



- **FACT SHEET No. 9**

## **Education Online and through Social Media**

Social media has changed education practice radically. This Fact Sheet briefly explains the benefits of social media and some of the opportunities to improve pain education practice. It then outlines what individuals and organizations can do through social media in the context of the Global Year to focus on public and professional awareness.

The term “social media” is often used where education is publicly accessible and informal, whereas online learning tends to be more structured, requiring dedicated access. At the simplest level, social media is an effective way of providing information about education courses of all types to those who are most likely to engage. Yet opportunities in social media now challenge traditional educational methods. Opportunities to replace or supplement traditional classroom approaches with alternative methods of providing education have emerged rapidly, allowing informal and widely accessible learning. At the other end of the spectrum are more structured, closed, online opportunities run by academic institutions.

Following are potential educational benefits of social media:

- Distance learning through web-based education programs, including those offering advanced degrees
- Blended learning
- More personalized or targeted learning
- Online educational resources
- Improved networking
- Increasing public awareness and engagement opportunities
- Improved information management
- Improved professional or group profile
- Communication

Platforms for social media:

- **Virtual education spaces** allow the provision of online tools and resources to support education. A secure portal may create a safe online environment to improve learning through collaboration involving learners and educators.
- **Social spaces** for individuals to develop include discussion groups, hangouts, or direct peer-to-peer interaction. Organizations and individuals can use Twitter and Facebook feeds, newsgroups, or other platforms to distribute pain education resources, inform and interact with one another, or even recruit for or conduct research trials.
- **Websites**, including those for professional organizations and specific health conditions provide a backbone of information, but many also provide rolling media broadcasts.

### Using Social Media for Collaborative Learning

This Fact Sheet promotes learning through “doing” during the Global Year. We encourage collaborative learning as a process to explore the educational power of social media while contributing to the success of the Global Year for Excellence in Pain Education itself.

The aims are to use the Global Year to:

- Create a worldwide virtual social media network that promotes public, professional, patient, and governmental awareness of pain
- Facilitate individual professional educational development
- Improve understanding of the Global Year and IASP through social media

To achieve these aims, IASP invites members, chapters, and federations to contribute. Following are ways this may be possible:

#### *Strategies for individuals*

Consider the following:

- **Reflect.** Are you missing an opportunity? During 2018, we will use Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn and encourage you to join in, listen passively, or contribute your own voice to the discussions.
- **Create a social group.** (through Facebook or other platform) for a group of learners. This could be a class group or a team of like-minded health experts. Post interesting experiences, articles, lectures, announcements, and important communications. Share questions and challenges as well as solutions. Post videos, photos, documents, and other resources on the group’s wall. Bring your fellow learners together and share this experience. We will advertise online learning opportunities as they occur throughout the year.



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- **Start a Twitter feed.** Twitter offers a quick way to post announcements and allows followers to post real-time information on selected events or educational topics. Follow the Twitter feeds of experts in the field and learn more about what is happening. Have your say, too; respond and keep the debate flowing.
- **Undertake one educational activity and fundraising event in the name of the Global Year:** Share this experience.
- **Participate in the Global Year activities,** including webinars, and post your experience. Watch the Global Year Facebook and Twitter feeds to find opportunities.

### *Strategies for chapters and federations*

Consider the following:

- **Run one educational event** in the name of the Global Year and share this on social media.
- **Run a social media poster campaign.** An example of posters that could be developed by host countries is [appears here](#). Chapters should develop their own based on the educationally pressing issues and agenda in their own country.
- Use the **Global Year brand prospectus** to raise money for high-quality transformative educational programs by developing a policy for targeted messaging to major corporate investors directly and through social media. An example of how a brand prospectus may look [appears here](#). Chapters can develop their own prospectus.
- Encourage national departments of health to run a comprehensive **national independent e-learning program** (3). A working model can be accessed through [this link](#).
- **Organize one political lobbying event.** Political systems vary, but one political lobbying event to promote pain education that recently occurred in the United Kingdom was a reception for members of Parliament.

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### About the International Association for the Study of Pain®

IASP is the leading professional forum for science, practice, and education in the field of pain. [Membership is open to all professionals](#) involved in research, diagnosis, or treatment of pain. IASP has more than 7,000 members in 133 countries, 90 national chapters, and 20 Special Interest Groups.

Plan to join your colleagues at the [17th World Congress on Pain](#), September 12-16, 2018, in Boston, Massachusetts, USA.

As part of the Global Year for Excellence in Pain Education, IASP offers a series of nine Fact Sheets that cover specific topics related to pain education. These documents have been translated into multiple languages and are available for free download. Visit [www.iasp-pain.org/globalyear](http://www.iasp-pain.org/globalyear) for more information.



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