

SOCIAL MEDIA USE IN CANCER CARE

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OBJECTIVE: *To describe the increasing professional use of social media within oncology health care practice.*

DATA SOURCES: *Peer-reviewed and lay publications.*

CONCLUSION: *Social media has changed the communication landscape over the last 15 years. An integral part of worldwide culture, oncology health care professionals can utilize social media to listen, learn, engage, and co-create to advance cancer care.*

IMPLICATIONS FOR NURSING PRACTICE: *Nurses must be aware of the professional uses for social media, how to use the media, and where to find evidence supporting health care social media efforts within cancer care.*

KEY WORDS: *social media, communication, Facebook, Twitter, engage.*

Social media is defined as “forms of electronic communication (such as Web sites for social networking and microblogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (such as videos).”¹ The social media landscape changes daily, so it is difficult to determine the exact number of online social networks. Figure 1 provides the most recent Con-

versation Prism 5.0,² which gives insight into the landscape by social network type and top examples. Despite the continuous landscape change, however, social networks are so well established now that there is general consensus on the five “core” social networking sites used for benchmarking and research purposes – Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, LinkedIn, and Twitter (see Table 1).

Sixty-six percent of the world’s 7.5 billion people own a mobile phone. Fifty percent of the global population is online, 37% of Internet users (2.789 billion people) are a part of at least one social network, and 34% of people worldwide – or 2.459 billion people – access social media from a mobile device. North American has the highest regional social media use, with approximately 66% of the continent connected via social networks, 58% of who do so from a mobile device.³ An estimated 89% of adults in the United States are now online, with smartphone ownership at 72%.⁴ When the Pew Research Center began tracking social media use in 2005, only 5% of Americans used a social network. As of January 2017, 79% of all U.S. adults are Facebook users, while 28% use Instagram, 26% use

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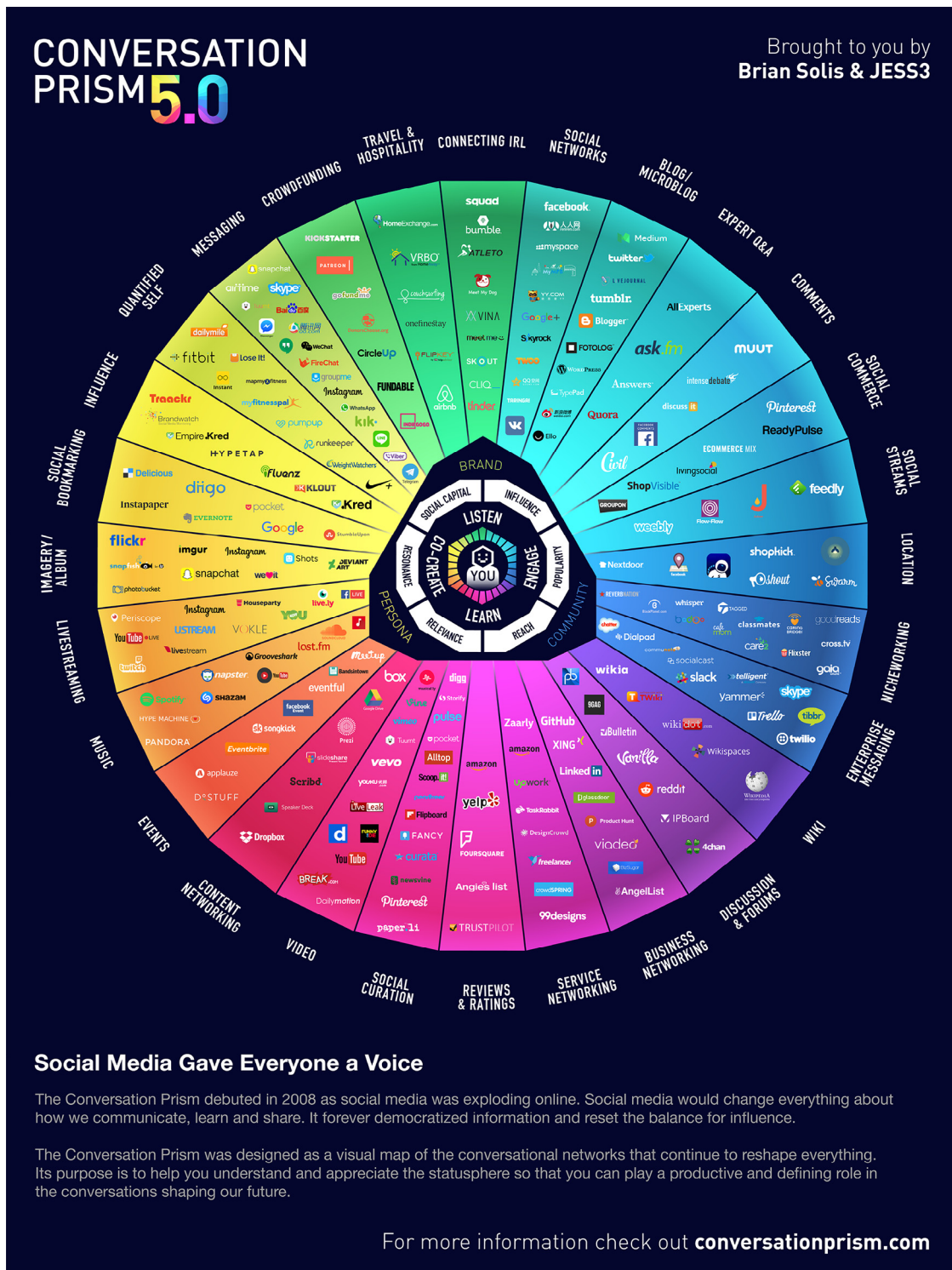


FIGURE 1. The Conversation Prism, 5.0.² (Reproduced with permission from Reference Solis and Thomas²).

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