# Social media & social marketing: a systematic review of the evidence

Bardus, Marco, MA, Suggs, L. Suzanne, PhD | marco.bardus@usi.ch - suzanne.suggs@usi.ch



In the last few years "social media" and "Web 2.0" concepts have become commonplace when talking about the Internet. Many organizations of all sectors and sizes use social media, as they have great potential to reach large audiences at a relatively low cost.

INTERNET AND SOCIAL MARKETING. Social marketers, public health managers and health marketers are using social media in health campaigns. Examples are: the Swiss "Love Life Stop Aids" for AIDS/HIV prevention, the British "Be a star" for breastfeeding initiation, and the US "Truth!" for youth tobacco use prevention.

Searching in electronic bibliographic databases "internet", "web" or "world wide web" in combination with "social marketing", "health communication", "health education", "health campaign", "health program" or "health initiative", yields more than 3,000 references. What about social media?

WE DON'T KNOW YET: Why and how are social media used? What outcomes are associated with social media use in social marketing campaigns?

literature global

networking

references

#### Purpose

a) Identify all peer-reviewed articles that discuss social media in social marketing campaigns. b) Describe how social media are used in social marketing initiatives.

#### Research questions

To what extent is the use of social media in Social Marketing reported in the academic literature?

Which theories or models - if any - are these campaigns based upon?

What measures of success do they report, if any? (e.g. basic output, outreach, outtake, behavioral outcomes)

#### Electronic database search ProQuest ABI/INFORM Global, ABI/INFORM

**EBSCOhost** 

Trade & Industry, ProQuest Sociology Academic Search Complete, CINAHL, Communication & Mass Media complete, GreenFILE, Health Source: Nursing/Academic Edition info, Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts, PsychINFO, Psychology and Behavioral Sciences Collection

Web of Knowledge

Arts & Humanities Citation Index, Science Citation Index Expanded, Social Sciences Citation Index Biomed Central, PubMed Central ERIC, MEDLINE, Social Services

ScienceDirect

Scirus

CSA Illimina

Abstracts, Sociological Abstracts ScienceDirect The Cochrane Library Database Wiley Interscience

#### Inclusion/exclusion criteria

Peer-reviewed articles published in English (January 2004 - May 2010).

INCLUDE IF: abstracts, titles keywords and mention:

a) Social media terms and search phrases "social media" OR "web 2.0" OR "web2.0" OR blog\* OR "social software" OR "social web" OR "social comput" OR "new media" OR "social networking sit\*" OR "social networking websit\*" OR podcast\* OR tagging OR wik\* OR facebook OR myspace OR youtube OR twitter OR friendfeed

b) Social marketing & health communication

"social marketing" OR "health promotion" OR "health communication" OR "health education" OR "health campaign\*" OR "health program\*" OR

**EXCLUDE IF:** business-oriented, marketingfocused, dealing with social media marketing and "Internet marketing" without referring to social marketing, health communication or health promotion.

#### communication applications international entries terms myspace world study subject communications potentially google selection

technologies studies education

published al promotion following identify increasing relevant network keywords flu include networks database internet

public

Deer-review index political politica

technology campaigns inclusion abstracts

knowledge keyword

# Search procedure and results

367 references retrieved and imported into RefWorks reference manger.

162 excluded (duplicates, non-peer-reviewed, non-English papers). 205 potentially relevant articles were used as basis for analysis.

systematic

82 excluded (non-relevant based on title, abstract and keyword filtering). 123 articles screened (title, abstract, keywords) and checked against inclusion criteria.

110 excluded (non-relevant or non-meeting inclusion criteria).

23 references submitted for full-text screening. 20 excluded (do not focus on social marketing or health interventions).

4 articles (2 reporting the same data) explicitly mention and report the use of social media in social marketing initiatives.

#### Summary of the reviewed articles

	Citation	Initiative	Heath topic	Social media	Type of outcomes
	Adams, 2007 & Adams, 2010	Valtaf  Digital Personal Experience Record	Weight loss Rare diseases	Blogs	Usage of services, number of users, amount of published content
	Hasman, 2008	University of Buffalo pain management resource	Pain manage- ment	Wiki	N/A
	Taubenheim, 2008	Heart Truth Campaign	Heart disease	Mix of social media	Outputs (nr. of posts created) Online advertising impressions and usage reports of web pages.

**THEORIES OR MODELS USED.** No theories or models are explicitly reported. TYPE OF REPORTED OUTCOMES. Only 2 articles report outcomes: quantitative outreach and outputs, i.e. website page views, nr. of viewers, registered users, "friends" and followers.

# **Excluded articles show interesting trends**

- 1. General commentaries and editorial material about social media and their potential use in social marketing and health communication (34)
- 2. Health professional education and training using social media (21) 3. Content analyses focusing on the content produced by users (8)

#### General considerations

literature

Although a substantial number of articles recognizes the potential of Web 2.0 and social media tools for health communication, social marketing etc., it appears that the digital environment has not been rigorously scanned, evaluated, analyzed and reported in the academic refereed literature. Moreover, the outcomes associated to the use of Web 2.0 and social media tools are quantitative outcomes, not behavioral.

#### We need evidence!

- a) There is a lack of evidence regarding outcomes and appropriate theory driven approaches.
- Findings suggest that more research has to be conducted and reported.
- c) We need to understand what is the added value of using social media and how they might enhance the effectiveness of interventions and campaigns.

### Where to go from here?

Measure the impact of social media and report it in the academic literature.

SOCIAL MEDIA = RICH-DATA METRICS.

QUANTITATIVE + QUALITATIVE APPROACHES: conversation, interaction analysis, online focus groups, conversations tracking and online behavior, etc.

# **EXPLORE AND ANALYZE**: use of social media vs. traditional media.

#### References

- Adams, S. A. (2007). Using blogging tools to help individuals record their experiences: An exploration and review of two commercial web applications in the netherlands. Studies in Health Technology & Informatics, 130, 193-
- Adams, S. A. (2010). Blog-based applications and health information: Two case studies that illustrate important questions for consumer health informatics (CHI) research. International Journal of Medical Informatics, 79(6), e89-e96.
- Hasman, L., & Chiarella, D. (2008). Developing a pain management resource wiki for cancer patients and their caregivers. Journal of Consumer Health on the Internet, 12(4), 317-326.
- Taubenheim, A. M., Long, T., Smith, E. C., Jeffers, D., Wayman, J., & Temple, S. (2008). Using social media and internet marketing to reach women with the heart truth. Social Marketing Quarterly, 14(3), 58-67.