CBS Grad Chats
Series & CEPS
Brown Bag Series

Social media for science communication
November 8, 2022

Content
01 Welcome
02 How to brand yourself
03 Social media advice
04 Tips to handle a troll
05 Digital footprint
06 Q&A
Welcome!

- Dr. Virginia Capmourteres, Research and Graduate Officer, CBS
- Dr. Bethany Davidson-Eng, Research Comms Officer, CEPS
- Alex Rodgers, Communications Manager, CEPS
- Cara Copeland, EL Coordinator, CBS

How to brand yourself

Who are you?
What do you want others to know?
How to brand yourself

• Social media: personal use or professional use?
  • Leveraging your research?
  • Sharing personal information?
  • Content you post, like, or re-share?
  • Views your own?
  • Voices you amplify?

How to brand yourself

• Social media: how do you position yourself?
  • Are you an authority figure?
  • Are you still starting out and still want to learn?
  • Are you hoping to engage in some dialogue?
  • Think about the tone you want to set with your followers and those who seek you out.
Social media advice

What are some key considerations to keep in mind for scicomm?

1. Know which channels your audience is on
   - Often used to connect with industry and for business-to-business marketing/communication.
   - Content will do well here if there is an opportunity for collaboration or partnerships.
   - Good for networking and finding companies/institutes you’d like to know more about
Social media advice

1. Know which channels your audience is on

- Typically used for news sharing (personal or professional)
- “Live” events and conversations – be prepared to engage in back-and-forth with interested folks in your discipline or the public
- Used by many academics and scicomm: introduce new lab members, show new publications or awards, share grant competition results, connect about hot topics

#sciart

Social media advice

1. Know which channels your audience is on

- Very visual – you need strong images to succeed in this space
- If you have visual research, work with cool equipment, and/or travel around, your message could take off here
- Also good to create visual portrayals of scientists that counter stereotypes and offer audiences a view inside the lives of scientists
- #sciart
Social media advice

1. Know which channels your audience is on

- Typically used for personal exchanges and “pull” tactics (instead of pushing information, users actively search you out)
- Information tends to flow slower
- Users seek social connection, shared identities, content, social network surfing
- You can have success here, but people often reserve Facebook for more interpersonal communication

Social media advice

Go to menti.com and enter code 8777 4473

*What social platform do you use the most for science communication?*
Social media advice

2. Post regularly

- To stay relevant, you should post regularly
- Posts: insights about your research area, sampling days, articles, collaborations, new skill learned, lab meetings, milestones, presentations, publications, etc.
- Don’t post just for the sake of posting, but some social media platforms (e.g., Instagram) will actually start to bury your content if you go weeks in between posts
3. Give back to your community

- Retweeting, following, liking, sharing, reposting – you’ll build goodwill with your community and support from them
- Be strategic - you don’t need to follow anyone and everyone
- Tag your supervisors, collaborators or people you admire
- Establishing a positive reputation online can be as beneficial as developing one in real life

4. Use compelling content

- Imagery, photo and video are the way to the Internet’s heart
- Try to lead with the “why” and the results (and what they mean) rather than more scientific terms and methodology
Social media advice

Go to menti.com and enter code 8777 4473

What strategies have helped you build a stronger community of scicomm in social media? Any tips or advice for those who are starting?
Tips to handle a troll

What is a troll? How can you protect yourself?

Tips to handle a troll

Go to menti.com and enter code 8777 4473

What is a troll? How would you describe it?
Tips to handle a troll

1. Know a troll when you see one
   - Not everyone who is negative on the internet is a troll
   - It is important to recognize someone who is providing a genuine critique vs. trolling
   - Trolls typically make sweeping generalizations about you or your research, with a negative tone and outrageous, hateful accusations that often cannot be de-escalated. Their goal is often provocation over accuracy!
   - Check their comment history and see if there’s a pattern of trolling
Tips to handle a troll

1. Know a troll when you see one
Example from Reddit IamA called “Global land use implications of dietary trends”
Tips to handle a troll

1. Know a troll when you see one
Sometimes trolls are very obvious!

2. Don’t overshare

- Avoid sharing personal details (e.g., where you live, where you spend your time on campus, when you’re going on vacation or away to conferences, give your specific location or routine)
- Don’t give an opportunity for trolls to learn personal information that could make you vulnerable
Tips to handle a troll

3. Make use of privacy settings

• You can always make your accounts private – they do not have to be open, and you don’t need to share information
• If your account is public, you may face more trolling
• When you feel the need to, block the troll: Open dialogue is not always worth the burden on your mental health

Tips to handle a troll

4. Don’t feed the trolls

• Your efforts to calm a troll will probably not work, and you could have better used your time elsewhere
• If, for whatever reason, you do not think you can let the troll stand, take a deep breath before responding, and even consider walking away before you respond based on emotion
• Use facts and figures to contradict their sweeping statements
• You can also block them, especially if they are harassing you
Tips to handle a troll

5. Don’t feel bad

- It’s normal to have immediate gut reactions – maybe you’re offended, upset, angry
- Trolls don’t know you and don’t care about you. They don’t even care if you’re right or wrong!
- You should react to them with the same indifference they’re posting
- It might feel personal if they attack you or your research, but it’s not
- Figure out self-care that helps you feel better and block them or step away if needed

Digital footprint

- What traces are you leaving behind?
Digital footprint

• Online reputation management:
  • Anything you put online could come back to “haunt you” someday
  • Hard to permanently delete anything from the internet
  • Reputation can be affected by someone else’s posts or even people with your same name

Digital footprint

• Why care?
  • Safe to assume that prospective employers will check your online presence
  • Companies hire people to conduct background checks
  • Posts don’t have to be work-related to hurt your chances of being hired
  • Consider which ideas or principles you’re publicly associated with
Digital footprint

• What can you do?
1. Find out what’s already out there:
   o Google yourself – what do you find?
   o Are you linked to comments, photos, or content you don’t like?
   o Check your social media handles – are they identifiable?

Microsoft (2012)

Digital footprint

• What can you do?
2. Damage control:
   o Review your social media privacy settings
   o Un-tag yourself from undesired content, including photos or comments made
   o Leave groups that don’t serve your purpose
   o Consider reviews you have posted
   o Ask site managers to delete old profiles or files of you that you no longer want available (e.g., student profile, old CV)
Digital footprint

• What can you do?
3. Accentuate the positive:
   o Build your profile online with content you want to be associated with
   o Consider building your own website
   o Create new content that reflects your interests and values
   o Before posting, ask yourself if you would be comfortable with prospective employers seeing it!

Q&A

Do you have questions for us?
Thank you!

Contact us:

• Virginia Capmourteres, vcapmour@uoguelph.ca
• Bethany Davidson-Eng, bdavieng@uoguelph.ca