

Social Media Guide

Introduction:

Social media can be a powerful tool throughout all phases of a research project timeline, from recruitment through dissemination. To grow effective social media campaigns, it is important to establish dedicated social media accounts for projects, separate from personal accounts. Facebook, Twitter and Instagram allow for pages and accounts dedicated to specific things such as businesses or clubs, but it is helpful to have multiple people who have varying levels of access to the dedicated project page/site. It is also important to update and post regularly since a stagnant page with periods of dormancy will be challenging to gain traction or build a platform from.

The social media platforms that early on served for promoting recruitment can also be utilized to disseminate findings. This is an excellent way to make sure those who participated in the research in the onset know what happened with the outcomes at the end. Beyond recruitment and the dissemination of results, highlighting partners and looping in other stakeholders can both strengthen and foster new partnerships. Finally, a piece often missing from research is offering an avenue to seek resources related to a particular issue being studied. By providing links to services needed, investigators can help close the loop after a project concludes and demonstrate sensitivity to the communities and populations involved in the research.



Benefits

- Gaining professional visibility and credibility.
- Networking: it is easier to go to talk to people or call them when you are following them on social media.
- Event information: finding out about interesting events and following events if participating was not possible.
- Finding information about project calls, projects, new trends, and ideas.
- Following professionally relevant news anywhere and anytime through mobile.
- Gaining an idea of someone's personality by following their social media activities.

(source) <https://timreview.ca/article/1098>

Know Your Numbers (Analytics):

Most social media platforms offer analytics to help track growth of a page, post, channel, etc. Each platform has certain keywords they use to describe what's happening, but what these words are referring to can be vague at first glance. For example, Facebook uses the term "Reach" as a main analytic criterion. In this case, "Reach" is the number of unique people who saw your content, it affects every other metric you can track: engagement, likes, comments, clicks and negative feedback. Twitter uses the term "Impressions" which is the tally of all the times the Tweets have been seen. YouTube offers definitions of their terms by hovering over each one when viewing a channel's analytics page. They also have a table that provides this information as well (see below, link included).

Impressions	How many times your thumbnails were shown to viewers on YouTube through registered impressions.
Impressions click-through-rate	How often viewers watched a video after seeing a thumbnail.
Unique viewers	Estimated number of people that watched your content within the selected date range.
Views	The number of legitimate views for your channels or videos.
Views from impressions	Views that originated from impressions for the selected date range.
Watch time (minutes)	The amount of time that a viewer has watched a video. This gives you a sense of what content viewers actually watch (as opposed to videos that they click on and then abandon).
Watch time from impressions	Watch time that originated from impressions for the selected date range.

https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/9314486?hl=en#learn_about

10 KEY DATA FROM FACEBOOK INSIGHTS

1. **OVERVIEW** How your Page is doing
2. **LIKES** Where your Page Likes came from
3. **REACH** What your reach is & what factors affected it
4. **PAGE VIEWS** Who viewed which section of your Page
5. **ACTIONS ON PAGE** What people did on your Page
6. **POSTS** How well your posts are performing
7. **EVENTS** How successful your event pages are
8. **VIDEOS** How well your videos are performing
9. **PEOPLE** Who liked, saw, or engaged with your Page
10. **MESSAGES** How well you responded via Messenger



[Facebook Insights Beginner Guide](#)

Multi-sharing Sites:

There are sites that are used to share to all accounts simultaneously (for example “Hootsuite”) instead of making individual posts for each account. These sites have pros and cons, and their usefulness varies from post to post. A strength of this approach is time efficiency, instead of crafting the same post for each account it keeps the post uniform and shares simultaneously. This helps with generic posts and ones that can be scheduled to post repeatedly (i.e. reminders, overall opinions, holiday wishes). Also, these services allow multiple users as well as the ability to pre-schedule posts which can relieve a bit of stress on timely posts.

