

Around the World in 180 days

How Much Has Twitter "Disrupted"
Hierarchies in Forensic Pathology?

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No conflicts to declare

Can hierarchies really be flattened?

Humans tend to form groups and groups are eventually sorted into hierarchies depending on the ambitions of the individual group members

What is Twitter?



- A microblogging service
- Tweet within a 280 character limit on any topic that you fancy
- You have a "following" and you "follow" (others to receive their tweets)
- ~ 126 million daily users (worldwide)
- ~ 48.65 million active users in the US

Was limited to 140 characters till November 2017

Leading countries based on number of Twitter users as of July 2019
(in millions)

- US: 48.65
- Japan: 36.7
- UK: 14.1
- Saudi Arabia: 9.9
- Turkey: 8.6
- Brazil: 8.28
- India: 7.75
- Mexico: 7.02
- Spain: 6.71
- Russia: 6.63

Source: Clement J. Social Media & Generated Content
<https://www.statista.com/statistics/242606/number-of-active-twitter-users-in-selected-countries/july-2019>

Anatomy of the FP Twitter “group”

- 31 accounts on Twitter identified as belonging to those of a forensic pathologist (per their profiles)
- 15 are US based
- 4 - Canada
- 3 - UK
- 2 – Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia,
- 1 - Denmark, NZ , South Africa
- 17 female – 14 male

2 fellows, 5 residents and 1 medical student

Characteristics of followers

- Total of 82k+
- Range of 25 to 45,400
- Three had > 4k
- **Most had less than 1k**

“Followers” refers to people who find the opinions of the FPs worthy of consideration

Characteristics of “following”

- Total of 28,776
- Range of 36 to 9.9k
- **Most FPs followed < than 2k people**

“Following” in this context refers to people whose opinions the FPs may find worthy of consideration

Tweet characteristics 2009-19

- **Total tweets 90,498!***
- **51% (16) tweeted >1k times**
 - 6.5% (2) - > 10k
 - 32% (10) – between 2k & 10 k
- 19% (6) – between 500 and 2000
- 39% (12) - had 500 tweets or less

*Tweets include both forensic and non forensic topics

How much forensic content* did they tweet about?

Of 100 sequential tweets of the top 10 Tweeters

- **30% of forensic related content (2)**
- 9% to 20% forensic content (4)
- 5% forensic content (4)

*Forensic content defined by the following criteria: Death investigation, autopsy, recruitment, teaching cases, testifying, images

What was the forensic content?

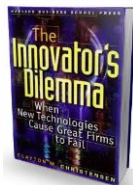
- Retweets of forensic cases or opinions
- Responses to general questions and queries
- Original posts on forensic cases
- Opinions on death investigation processes
- Advertises for training positions/jobs
- Responds to queries on recommended texts
- On SUDC
- Links to teaching cases
- Training of medical undergrads in the basics of forensic medicine and pathology

When did they join Twitter?

- 77% (24) joined **after** 2010
- Almost 50% joined after 2014
- 29% (9) **joined in 2018-19**
- **None** were registered on the platform when company started in March 2006

Disruption (in business)

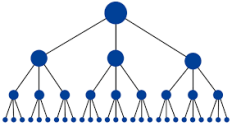
- Clayton Christensen's 1997 book *The Innovator's Dilemma*.
- However Joseph Schumpeter described the term "*creative destruction*" in 1949, which he in turn had adapted from Karl Marx



Either make stuff for the least discriminating customer or develop product which customer did not know that they needed

What hierarchies are disrupted?

- Traditional “command and control”
- Revenue?
- Organization?
- Influence?
- Information and learning?



The Wirearchy

- A term coined by John Husband (1999)
- “..Power structure created as the Information Age unfolded, disrupting hierarchical organizations and the fundamental construct of access to knowledge”

See References

Main concept:

That the “Internet and its associated networks are moving the world away from the "master-servant" archetype of the Industrial Age to a more open, social, and collaborative relationship”.

See References

Metrics of Disruption

- Number of inquiries to forensic fellowships?
- Number of fellows increased?
- Number of resident & medical student members of NAME?
- Number of resident & medical student attendees at NAME & other forensic meetings?
- Inquiries made by the public to self identified experts?
- Number and frequency of connections made peer to peer?

Number and frequency of connections made peer to peer

- Probably the most easily measurable index
- Twitter is free & requires **no permissions** to follow a particular individual unless the account holder specifically requires it
- In general the more followers you have the more influential you are (unless your followers are bots!!)
- Take advantage of the many opportunities to teach and share knowledge

Securing the "new" environment

- Polite and respectful interactions are encouraged – avoid racist, sexist and abusive language
- No need to tolerate abusive or offensive commentary from anyone
- The more followers you have **the more careful you need to be** especially when discussing professional opinions – they carry a lot of weight

In short....

- Your name is your brand which you **should** protect
- People often tweet racist or offensive comments particularly about public figures
- If you value your current or future employment you should either ignore the comment or condemn it

Summary

- Twitter is a useful tool that facilitates **peer to peer interactions (especially among FPs)**
- **Few** FPs have professional accounts on Twitter
- It is **too early** to tell what other effects it will have on recruitment
- A willingness to interact directly with the general public, medical students and residents may help attract them into the profession (controlling for other factors i.e. money et al)

Conclusion

The wealth of opportunities to interact with directly with experts around the world breaks down barriers to communication and increases opportunities to learn and collaborate (so called **flattening of the knowledge** hierarchy or “wirearchy”).

The more (FPs sign on) the merrier

References

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