



Description

An array of social media platforms has given the world access to endless information, entertainment, news, and many other topics. Social media use from 2005-2015 increased from 7% in 2005 to 65% in 2015. And not only has it influenced the issues mentioned above. However, it has increasingly become important in the academic community. Social media has become an essential tool for research promotion. Obviously, it provides a new outlet for spreading relevant research and information. However, there is still a debate as to its effect on increasing research citations. In this article, we will look at various studies and investigate the trends in using social media platforms for research promotion.

Social Media Platforms

When most people think of social media, they think of selfies, vacations photos, or photos of food. So, it is no surprise that researchers are not fully involved in using social media to promote their research. However, this could be the wrong way to look at social media. And, if researchers [use these platforms to their full potential](#), their feelings toward social media and academic work might change.

This starts with [finding the right channel](#) for your research promotion needs.

- Twitter: You can instantly link to and promote your latest research, conference presentation, blog, and more.
- LinkedIn: You can use this professional networking platform to share updates on your work within a specific group or for a broader audience. You can also provide links to your work.
- Blogs: There are many blogging platforms to use, to share, and link your research and papers. Readers can also respond to your work and engage in discussions.
- Facebook: This offers a wide range of avenues to promote your research and link to other social media platforms and journals.
- Mendeley helps you grow your network by joining groups in a particular field of interest. Researchers can engage with each about their work.
- ResearchGate is a social networking platform for researchers to share and discuss a range of research topics. Use ResearchGate to promote collaboration in the academic community.

Comparing Studies

All studies will agree that social media allows people to easily connect to and communicate with others. However, there is still a debate on the effectiveness of using social media to promote research. For example, a [study](#) by Katy Jordan of the Institute of Educational Technology offered three key points:

- Researchers are more likely to upload their papers to academic, social network sites (Academia.edu, ResearchGate, and Mendeley) than to websites run by institutions and universities.
- Academic, social network sites and social media show a positive effect on impact factors, citation counts, and search rankings.
- Social media results in increased interactions with others in the academic community.

There are some contrasting views, too. Phil Davis, a Ph.D. in science communication and publishing consultant, [recently summarized the studies](#) on the impact of social media platforms on research. A study using Facebook, Twitter, and blog promotion for the journal *Circulation* reported no change in article views. A similar study on papers published in the *International Journal of Public Health* also revealed no difference in opinions or research citations.

Sometimes, the results can vary depending on the academic field. Clayton Lamb, a University of Alberta Ph.D. student, summarized the findings of a [recent study](#). “There’s a compelling signal that citation rates are positively associated with science communication through social media. Certainly, Twitter provides an accessible and efficient platform for scientists to do a majority of that communication.” For the scientific community, the use of social media for research promotion is more common than in other subjects like the humanities.

Drawbacks of Social Media

In general, there are some drawbacks to using social media, including a lack of privacy, advertising, and hacking. The same goes for the academic community. One example is [information overload](#). This could fail to find credible information or research.

Other criticisms include the following:

- Some believe that social media weakens the quality of academic discussion by opening up information to the non-academic world.
- Open discussions on social media can weaken the peer-review process. It is difficult to identify credible opinions and contributors to social media platforms
- The researcher needs to be [committed to promoting their work](#). All researchers might not see this as a negative, but it does add a lot of work to an already busy schedule. Responsibilities include following leading academic figures on social media, posting regular updates, providing links to your social media pages, and even measuring the performance and effectiveness of social media promotion.

These drawbacks, while dangerous, can be overcome. It takes some discipline on the researcher’s part, as well as a focus on their priorities and schedule. A researcher needs to remember that their

work comes first. Using social media to promote the work is a complement to their research and professional lives.

Improving the Social Media Experience

Academic research is essential for many reasons. So, researchers and institutions need to do everything they can to spread information and promote knowledge. Individual researchers also use academic work to increase their visibility and widen their reputation – both are connected to increasing citations. Nader Ebrahim, in his paper [“Citation and its Impact on University Ranking,”](#) says that in the future publishing an article in a journal will only give it a fifty percent chance of getting cited. Promotion and distribution of the articles and journals will need to be the other fifty percent.

Most journals work to promote the articles they publish. However, it is the researchers who are in the best position to effectively promote their work. This can be done at [all stages of research](#). In the pre-research stage, researchers can participate in team-authored articles, especially with their peers. At the pre-publication stage, they can research journals with a high impact factor and open access. Lastly, they can actively promote the article to a broader audience at the post-publication stage.

What are your experiences with using social media to promote your research? Have you seen a correlation with social media promotion and research citations? Please share with us in the comments.

Category

1. Promoting Research
2. Using Social Networks

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