

## **Video Lecture: Tools to Publish, Tools to Search, Tool to Archive**

If we think back to the start of the semester when I talked about the definition of the so-called social media, I said I was very unsatisfied with most modern definitions. Instead, I prefer to examine technologies through a historical perspective, to see them on a continuum. In that way, we have a better vantage point for evaluating what works, what doesn't and *why*, which is maybe the most important of all the questions.

That said, there comes a time when the theoretical gives way to the practical in terms of your learning. At some point, you need to pick up the tools we've discussed. You need to play with them. You need to be frustrated by them.

Once you develop that understanding, you can begin to meld the theoretical with the practical.

At that point, you'll have gone Full Zen on me.

### **Tools To Publish**

The first component of the so-called social media is the ability to use software tools to publish into the data stream. There are several ways to set about doing that.

- You can build your own website, either by hand or by using software tools
- You can use blog tools to publish your own site (with a little less control over the look and feel)
- You can use tumblr, which essentially re-creates the micro-blogging formats within a blog environment
- You can use micro-blogging to publish directly into a data stream that can be captured and parsed in a few different ways

### **Blogs**

You can have a self-hosted blog (which means you run it off your own server or you rent space on a server) or you have a hosted blog (which means you don't have a specific URL, but you don't have to pay for those services).

- [Blogger](#) - Google
- WordPress – [hosted](#) or [self hosted](#)
- [Live Journal](#) – this is a private community

### **Web Pages**

- [Google Sites](#) – creates a simple web page and links, unlike a blog which you can easily publish to – this you'll be creating a page or editing a page each time
- Dreamweaver – this is a software tool used to create websites using a combination of graphical interfaces and hand coding

[Tumblr](#) -- This is a micro-blogging service, more like a clip service, that allows you to grab and easily share short pieces of information to a hosted service.

### **Micro-Blogging:**

- [Twitter](#)
- [Google Buzz](#)

### **Life Streaming**

- [FriendFeed](#) – you can use a service like this to aggregate all the different places you publish (in that sense its an aggregation and search tools as well) but you can also publish out into the data stream.

When you begin to look at these basic publishing tools (think CREATORS), you can see the modern digital world offers a variety of ways to get your thoughts out into the world.

As future media folks, it's important to have some understanding of how these services work, what they can do and how you can interact with them. The best way to figure that out: start playing around with them.

### **Tools To Search**

When you think of search, most people default to Google. But the search for information online is far beyond Google. There are search engines that crawl for information related to specific topics, there are human-powered engines, and meta-engines that pull from a variety of sources.

You can find a list of relatively comprehensive search list [here](#), or a [vast archive at Wikipedia](#).

The point is this: a smart searcher doesn't simply go to Google. A smart information surfer begins with Google and moves out into the vast sea of information armed with a variety of tools meant to dig up specific bits of data.

Once you get comfortable with these tools, the next thing you must master is *how* to search. You need to extrapolate meaning to find keywords that summarize and identify what information you're trying to track down (in other words, if you tell me you can't find something my initial response is that you haven't done a very good job searching).

The logic and language skills you need to do this aren't easily acquired. It takes time and patience to search for information, parse out what it means, extrapolate keywords and go deeper into the Web.

### **Traditional Search Tools**

- Google
- Bing
- Yahoo

### **Computational Search**

- [Wolfram-Alpha](#): This is a computational search engine (created by a few former Google-ites) that tries to answer questions. It takes data and creates relational information. This is about information and knowledge, not just data.

### **Blog Searches**

- [Bloglines](#)
- [Technorati](#)
- [Google Blog Search](#)

### **Human-Powered Search**

- [ChaCha](#)
- [Mahalo](#)

### **Comprehensive Search**

- [Dogpile](#)
- [Metacrawler](#)

### **Forum Search**

- [Omgili](#)

### **Tools To Archive**

It's not enough to publish information and find information, one of the hardest things you'll do is try to keep your head around what is happening. It doesn't do you any good if you have your bits and pieces of information scattered across the digital landscape.

There are multiple ways to gather information. Understanding which one works with the problem you have is the first step in mastering technology.

- [Lifestreaming](#): This type of service allows you to pull published information (yours and others) into one place.
- Google Reader/RSS: RSS allows publishers to create feeds that people can store in Readers, making it much easier to gather -- and search -- content.
- [Social Bookmarking](#): A service that enables you to create a Web-based archive of websites you want to keep, tagged for organization.
- Blog archives: Whether self-hosted or hosted, your blog should have a database that stores all your information.
- [Note-taking software](#): A service that allows you to pull audio, video, Web clips, notes and other digital bits into one place.