This does not help when a post needs to be formatted specifically for each platform such as the character limit on Twitter or image specifications on Instagram. Additionally, there can be issues when tagging others in posts, sometimes an organization does not use the same username for all of their accounts. If you try to tag both you may end up with only 1 tag and 1 seemingly random piece of text (i.e. tagging both my Facebook and Twitter in a post may look like “Happy to work with [Center for Reducing Health Disparities](#) [@reducedisparity](#) on this project” in this case the blue text being the Facebook while the other is the Twitter handle. As you can see this disrupts the post by having an odd piece of text in the middle of it. However, Hootsuite can also help keep on eye on certain threads via hashtag per platform. For example, if you plan to use #healthdipsarities you can monitor this as a thread that’s added to your feed, which allows for better networking. A separate thread will be needed for each platform though. This meaning that if you set up a thread with that previously mentioned tag but it was for Twitter, you’ll have to do a separate one for Facebook, Instagram, etc. ** Please note the following shortcomings are Hootsuite specific and experience may vary from service to service and plan to plan

Hashtags:

Hashtags, which are added to digital content to identify it as concerning a specific topic, are fairly straightforward to use. There some small details in using them to get a better effect, with spelling and abbreviation choice being key. For example, two hashtags related to the same topic but typed differently or structured differently may perform differently i.e. #COVID vs #COVID19 (in this case they may perform almost equally given both being popular in current times). When creating a new branded hashtag, consistence in spelling and abbreviations will be vital to gaining traction. On Instagram, the number of posts using that hashtag can be seen.

- Use fewer hashtags on [Facebook](#) than you would on Twitter or Instagram.
- As a professional networking site, [LinkedIn](#) is not the place for a hashtag bonanza. Use only two to three hashtags that are highly specific to your niche.

[Hashtag Do's and Don'ts Guide](#)

Know Your Platform

Each social media platform has their own unique type of usefulness, some are a better suited for certain tasks in comparison to others. While it is important to post consistently, it can be argued that it is more important to post accordingly and to intended demographics. Below are some generalized summaries of effective types of posts and the audience which each platform is geared.

facebook

Generally used as the space for friends and families to connect but less so for businesses. While businesses do have pages, they are usually reserved for major business who have a sizeable budget dedicated to promoting the page. Facebook is still most used social media with 60% of adults on the site. There are pages that exist for members of certain communities and for people who have hobbies in search of a community. For example, certain cities have an “[insert city name] in the know” page where members of the community share information on various day to day manners such as finding recommendations for restaurants, contractors, or other services. These pages could also be utilized to disseminate information, though keep in mind these pages have member guidelines of their own. In regards to posts on Facebook, be aware of how link previews appear, provide a detailed yet brief description for picture posts, as always tagging relevant parties helps to garner attention. It should be noted that when sharing something from Facebook externally, one must have an account and be logged in to view it which can be a barrier of entry to those without an account.



Known best for providing a space for expression of thought within a 280-character limit, but is also a good way to make direct connections to not only individuals but organizations and businesses as well. Organizations and business tend to have a more immediate response to tweets directed at them via tagging. Unlike Facebook, Tweets shared externally can be viewed by those without accounts therefore adding accessibility to information shared. When crafting posts, it's important to be mindful of word placement in regard to the character limit. One tip is to make sure links are placed below descriptive text so that pertinent information is at the top. If need be shared links can be pushed to threaded tweet. A good way to conserve space and tag relevant parties is to naturally include the tag in the descriptive text. Another way to conserve characters is by using link shortening tools such as ow.ly or [bitly](https://bitly.com).

Ex.

