The evolution of journals from print to enriched media: an assessment of journal digital characteristics

Samantha Collinsa, Gregory Thompsonb, Angela Cairsa, Tiffany DeSimonea

KnowledgePoint360 Group, aMacclesfield, Cheshire, UK; bLyndhurst, NJ, USA

Abstract

Objective: HCPs are being forced to access clinical information in response to the dramatic evolution of online and mobile resources. Concurrently, peer-reviewed medical journals are adapting to effectively compete and provide useful, engaging, and informative healthcare information. We sought to understand how medical journals are adapting to effectively compete and provide enriched forms of digital media to offer enhanced access to clinical information.

Research design and methods: We surveyed 100 medical journals to explore what changes they have made to increase their use of digital media to deliver content. In addition, we analyzed 39 medical journal websites to identify how they are using social channels and other new media to expand the reach of their content and facilitate broader, enriched access to this content.

Results: Of the 100 journal websites surveyed, one-quarter (n=25) had no digital characteristics. Of the remainder (n=75), social media characteristics comprised 36%, which was followed by 22% for video and 18% each for optimized websites, apps, and mobile sites. Seventeen journals (44%) had active social media channels such as Twitter or Facebook. We have surveyed social participation from 130 journals and are currently seeing responses.

Conclusions: Peer-reviewed medical journals are rapidly moving to meet the needs of HCPs in accessing healthcare information through mobile and online resources. Journals report this trend will continue, as they face increasing pressure from their HCPs to increase their use of new media that are suitable for rapid and user-friendly access to ides and education.

Introduction

• The methods and channels by which the medical community search for and obtain their information is evolving. Online resources, including search engines, websites, mobile apps, and social media, are increasingly used by healthcare professionals (HCPs) to inform clinical decision making and communicate with peers.

• Recent research conducted by Google with Manhattan Research looked at digital adoption among 300 practicing physicians and found that physicians spend twice as much time using online resources for clinical decision-making (n=140) or keeping up-to-date (n=160) than they did prior to print resources.

• 87% use a Smartphone or tablet in their practice

• 55% use digital channels to manage and organize their professional information during the past 12 months.

• Moreover, 52% of HCPs use message boards, communities, social networks, or blogs on a monthly basis.

• Peer-reviewed medical journals are adapting to effectively compete and provide useful, engaging, and informative healthcare information.

Objective

To understand how medical journals are expanding their use of digital media to provide enriched sources of publication content to users.

Research design and methods

• KnowledgePoint360 performed an online assessment to determine whether medical journals offer mobile-friendly websites, apps, podcasts, videos, FSS feeds, and Alert, in addition to opportunities for digital content delivery. Journal participation in social media (Facebook, Twitter, blogs, LinkedIn, and YouTube) was also examined.

• The initial assessment was limited to 30 medical journals but later expanded to include 60 medical journals.

• A selection of 60 peer-reviewed journals, with a range of business models and impact factors within the fields of gastroenterology, general medicine, health economics outcomes research (HEOR), dermatology, oncology, and urology were included.

• In March and April 2013, KnowledgePoint360 also surveyed 100 medical journals to gain insight into their utilization of digital media, either as part of digital enhancements to their websites or in providing enriched content delivery (non-social media).

• Using Googleplex, Journal Selective (journals with high- and medium-impact factors across a diverse range of therapy areas, including oncology, neurology, neurology, and general medicine) were identified. Leading journals were not included as they are most likely to be representative of journals typically targeted during publication planning. Therapy areas were chosen based on the premise that such journals would be in a highly competitive market place and actively looking to shift their business model.

• The survey was conducted via e-mail using SurveyMonkey.

Results

• Of the 60 journal websites surveyed, all (100%) incorporated additional digital characteristics on their websites.

• We identified several digital enhancements that journals had included on their websites at the time of our survey research. We classified these as either social media or digital content delivery (non-social media).

• Social media characteristics comprised 47% of all digital characteristics measured (Figure 1).

• Videre were the most commonly offered digital content delivery enhancement. Quizzes/polls and mobile sites were offered the least often, each provided by 30 journals (5%).

• The type of digital enhancement offered by journals showed variability by therapy area, with the overall proportion of added social media features ranging from 3% (6/49) to 73% (36/49) (Figure 2).

• HCPs were the only specialty area examined that added more social media than digital content delivery enhancements (57% vs. 43%, with Twitter representing 39% of all social media additions).

• The general medicine and dermatology journals examined added an equal proportion of social media and digital content delivery features, most commonly Twitter and FSS feeds, respectively. Of the oncology journals examined, slightly a higher proportion of digital content delivery enhancements was added relative to social media (54% vs. 46%).

• Among the oncology journals sampled, digital content delivery enhancements were added more often than social media (61% vs. 23%).

• Of the 100 medical journals surveyed, response have been received from 13 journals. The demographic characteristics of survey respondents and their journals are summarized in Table 1.

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• Most of the 13 journals surveyed, responses have been received from 100 medical journals.

• Of the 13 journals, 4 (31%) did not use any form of social media to engage HCPs. Among the remainder, a Twitter feed (40%, 6/13) was the most commonly added social channel, followed by a Facebook and LinkedIn presence (each 31%, 4/13) (Figure 3).

• Videos (46%, 6/13) were the most frequently offered digital content delivery enhancement.

• Due to the low response rate, data were not analyzed according to high-volume mid-ranking impact factor or therapy area focus.

Conclusions

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Summary

• Of the 60 journals examined, the majority (62%, 38/60) offered their readers digital media enhancements. Of these, most (73%, 34/46) fell into 1 type of digital characteristics.

• Of the 60 journals examined, the type of enhancements offered was split relatively evenly between social media and digital features that enrich context (52% and 47%, respectively).

• However, very few journals were identified by therapy area, differences were found in the type and relative proportion of digital enhancements.

• Our survey of medical journals is ongoing, but preliminary results support the findings from our online assessment and indicate a continuing increase in the utilization of digital characteristics.

References


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