Using Social Media to Create Virtual Interest Groups in Hospital Libraries
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Background

- Two acute care sites in large urban city
- Health care organization with social media policy in development
- Two librarians who are already actively involved with health research groups: Clinical Practice Guidelines (CPG) and Patient Safety (PS)
- Grey literature in CPG and PS
- Librarians with a keen interest in learning how social learning enriches information creation
Purposes of Study

To examine whether the opportunity for enhanced researcher-librarian interaction that Web 2.0 tools provide creates a synergistic experience for health research interest groups.

To examine the role of social networking in the processes of knowledge generation and sharing.
Methodology

• Recruitment to two Virtual Interest Groups
• Pre-Survey
• Post-Survey
• Data analysis

Project Phases:
• Three social media tools
• In person training
Pre-Survey

- 25 responses
- Most with previous experience using social media tools
- Major uses: Communication, information sharing
- Barriers to use: Workplace access limited, time constraints, discomfort with medium, privacy issues
- Training required in creating good online content and using these tools
Blogs

- Gateway platform, all other tools accessed from here
- Share resources, questions to group, etc.
- 21 participants, 20 posts

Wealth Creation - Information shared:
- Article review
- Guideline review tools
- Favourite free resources including websites
- Department newsletter
Chat

• 4 live chat sessions
• Connect with group virtually
• Troubleshoot issues

Who participated?
• KM specialists in guideline development
• Researcher in psychosocial oncology
• Health researcher/project coordinator
• IT support in population health research
Wealth Creation – Information Shared in Chat

- Recent developments related to the interest group topic
- Reflections and discussions about recent posts
- Interest group resource sharing
- Discussions about the use of Social Media for specific information sharing purposes
- New Social Media tools to explore

Examples:
- Guidelines developed, use in patient care, etc.
- Comparison of CPG evaluation tools
- Key journals for use in CPGs
- How groups are using Twitter, reaching different user groups
- New chat software, Yammer
Delicious

- Bookmarks for free resources
- Created 3 tag lists to share: CPG, PS, Social Media
- Resource sharing in virtual interest groups
- Value implicit when experienced in person
Post-Survey

- 7 responses
- Full participation = increased comfort
- Barrier to participation: Time constraints
- Positive experience
- Increased awareness in how information sharing is enriched by these tools
Conclusions

• A third interest group evolved for Social Media
• Time for participation in an interest group is greatest barrier
• Increasing awareness and comfort with social media important first step
• Social media becomes more and more vital in research communication
• Information is created, shared and enhanced in social media environments
Future Directions

• Sufficient interest to keep these interest groups active
• Participants to facilitate new interest groups, librarians become participants
• More Social Media training
• More awareness of grey literature in research interest groups