“Our Co-Director Dr. Ash Sehgal was featured as a guest on the @AnnalsofIM's “Annals On Call” Podcast. The episode discusses the rationale for and against incorporating race into equations used to estimate glomerular filtration rate #healthdisparities”
(Insert link here)

Instagram

Instagram is a picture focused platform with text being secondary with an audience more on the Millennial, GenZ & Y demographics. When disseminating information here it is best to put as much appropriate information in the picture as possible and saving the caption area for links and hashtags. For example, when disseminating study results, infographs are useful in providing easily readable information and then including the link for more information on the study in the caption text. Another example would be for events, treating the picture portion as a flyer with all the event details information and placing a registration link in the caption text. As far as designing flyers and infographs a user-friendly platform is [canva.com](https://www.canva.com). Canva has a variety of templates, multiple ways to download and share the images (making adapting for sharing on social media easier), and has a free version for use.

YouTube

YouTube proves to be one of the more difficult platforms for sharing information due to numerous changes in policy and their infamous algorithm. Unlike the other platforms, hashtags have less of an impact on garnering attention or in this case, views. Currently, the algorithm places more importance on the title, description, and thumbnail. Additionally, it is vital when posting video to pay close attention to the numerous options upon upload. Aside from providing information for what the video entails the description text is also a prime area for including related links (i.e., social media accounts, websites, etc.). As with many of these platforms the titles should be brief but informative. Posting videos as part of a series with unique sub-titles should be utilized with that sub-title placed before the main title. For example, a series of quick movie review titles could read "Star Wars| Quick Movie Reviews" then "Empire Strikes Back| Quick Movie Reviews". This helps distinguish between episodes and gets the identifier information read first. This applies to the thumbnail image as well. Each episode of a series should have a unique image to help viewers differentiate between them.

<https://blog.snappa.com/youtube-thumbnail-size/>

ResearchGate

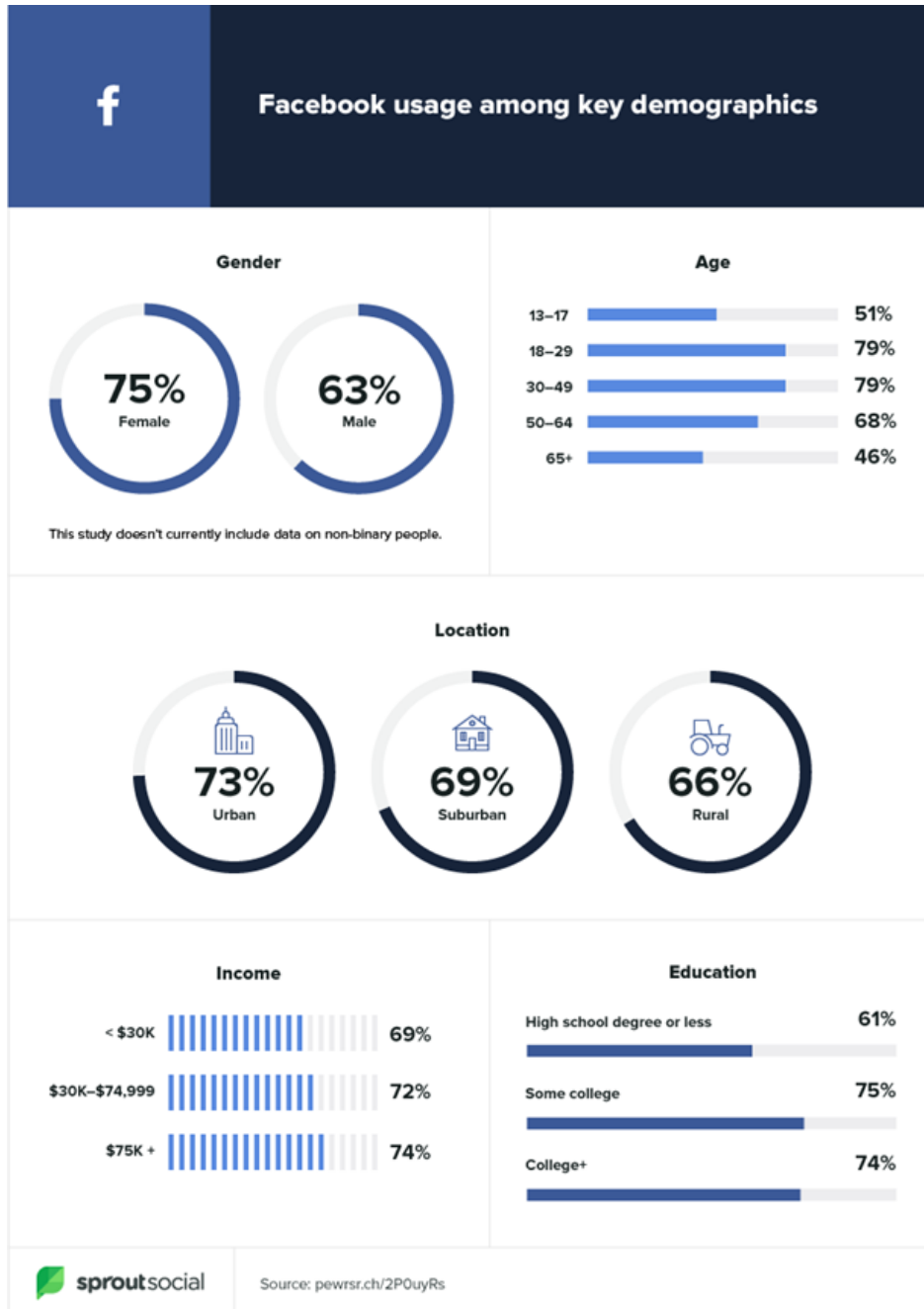
"ResearchGate is a popular academic social media outlet. ResearchGate is a website that provides scientists with a forum to share and discuss their research as well as find collaborators. If you share your research on your personal account, then the only people that will see it are those whom you connect with. However, if you were active on different community or special interest pages that relate to your area of study and participate in regular discussions with other researchers on these sites, then you may find yourself having a much wider reach. Again, it all stems back to what you wish to accomplish with your research."

