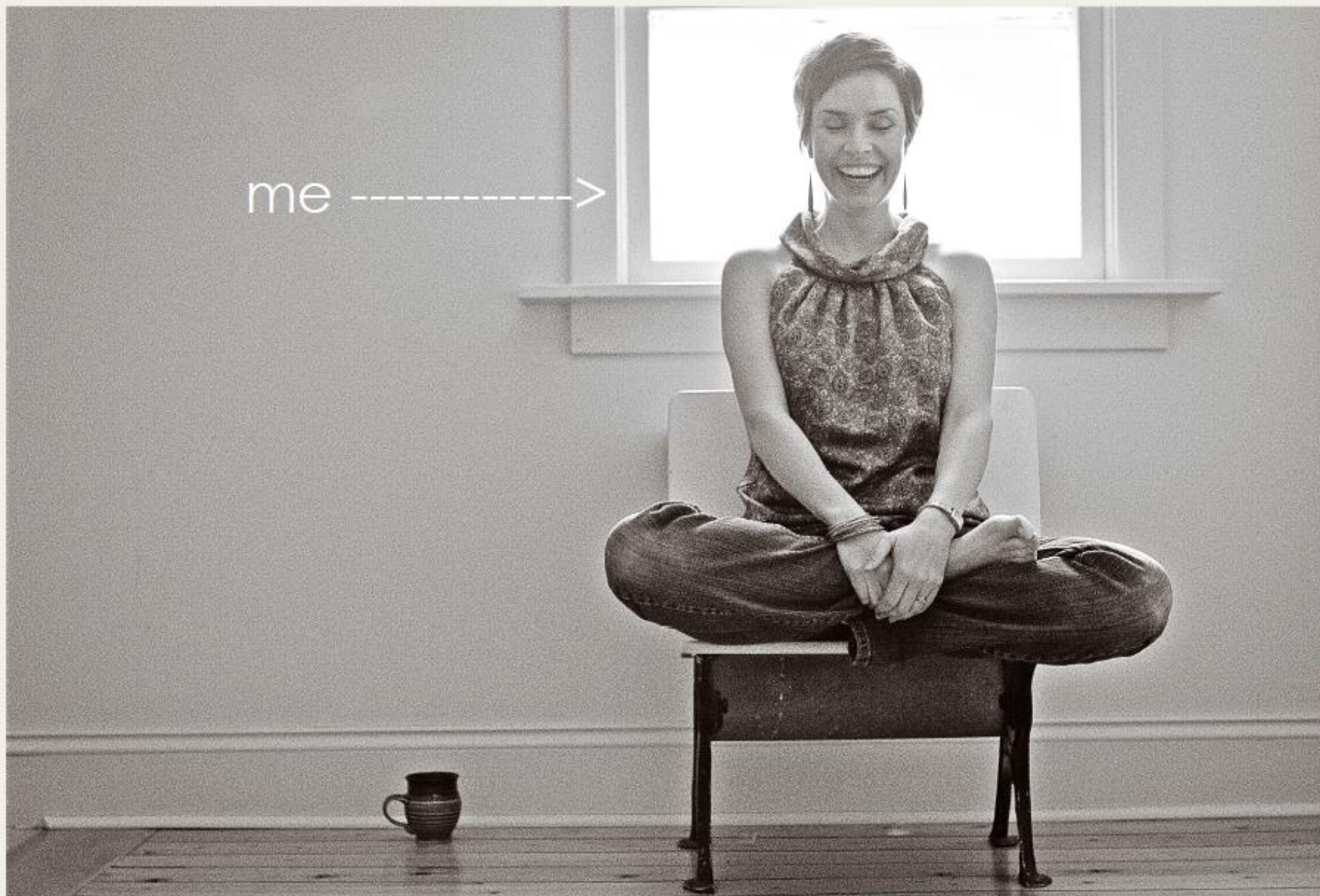


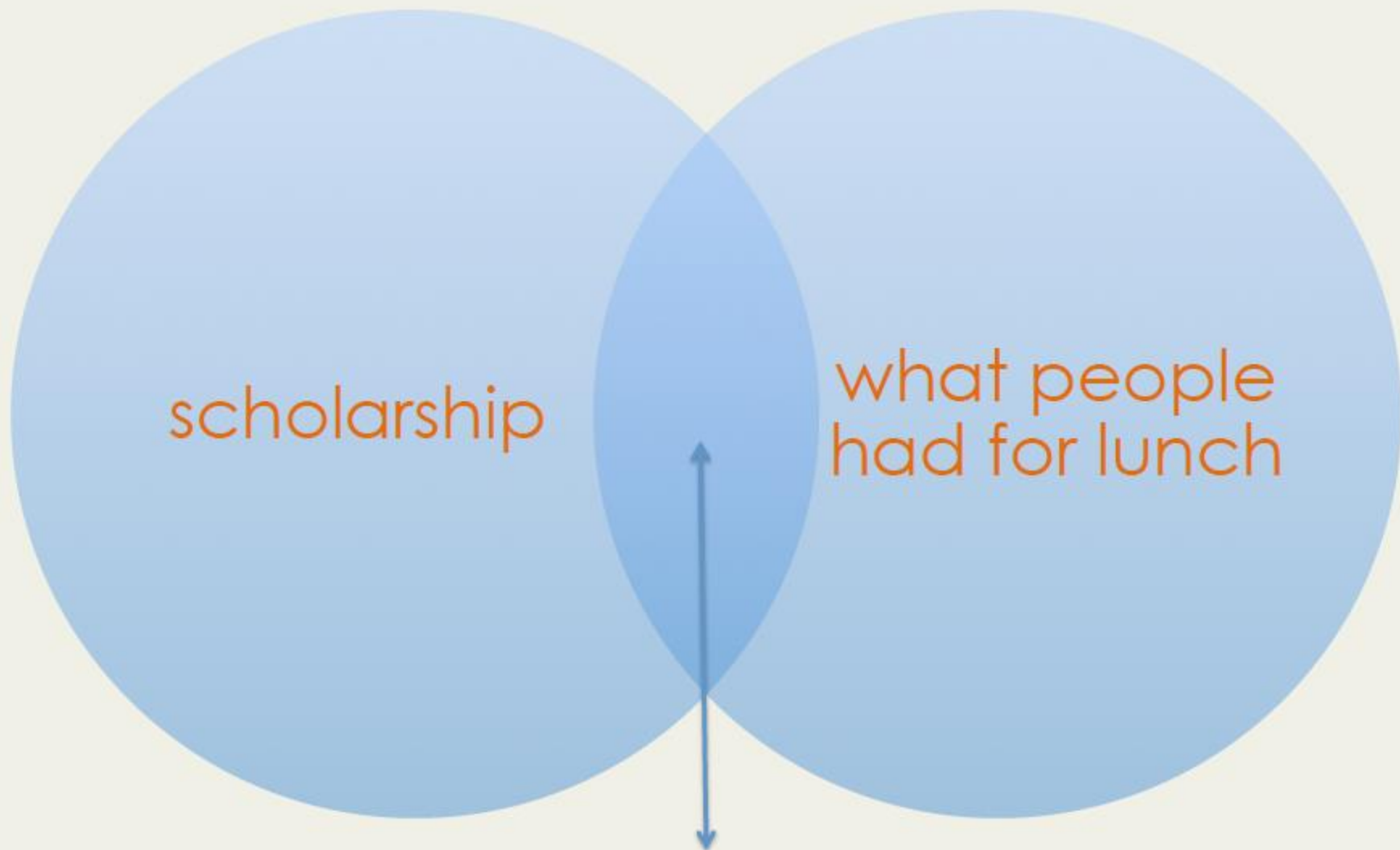
# Academic Twitter: The Intersection of Orality & Literacy in Scholarship?



