Promoting a mathematics support centre: what works?

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Introductions

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Previously in MASH

Exchange! 2015
Sharing Ideas for Learning & Teaching at Bath
Thursday 7th May 2015, Chancellors' Building

Promoting a mathematics support service: what works?
However…

I wish MASH existed when I was in first year.

You should have drop-ins during exams.

One of my housemates told me about MASH. It was lucky it just happened to come up in conversation.

You should advertise MASH better.
What did we do?

- Survey via sigma mailing list
- Spoke to other support services at Bath
- Researched other institutions and the literature
- Drew upon our own experiences
Survey results: key findings

Lecture shout outs and promotion from lecturers are most used and most effective methods.

Difficult to know how effective promotional methods are.

Few Maths support centres use social media, many would like to…

But they don’t know how / don’t have time / are nervous about it / …
Social media – why?

Institutions need to make sure they’re [...] communicating with students over channels those students are already using.

Martyn Harrow  
Jisc Chief Executive

Research has revealed a sharp rise in the number of students using social media to stay in touch with tutors at college and university, with 40% of students now using social as a means of communication with lecturers.

Promoting a mathematics support service: what works?
Social media – why?

Why educators can’t live without social media

by Eric Stoller
20 July 2015

From student recruitment to alumni relations, social media has a place at every step of the student journey, says Eric Stoller. Institutions and educators ignore it at their peril.

Communication is at the core of the human experience. How we learn, teach and engage is predicated on our ability to communicate with one another, and technology-based services

Social media doesn’t replace face-to-face communication, it adds a needed layer of options

Promoting a mathematics support service: what works?
SOCIAL MEDIA EXPLAINED

FACEBOOK
I like doughnuts

LINKEDIN
My skills include doughnut eating

TWITTER
I’m eating a #doughnut

PINTEREST
Here’s a doughnut recipe

BLOGGER
Read about my doughnut eating experiences

LAST FM
Now listening to “doughnuts”

FOURSQUARE
This is where I eat doughnuts

INSTAGRAM
Here’s a vintage photo of my doughnut

YOUTUBE
Watch me eating a doughnut

GOOGLE+
I’m a Google employee who eats doughnuts

Promoting a mathematics support service: what works?
Premier League ref giving lecture on campus this Wednesday (+ link)
Social media – key dates

- A-levels results day
- Freshers' week
- Exams
- University/Departmental open days
- ‘Maths dates’ – Pi day, World Maths Day, Birthdays of famous mathematicians, ...

Useful resource: http://www-history.mcs.st-and.ac.uk/
Social media – Top tips for posting

**DO**
- ✓ Interact
- ✓ Be visual
- ✓ Keep posts brief
- ✓ Publicise all settings
- ✓ Vary your posts
- ✓ Use pictures
- ✓ Ask questions

**✓ Link all platforms**
**✓ Investigate tools to help you (Hootsuite, Bitly...)**
**✓ Make sure you know what you are doing!**
Social media – Top tips for posting

DONOT
	× Ignore the audience
	× Be too formal
	× Forget to appreciate responses
	× Write lengthy posts

DONT
	× Post too much
	× Clutter newsfeed
	× Start without a plan

Promoting a mathematics support service: what works?
Social media – Facebook

Promoting a mathematics support service: what works?
Social media – Twitter

MASH at Bath @BathMASH · Aug 19
Looking forward to the social media for maths support workshop on Monday @gomaynooth @CMacaBhaird maths facebook twitter

MASH at Bath retweeted
University of Bath @UniofBath · Aug 18
What does a mathematician really look like? @Kit_Yates_Maths bit.ly/1MA8rw5 #realfaceofmath
A couple of tips

Promoting a mathematics support service: what works?
Promotional video

Starts with a story
Covers key MASH activities, not all
Features many students
Key message: MASH is for all and friendly

Visual: People
Audio: General information
Text: Specific information
Promotional video

Easy for lecturers to...
  show in lectures
  link on VLE

✓ Removes coordination issues
✓ Can look again later
Get an expert in!
Next steps

- Develop other promotional materials
- Publish findings
- Publish social media guide
In conclusion – so what does work?

- Speaking to students!
- Speak to other support services / departments at your institution
- Decide what you want to achieve (e.g. social media audit)
- Develop your brand
- Be committed! It takes time.
- Ask the experts.

- Time will tell…
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Comments and questions welcomed.

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