<https://bioresources.cnr.ncsu.edu/resources/the-use-of-social-media-and-its-impact-for-research/>

Detailed Demographic Information:

Below are some useful infographs containing demographic information for some of the platforms previously mentioned

Visit <https://sproutsocial.com/insights/new-social-media-demographics/> for more demographic information

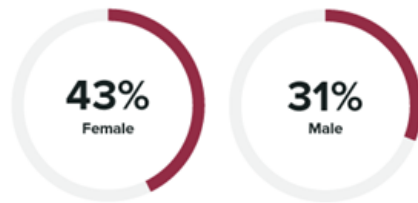


Detailed Demographic Information(cont):



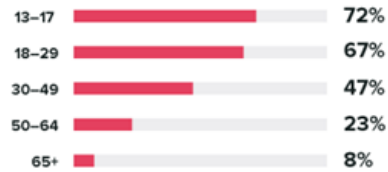
Instagram usage among key demographics

Gender

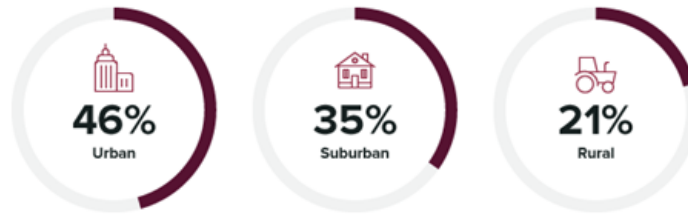


This study doesn't currently include data on non-binary people.

