

**Social Media in Clinical Practice:  
Practical Considerations**

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**Outline**

- Why you should care about digital footprints
- Barriers to uptake
- Risks
- Benefits
- Managing your digital footprint

*Bottom Line:  
You are already on line.  
It's important that you are in control.*

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**Digital Footprint**

- What is it?
- Who creates it?
- Why is it important?

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**Digital Footprint**

- What is it?
  - It is your on-line presence
  - It is what’s being said about you
  - It is the on-line information about you
  - It may not be restricted to your professional information
- Who creates it?
- Why is it important?

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**Digital Footprints**

- What is it?
- Who creates it?
  - Ideally, you do
  - If you don’t, someone else will
  - Howard Luks, MD:
    - Do you know if your patients are *talking* about you?
    - Do you know *what they are saying*?
- Why is it important?

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**Digital Footprint**

- What is it?
- Who creates it?
- Why is it important?
  - Because the exchange of information is not through *traditional media channels*
  - It will impact your reputation
  - Patients are utilizing the web for health information

*Education is all of our obligation*

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### Why Aren't More Clinicians On Line?

- Too many responsibilities already
  - No credit for on-line activities
- Talking about myself is not a good use of my time (Narcissism)
- Liability
  - HIPAA violations
- Harm
  - Posting of "inappropriate content"
- Overwhelming learning curve

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### HIPAA Violations Scare Everyone

4/2011: Doctor fired for "unprofessional misconduct"  
– Posted details of a specific ED case with sufficient detail to allow others to guess who it was  
– Fired *despite* deleting the post

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### HIPAA Violations Scare Everyone

8/2013: Spectrum workers fired for FB post  
– "Discussed situations in enough detail that someone with knowledge of their cases might be able to identify who was being discussed"

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**But There May Be More Danger by Ignoring Social Media**

- Imposters
  - Twitter
  - Facebook
- Patient reviews
  - Angry patients more inclined to rate you?
  - “When trusting the wisdom of the crowds, it is important to understand what is meant by ‘crowd’.”\*
- Dissemination of misinformation

\*P. Davis, 1/14/13. scholarlykitchen.sspnet.org

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**Social Media Has Tangible Benefits**

- Enhance your presence = enhance your reputation = increase your patient practice
- Larger presence = more information that *you* want and can control
- Education = Greater patient awareness
- Networking = Ability to access colleagues beyond your local community

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**Separation of Professional From Personal identities?**

- Dual citizenship
  - Aim is to leverage professional connections while maintaining privacy in other settings
  - Examples
    - Exclusive use of Twitter for professional means
    - Exclusive use of Facebook for personal means
  - Separation is supported by AMA (Opinion 9.124)
  - **VERY IMPORTANT: All SM posts should be considered public.**

Mostaghimi and Crotty. (2011). Ann Int Med, 154, 960.

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### Can/Should You Separate?

- Ethics of separation
  - “Robs” patients of the opportunity to see their clinicians as humans
    - The professional identity as constituted by the personal identity
  - Operationally impossible
    - Web searches can “quickly” connect the two
  - Acknowledge that SM is inherently public, no matter the forum

DeCamp, Koenig, and Chisolm. (2013). JAMA, 310, 2566.

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### Ten Tips From ASCO

1. Get involved
2. Engage often
3. Always identify yourself
4. Protect patient confidentiality and privacy
5. Contextualize your activities



<http://www.asco.org/about-asco/social-media>

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### Ten Tips...

6. Avoid impropriety
7. Give credit where credit is due
8. Professionalism is critical
9. Separate the personal from professional
10. Be aware of your institutional guidelines



<http://www.asco.org/about-asco/social-media>

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