



**Instructions
for playing**

**SOCIAL
NETWORKING ~**

**SNAKES &
LADDERS**

**tweet and share
and comment ...**

Purpose

Can social media be work?

This game is a tool to spark discussion about how we use social media at work.

What you will need

- ✔ A snakes and ladders board
- ✔ A counter for each player
- ✔ A pack of game cards
- ✔ Two snakes (one long, one short) and two ladders (one long, one short)

How to play: Part 1

The game is played in much the same way as traditional snakes and ladders. Each player has a counter and the aim is to move your counter along the board from start to finish. If you land on a snake this takes you down the board, while ladders take you up.

The difference is that instead of a rolling a dice, you use the game cards. Each game card describes a different social media situation that you might find yourself in at work.

With all the counters placed on 'start', the first player turns a card and reads out the situation. All players should discuss the activity as a group and then decide individually whether they agree or not. All players who agree with the statement move their counter along the board the number of spaces specified. All players who disagree with the statement remain where they are.

The next player then turns over the next card.... and so on.

How long you play for depends on the time you have available and how long your discussions last. We suggest about twenty minutes as a guideline.

Note

The game cards describe a variety of different situations involving the work use of social media. The important thing is that there are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers. Some players might not move along the board very far, while others reach the end.

How to play: Part 2

While playing the game, you will probably have identified some 'ladders' – motivations for choosing to use social media at work and also some 'snakes' – barriers stopping you using social media.

In your groups, discuss the motivations and barriers you have identified. On the large snake, write the biggest barrier; on the small snake, one of the lesser barriers. Similarly, on the long ladder, write the strongest motivations; on the short ladder, one of the secondary motivations.

Share these with the other groups playing the game. Are there any similarities or differences?

Suggestions for follow-up activities/outcomes

What would 'winning' this game look like? Does winning mean using all and every kind of social media? Does it mean using them strategically? How can we engage with academics and non-academics via social media?

Personal

- ➔ Identify a barrier to using social media that you think you can overcome. Set yourself a realistic time to achieve this in.
- ➔ Identify an activity you can put into practice and set yourself a goal to do.

Institutional

- ➔ Identify an institutional barrier to using social media – can you find a way to overcome it? What help or support would you need from your institution?
- ➔ Do your colleagues think of social media as work? Are there routes to be recognised and rewarded for excellent work using social media?

The issues you will address through this game can be explored in more detail by studying the resources we have developed at Attributes of digital engagers – <http://weblab.open.ac.uk/dper>



Social networking: snakes and ladders was conceived at The Open University by Ann Grand (Institute of Educational Technology) and Helen Donelan (Faculty of Mathematics, Computing and Technology), with the support of Richard Holliman (Faculty of Science) and Peter Devine (graphic designer, Institute of Educational Technology).

The ideas for this game arose from research conducted at The Open University. Ann's work was conducted as part of Research Council's UK Catalyst for Public Engagement with Research [Grant Number EP/J020087/1] 2012 – 2015. Helen's research, into the use of social media for enhancing professional networking and engagement opportunities in academia, was undertaken as an eSTEeM project at The Open University.

The output of both these projects highlighted the challenges that academics and researchers encounter as they acknowledge the value of maintaining a public profile and face increasing calls for research to be discussed in the public sphere. Digital and social media offer a space where these demands can be met. But social networking is not a straightforward option: researchers have to juggle multiple priorities and spending time in the digital realm has to be justifiable. In short, it's a knotty challenge; a game of snakes and ladders.

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