

Japan Geoscience Union Meeting 2011

(May 22-27 2011 at Makuhari, Chiba, Japan)

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MTT034-P05

Room:Convention Hall

Time:May 24 14:00-16:30

Use of social media in academic societies and universities in earth and planetary science: present situation & problems

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The use of social media in the geoscience-related academic societies and universities has recently been increasing. American Geophysical Union (AGU) promotes the use of social networking systems (SNSs) such as blog, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube, as they have their official account and put the links on the top page of AGU website. European Geosciences Union (EGU) operates their original SNS (COSIS.net) to promote information distribution and the mutual communication among the members. Such social media has also been frequently used as the official accounts by universities, as well as by departments and personal levels. Also in Japan, more private universities are using blogs and Twitter with their official accounts, and the number of their personal- or laboratory-level use has also been increasing. For instance, although Japanese-style lectures often do not have an atmosphere of discussing or talking during the lecture time, the use of Twitter in our teaching classes helps us to communicate with many students in the class at real time. However, we should care of, under the current situation, the discrepancy between the users and non-users of such social media, and even within the users whose information literacy highly varies when we use social media as a communication tool in the academic society and universities. In terms of the use of Twitter in teaching classes, for instance, not all the students can use it effectively and it should be regarded as a supplementary tool. Social media, however, will become a powerful tool to enhance science when they develop maturely in the near future.

Keywords: social media, academic society, university, information literacy