Bonnie Stewart  
University of Prince Edward Island  
@bonstewart  
LSE NetworkED  
January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2016



(photo credit: Kate Inglis)



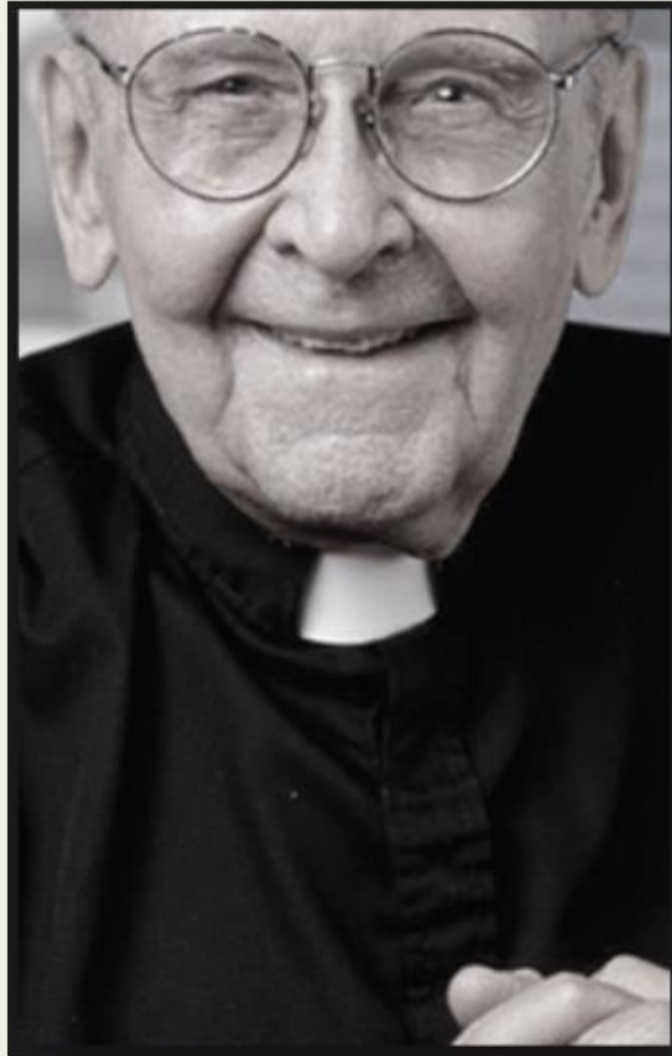
“Academic Twitter”

Academic Twitter =  
a complex, messy story of  
identity & publics

# Told with thanks to David Bowie, 1947 – 2016



...and Walter Ong, 1912 – 2003.



# 1. Digital Identity, the Bowie model



SO I TURNED MYSELF TO FACE ME

# Who are we when we're online?


**TWEETS** 63.3K    **FOLLOWING** 1,484    **FOLLOWERS** 8,564    **LIKES** 5,623    **LISTS** 1

**Bonnie Stewart**  
@bonstewart

educator, researcher, social media fortune teller - part LEGO, all cyborg.  
bstewart@upei.ca

📍 Charlottetown, PE  
🌐 [bonstewart.com](http://bonstewart.com)  
📅 Joined June 2007

**Tweets**    Tweets & replies    Photos & videos

 **Bonnie Stewart** @bonstewart · 1m  
excited to have you lead these conversations at #UPEI, Freddie. :)

**Frederic Fovet** @FFovet

Leading #UDL implementation in schools = lot harder than appears  
.Grasping teachers' complex perspectives ecologically is crucial #UDLWQ





In institutional structures, an individual has a **role**.

In a networked culture, an individual has an **identity**, which it is his/her job to differentiate.

Caveat: you do **NOT** need to use Twitter to have a viable academic career.



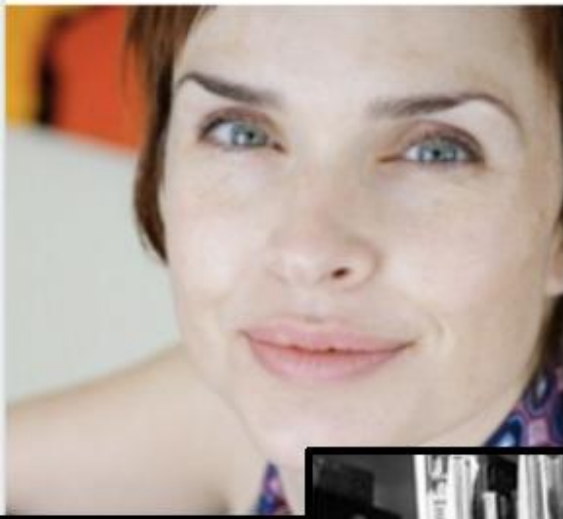
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:UK\\_traffic\\_sign\\_562.svg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:UK_traffic_sign_562.svg)

# Serial Selves



<http://www.flickr.com/photos/thelotuscarroll/6842167375/>

# The personal/professional divide is blurring



## Bonnie Stewart

Coordinator of Adult Teaching, University of Prince Edward Island

Prince Edward Island, Canada | Higher Education

Current University of Prince Edward Island

Previous Royal Roads University, University of Prince Edward



Bonnie Stewart

★ Friends ▾

✓ See

Timeline

About

Friends

Photos

More ▾

# Crowdsourcing selves



**Bonnie Stewart** @bonstewart · 1h

working on a chapter on Twitter as platform for academic research. who's got great work i should be reading on this?



10



3



**sava** @savasavasava · 48m

@bonstewart I'm doing this! but don't have anything pub'd =( I cite @tressiemcphd "social media content as user-generated autoethnographies"



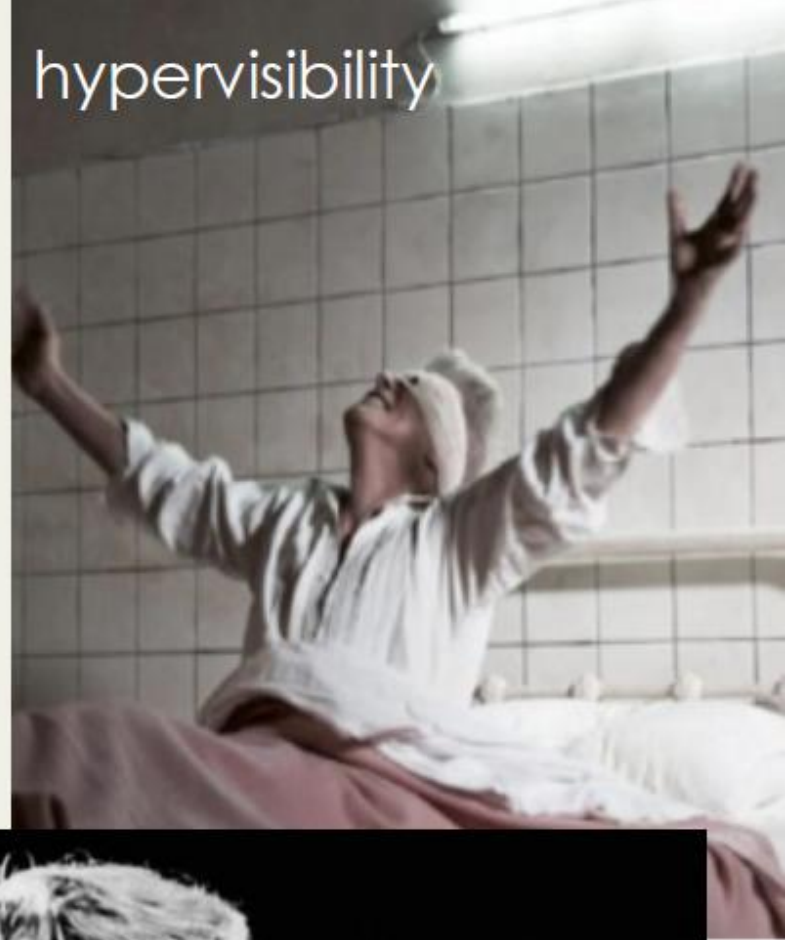
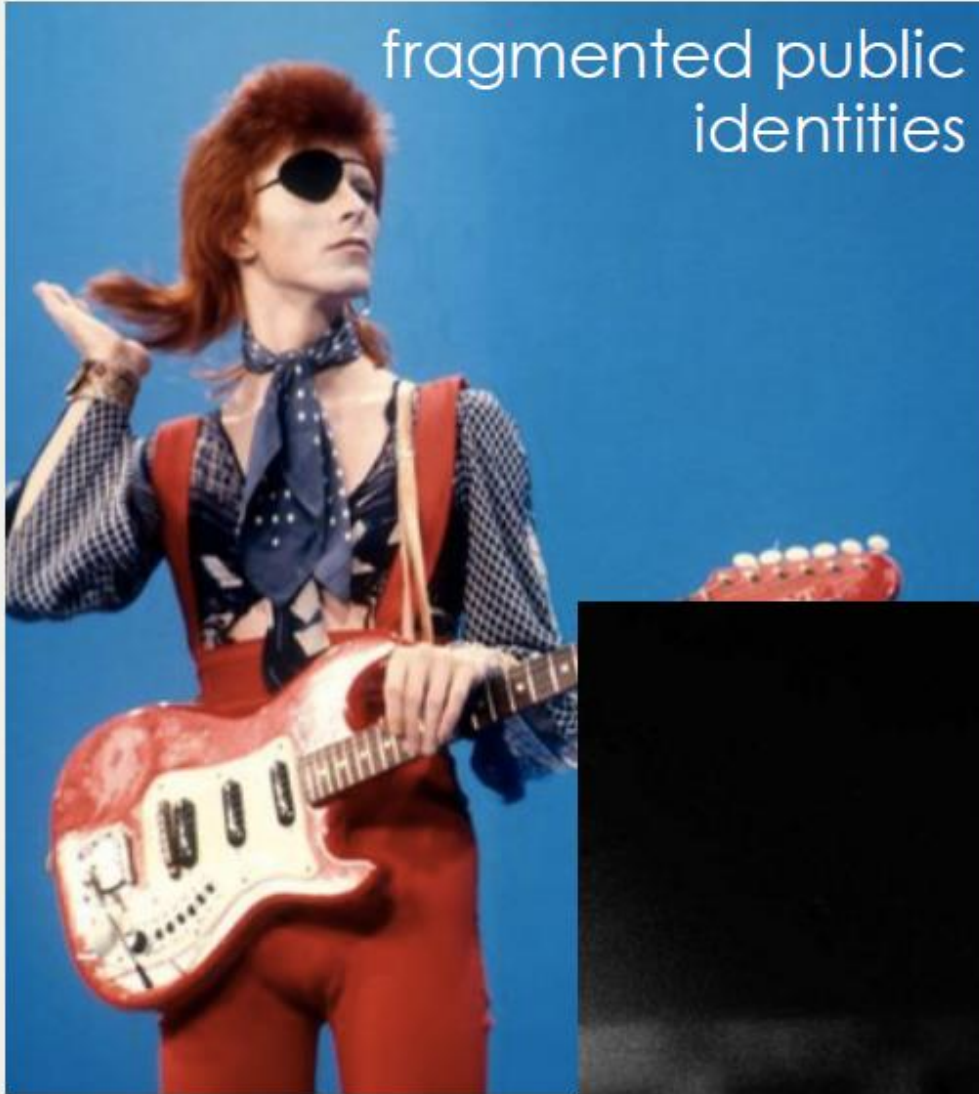
1



