# Social Media for Knowledge Translation

## Social Media

"A collection of web-based technologies which share a user-focused approach to design and functionality, where users actively participate in content creation and editing through open collaboration between members of communities of practice."^{1}

Examples: wikis, blogs, podcasts, vlogging

## Knowledge Translation

"A dynamic and iterative process that includes synthesis, dissemination, exchange, and ethically-sound application of knowledge to improve the health of Canadians, provide more effective health services and products, and strengthen the health care system."^{2}

## Using Social Media for Knowledge Translation^{3-7}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>Challenges</th>
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| **Message Content & Quality**  
  - Create easily consumed summaries  
  - Link target audiences to primary source  
  - Rapid dissemination & exchange of information  
  - Easy feedback mechanism for two-way communication & post-publication review  | **Message Content & Quality**  
  - Difficulty presenting important detail  
  - Trustworthiness of the source  
  - Difficulty tailoring message to diverse audience  |
| **Audience & Networks**  
  - People already use social media, can reach a broad audience  
  - Fewer degrees of separation between individuals  
  - Creation of networks & communities with similar interests  
  - Complements traditional publishing  
  - Information is free to access  | **Audience & Networks**  
  - Targeting the correct audience  
  - Blurring the line between personal & professional networks  
  - Creation of echo chambers that reinforce existing views instead of providing feedback  
  - Less personal with fewer face-to-face interactions  
  - Message may get lost in translation  
  - Cannot manage information flow  |
| **Message Medium**  
  - Freedom to share alternative content like figures, videos, podcasts, and infographics  
  - Flexibility in when & how to share information  
  - Portable content  | **Message Medium**  
  - Choosing the most appropriate social media platform & how to communicate message  
  - "Digital footprint" cannot be erased  
  - Privacy issues  
  - Difficult to filter out non-relevant information  |
| **Effort & Value**  
  - Time efficient for health professionals & patients accessing information  
  - Use of metrics to measure social engagement (e.g., Altmetrics)  | **Effort & Value**  
  - Time consuming to maintain social media accounts  
  - Shortage of evidence on the effectiveness of social media for knowledge translation, learning & implementation  |
Using Social Media (SM) to Translate Evidence into Practice: Results of a Survey of Health Researchers & Clinicians (n = 856)

Social Media Use

Confidence in Using Social Media

Professional use 80%

Personal use 89%

Confidence 58%

Personal use 81%

Social Media Use for Professional Purposes

Professional networking 44%

Studying 36%

Obtaining research evidence 27%

Professional development 24%

Disseminating research evidence 15%

Biggest Obstacle using SM to Obtain Information

Information being trustworthy 71%

Biggest Obstacle using SM to Share Information

Lack of privacy 38%

Even though there are similar rates of professional & personal SM use...

...users are significantly less confident using SM professionally.

Professional SM use is primarily for networking, rather than knowledge translation activities.

Trustworthiness of information & lack of privacy are major concerns for researchers & clinicians.

Interesting Facts & Tips for Using Social Media for Knowledge Translation

Most popular platforms for professional purposes:

Facebook

Twitter

YouTube

of health professionals are able to spend time online for professional purposes during the workday.

Perceived trustworthiness of information was a key barrier to professional social media use.

This may be addressed with brief messages obtained from a reputable source & linked to full sources.

Training programs on professional social media use may increase the number of health professionals that use social media for obtaining & communicating research evidence.

Equally effective in improving clinician knowledge & promoting behaviour change.

References


Available from www.mentalhealthresearch.ca

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