Age



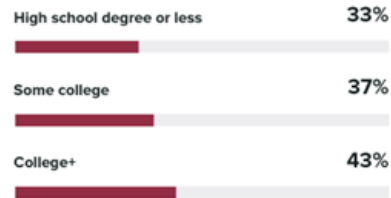
Location



Income



Education



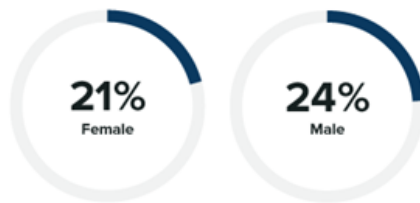
Source: [pewrsr.ch/2P0uyRs](https://www.pewrsr.ch/2P0uyRs)

Detailed Demographic Information(cont):



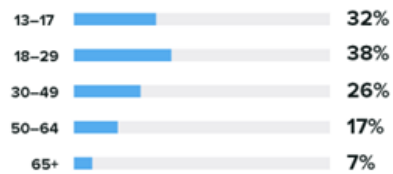
Twitter usage among key demographics

Gender

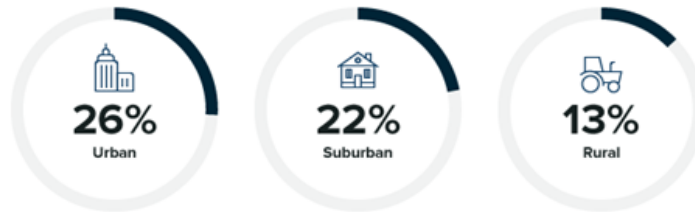


This study doesn't currently include data on non-binary people.

