


Best Practices using Technology in Advising

Jacqueline H. Wells, School of Art, NIU



Northern Illinois
University



“An effective advisor incorporates technology while maintaining dedication to building strong interpersonal relationships with advisees.”

– Jeff Carter



Technology Standards



- Hardware

- What type of machine can process the information needed to advise students and run any data processing software as well as social media sites?
- What office set-up will you use?
 - Traditional desk and chair v. Couch setting
 - Single v. Double screen
 - Student computer stations
 - iPads for advisor/student use

- Software

- Software should be able to combine data about students (grades, course loads, financial aid, degree progress toward graduation, housing and contact information, etc.)
- According to the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, “Academic advisors must have access to computing equipment, local networks, student data bases, and the Internet.”



Technology Standards cont.

- Replacement costs and frequency
 - How fast is technology changing? About every 4-5 years computers need to be replaced to handle the upgrades in software
 - Can costs be recouped by the reduction of printing costs and postage charges? How can we absorb the cost of technology?
- Student Background
 - Do they have access to the technology you are asking them to use?
 - Do they have the resources to learn new technology?
 - What do our students prefer? Remote access or person-to-person contact?
 - What are our students preferred contact hours? Is it during normal business hours, or would alternative hours best suit the student population?
 - Technology has created a 24/7 environment, how are we responding?



Professional Development

“Staff training is one of the most important investments that can be made. [regarding changing technology]” (Multari, 2004).

- Staying current with available technologies
 - MyNIU training
 - Professional software such as Microsoft Office training sessions
 - Learning to use networking sites; *Facebook*, YouTube, Twitter, LinkedIn, Skype, eBlogger, etc.
 - Automated email software, i.e. Hobsons
 - Data-collection programs
- Ethical Issues
 - “Once received, electronic communication becomes a public document whose subsequent redistribution cannot be governed by the original author... All of this suggests that the use of e-mail as a management and communications tool must be carefully considered and appropriately used.” (Moneta, 1997).
 - We should treat e-mail like a postcard – Confidential information should rarely be transmitted this way



Professional Development cont.

- Ethical Issues
 - FERPA
 - Applies to information in possession of the university
 - Does not apply to “directory information”
 - When using Social Media sites, remember information that pertains to university grades, or other academic records is private. Know NIU’s policy guidelines when considering posting publicly on a students wall, or even emailing them confidential information.



Current Research

- Inform

- We provide information to students through websites, emails, *Facebook* events and postings, Tweets, and web training modules like Moodle.org
- What is the preferred method of communication?
 - Asynchronous - not occurring at the same time (e-mail)
- Vs.
- Synchronous - occurring at the same time; coinciding in time; simultaneous (IM, Skype, Twitter)

The screenshot displays the Northern Illinois University website. At the top, the university's name and logo are visible, along with navigation links for 'ABOUT', 'ACADEMICS', 'ADMISSIONS', 'ATHLETICS', 'GIVE', 'LIBRARIES', 'STUDENT LIFE', and 'VISIT'. A search bar is located in the top right corner. Below the navigation bar, there is a section titled 'Resources for Students' with a sub-header 'Exploring Majors Fair' and a date 'Monday, Sept. 26'. The main content area is organized into several columns of links and services, including 'Academic Resources', 'Activities & Events', 'Staying Safe on Campus', 'Calendars', 'Catalogs & Courses', 'Computing', 'Libraries', 'Study Skills/Test Prep', 'Financing Your Education', 'Living Off-Campus', 'Transportation', and 'Support Services'. A 'Quick Links' section is also present on the right side. At the bottom of the page, there is a footer with copyright information and contact details.



Current Research cont.

- Organize
 - Promote student interaction and community by creating and sharing events
 - Groups in *Facebook* can open the floor for discussions, connect student populations, and create forums for specific students to gather information
 - Let us meet students where they are; Online!



Current Research cont.

