



Monitoring and Evaluating Social Media

Social networking tools such as Facebook and Twitter are characterized by their interactive and participatory nature, making them popular tools for health communication.

A key feature of Facebook that makes it popular for health organisations is that it is both a community of users and the public face of a program or organization. This makes it easy for the organisation to communicate directly with its users and it is still the most popular social media tools used by healthcare organisations. Twitter is also believed to help communication between healthcare professionals and their clients, and is increasing in popularity. However a big question is how best to monitor and evaluate the reach and impact of these tools.

Measuring 'reach' (Are you attracting your intended audience?)

Both Facebook and Twitter provide metrics that are easily downloaded from your feed and that can provide a simple measure of reach. This includes:

- 📊 Follower count
- 📊 Page likes

However the value of these stats are limited since:

- 📊 If your program does not have its own Facebook page or Twitter account and you are sharing space on your organization's general page, you will not be able to tell how many followers are interested in your TIS program;
- 📊 These numbers are low value stats - also known as 'vanity metrics' since they tell you how many people have read your page/profile, but what you really want to know is how many have engaged with the message and (ultimately) have they acted on t message?

Looking at individual posts will give you a better picture of whether or not you were able to engage your intended audience.

Measuring engagement (Is your audience involved with your program's message?)

By looking at individual post you can answer questions such as:

- 📊 Did your post grab people's attention?
- 📊 Did people like your message?
- 📊 Did you start a discussion?

You can measure this using higher-level metrics such as:

- 📊 Message 'amplification' - the number of shares or retweets per post
- 📊 Conversation rate - on Facebook this is the number of comments, on Twitter its replies
- 📊 Applause – retweets, likes etc

It would also be useful to look at your 'Star Posts' (which 2 posts have had the most engagement over the month). This is an important way of monitoring what grabs the attention of your followers so you can keep doing what works.

Measuring impact (Did you cause people to take action?)

This is more difficult for social media than for many other activities. However you can use the content of posts/comments on Facebook and replies on Twitter in the same way as you would other qualitative data (for example from a focus group) to describe your users' interactions with your message and each other. By looking at the content of posts you will gain a better understanding of the impact your messages are having. Data to look at include:

- 📊 Written content of comments/replies
- 📊 Emoticons and emojis associated with a post
- 📊 Use of photos in comments/replies

There are many ways to analyse the content of posts/replies. A good starting point would be to focus on your most popular post/tweet and look at the content of comments/replies. You can then either:

- 📊 Look for distinct themes or ideas in the content. What do you think the person wanted to achieve/show by their comment/reply? What are the TIS messages?
- 📊 Or you could use a pre-defined set of codes in your analysis. For example how many people mentioned quitting, being smoke free, cutting down and so on?



Other monitoring and evaluation tips:

Facebook and Twitter both have built in analytics that are available from the home page.

Facebook call this 'Insights' and it is available once 30 people have liked your page. Data includes:

- The number of people who have seen your content
- Post clicks
- Reactions, comments and shares
- Total video views

You can find out more about this service here: <https://www.facebook.com/help/268680253165747>

As well as the analytics page available from the home page, Twitter have the 'Tweet Activity Dashboard' which is available to all Twitter users from a desktop/laptop computer, or the mobile app. It is updated in real time and data includes:

- Number of people who have seen your tweet
- Number of interactions – e.g. retweets, replies and follows for each tweet
- Number of likes for each tweet

You can find out more about this service here <https://support.twitter.com/articles/20171990>

This is useful information, and where you have a lot of 'silent traffic' the data on reads/views can show you just how many people are reading your posts and seeing your tweets, even if they are not commenting or replying. It is also worth remembering that on average a post reaches less than 10% of your followers. This is partly because of the algorithms that Facebook uses. Promoted posts will reach more of your followers, but this can be an expensive option. However, if that 10% engage by sharing or tagging others in a comment then your reach will more than double. Which means that engagement is also increasing your reach. It is very difficult to benchmark engagement rates, but available information suggests that for NGOs working in health engagement on Facebook is around 5%, and on Twitter just over 1%.

However this data won't give you the same information about engagement or impact that a qualitative analysis of comment/reply content will. If you are finding that people are just not replying to tweets or posts it might not be because the content is not of interest; some people are reluctant to take an active role on social media, or they might see your page as a source of information rather than a place to communicate. You might want to try and increase interactions through the way you use social media. For example, instead of just posting information, you could:

- Ask your users questions
- Run a competition using social media
- Post videos and pictures

You could also run an anonymous survey through Facebook to find out what people think about your page.

Find more tips and tricks for increasing Twitter and Facebook engagement here:

<http://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/6-ways-to-increase-twitter-engagement/>

<http://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/10-ways-to-increase-your-facebook-engagement/>