# WE CAN BE HEROES?

hypervisibility

fragmented public identities



celebrity

...even among academics



**tressie mc** @tressiemcphd · 2m

People write me to tell me they don't read me. I'm like join the club? What's that compulsion about? LOL

Expand

↩ Reply ↻ Retweet ★ Favorite ... More

“My boss is scared of my social media presence because it’s a form of soft power; they’re scared to lose me because it would be so visible.”

- @thesiswhisperer, 2014

# FASHION: Memes & Citation





# Quantified Selves

**The man who  
sold the world  
Bowie Bonds**



**Bonnie Stewart**



educator, researcher, social media fortune teller - part LEGO, all cyborg.  
bstewart@upei.ca

Academics ★ Expert

Adult Education ★ Expert

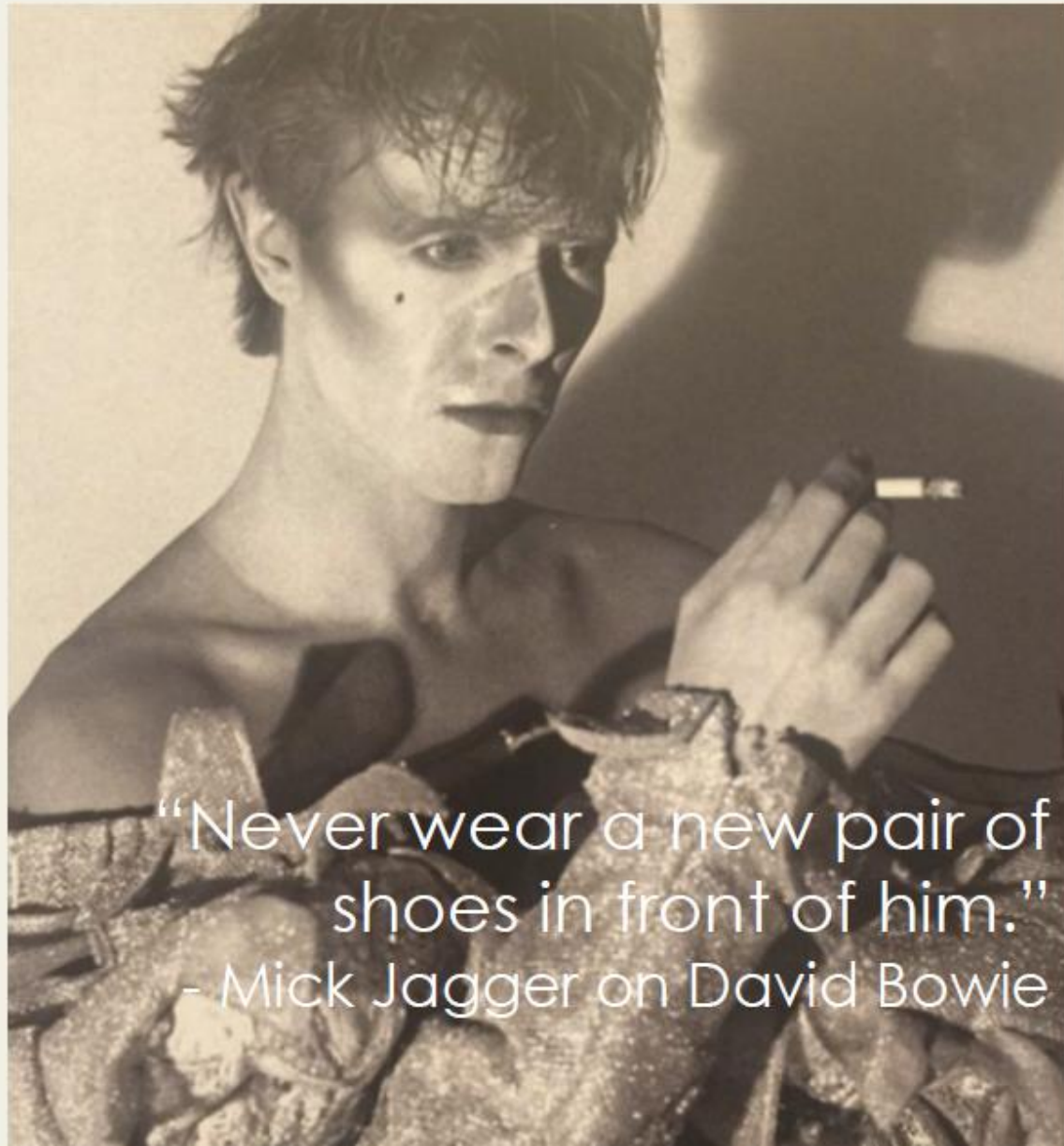
Being a Dad ★ Expert

Canada ★ Expert

Coding ★ Expert

Education ★ Expert

# Magpie selves



“Never wear a new pair of shoes in front of him.”  
- Mick Jagger on David Bowie

# & behind-the-scenes glimpses

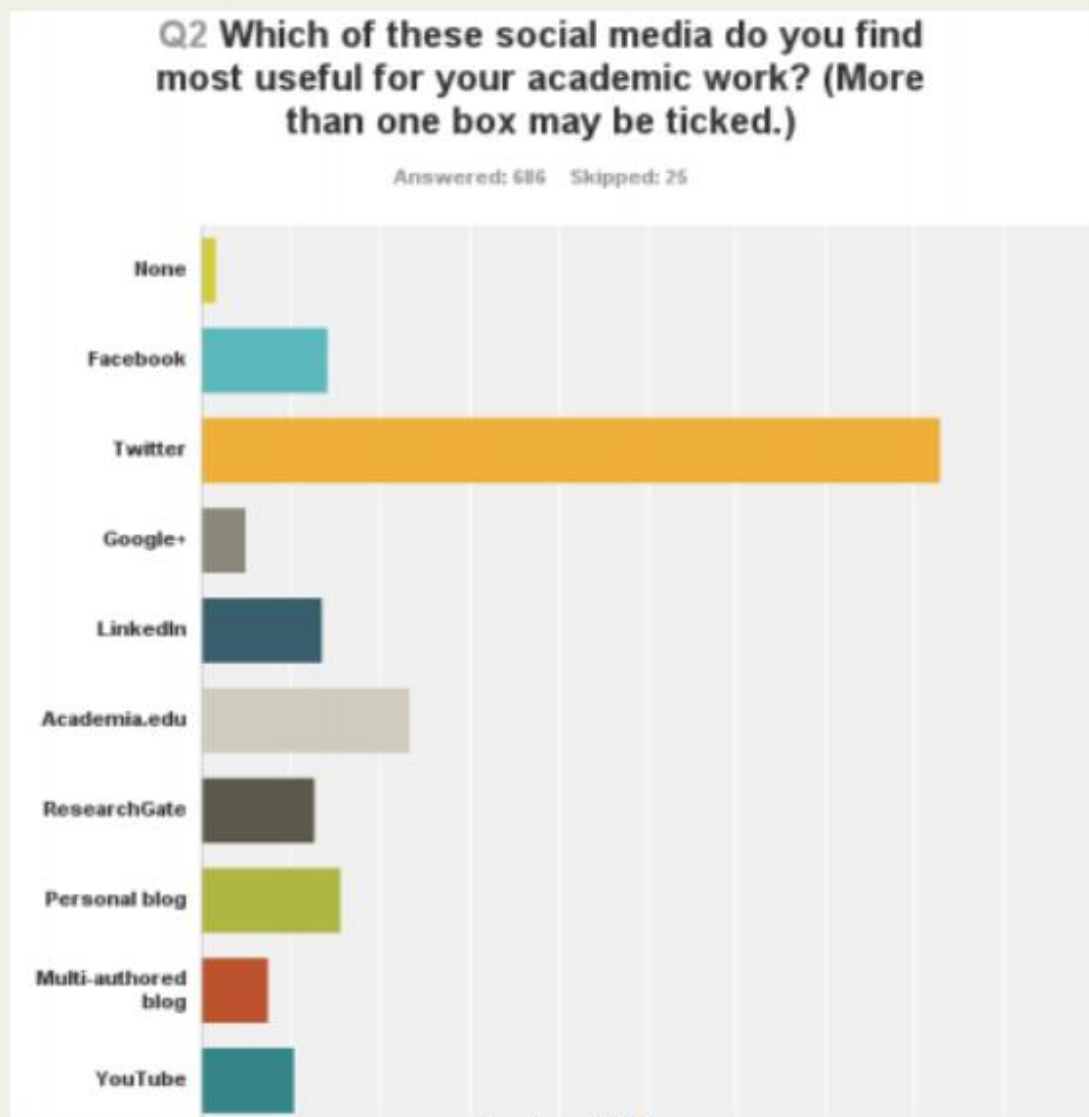


Performative digital identities  
unsettle our illusions of a unified Self

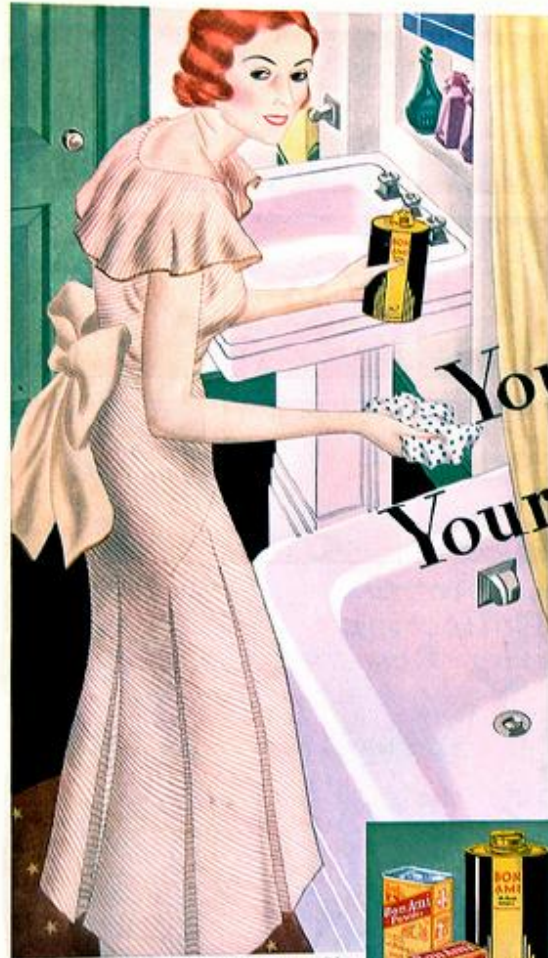


SO WE BITCHED ABOUT HIS FANS  
AND SHOULD WE CRUSH  
HIS SWEET HANDS?

## 2. Digital publics, the Academic Twitter model



# Academia & social media are both reputational economies



Your hands  
Your bathtub  
*both* show  
what kind of  
a cleanser  
