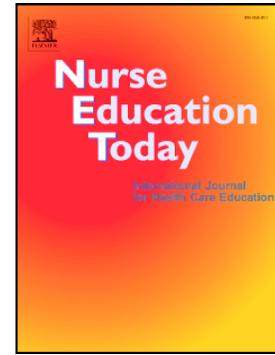# Accepted Manuscript

Developing the social media presence of @NurseEducToday by using Twitter

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Developing the social media presence of @NurseEducToday by using Twitter

The use of social media (SoMe) has increased significantly over the last ten years. Twitter, one example of the SoME was developed in 2006 aimed to communicate with small groups. Since its inception Twitter has been embraced as an important professional communication platform by clinicians, academics, educators, students and researchers. Tweets are increasingly used to build collaborative relationships, showcase research and communicate innovative clinical and educational information.

In this editorial, we discuss the academic and professional impact of developing the Nurse Education Today (NET) Twitter platform. In our role as SoMe editors for (NET) we are responsible for the developing the presence of the journal on Twitter. NET currently has three SoME editors; @sharp_pam and @RobMarki are UK academics and @Brissydeb is an Australian academic. The NET SoMe editor role is relatively new and the aims and scope of the role are still evolving. The current editors are committed to developing the NET social media presence, improving professional communication, and building a Twitter community that values and embraces nursing and midwifery research and education. As NET SoMe editors we are all motivated by a strong belief in the value of SoMe in our roles as nurse educators, academics and researchers.

Twitter is increasingly used to communicate research findings and improve author's citation metrics. Traditionally, academic impact is measured via metrics such as per-author and per journal citation counts (Ravenscroft *et al* 2017). Thelwall *et al.* (2013) and Shuai, Pepe, & Bollen, (2012) tentatively observed a small correlation between social media coverage, usage, and early citations, a strong social media presence may therefore positively impact on authors academic metrics and play an increasingly important role in identifying the impact of academic outputs. Ravenscroft *et al* (2017) also discuss measuring comprehensive impact i.e. on the economy, society, health and legislation. They propose that to evaluate wider impact, information from wider sources including social media posts should be available. We believe the dissemination of research could be further enhanced if authors of papers made their Twitter handle known to publishers and also disseminated their own work through their SoMe contacts and professional links.

The use of social media in scholarly communication and the use of "altmetrics" has been explored by Haustein et al. (2015). Haustein and colleagues define "altmetrics" as the spectrum of social media-based metrics but they identified that the presence of papers on social media was low. For example, only 21.5% of papers received at least one tweet, although 66.8% of papers received at least one citation. Social media metrics and citations increased when collaboration was evident and longer references lists present. Although longer papers typically attracted more citations, the opposite was seen on social media platforms. Editorials and news items were identified by Haustein and colleagues as most popular on Twitter and they concluded that factors driving social media and citation metrics are different than traditional academic metrics.

Inappropriate or ineffective tweets can be a limit of Twitter and Robinson-Garcia et al (2017) discuss the limitations of counting the numbers of Tweets of academic papers (they examined content of dentistry Tweets). They concluded that almost all tweets were

"mechanical and devoid of original thought, no evidence of conversation, tweets generated by monomania, duplicate tweeting from many accounts under centralized professional management and tweets generated by bots" (p1). They note that many Tweets do not show any evidence of engagement with the papers and that simplistic use of social media data can be misleading. They assert that users of Twitter data need to be mindful of its limits.

We have attempted to build NET social media presence using a variety of different strategies: we share papers from NET as they are released, highlight significant findings, add a comment and/or useful hashtags and retweet at different times of the day/on different days. We also select papers that we individually we find of interest. We observe that some of our followers clearly retweet without reading the paper (the retweet is too quick) and some tag other accounts or organisations that they think might find the paper of interest. Knight and Kaye (2014) report that much of Twitter use is passive. However some followers clearly do read papers fully and add comment or questions and we have noticed that there is genuine engagement by both students and faculty. Since we began this approach, the NET Twitter account has had a significant increase in the number of followers and attracted a wider range of UK and international followers.

We 'follow' any nurse or midwifery educators or organisations that tweet relevant content and share and/or comment on any relevant content posted by our followers. We 'like', thank and respond to those who comment on the papers or what we post. We have posted general interest stories, media reports and key papers from other journals as long as they meet our area of interest (i.e. nurse/midwifery education). We have however found it challenging to engage regularly with Twitter when alongside our own busy professional and home lives. It can be all consuming and sometimes addictive (checking notifications at all times of day/night).

Individually, as SoMe editiors we are all reading more papers from NET and by accessing the account regularly finding resources and information for our own professional interests. We are developing skills in concise writing (although the recent change to 280 characters has lessened the need for that). We are also widening our own awareness of issues that are of interest to Tweeting nurses, academics and students. Importantly we are building collaborations and developing a community of educators within the nursing and midwifery professions.

There is emerging literature on the use of SoMe in nursing and midwifery and specifically its use in education. The WeCommunities website based in the UK holds regular Twitter chats using #WeChat and they have a useful resources section: http://www.wecommunities.org/resources/links/article. The Higher Education Academy offers guidance to engaging in Twitter Chats: https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/individuals/heachat/made-easy and offer weekly Learning and Teaching in Higher Education Chats (@LTHEchat) under the hashtag #lthechat https://lthechat.com/

Some of the potential benefits of engagement are highlighted in the literature as:

Engagement by students (Price *et al.* 2017, Booth, 2015) in Twitter Chats (Sinclair, McLoughlin, Warne, 2015).

Sharing of resources/networking (Price *et al.* 2017) Alpert & Womble (2016)

Dissemination of research Shuai, Pepe, & Bollen, (2012) <u>Haustein, Costas, & Larivière</u> (2015), Mollett *et al.* (2017), Baker (2018).

Conference networking/sharing using hashtags (Salzmann-Erikson, 2017).

For academics (Wright 2015) and clinical staff to unwind and have fun.

Continued professional development and revalidation (Moorley and Chin 2015).

We do however have some unanswered questions: Do we meet the needs of our followers? Do our followers want our comments or just the link to the papers? Should we try and set up more debate/discussion/sharing of practice or implementation regarding key papers. Can we increase engagement from our followers (more than just retweets and likes (see Robinson-Garcia et al 2017). Would adopting a more visual approach increase uptake (Ibrahim et al 2017). How can we broaden our international network without losing relevance on national issues? Should we expand to develop other SoMe formats (blogs, Facebook, Instagram etc.)? How can we widen our understanding of the different nurse education cultures (and the varied terminology) and how can we engage nurse educators in countries where Twitter is not allowed or widely used?

The issue of ensuring professionalism when using social media is frequently raised (Price et al 2017, Sinclair, McLoughlin, and Warne (2015). However, Jones et al (2018) observes that the advice from some university nursing staff seems to be to 'avoid social media'. This is not the answer as there are useful guidelines on ensuring a professional approach from professional bodies and from employers. Educators have a clear role in ensuring that students see the benefits and are aware of professional.

Since the SoMe editor role was expanded, the number of NET Twitter followers has increased significantly and engagement with the content has increased. Social media, is an important communication platform and it is important that NET is able to meet the demands of its readers and the wider nursing and midwifery community. Twitter was developed to promote instant messaging. However it evident that it is much more than mindless chatter, rather it has emerged as an important information sharing and social communication platform.

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