


Chapter 8

Social Networks on the Internet: Dissemination and Communication of Scientific Knowledge

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ABSTRACT

The chapter in question addresses the importance of social networks on the internet for science, as well as the evolution of these networks and their role in scientific research. It defines the concept of social networks on the internet and explores their specific relevance in the context of scientific research. In addition, it discusses how social networks can be used as tools for conducting scientific research and how to promote scientific dissemination and communication. It also explores active and passive approaches in the dissemination of research, highlighting academic social networks and other traditional tools that can be used for scientific outreach. The concept of the citation funnel is introduced, and guidance is provided on how to cite content taken from social networks. Finally, the challenges faced in communicating science to a lay audience are presented.

INTRODUCTION

I have addressed this issue before. For years I have been trying to understand and use social networks on the internet to make and disseminate science. Social networks can enhance the scientific dissemination and professional interaction of a researcher, student, teacher, or scientist (Bik & Goldstein, 2013) becoming a powerful social media tool (Aichner et al., 2021; Jarreau & Porter, 2018; Manca & Ranieri, 2016).

To give you an idea, my first email address dates to 1991, and I used @apx.ibase.org.br!!!! It was a server of ALTERNEX, the first Brazilian server, in 1988, for the internet (Instituto Nupef, 2022) set up by IBASE (that of Betinho, brother of Henfil... Do you remember? If not, it would be nice to know their history...) (IBASE, 2023) I accessed via BBS (Bulletin Board System) (Driscoll, 2022) so in this year of 2023, I celebrate 32 years as a 'netizen'. Most users today (at least in Brazil) are not that age (laughs), according to IBGE (IBGE, 2023).

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The importance of communication about science is continuously debated throughout the Academy, both in Brazil and in international meetings (Times Higher Education, 2023), and the need to disseminate information about scientific research through social media (Fala de mestres, 2018) is discussed. To disseminate science, it is necessary not only to inform about research, but also to create interest in society (Monte et al., 2022), using digital tools such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, blogs, and forums, etc. (Rodrigues & Neto, 2022) One sees an intense use of YouTube by virtue of its appeal in videos (Buitrago & Torres-Ortiz, 2022).

However, just transposing content from a traditional platform to social media is a mistake and does not consider the dynamics and language of these platforms (Marres, 2012). Communication about science should have a different approach from traditional journalism and consider the marketing strategy of these platforms, such as understanding about persona, value, and metrics, as well as using creative alternatives to make themselves understood by the audience considered as laypeople (Araujo, 2018; Lyall et al., 2023).

EVOLUTION OF SOCIAL NETWORKS ON THE INTERNET AND SCIENCE

Technology has played a key role in the evolution of society and the way we relate to scientific information. Since the beginning of the popularization of the internet in 1995, many tools have been created (Borup et al., 2006; Cash et al., 2003; Pinch & Bijker, 1984; Szymkowiak et al., 2021) with the aim of facilitating the sharing and access to technological, scientific and innovation information (Barashkova et al., 2019; Castaneda & Cuellar, 2020; Oddone & Meirelles, 2006; Szymkowiak et al., 2021).

In 2003, the social networking platform LinkedIn was launched, allowing professionals to connect and share their experiences and knowledge. Then, in 2004, Facebook and Google Scholar emerged, allowing you to connect with friends and researchers, respectively.

In 2005, YouTube was launched, revolutionizing the way we share and access videos online. Twitter emerged in 2006, becoming a microblogging platform of importance for sharing news and information in real time and useful for doing research (Denia, 2021).

In 2008, Academia.edu and ResearchGate were launched, allowing researchers to share and access scientific articles more easily and quickly (Ribeiro et al., 2017).

In 2009, WhatsApp was launched, making it one of the most popular messaging platforms in the world (Miríadax, 2020b). In 2010, Instagram was launched, allowing people to share photos and videos in a visual and eye-catching way (Rodrigues & Neto, 2022; L. P. G. Souto et al., 2022). Both tools are heavily used to disseminate and communicate science or conduct research (Miríadax, 2020a, 2020b).

In 2012, ORCID and Publons were launched, becoming important tools for identifying and tracking the scientific impact of researchers. And in 2020, SciELO Preprints was launched, allowing researchers to share their findings even before they are published in scientific journals, thus generating interactions and contributions to the improvement of texts even before they are published.

In summary, the technological tools mentioned above have revolutionized the way we share, access and evaluate scientific information, making the process faster, more efficient and democratic, but it can also bring disinformation the growth of so-called fake news also in scientific communication (González-Padilla & Tortolero-Blanco, 2020; Moura, 2009; Ojha et al., 2023; T. Oliveira, 2020).

From now on, you want to deepen your use of these tools.

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