

Is radiology education ready for #SocialMedia?



Social media is part of our lives, our physical and digital personas are increasingly integrated to where we have gone from having a digital extension of our self to seamlessly living both on and off screens.

The majority of US adults are using Facebook (68%), and the numbers are significant in the 18-24 age demographic using Snapchat (78%), Instagram (71%), Twitter (45%) and YouTube (94%). When you include radiology trainees in the 18-29 age demographic, 88% use at least one social media platform. It is well overdue the interactive nature of social media platforms are being explored as a teaching tool, with early adaptors reporting significant successes.

Students today want to use these social media for learning and report a greater degree of student satisfaction when using interactive platforms in their training. This of course means facing challenges to implementing social media into curriculums, yet there are great opportunities to educators using social these platforms to interact with the new generation of digital natives.

Radiologists can use disruptive technologies to their advantage to engage and relate to their students and find new ways to take advantage of daily use of digital media in the workplace. The interactive nature of social media provides new avenues compared to the one-way use of the internet for education to just provide material. Educators now are exploring ways to enhance their teaching using social media in order to increase the interaction between students as a natural evolution to the value of traditional didactic teaching.

Students today are connected, creative, collective and religiously 'google' questions or information, 24/7 and this has shifted the dynamic of teacher as 'expert' making the real value of educators their ability to help students interpret and vet the magnitude of information available at their fingertips. This is an interactional relationship which can be cultivated using social media for learning.

Increasingly students want more online content, with a study showing the majority of health students today prefer to get educational materials online rather than in the classroom. Early adopters of social media use in medical education have seen success, with Stanford medical school reporting an 80% increase in class attendance after incorporating online sessions reserving classrooms for interactive discussion and problem solving.

There is no standard to successfully implement online learning which is one of the obstacles to social media adoption even though students want more use of online and interactive educational strategies. Another hurdle is the significant time faculty need to invest to incorporate social networking as a teaching tool.

Medical education has been a one way transfer of information where in no uncertain terms the educator is 'god' passing down knowledge and it will take a major change in perception and time to move to the social media interactive experience and value of the teacher as an interpreter and guide.

Radiologists can leverage digital platforms as tools and use this power as an exchange and inclusive dialog, the very nature of social media, to go beyond posting lectures or tweeting a case, to ask learners questions that will engage further queries they can interact with by harnessing the sea of online information at their disposal. They can create journal clubs through Twitter, use Facebook to challenge students with case-of-the-week challenges and start discussions on Snapchat. It may take some work in the beginning but the rewards of medical students and residents interacting as they learn and evolve in the digital era will far out way the effort.

Source: [Academic Radiology](#)

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