

Medical Writing

Social media

“For many people, the internet can feel like a lonely place. It can feel like... a big, endless, expansive void where you can constantly call out to it but no one’s ever listening. But... I found, in sharing my feelings with the void, eventually the void started to speak back”¹

This excerpt from Jonny Sun’s TED Talk crystallises the otherworldliness of the internet, especially what is found in social media (SoMe) platforms. Each with its own set of rules, particular vocabulary, and different dwellers; SoMe vastness can be hard to navigate.

Still, all the different platforms can become a place of gathering and sharing, where we can find like-minded people and amplify our voice beyond the limits of physical reach. One can learn a new skill, keep in touch with loved ones, and even grow a business with the help of SoMe. For medical writers, SoMe can alleviate the isolation that comes from working in their home offices, help them to have a chat with distant colleagues, or share a laugh over some nerdy wordplay.

In this issue, we explore the various facets of SoMe and how medical writers can dip their toes – or cannonball-dive – into the vastness.

First, **Jennifer Bell** discusses how she has leveraged LinkedIn to get some work coming her way for the past 10 years, including some techniques to increase reach to a wider audience. **Nicole Bezuidenhout** sheds light on a dark facet of SoMe, analysing how it has been used to spread misinformation about COVID-19 and what strategies can be applied to combat it. Next, social media crusader **Melvin Sanicas**, who fights against misinformation, is interviewed by **Raquel Billiones** in a piece that lays bare the challenges of this fight. Working from home has become the new normal since the first lockdown imposed by the pandemic, but it comes with its own set of challenges, which **Timothy C. Hardman**, **Peter Llewellyn**, and **Steven Walker** compiled through a survey. One of the findings:

43% of respondents report spending more time on social media. **Ekaterina Bulaeva** and **Amalia Ijasova** draw on their entrepreneurial experience to provide insights about the best way for the healthcare industry to leverage video content in SoMe. Next, **Archana Nagarajan** gives counsel on how we can use Medium to grow as a writer, while **Mariana Rickmann** guides us on the many tools to schedule SoMe posts. Geoff Hall scholarship winners **Adriana Rocha** and **Petal Smart** explore how social media contributed to the rise of predatory journals. Finally, **Surayya Taranum** delves into the role of a scientific writer using SoMe to stand up for science, and **Martin Delahunty** describes the use of altmetrics in the context of medical research publications.

Happy reading!

Diana Ribeiro

Acknowledgements

To all the people I contacted via SoMe asking for a contribution, I offer my sincerest thanks. You sure make the internet a less lonely place for me.

Many thanks to Raquel Billiones for the comments on this editorial. I look forward to seeing what the next years bring to *Medical Writing*.

References

1. Sun J. Transcript of ‘You are not alone in your loneliness’. [Cited 2021 Feb 6]. Available from: https://www.ted.com/talks/jonny_sun_you_are_not_alone_in_your_loneliness/transcript.

About the Guest Editor

Diana Ribeiro, MPharm, is a freelance medical writer based in Cascais, Portugal. Having worked in healthcare for more than 10 years, she has now exchanged verbal interactions with patients for written documents that reach a wider audience. Her long-time interests in health literacy and medical education were recently joined to a budding attraction to medical devices and regulatory writing. When she is not working, you can find her running, cooking, or (of course) scrolling through social media.

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