SOCIAL MEDIA FOR MEDICAL JOURNALS

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Abstract
Social networks are now an integrated part of life in most digitally connected societies. Bringing scientific papers of interest to a defined audience using the appropriate channel might substantially contribute to the impact of a scientific discovery. Various media and metrics have come to the fore in strategizing dissemination of scientific information. This opinion piece offers Insights from the social-media experience of digital editors of peer-reviewed journals from non-Anglophone countries.

Keywords: Periodicals as topic, Social media, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Open access

INTRODUCTION
A hypothesis matures though scientific rigour into a theory. It can help mankind when it reaches relevant audience. From the first scholarly journal onwards, sharing and dissemination of knowledge has been the basic principle of academic activities.

As the number of periodicals is increasing globally, libraries have to prioritize selecting sources for subscription in the interest of finance and space.

The Journal Impact Factor (JIF) and other citation metrics are still widely employed by libraries and other institutions as proxies of “success” and yardsticks for selecting the most prestigious periodicals. However, the true success lies in reaching the highest number of relevant users and readers, who may enrich their knowledge and generate new ideas based on available publications.
The rise of electronic information and cross-linking of the world via the World Wide Web (www) has turned the sea of knowledge into a churning ocean with ever-widening horizons. A directed search can be made on search engines dedicated to bibliographic databases, such as PubMed, or even general search engines like Google. However, the question remains on how to take new information to the relevant user. The right answer could be related to the use of social media for promoting scientific information and gauging interest in academia [1]. Social media is far-reaching; it allows engaging specialists with various language and professional backgrounds and fellows of scientific societies into scholarly communications.

Altmetrics.com has emerged as a promising platform for measuring social media influence and popularity of its channels. Altmetrics.com reports are currently employed by journal editors to visualize the use of scholarly articles by tracking social media and traditional citation activities. Such a complementary approach allows overcoming the disadvantage of the citations that require a long time to accumulate and reflect the use of scholarly articles [2]. By the time the number of citations is high enough to bring a new work into notice, the authors may change their research interests and even suffer demise. The immediate social media activities referring to recently published scholarly articles may attract re-use and citations, which are widely perceived as ‘hard’ currencies for modern academia.

This article offers an insight on social media based on the authors’ own experience of editing medical journals.

SEARCH STRATEGY
MEDLINE and SCOPUS were queried for “social media”, “editing”, and related keywords. Relevant articles were chosen at the discretion of the authors and the data pooled together in line with the widely publicized recommendations [3]. Written permissions were obtained from the editors of the *Journal of Clinical Rheumatology* (JCR) to analyse and publicize their social media data.

SOCIAL MEDIA USE
Social media is increasingly used by population at large. The users with access to the WWW on their mobile phones tend to open an account on at least one social media site. In fact, 69% of US-based adults are registered with at least one social media channel, and the average American Internet user has 7 social media accounts [4]. Preliminary statistics suggest that 45% of the global population is represented on social media [5].

Numerous quality journals are currently registered with Twitter, Facebook, and other popular platforms to promote their contents and attract immediate public attention [6]. Such a strategy, coupled with proper abstracting and visualizing the most important article parts, results in increased abstract views [7]. A recent analysis demonstrated that 1,236 journals registered with the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) are linked to various social media sites [8]. The same study showed that open-access journals within the first quartile of SCImago Journal Rank (SJR) have more followers on Twitter, Facebook, and other social media channels than other periodicals with lower SJR [8].

It is widely accepted that newly launched open-access journals can rapidly become highly prestigious scholarly platforms by publicly promoting their contents on popular social media channels. Social media and various online news outlets are increasingly employed by journal editors for post-publication discussions. Additionally, attempts are made to open access to pre-publication comments and expose peer reviewer activities to Publons users [6]. Visualization tools, such as infographics and video summaries, are increasingly adopted by established journals revising their editorial policies and opting for interactive communication with their readers [9]. Finally, journals publishing visually attractive contents often embark on Twitter and other online
sites for organizing virtual journal clubs and advancing options for continuing professional development [10].

SOCIAL MEDIA BENEFITS FOR SCHOLARS
Online social networking helps distinguish reliable scientific information from redundant, unattractive, and potentially misleading comments and posts. Preliminary evidence suggests that journals with social media links are well positioned to publicize truly impactful contents, both in terms of citations and positive post-publication online comments [11].