you use . . . .

Many bathroom cleansers do two things—things that are easy for anyone to see. They gradually dull and wear away the lustrous surface of your bathtub by scratching it. And they roughen and redden your hands . . . make them feel and look dry, puffy or puckered.

But *Bon Ami* is entirely different. It cleans thoroughly, quickly and well but doesn't dull and wear bathtubs. Nor does it irritate and redden your hands or harm your fingernails. Instead, *Bon Ami* leaves the enamel or porcelain smooth, shining and unscratched . . . your hands, soft, nice and unroughened.

To save your bathtub—to protect your hands . . . use only *Bon Ami*. You'll discover, too, that *Bon Ami* doesn't leave gritty sediment in the bottom of tubs and basins . . . doesn't collect in and clog up drains . . . and that it is odorless.



There's never to suit your taste . . . a Cake, a Powder and a lovely De-luxe Bathroom Package.

**BON AMI** *Hasn't scratched yet!* 

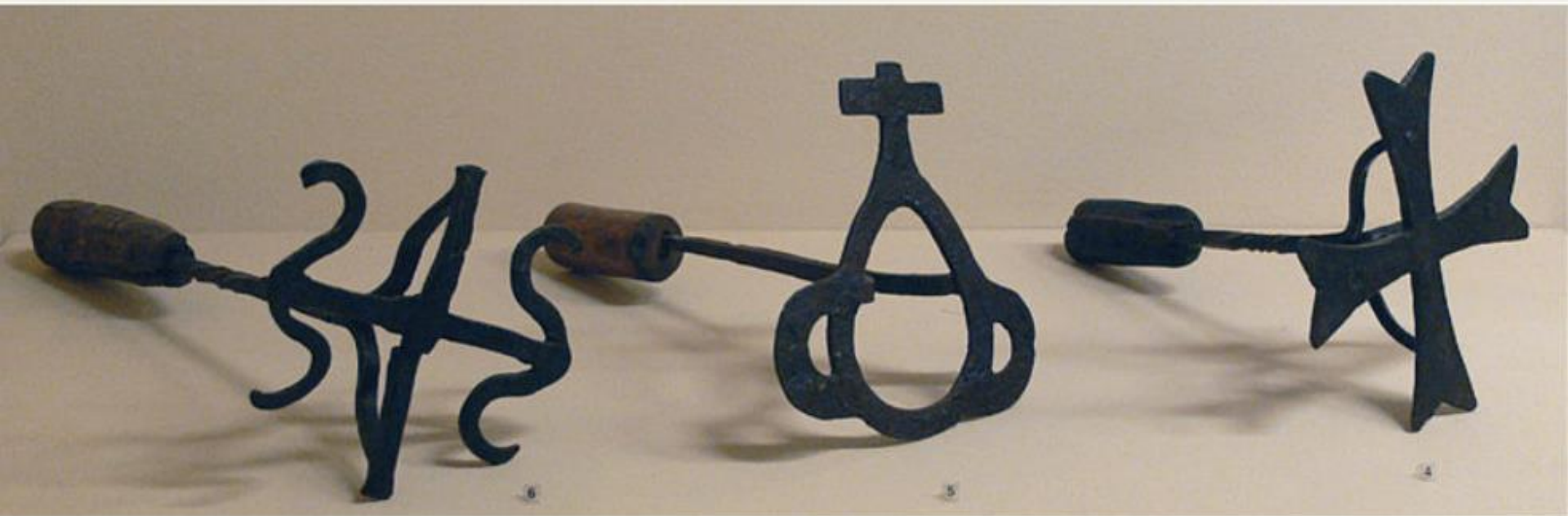
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/8113246@N02/7932198032>

Those within the academy become very skilled at judging the stuff of reputations. Where has the person's work been published, what claims of priority in discovery have they established, how often have they been cited, how and where reviewed, what prizes won, what institutional ties earned, what organizations led?