• Educate

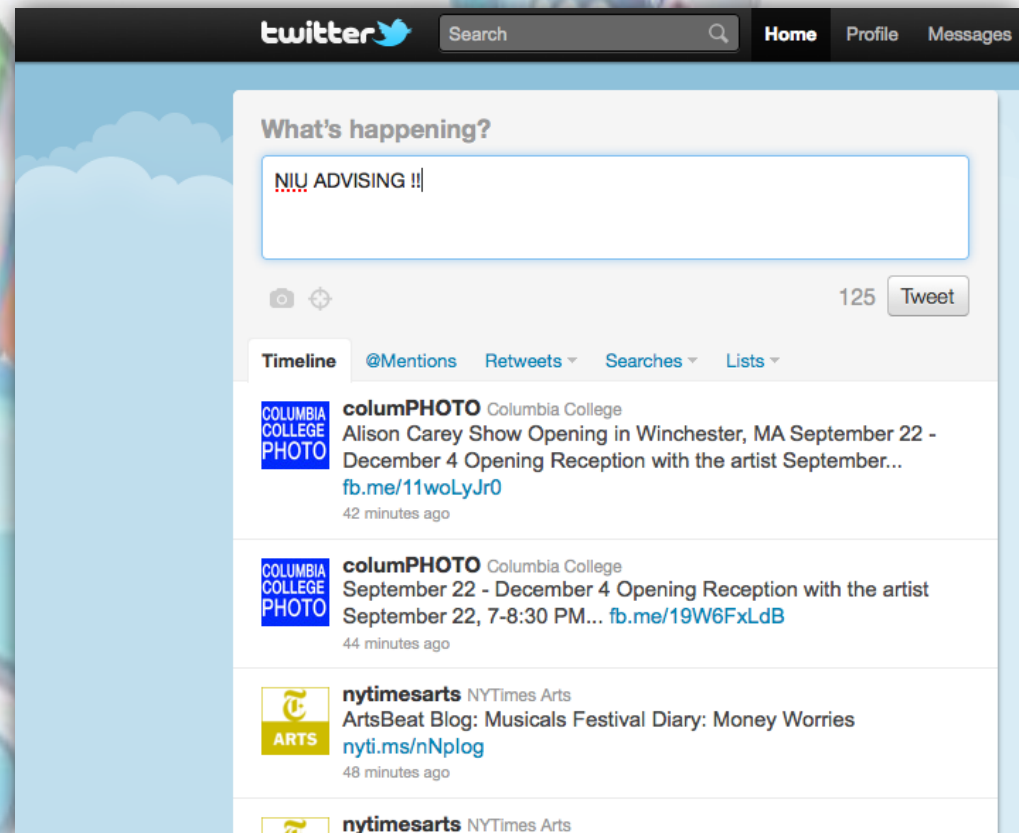
- “Technology only complements academic advising to impact student success when it is used as a tool to achieve a Student Learning Outcome.” (Larson, 2011).
- Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)
 - SLOs are benchmarks we set for students to help them navigate through the university and into their careers
- The goal of using technology in advising is to teach students to take an active role in their education and future
 - This goal leads advisors to find new ways to advise and help students succeed
- Teach students appropriate online etiquette; what they post can affect their professional lives



Current Research cont.