Open-access articles are particularly attractive to social media users who can easily navigate to the full-texts, evaluate the quality, and share their comments publicly [12]. More and more professionals in rapidly developing fields of science are considering social media channels as reliable vehicles for sharing preprints and exposing pre-publication history to potential readers and authors [13].

Despite numerous challenges and ethical barriers, social media channels are also increasingly employed for establishing physician-patient communication, receiving their comments, and recruiting them in clinical research studies [14-16].

SOCIAL MEDIA OPTIMIZATION TACTICS
Given the widely known benefits of social media for scholars, numerous journals are expanding their related links and involving experienced editors to manage their social media accounts by properly selecting items for promotion, generating attractive comments, and attracting followers with interest in the shared topics and capacity to distribute posts to the global community of scholars. The following technical options and tactics are often used by journal editors aimed to benefit most from online shares and social media posts.

1. Hashtags. The advent of hashtags (words or phrases prefixed with a “#” sign) has transformed information retrieval and enhanced discoverability of relevant contents [17]. Social media posts with properly chosen and widely known hashtags fare better than those without [18-20].

2. Tagging user accounts. Another successful option is tagging registered accounts of individual authors, professional societies, and journals with interest in the subject matter. Tagging societies may have an impact which is proportionate to the number of related followers. However, the same approach can have negative implications due to the patients’ involvement in social media networks. Social media moderators may overcome this challenge by properly tagging accounts and regulating the distribution channels.

3. Links. Links to journal articles’ webpages may increase the number of views. Article downloads can be also increased by providing various access options, such as links to open-access pages.

4. Timing. Social media posts sent out at the wrong time may be overlooked by target audience. Declining attention of social media account holders is another deterrent. Hootsuite is widely used software for managing various social media posts and scheduling their release at preferable times [21]. Also, Facebook analytics offers insight into the best time when most followers are online. Scheduling Facebook posts may maximize their targeted use and related implications [22].

5. Perspective. Expressing an opinion in a single sentence is more useful than simply posting a comment full of unrelated keywords and hashtags.

6. Automation bots. Social media bots, also called web-robots, run automated tasks. These can be used to generate huge amounts of tweets, re-tweets, like, and links to followers. Although such activities allow maximizing distribution of information, there is a risk of spamming, particularly due to the lack of the “human touch” [23].
7. **Online journal clubs and quizzes.** Social media editors may host and take active part in online journal clubs, particularly with help of visual materials [24]. Creating a quiz is another technique often employed by social media editors. Asking for opinion on images and seeking response is a way of didactic engagement with followers.

8. **Brevity.** With declining attention spans, only editors who master the art of brevity can manage to capture a busy mind. Attractive posts are short and crisp.

9. **Pictures.** It is widely accepted that posts with images, photographs, and video clips are more attractive than those with solely text messages.

10. **Retweeting.** Retweeting new and relevant information adds diversity to quality content. Establishing retweeting networks for social media editors may enhance visibility of contents distributed by different sources.

**POPULAR SOCIAL MEDIA**

**Twitter**

Twitter is perhaps the most widely used social media channels for dissemination of scientific information. The character limit set by Twitter makes it unique in that tweets are concise and readable by most busy users. The use of hashtags has been popularised by Twitter and it has been picked up by several other platforms. Retweets often ensure rapid spread of new information.

Twitter users may express their interest by likes. Importantly, a recent evaluation of 232 endocrinology journals revealed a moderate correlation between the number of followers on Twitter and the SJR (r = 0.60, p < 0.05) and between tweets and the SJR (r = 0.59, p < 0.05) [25].

**Facebook**

Journal editors can create Facebook accounts for posting some materials of interest to their readers. One of the new Facebook features allows journal editors to post into common interest groups by the web-page directly, without compromising editor privacy.

**Instagram**

It is a portal for distributing mostly visual contents. Some journals have ventured on it.

**Other platforms**

Academia.edu, ResearchGate, and Mendeley are networking sites dedicated to scholars [26].