*Willinsky, 2010*

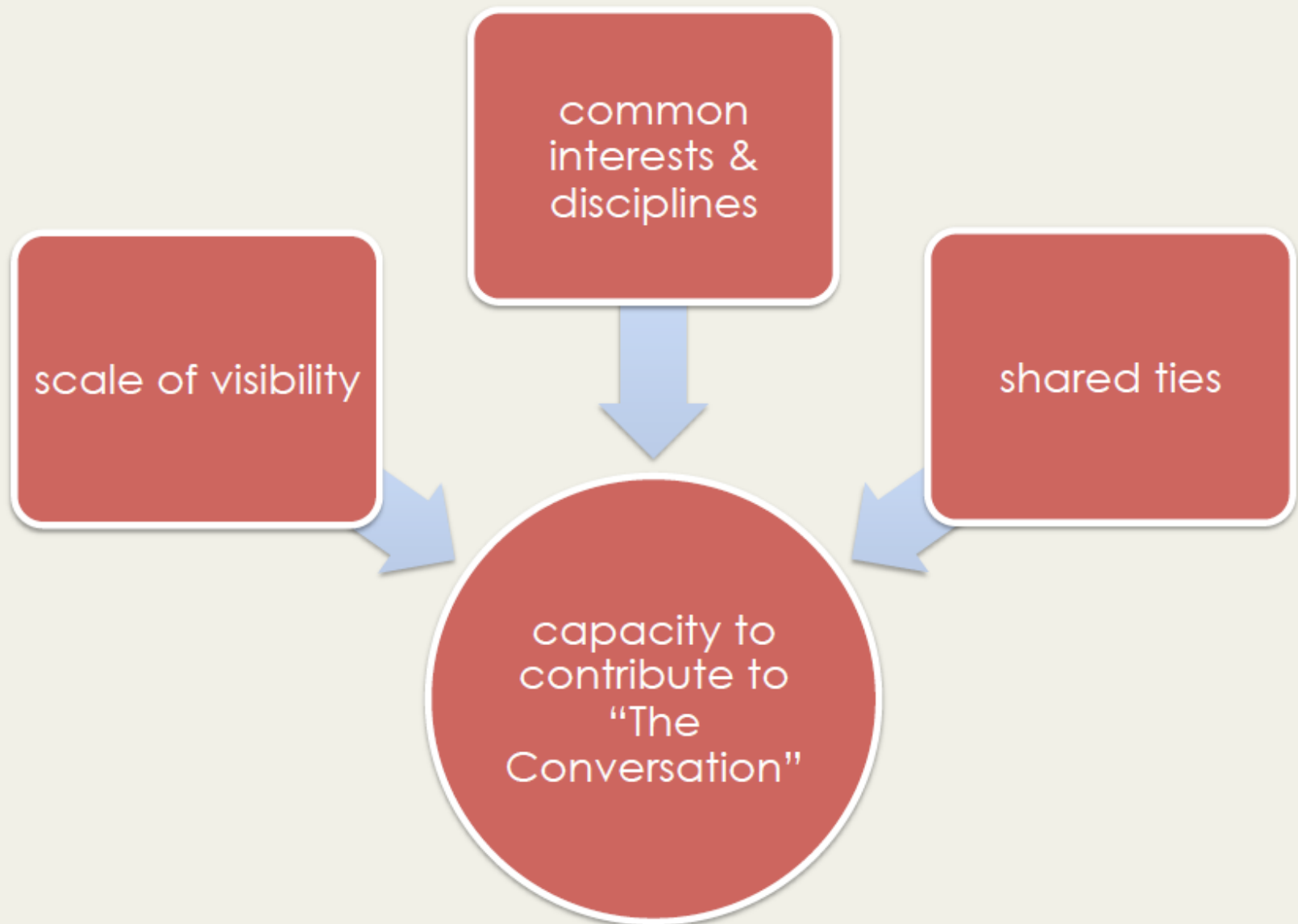


# AND THE PAPERS WANT TO KNOW WHOSE SHIRT YOU WEAR



[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Euskal\\_Museoa\\_branding\\_irons.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Euskal_Museoa_branding_irons.jpg)

# Digital signals = less **codified**



# Again, **identity** vs. role



“I really wanted,  
more than  
anything else, to  
**contribute** in some  
way to the culture  
that I was living in.”

*Bowie, 2002*

The gates are open



<https://www.flickr.com/photos/vince2012/14557320666/>

# Networked publics: **many-to-many** signals



[http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/it/thumb/d/d8/Do\\_Not\\_Adjust\\_Your\\_Set.jpg/280px-Do\\_Not\\_Adjust\\_Your\\_Set.jpg](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/it/thumb/d/d8/Do_Not_Adjust_Your_Set.jpg/280px-Do_Not_Adjust_Your_Set.jpg)

THAT WERE NO DJ  
THAT WAS HAZY COSMIC JIVE...



<https://www.flickr.com/photos/ooohoooh/1350774613/>

...Like a party line with multiple private/public options



<https://www.flickr.com/photos/94342662@N00/3869483214/>

# UNDER PRESSURE: Context Collapse

(Wesch, 2009; boyd, 2011)





When your **non-institutional** ideas land amidst institutional **audiences**





Institutions do not always **approve**.

The **infinite selves** of the blank status update are all:



<http://www.flickr.com/photos/jamison/3669034513/>

- Persistent
- Replicable
  - Scalable
- Shareable

# Academics express concerns after Salaita settlement

Ali Abunimah Rights and Accountability 17 November 2015



---

**ALI ABUNIMAH**

---

Co-founder of The Electronic Intifada and author of *The Battle for Justice in Palestine*, now out from Haymarket Books.



**Opinion: Saida Grundy Shows Twitter Doesn't Always Equal Tenure**

by JASON JOHNSON



**Bonnie Stewart** @bonstewart · Aug 7

academia, this whole "Twitter counts enough to get you fired but not hired" mindset is why we can't have nice things.



134



118



# “Online **Shaming**?”

Jon Ronson: “Time and again on Twitter we act like the thing we purport to hate’

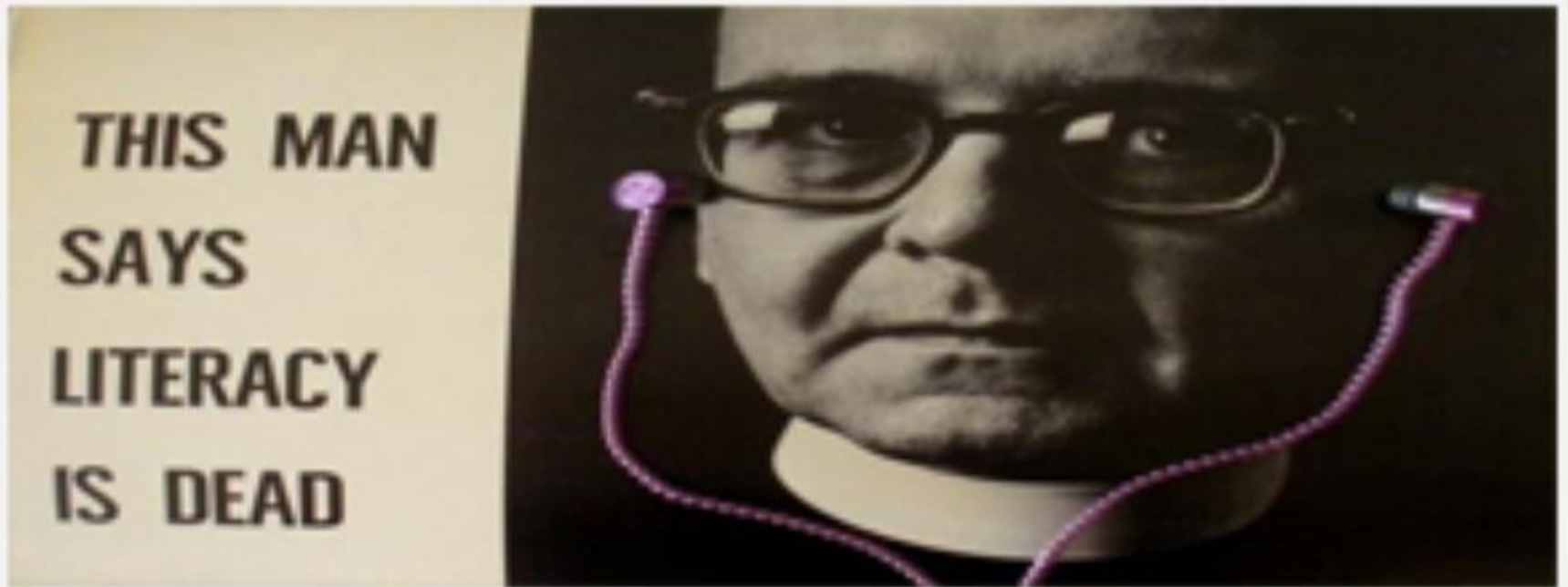
The British journalist and broadcaster talks about shame, bullying and his disenchantment with social media



WAIT



...where **Ong** comes in.