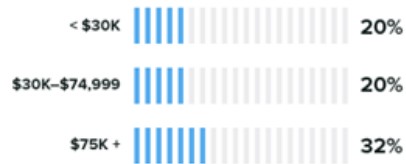
Age



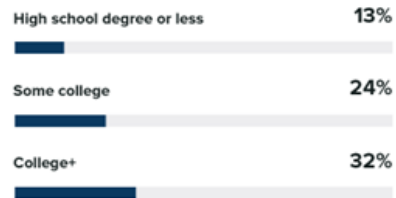
Location



Income



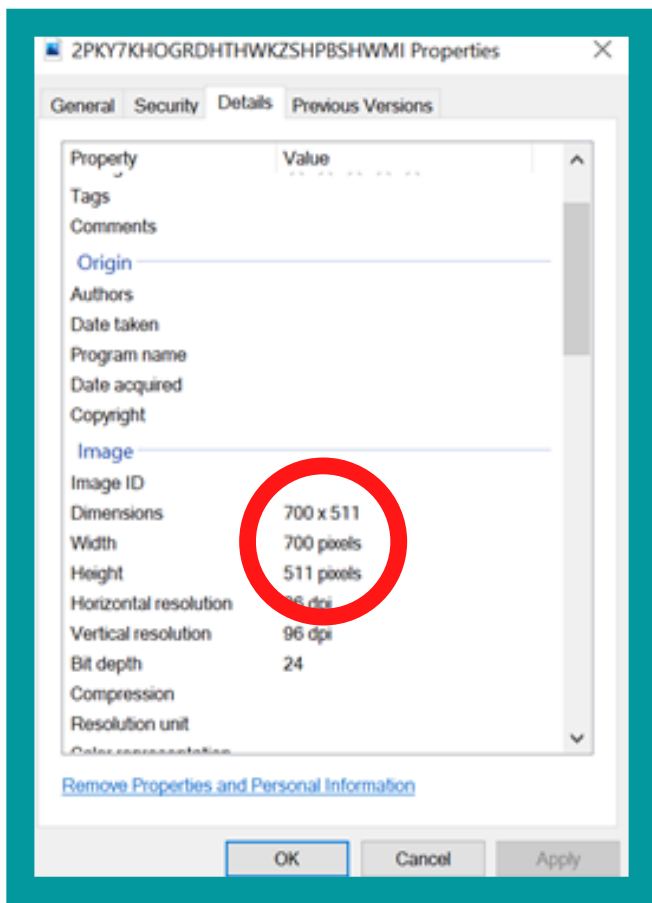
Education



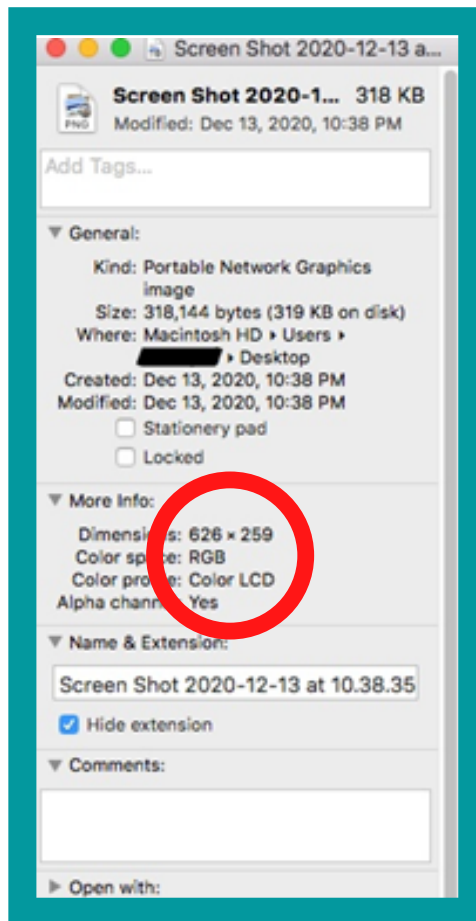
Source: [pewrsr.ch/2P0uyRs](https://www.pewrsr.ch/2P0uyRs)

Pixels:

In order to effectively use the image guide we assembled, it will help to know where to find pixel information for an image. On a PC, right click on the image you plan to use to and click on “Properties” within the menu. After the “Properties” window opens, click on the “Details” tab. All of the pixel dimension information should be displayed here (see image below). Similarly, for Mac right clicking on an image and selecting “Get Info” in the menu will have the same effect. Please note that you may have to click on the small triangle to expand what information is viewable, specifically the one next to “More Info.” The pixel information isn’t broken down as specific as on PC from this view point but it still follows the width by height format (see image below)



(PC)



(Mac)

Social Media Guide

Social Media in Research: What does the Research Say?

Increasing Responsiveness and Engagement

"While all social media outlets have the potential for massive reach, it all comes back to a matter of whom you connect with or engage. However, the fast-paced and live aspect of social media can drive skeptical researchers not to publish, but successful reactions and quick responses can increase a researcher's credibility. Research is about producing new information, and social media offers unique opportunities to present new content." (1)

"While some IRBs have policies on social media recruitment, most do not, and even among existent policies there is no clear consensus over how to identify and approach the most pressing issues. This is problematic, since navigating social media recruitment requires applying legal and ethical norms sensitively in a context that may be unfamiliar to investigators and IRBs." (2)

Working with Institutional Review Boards

"To date social media recruitment techniques have shown effectiveness for HIV vaccine clinical trials, occipital nerve studies, pediatric cancer research, depression prevention studies, and smoking cessation research, among others. Perhaps more striking, they have also shown effectiveness with historically hard-to-reach populations, such as young cancer survivors, gay Latino males, the deaf community, and sufferers of low-incidence diseases, such as spontaneous coronary artery dissection." (2)

Recruitment in Hard to Reach Populations

Social Media is Part of the Future of Research

"While unlikely to be the sole remedy for the challenges of recruitment, social media is, and will increasingly become, an important tool in the recruitment arsenal, and therefore calls for ethical and regulatory guidance that can facilitate the appropriate implementation of social media recruitment techniques." (2)

Sources:

1. Rogers, Jessica. (2019). "The Use of Social Media and its Impact for Research," BioRes. 14(3)

2. Gelinas, Luke, et al. "Using Social Media as a Research Recruitment Tool: Ethical Issues and Recommendations." The American Journal of Bioethics, vol. 17, no. 3, 2017