

Social Media for Global Education: Pearls and Pitfalls of Using Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram

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CTIsus.com is a website created in 1999 as an educational resource for body CT diagnostic imaging. The site's mission is to provide free resources to the medical community across the globe. On average, 20,000 people from more than 125 countries visit the website each month. Social media has been used since 2009 as the primary tool to build brand awareness, drive new users to the website, and engage with the users. The three social platforms CTIsus uses are Facebook (Facebook, Inc, Menlo Park, California, USA), Twitter (Twitter Inc, San Francisco, California, USA), and Instagram (Facebook, Inc). Each platform distributes information differently using text, images, and a combination of both text and images. The popularity of each social platform varies in different age groups and industries. CTIsus shares content via all three venues with the goal of reaching a wide audience that has different learning styles and communication preferences. The relative effectiveness of these sites are monitored weekly through Google analytics (Google, Menlo Park, California, USA) and the built-in analytics tools each social platform provides (Fig. 1), and user engagement information drives quality improvement of the content. This editorial provides an experience-

based analysis of these social media platforms for distributing educational medical information worldwide.

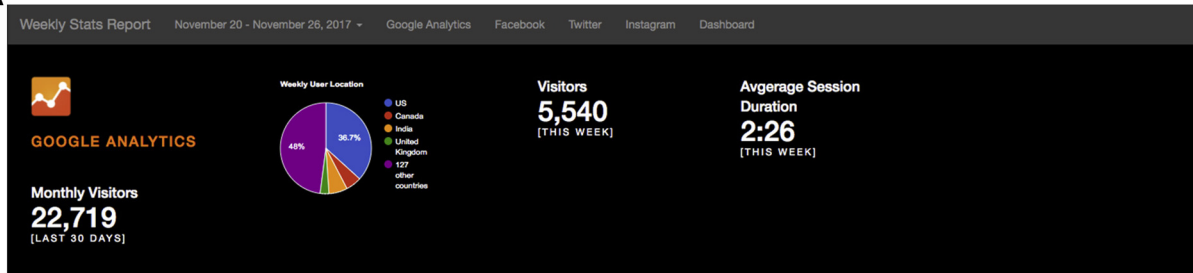
The preferred social platform for CTIsus is Facebook [1]. It provides the greatest flexibility in type of content that can be shared and ease of use, and it also provides an in-depth analytics tool to measure performance. Facebook enables sharing of photos, mp4 files, live videos, links, and posted text. Text posts have a generous 60,000-character limit as opposed to the Twitter limit of 140 characters (Twitter is currently testing increasing the limit to 280 characters to accommodate languages that average more characters per thought). Facebook also enables scheduling of posts, which is extremely helpful to manage CTIsus' high post volume strategy. CTIsus posts about 15 to 20 times a day to Facebook with a wide range of content: CT case studies, medical illustrations, pearls relevant to radiology, management tips, and current articles relating to health and medicine. In addition to the medical posts, CTIsus also posts nonmedical content: music, pop culture, business, and politics, to name a few. Although CTIsus' primary goal is radiology education, a variety of content on Facebook has helped increase popularity on social media [1]. The two billion Facebook

users worldwide are using Facebook for both personal and professional reasons. Two-thirds of US adults get their news from social media [2]. CTIsus strives to provide a variety of content to satisfy user's craving for information. In efforts to appeal to a larger audience and maintain a positive message, CTIsus shares factual articles and tends to leave out opinion pieces. Users are driven from Facebook to the website, CTIsus.com, for a broad range of strictly educational resources that pertain to radiology.

In April 2016, Facebook launched a live broadcast tool, which CTIsus started using in March 2017 as a new way to engage users. Once a week at the same time, CTIsus hosts a brief live discussion on a topic related to radiology. Users have the ability to post questions in the live interface, and CTIsus can answer in real time via text or voice. Based on positive engagement and user feedback from Facebook users, CTIsus began broadcasting the same live discussion on Instagram in October 2017. Twitter also has live broadcasting capabilities, which CTIsus is considering testing.

Twitter is a very powerful resource to disseminate medical information [3]. Facebook offers the ability to sync with Twitter and convert posts to

A



B



C



D

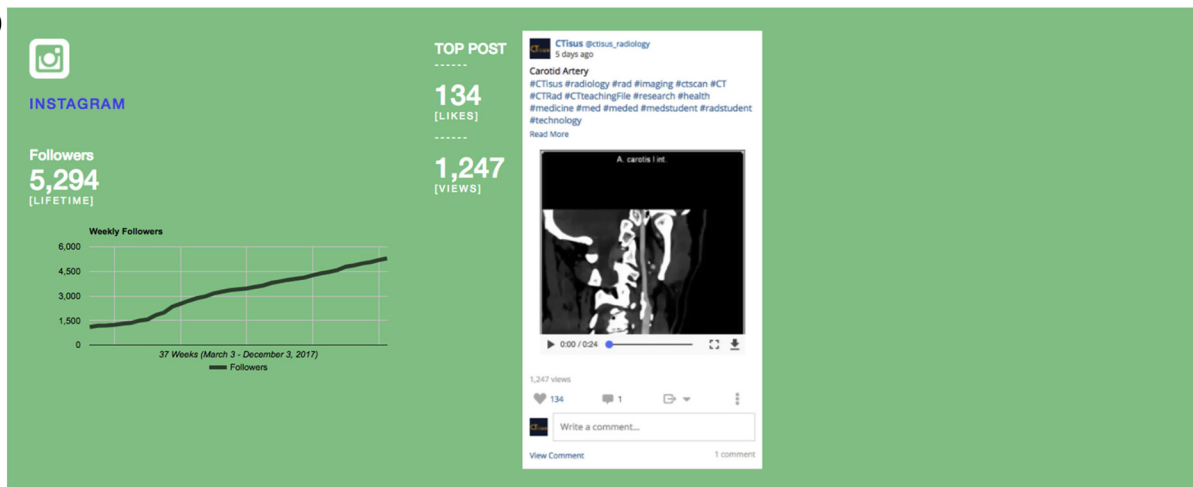


Fig 1. Google Analytics (Google, Menlo Park, California, USA) weekly stats reports for Facebook (Facebook, Inc, Menlo Park, California, USA), Twitter (Twitter Inc, San Francisco, California, USA), and Instagram (Facebook, Inc).

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