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Curating a Digital Identity: What Urologists Need to Know About Social Media

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Conflict of Interest: RR is the social media editor for *Urology*.

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Urologists want to expand their reach to clinicians, researchers, and patients on the web. Much has been written about interfacing with the public via social media tools such as Twitter and Facebook.¹⁻⁴ We believe that a urologist must have two different goals for using social media:

1. To interface with prospective patients and the wider public about socially relevant urological issues and new developments, such as evolving standards for prostate cancer screening; and
2. To connect with and promote one's work to other clinicians, scientists, and colleagues.

Connecting with patients and the public

According to a 2013 survey by the Pew Research Center, 72% of Internet users sought some type of health information online, and 35% of them specifically tried to self-diagnose a medical condition using online resources.⁵ While patients' desire for active engagement in their own healthcare is commendable, online tools are not always a safe alternative to professional medical judgment. A recent *British Medical Journal* study investigated the accuracy of 23 online symptom checkers, including WebMD, by testing known diagnoses against these online tools. They provided the correct diagnosis only 34% of the time on average; results ranged from 5% to 50%, based on the tool used.⁶ The Pew survey found that 77% of online health searches start from Google, Bing, Yahoo, or a similar search engine.⁵ Unfortunately, such search methods

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