**2020 Online KT Conference:**

**Social Media Strategies for Knowledge Translation**

*Panel: Social Media in Research: Navigating Ethical Issues*

Luke Gelinas

Originally Recorded on October 28, 2020

YouTube Link: <https://youtu.be/rJtLaRB72QY>

>> JOANN STARKS: Thank you so much, Luke. That was a lot of information to cover and you really touched on some important issues. At this time I would like to introduce today's reactors and invite them to turn on their web cams. We have a short discussion period, so I’ll just do a very brief introduction right now.

We have Paul Baker, Senior Director of Research and Strategic Innovation at Georgia Tech’s Center for Advanced Communications Policy. We have Marta Garcia, who is bilingual information media specialist with the National Rehabilitation Information Center or NARIC and we have Hilda Smith an Independent Knowledge Mobilization Specialist.

Let's see. We have do have a couple of questions that came in. This is for Luke. Can you speak to the ethical and privacy issues of conducting research via social media, for example, engaging with participants using a private Facebook group?

>> LUKE GELINAS: Since I talked so much can I ask Paul or Marta or Hilda if they want an opportunity to answer this or just reflect on that question?

>> JOANN STARKS: That’s a good point, we’ll go ahead and do that. Hilda your expertise in social justice is critical to using social media ethically with disadvantaged populations. What are your thoughts about this question about engaging with participants via private Facebook group?

>> HILDA SMITH: I think there is a lot of trickiness with that. Private Facebook groups when dealing with a marginalized group or a group that has particularly some fear of their whatever being disclosed, can be really tricky to enter those spaces on the basis of you are not just a member of that community joining for the purposes of that community.

In my experience, it's actually better to just go and talk to the moderators, the owners of that page and have them direct the information into it instead of an outside researcher joining and promoting.

That way you have been okayed by the people who run the group itself. There is a bit of a buffer so that people who wouldn't want to engage, their privacy is still kept private even from the researcher. And then people who want to engage can have an entry point to connect with the researchers.

>> JOANN STARKS: Thank you very much for that. Marta, one of your specialties is being able to translate research and evidence based materials into Spanish social media bites at NARIC. What is your process for maintaining scientific integrity which Luke mentioned when translating materials to share in Spanish?

>> MARTA GARCIA: One of the processes is making sure that I have the verbiage in both languages, so it matches. I don't want to be writing something that a NIDILRR grantee you know, the research into Spanish and have it not be specific to the research if that makes sense. So that is one way that I try to maintain the integrity. But also, I have tried to ‑‑ one of the things with Spanish is there is formal and informal. To help keep the integrity, I'll keep my social media bites more formal. Then, make them more informal if it's more of ones from knowledge translation occurred. Then I make them more informal. I try to keep abreast of what the research is so when I do translate into Spanish I don't translate the wrong thing or say the wrong thing. That is pretty much how I try to maintain the integrity of the research.

>> JOANN STARKS: Thank you. Paul, you have managed many NIDILRR grants over the years focusing on technology and accessibility for people with disabilities. Given social media is voluntary, while there are issues with privacy, what metrics would you use to assess the utility of social media versus alternative methods for recruitment and can you speak to what those methods might be?

>> PAUL BAKER: Sure thanks. I think one of the incredible power of these platforms is the reach it gives you well beyond nontraditional recruitment. For instance, I was making notes to myself that I think of social media as having three kinds of purposes. Your metrics depends on your purpose. It's recruitment among the most powerful so it allows you to not just ‑‑ if you amplify snowball reputational, it can really amplify it. From a social or ethical standpoint it means your sample is larger and you get a more representative sample of perhaps marginalized or underrepresented. Very powerful technique.

Data collection is also powerful for data collection for similar things as Dr. Gelinas mentioned. It allows you to recruit more broadly than you ever would. In that sense it provides better gist for the mill, if you will, in terms of the input you have. What really wasn't covered was kind of the back end and I think of the reinforcement component which is the dissemination. Social media is not collection. It has amplifying power in terms of dissemination on what you are doing. Dissemination then in iterative standpoint you can feedback in. One of the things we have noticed, one of my colleagues ‑‑ in fact, may be on the call. Has been effective at the use of Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn not only amplifying the message but cross platforming amplification the message. We have been able to get data or participants beyond what we would normally do. But to directly answer the question, I tend to assess the utility of what I'm doing. There are a number of metrics built into Twitter and Google analytics, Facebooks. There are tools. They may not be as easy to use as paper and pencil, but they are fairly accessible.

One of the things to do, for instance, you may tweet out a recruitment and you may wonder why you don't hear anything. The metrics can tell you ten people have looked at it. That is why you are not hearing anything because it vanished. You can setup a schedule, for instance in terms of recruiting over time. You can see the people who have either looked at it or engaged with it. It tells what times of day are more effective. And this gets to the entire strategy that you are using for recruitment. I have gone way too far. The short is there are metrics out there that are really powerful to help you tune and make more effective these tools.