



Workshops - 2017

W13 Forensics and Social Media: The Intersection of Education, Personal Promotion, and Professionalism

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After attending this presentation, attendees will be able to harness the power of social media for professional promotion while learning to avoid potential pitfalls and classic mistakes. Social media platforms to be addressed include: Instagram™, Twitter™, LinkedIn®, ResearchGate, Snapchat™, Academia.edu, Facebook®, Hootsuite™, and YouTube®.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by instructing attendees in the appropriate use, advantages, and pitfalls of social media engagement for the purposes of professionalism, education, and outreach. It is hoped that by defining and demystifying some common platforms, attendees will be encouraged to explore this brave new world of social connectivity.

According to the Pew Research Center, nearly three-quarters of Americans use social media in some form and engage with it on a daily basis. Despite the substantial social media user-base and the currently strong interest in the forensic sciences among the general public, the forensic science community has done little to nothing to address the phenomenon or integrate itself into the social media landscape. While many forensic scientists avoid social media for fear of appearing unprofessional or violating confidentiality, social media is a powerful tool for professional promotion, education of the general public, and recruitment of potential new scientists. This goal of this workshop is to introduce a range of social media platforms, their utility, and their potential use within the forensic science community.

The professional use of limited-content platforms will be addressed. Instagram™ is an image posting application in which users are encouraged to “tell a story” through captioned pictures. Twitter™ allows for images and video to be posted, but text is limited to 140 characters forcing the user to be exceptionally precise. Figure 1© is limited to healthcare professionals allowing them to communicate and receive feedback from colleagues using HIPAA-compliant messaging. For each of these services, their benefits and limitations as well as the means by which they can be harnessed to advance the forensic science community will be defined. Additionally, the pitfalls and responsibilities inherent in establishing oneself as an influential expert with a dedicated social media following will be discussed.

Platforms designed for professional promotion and career development will also be covered. LinkedIn® provides the ability to create an online CV that can be examined by other users. Other platforms that will be covered enable the professional to share publications, projects, presentations, and educational handouts. The user community and limitations of platforms such as Academia.edu, ResearchGate, and the Academic Room will be introduced to help participants determine which service best suits their needs.

The final platforms to be discussed are those suitable for promoting one’s institution or agency such as YouTube, Twitter, and Periscope. The creation of mutually beneficial relationships between institutions through social media will be covered, as will goal-directed content and analysis metrics on multiple platforms. The workshop will finish with a review of how to generate and distribute content, original quality content vs. reposting, migrating



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to new platforms, cross-platform posting, boundaries and sensitivities, social media plagiarism, and legal issues surrounding content ownership.

Social Media, Public Outreach, Career Development