

# The Platformisation of Career

*Exploring the experiences of graduates using social media for their post-university career transitions*

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# Summary

- *Digital literacy dominant concern in the literature*
- *Weak conceptualisation of digital technology*
- *Data from study points towards technological experience as*
  - *Inducted*
  - *Fetishised*
  - *Surveilled*



# Digital Literacy

- *Developed by authors like Belshaw (2012), heavily supported by JISC*
- *Linked to Digital Career Literacy (Hooley, 2012; Bridgstock, 2016)*
- *Instrumental view of engagement with technology*
- *Focuses on utility over structure*



# Digital Platforms

*Srnicek (2017), Meijas (2013), Van Dijck (2013) - draw attention to platforms as an economic model where participation is structured by the platforms designer.*



# Study

- *Exploration of how graduates use and experience social media platforms as part of their career transitions*
- *Longitudinal study over 2 year period (winter 2019- spring 2022)*
- *24 initial participants*



# Overview

- *Outcomes heavily linked to sector*
- *Some significantly positive stories but mostly negligible impact moving towards dissatisfaction*
- *Students showed ‘pencil sketch’ understanding of digital literacies*
- *No significant mitigation to the pandemic*



# Induction



# Induction

- *Students started using digital platforms for career at university because of university staff*
- *Linked to digitisation and employability agendas*



*“we kept being told all of these amazing stories of people who actually got amazing jobs on LinkedIn. And I just kept thinking, How is that? Why is that? Why have I not actually spoken to anybody who's ever done this?”*

# Fetishism





# Fetishism

- *“Symbolic substitution” - Kappler and De Querol (2011)*
- *Often looked at digital platforms as social and powerful despite experiences to the contrary*

*“Well, throughout University, there was a lot of talk going on about how useful LinkedIn is and how we need to be quite interactive on it and keeping the engagement going. So I did, I did all of that. And in a way, I was expecting more from it... But I was pretty, yeah, I was pretty sure that, that keeping it up and keeping everything going on LinkedIn is going to have some form of positive impact, even though I wouldn't necessarily know in what reference...”*

# Surveillance





# Surveillance

- *Very aware of surveillance, saw this as a double edged sword*
- *“Masquerade ball”*
- *Often traded authenticity for “professionalism”*
- *Despite this experienced harassment*

*“Yeah, you do a lot of things that people have ruined their career chances. They’ve got these embarrassing pictures on Facebook or all of these old Tweets which celebrities are getting done for lately. Yeah, so things like that can damage your reputation and career.”*

*“But I keep it I generally keep myself obviously, very professional presenting even on Twitter...There's nothing that could be construed as unprofessional and stuff. Because obviously, I know that people will look up my accounts and things like that.”*

*“Yeah. I don't really put anything on there about, say political views... I don't really post anything like that of that nature. And just to keep it completely separate, really.”*



Platformisation





# Platformisation

- *Supported by digitisation in HE and Employability Agenda*
- *Situates agency*
- *Influences beliefs*
- *Exposes to surveillance*



# Recommendations

- *Avoid technological solutionism*
- *Contextualise digital platform use in career pathways*
- *Develop hybrid understanding of career*
- *Reflect on limits and precarity of students*



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