- Connect

- Blogging
- Twitter
- *Facebook*
- LinkedIn
- YouTube
- Second Life
- MySpace

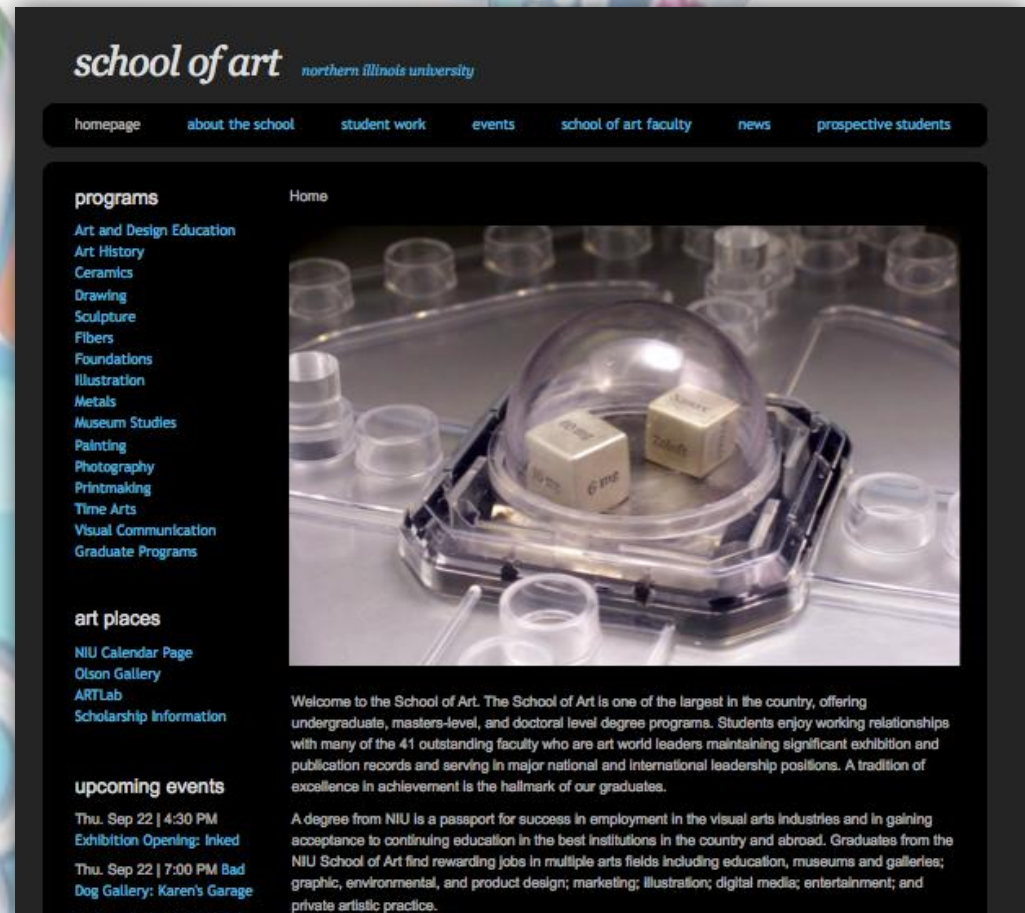


- University and College/School calendars are available for students to stay up-to-date on happenings around campus



NIU and the School of Art

- The School of Art currently utilizes a variety of technology to engage our students.
 - Web page
 - *Facebook* SoA page
 - Graduate Student *Facebook* page
 - YouTube channel
 - MapWorks early alert system
 - Powerpoint presentation for incoming students that is e-mailed during orientation for future information reference
 - TV monitors announcing events, shows, deadlines, student successes, faculty achievements in the hallways
 - College of VPA maintains a blog for students and alumni



school of art northern illinois university

homepage about the school student work events school of art faculty news prospective students

programs Home

Art and Design Education
Art History
Ceramics
Drawing
Sculpture
Fibers
Foundations
Illustration
Metals
Museum Studies
Painting
Photography
Printmaking
Time Arts
Visual Communication
Graduate Programs

art places

NIU Calendar Page
Olson Gallery
ARTLab
Scholarship Information

upcoming events

Thu. Sep 22 | 4:30 PM
Exhibition Opening: *Inked*

Thu. Sep 22 | 7:00 PM Bad
Dog Gallery: *Karen's Garage*

Welcome to the School of Art. The School of Art is one of the largest in the country, offering undergraduate, masters-level, and doctoral level degree programs. Students enjoy working relationships with many of the 41 outstanding faculty who are art world leaders maintaining significant exhibition and publication records and serving in major national and international leadership positions. A tradition of excellence in achievement is the hallmark of our graduates.

A degree from NIU is a passport for success in employment in the visual arts industries and in gaining acceptance to continuing education in the best institutions in the country and abroad. Graduates from the NIU School of Art find rewarding jobs in multiple arts fields including education, museums and galleries; graphic, environmental, and product design; marketing; illustration; digital media; entertainment; and private artistic practice.



Future Endeavors

- Currently, we are working to create a new structure of connecting to our students and advising them.
 - iPads for advisors
 - Students can sign into their MyNIU and follow along on Degree Progress Report
 - If there are tasks they need to complete in their student account while in my office, I can walk them through the process
 - They can take responsibility for looking up information
 - Essentially, having students able to actively participate during an advising session will create opportunities for Student Learning Outcomes
 - Skype advising hours
 - Our students do not keep 8:00 am – 4:30 pm hours!
 - This program will allow for advisors to be flexible with their advising hours and connect with students during more appropriate times






– Orientation training session and review

- Using Moodle.org, we are working to create an orientation review for incoming students
 - This will contain the same information in our current PowerPoint, but the program is interactive and will include questions to ensure students are retaining information
 - Students will print or e-mail results to advisors and then schedule an advising appointment where we will review progress toward graduation
 - We have not decided if we will put a hold on students accounts until this is completed
- Continuing to analyze how we can better use social media to connect to our students and help them succeed





While virtual sites will never replace face-to-face advising, we should not ignore our opportunity to expand our practices and reach our students in innovative ways.

- What are the best practices with technology use in advising that NIU currently employs?
- How can we improve our use of technology?



Bibliography



- Larson, Joshua. (2011). How Technology Complements Academic Advising to Impact Student Success. *Academic Advising Today*, v. 34.3.
- Moneta, Larry. (1997). The integration of technology with the management of student services. *New Directions for Student Services: Using Technology to Promote Student Learning*, 78, 5-16.
- Multari, R. J. (2004). Integrating Technology into Advisement Services. *The Mentor: An Academic Advising Journal*.