# Oral Tradition



- Participatory
- Situational
- Social
- Formulaic
- Agonistic
- Rhetorical

# Literate Tradition

- Interiorized
- Abstracted
- Innovative
- Precise
- Analytic
- Indexical



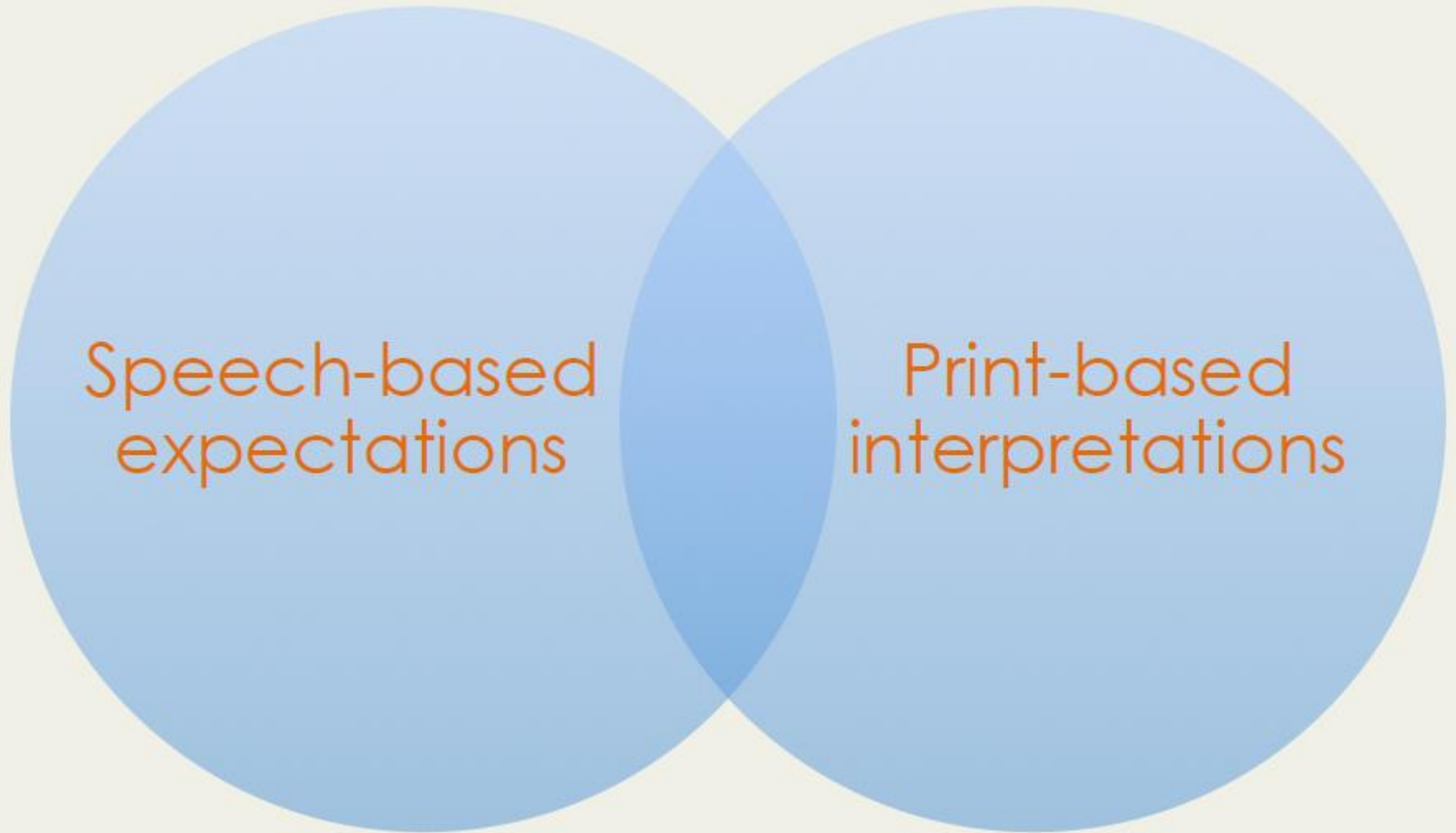
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Letterpress\\_printing#/media/File:The\\_Caxton\\_Celebration\\_-\\_William\\_Caxton\\_showing\\_specimens\\_of\\_his\\_printing\\_to\\_King\\_Edward\\_IV\\_and\\_his\\_Queen.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Letterpress_printing#/media/File:The_Caxton_Celebration_-_William_Caxton_showing_specimens_of_his_printing_to_King_Edward_IV_and_his_Queen.jpg)

# Ong's secondary orality + secondary literacy

“The **network message** from one person to another / others is very rapid and **can in effect be in the present**...textualized verbal exchange registers psychologically as having the **temporal immediacy** of oral exchange.”

*Ong, 1996*

# Call Out Culture = Collapsed Publics





Parker Molloy

Nov 12, 2015 · 7 min read

## 5 things the media does to manufacture outrage.

*People are so sensitive these days! People are just off Millennials, amirite?!*

“Tactical Twitter” is not one single phenomenon



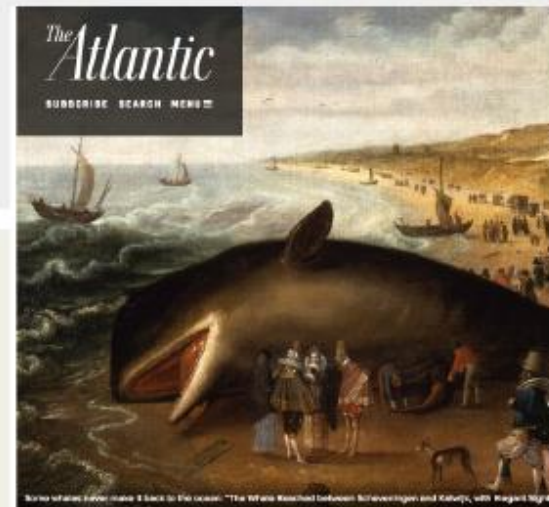
# PUTTING OUT FIRE...WITH GASOLINE

Hashtags + Public voice + Positional identities =  
Fraught public sphere

“The rot we’re seeing in Twitter is the rot of participatory media devolved into competitive spheres where the collective “we” treats conversational contributions as fixed print-like identity claims.”

~ Bonnie Stewart, “Something is rotten in the state of...Twitter”

The sense of participatory collective—always fraught—has waned as more and more subcultures are crammed and collapsed into a common, traceable, searchable medium. We hang over *each other's* heads, more and more heavily, self-appointed swords of Damocles waiting with baited breath to strike.



## The Decay of Twitter

The social network fundamentally changed in early 2014. And that's causing big problems for the company.

<http://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2015/11/conversation-smoosh-twitter-decay/412867/>

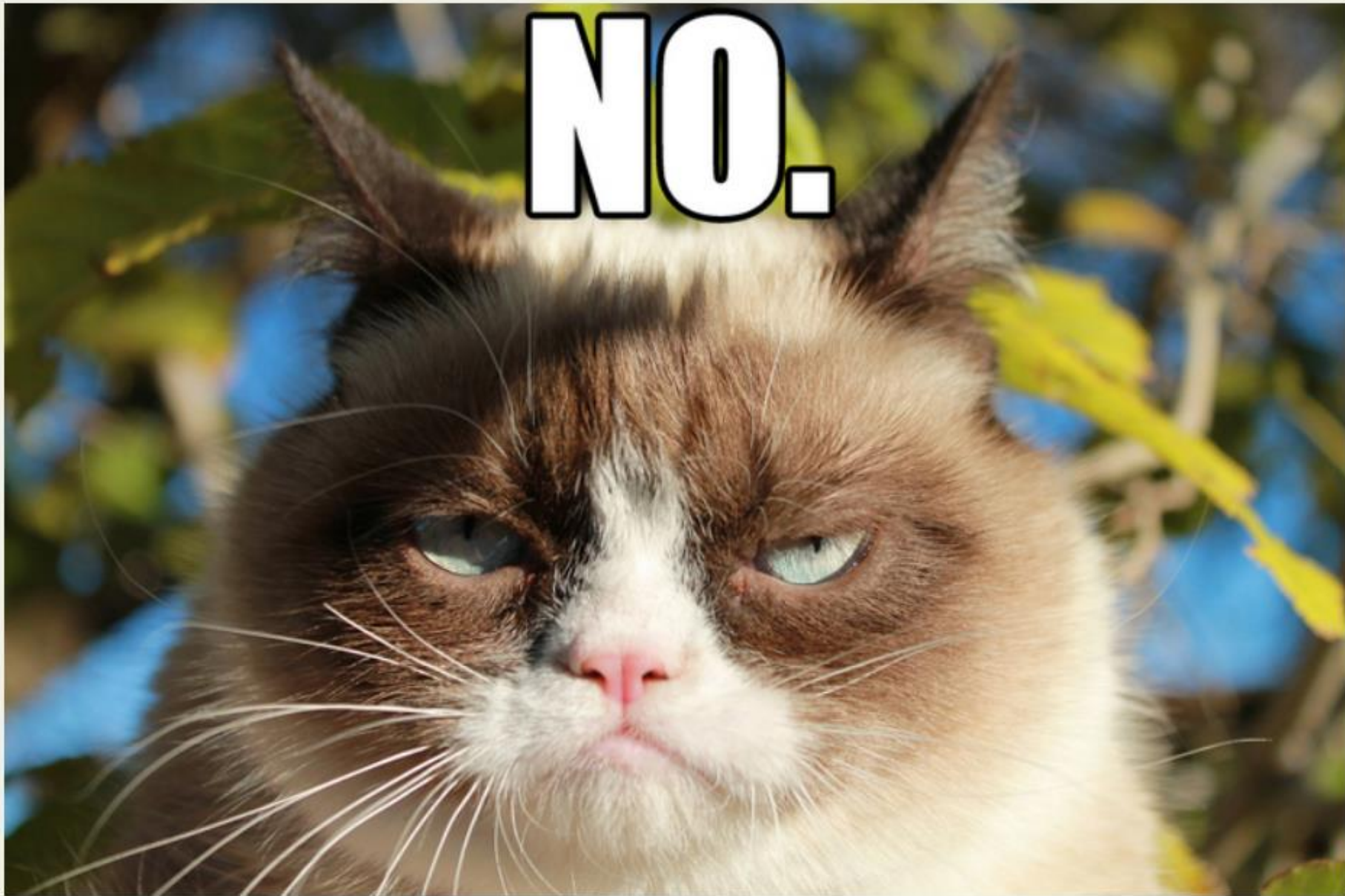
“Being stripped of your personhood to **stand in the gap** for a group of people against your will is rage-inducing...you were busy living and laughing and being a wholly fallible human being. It is **horrible** to lose a job for that. It is a **privilege** to have never before lost a job for that.”