**MEASURING IMPACT**

The digitization has heralded the use of various metrics for gauging impact of social-media posts. For example, Twitter offers Analytics for quantifying retweets, likes, link clicks, and impressions per day. A growing number of journals post and regularly update journal and individual article analytics reports. Apart from routine Altmetrics.com reports, social media impact can also be measured using Klout scores. Klout is a website and mobile app that uses social media analytics to rank its users according to online social influence via the “Klout Score”, which is a numerical value between 1 and 100 [27].

** THE JOURNAL OF CLINICAL RHEUMATOLOGY (JCR) EXPERIENCE**

The JCR used an automation bot on Twitter for sharing articles before two social media editors were appointed in January 2019. These editors have embarked on reading and learning by observing tweets, hashtags, delivering more pictures, and tagging relevant people (authors or researchers working in the area) and organisations. Freely available articles have been primarily targeted for promotion.

Going through the article, creating a tag line and relevant hashtags, and cropping pictures (and even
enhancing them at times for better visual experience) take approximately 20 min. Hootsuite has been employed for optimizing the editors’ work, particularly by creating a post for up to three accounts simultaneously and scheduling the distribution of posts. Posts can be created for a week in one go, and scheduled for different times of the day to reach various parts of the world in their daytime (or maximum social-media activity time which can be seen from Facebook). Twitter is viewed as a priority platform for the JCR. Forming a retweeting network with other sister journals is also prioritized to enhance outreach.

CHALLENGES
Unfortunately, there are no widely endorsed guidelines on dissemination of scientific information on social media. Likewise, regulatory control on flow of information between researchers and patients is lacking. In the overwhelming sea of knowledge, filtering the relevant can be a time-consuming task.

Posting on social-media platforms is a responsibility for representatives of various organisations. It is important to be mindful of delicate situations that might arise. Social media editors should be certain how to set the ball rolling for accounts without followers at the start. The initial followers are usually colleagues. The use of hashtags may help garner the required attention and attract new followers. It is important to follow relevant societies and influential account holders.

Social media posts may have better results with open-access articles. Negotiating with publishers of subscription journals to provide free access to certain articles for a certain period can be beneficial.

As visual abstracts do better when it comes to disseminating knowledge, good infographics require an experienced web designer. There has to be good communication between social media editors and web designers to facilitate the best representation of journal articles.

Cultural and geographic differences can influence the use of social media. As a prime example, China has banned access to Google and Facebook. Considering the population size of China and its growing contribution to science, such bans can be viewed as a barrier.

Finally, social media editors require diverse skills to deal successfully with a global cultural and mindset variability. This involves sifting through a sea of information, which can be overwhelming at times, gathering important connections with other editors for fruitful dissemination of information to the right people, and learning new cross-cultural negotiations.

CONCLUSION
The egress of scientific information on social media has opened up new avenues for dispersal of knowledge. As we move into a society with better and free access to knowledge, the shift into this foray is inevitable. Although some rules are yet to be set, there are already widely known social media optimization techniques to successfully promote journal contents. Despite the unprecedented growth, it seems that the best is yet to come.

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST
Sakir Ahmed is the Social Media Editor for the Indian Journal of Rheumatology. Latika Gupta is a Social Media Editor for the Journal of Clinical Rheumatology and the Indian Journal of Rheumatology.
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REFERENCES


Медициналық журналдарға арналған алеуметтік медиа

Түйіндеме
Өлеуметтік желілер қоғамдық қопшілік адам әмірінің ажырамас белгі болып табылады. Тақты арнаны қолдана отырып, белгілі бір аудитория қызықты ғылыми жұмыстарды ұсыну ғылыми жаңалықтардың ашылуына ықпал етеді. Ғылыми ақпараттарды қарастыру құрындарын қосылуы мүмкін екен. Социалдық желілерде ашық қол жетімділік және әлеуметтік желілердегі тәжірибелері таразылық бөлімдері болып беріледі.


Социальные сети для медицинских журналов

Резюме
Социальные сети являются неотъемлемой частью жизни современного общества. Представление научных работ заинтересованной аудиторией посредством социальных сетей способствует росту влияния научных открытий. Сегодня при разработке стратегии распространения научной информации ведущая роль отводится различным СМИ. В данной статье представлен опыт использования социальных сетей цифровыми редакторами рецензируемых научных журналов из неанглоязычных стран.

Ключевые слова: Периодика как тема, Социальные сети, Твиттер, Фейсбук, Инстаграм, Открытый доступ