Ten Sources for Learning More about Social Media

One of the first steps that principals interested in incorporating social media strategies into their communication and professional development plans can take is to read as much as they can about the role that new tools are playing in schools and businesses. The following readings and resources are good starting points for initial studies about the changing nature of communication, professional development and learning in a world dominated by social media spaces.

Websites

There are literally dozens of blogs and websites—many of which were introduced in Chapter 2— focused on the role that social media tools are playing in education. Two in particular, however, are bound to be of value to principals interested in using social media tools for instruction, communication and/or professional development.

Ed Social Media
http://www.edsocialmedia.com/

The edSocialMedia website started in 2008 as a home for extending the natural conversations occurring between four friends interested in the role that social media was playing in education. Since then, it has become one of the most significant online destinations for educators studying social media in schools. Anchored by a thorough and provocative blog (http://www.edsocialmedia.com/blog/topic/) and offering opportunities for extended learning through social media boot camps, the edSocial Media community is worth exploring.

Connected Principals
http://www.connectedprincipals.com/

The Connected Principals website—a group blog being maintained by 20 different principals serving schools across the demographic spectrum—is a great example of how blogs can be used as social media spaces. Writing about topics ranging from best educational practices and distributed leadership to school branding and technology integration, the Connected Principals are generating content that you're bound to find valuable. Be sure to explore the comment sections of each entry and imagine how interactions between blog authors and readers can become a regular part of your school's communication plan.

Books

While there aren't a ton of titles covering the use of social media tools in schools, there have been dozens of great books written for businesses interested in entering social media spaces. They include:

Power Friending: Demystifying Social Media to Grow Your Business
http://amzn.to/powerfriending

Written by social media expert Amber Mac, *Power Friending* might just be the most approachable explanation of the ins-and-outs of using social media to connect with communities ever written. Covering the characteristics of successful social media efforts and introducing the basic tools that companies are embracing, Power Friending is a great read for any school leader serious about exploring the role that social media can play in schools. (Readers may also be interested in listening to Amber Mac talk about social media in education with Steve Hargadon of Classroom 2.0, which can be found online here: http://bit.ly/ambermacinterview).

Twitterville: How Businesses Can Thrive in New Global Neighborhoods
http://amzn.to/twittervillebook

Focused specifically on the role that Twitter is playing in 21st Century communication patterns, *Twitterville* is an easy read detailing the work of several different individuals and businesses that have used Twitter to authentically engage with the communities that they are connected to. Full of true stories culled from interviews conducted by author Shel Israel during the course of his career as a social media blogger and public speaker, *Twitterville* can help principals to understand Twitter, a social media tool that is often misunderstood by educators.

Grown Up Digital: How the Net Generation is Changing Your World
http://amzn.to/grownupdigital

Designed as an introduction to the communication patterns and expectations of the Net Generation—individuals between the ages of 13 and 32—*Grown Up Digital* is a must-read for any principal who wants to be responsive to the desires of younger teachers. Covering topics ranging from the way that Net Generation brains process information to the kinds of strategies and behaviors that businesses can use to recruit, engage and retain younger workers, author Don Tapscott uses his experiences as the chief executive of a think tank focused on innovation in business to create one of the most useful guides to understanding today's employees.

Twitter Feeds and Delicious Collections

The best place to keep up with the ever-changing social media landscape, however, are online conversations and communities. Consider searching for the following tags and hashtags on Twitter (http://www.twitter.com) and Delicious (http:// www.delicious.com) to find the latest resources being used by educators interested in taking advantage of the power of social media in schools:

Twitter Hashtag: #cpchat
http://bit.ly/cpchatresults

The principals responsible for the Connected Principals website—and the readers who join them for regular conversations on the role that technology can play in education—use the Twitter hashtag #cpchat to make the resources that they are sharing easy to find for other Twitter users. By visiting this link, you can quickly skim the content being explored by these leaders in the effort to make social media a more significant part of the work being done in schools.

Twitter Hashtag: #edchat
http://bit.ly/edchatresults

The hashtag #edchat has been adopted by many progressive teachers, administrators and professional development providers interested in joining together to share meaningful resources related to the changing nature of education in the 21st Century. Here, you're guaranteed to find interesting links being shared and questions being asked. You'll also be able to spot like minds that might be worth adding to your personal learning network. Finally, you'll be able to join regular weekly conversations focused on everything from aspects of education ranging from assessment to technology integration.

Twitterstream: Pew Internet and American Life Project
http://twitter.com/Pew_Internet

The Pew Internet and American Life Project (http://pewinternet.org/), a project dedicated to studying the impact that the Internet is having on American society, is the premier provider of research on topics ranging from the social media habits of teens to the ways that demographic groups use online resources differently. This link—which connects to the Twitterstream of the Pew Internet team— is a great place to find direct links to new reports being published by Pew researchers.

Delicious Tag: Social Media
http://www.delicious.com/tag/socialmedia

Delicious—a social bookmarking service that allows users to easily share web finds with one another—has huge collections of current information on social media spaces. This constantly updated link includes every website that Delicious users tagged with the label "socialmedia." While not specifically created for or spotted by educators, the resources included in this collection are current and likely to contain reads that you'll find interesting.

Delicious Tag: Social Networking
http://www.delicious.com/tag/socialnetworking

Much like the "socialmedia" Delicious tag, this link connects to a constantly updated collection of resources that Delicious users are tagging "socialnetworking." While the resources included here are not always specifically connected to education, they will keep you connected to the trends in conversations around the role that social media is playing in our lives.