*McMillan-Cottom, 2014*



So. *Stay off the internet*, & live  
happily ever after,  
academics? 😊

**NO.**



# Call out culture crosses online/offline boundaries





Shit Academics Say @AcademicsSay · Sep 12

Academic social media.



*"We need to rethink our strategy of hoping the Internet will just go away."*

# NOT a Bowie strategy:



Bowie, 2000: "The potential of what **the internet is going to do society** – both good and bad – is unimaginable. I think we're actually on the cusp of something **exhilarating and terrifying.**"

*Interviewer:* "It's just a tool isn't it?"

Bowie: "No it's not - it's an **alien life form**. Is there Life on Mars? Yes, it's just landed here."

What do networked identities  
+ collapsed publics  
MEAN for academia?

# BEWARE THE SAVAGE JAW OF 1984



[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Risk#/media/File:AT\\_YOUR\\_OWN\\_RISK.svg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Risk#/media/File:AT_YOUR_OWN_RISK.svg)

NEVER LOOK BACK,  
WALK TALL, ACT FINE



<https://www.flickr.com/photos/opensourceway/5009661706>

# Academic Twitter allows participation outside **hierarchy**

Sometimes...I'll choose someone with twenty followers, because I come across something they've managed to say in **140 characters**, and I think "oh, look at you, crafting on a grain of rice."  
- @KateMfD



# Networked identities = new forms of vulnerability

 Retweeted by Dr Inger Mewburn

 **Glen Fuller** @Eventmechanics · 6m

There are drawbacks to using social media by young academics & ECRs, risks to reputation, privacy, becoming a target, ideas stolen @DALuption

[Expand](#) [Reply](#) [Retweet](#) [Favorite](#) [More](#)

commodification + institutional indictments of deviance + re-inscription of societal biases



**tressie mc** @tressiemcphd · 9h

Sadly, tempered enthusiasm doesn't sell well.

[Expand](#)

 xoJane.com

**Why I'm Masquerading As A White Bearded Hipster Guy On Twitter...**

By xoJane.com @xojanedotcom

Being a black woman is great. But being a black woman on social media can be a pain in the ass.

[View on web](#)



In a system that relies on free labour  
within an increasingly precarious  
profession



**Parker Higgins** @xor · Jan 6

I'm opening an academic-publishing-themed restaurant. You bring the ingredients and get volunteers to cook and serve. Now pay me \$10,000.



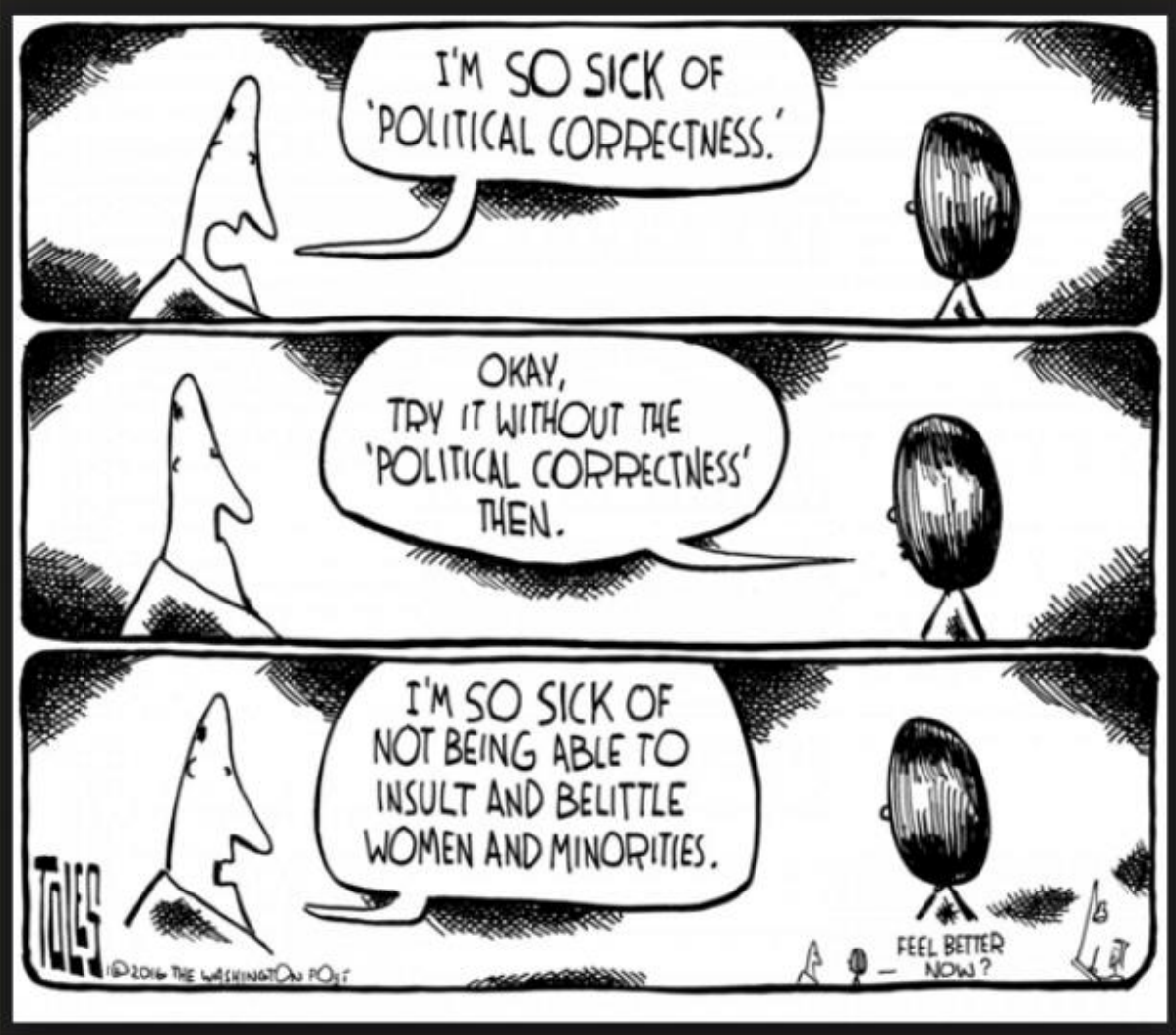
771



497



# Who is **standing in the gap**?



# Networked practices = scholarship

- Scholarship of discovery
- Scholarship of integration
- Scholarship of application
- Scholarship of teaching

(Boyer, 1990)



antonella esposito @antoesp · Feb 15

'Twitter and me: Using Twitter as a PhD Researcher' by @VickiMcDermott  
@scoopit sco.lt/7nqTVR via @socphd #phdchat



