

Health Web Science: Social Media Data for Healthcare (Health Information Science)

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The Role of Social Media for Patients and Consumer Health

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Summary

Objectives: To provide an overview on social media for consumers and patients in areas of health behaviour and outcomes.

Methods: A directed review of recent literature.

Results: We discuss the limitations and challenges of social media, ranging from social network sites (SNSs), consumer games, mobile applications, to online videos. An overview of current uses of social media (Generation Y) and potential users (such as low socioeconomic status and the chronically ill population) is also presented. Future directions in social media research are also discussed.

Conclusions: We encourage the health informatics community to explore the socioeconomic, age, race, and ethnic diversity of these populations, and select an appropriate medium and platform when designing social networked interventions for health. Little is known about the impact of second-hand exposures facilitated by social media, nor the quality and safety of social networks on health. Methodologic and theories from human computer interaction, human factors engineering and psychology may help guide the challenges in designing and evaluating social networked interventions to health. Further, by exploring how people search and navigate social media for health purposes, informatics and intelligence are promising areas of research that should provide valuable insights on present and emerging health behaviours in a population scale.

Keywords

Social media, healthcare consumers, patients, health behaviour, social network

Health Inform 2011 | vol. 11

IMIA Yearbook of Medical Informatics 2011

Introduction

The emergence of online social network services such as Facebook and Twitter has enabled consumers to share and exchange information and to communicate with each other. Many of these interactions are not only limited to online social network sites (SNSs) but are emerging on a variety of media and delivery platforms, such as videos, games, mobile and pervasive technologies. These interactions, whether they are intentional or not, have the potential to influence patient outcomes and consumer health behaviours. It has been suggested that these technologies can transform healthcare systems, empowering healthcare consumers to manage their own well-being and management of chronic diseases [1].

We provide an overview of the current and potential use of social media in three populations that span the Division of Innovations [2]. Selected studies are presented to illustrate social network influences on individual health behaviours, facilitated by 1) different types of social media (such

as SNSs, games, mobile applications, and online videos), 2) across different populations (such as Generation Y, born between 1977 and 1990 [3], low socioeconomic status populations, patients suffering from and consumers at risk of developing chronic diseases), and 3) from different discipline perspectives (e.g. human computer interaction, human factors engineering, psychology, infodemiology and infosurveillance).

In this directed literature review, we provide the medical informatics community an illustrative overview on social media through snapshots of recent research – from the types of social media, to current and potential users, and to future directions for social media. First, we provide an overview of social media use by Generation Y, an established early adopter and early majority of social media. Then, we look into late majorities and laggards as we discuss the use of social media to address the needs of low socioeconomic status (SES) and chronically ill populations. This review concludes with a call for further research.

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via online social collaboration platforms. and Outreach of Public Laboratory for Open Technology and Science. Web science, Social media, Medicine ., Health ing health information gathering processes from the web . cal web data it now provides a new source. Facebook contains more marketing than health-related information, . observational (e.g., data observing patients' social media . in journals indexed also in Web of Science (WOS), most of them classified in Health Care.

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