18

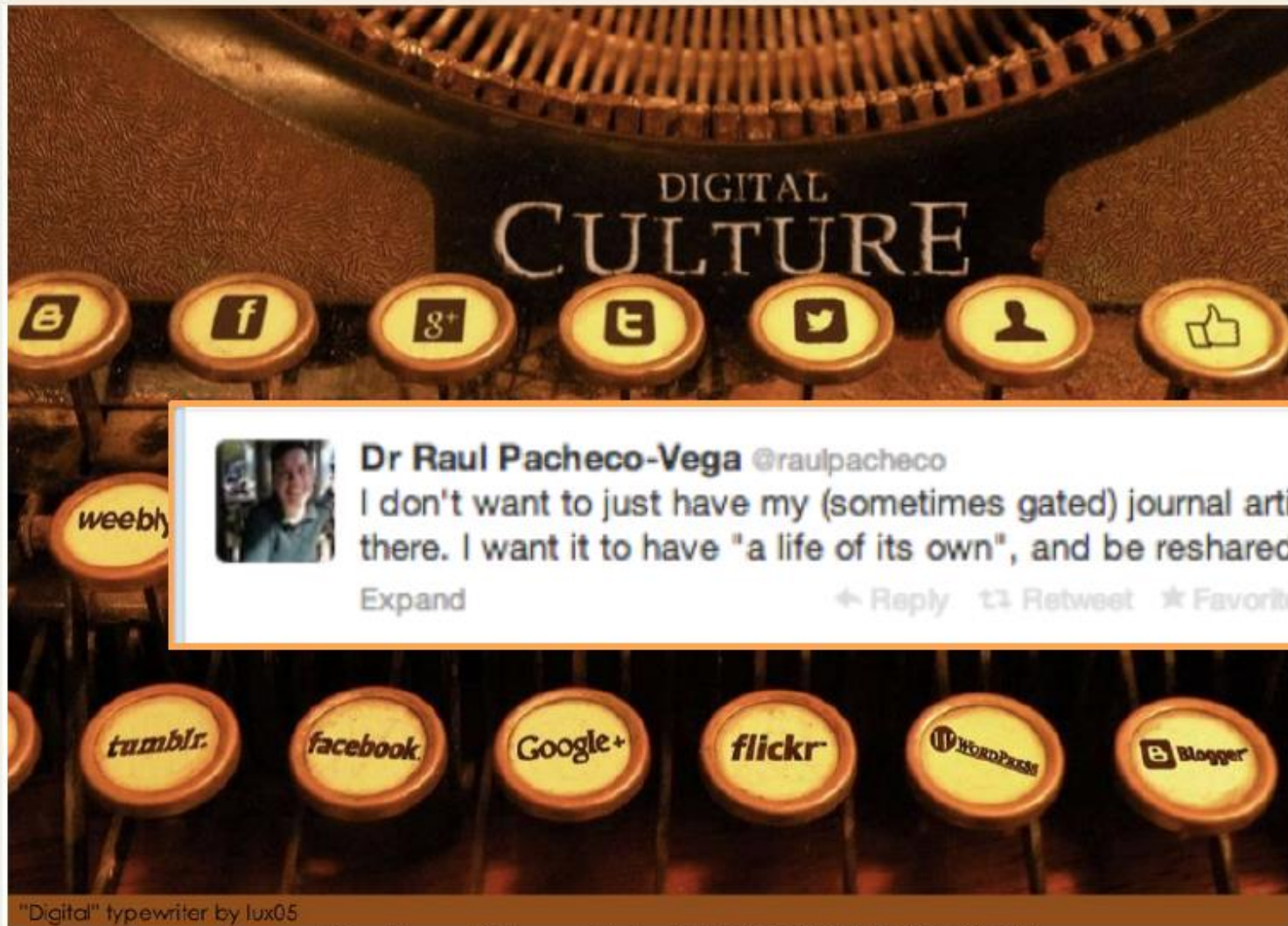


16



View summary

# But a scholarship of abundance



"Digital" typewriter by lux05

# ...and care



**Kate Bowles** @KateMfD · Feb 17

Beautiful, timely gift in the mail from [@drwitty\\_knitter](#) whom I've never met. Twitter: such kindness. [#chemo](#)



5



# Networks are becoming institutionalized



**Helen Rogers**  
@helenrogers19c

 Follow

[@Jessifer](#) In 2 minds about this. Would hate to see social media become another measure to assess & regulate us!

3:32 AM - 14 Jun 2014

2 FAVORITES



**Jesse Stommel**  
@Jessifer

 Follow

[@helenrogers19c](#) Well-said. Regulation and assessment practices in [#highered](#) would kill everything about Twitter that makes it scholarly.

9:48 AM - 14 Jun 2014

2 FAVORITES



# ASHES TO ASHES

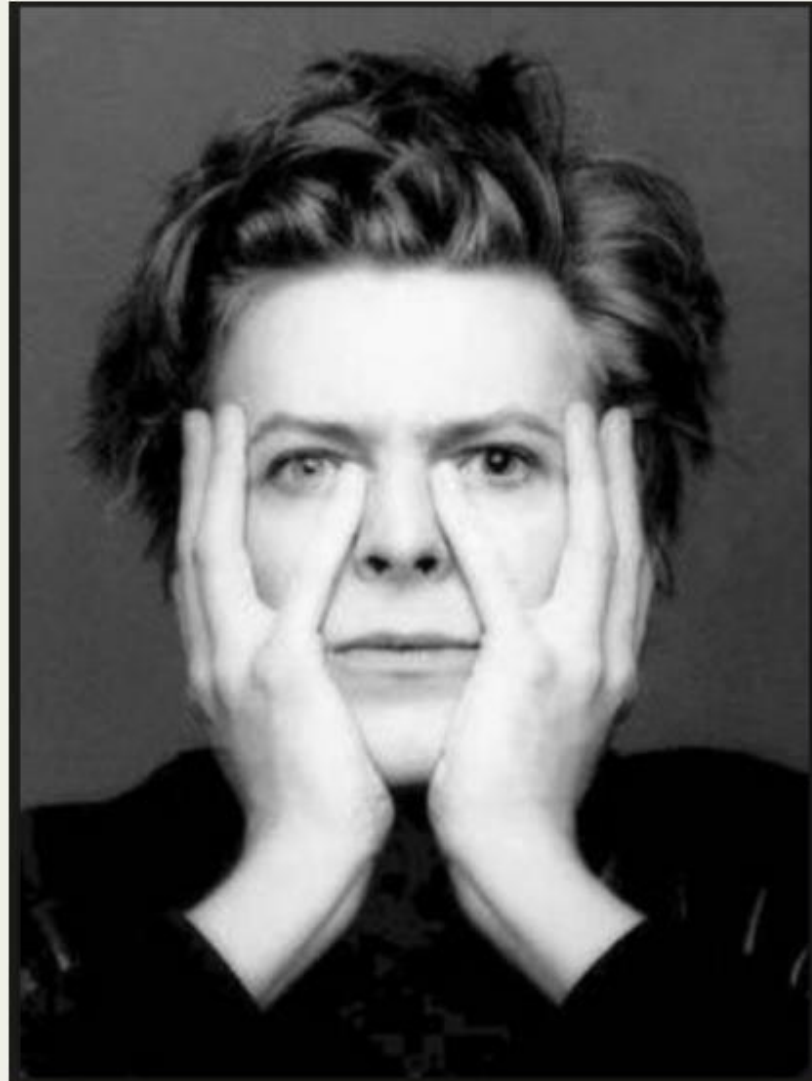


## OFFICE OF POLICY AND COMPLIANCE

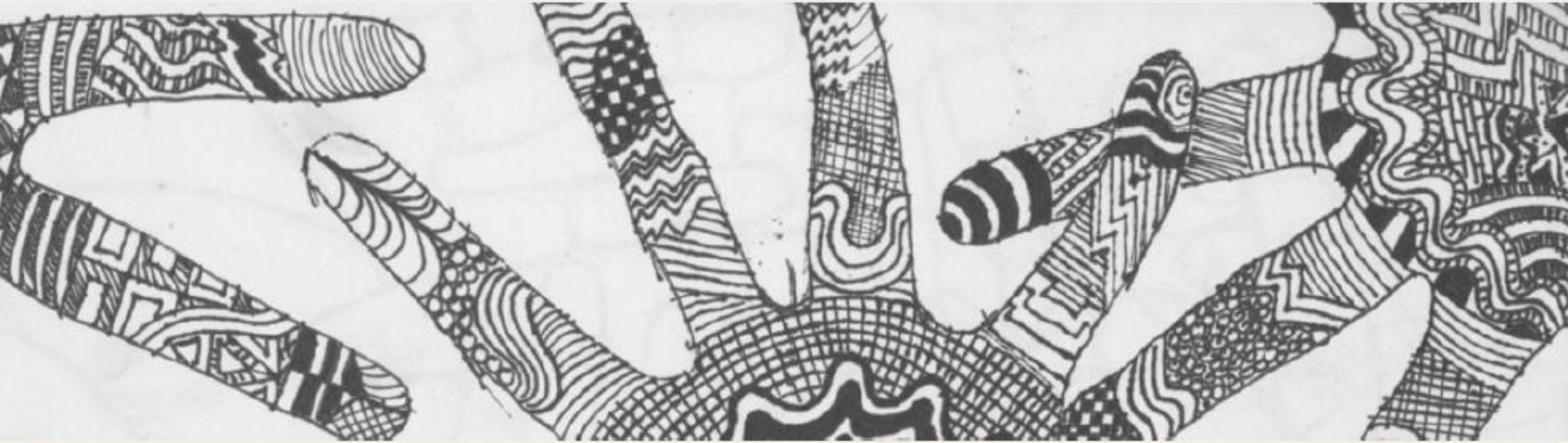
The Office of Policy and Compliance (OPC) is part of the Department of Policy, Risk and Environmental Programs (PREP) in the [Division of University Operations](#). Our mission is to meet the policy and compliance needs of the University by facilitating policy development, assisting the campus community in finding, understanding, and applying University Policies, and providing compliance tools and guidance.



We are **not** Bowie.



# GIVE ME YOUR HANDS



## VISION:

Digital **Literacies** for scholars & students

- Digital **Strategy** for systems
- **OER & Open Access** Literacies for scholars, students & systems
- Professional Learning/staff development for **portfolio** careers

...and don't panic

**“...And these children  
that you spit on  
as they try to change their worlds  
are immune to your consultations.  
They're quite aware  
of what they're going through...”**

**DAVID BOWIE**

ALL THE NOBODY PEOPLE AND  
ALL THE SOMEBODY PEOPLE  
NEVER THOUGHT  
I'D NEED SO  
MANY PEOPLE...



THANK YOU.  
Thoughts?

@bonstewart