

## USING SOCIAL NETWORKS FOR COLLABORATION

### Is Facebook or Twitter a good networking / collaboration tool?

It depends on your goal for using the channel. There are some concerns about the use of social media as a collaboration tool.

**Public Networks:** Social networks may be appropriate and effective for activities such as recruiting physicians or communicating about events or subjects that are not confidential in nature. Of course, social media is not the place to have discussions about, or with, patients.

Facility Engagement information, as well as physician feedback in general, is not generally for wide public consumption or sharing; therefore the usual public-facing social networks are not appropriate collaboration spaces.

On Twitter, which is essentially a news networking platform with widespread audiences, or Facebook, you cannot ultimately control who views, or comments on your discussions, nor how far and wide your postings will be shared.

**Closed networks:** Alternative options, such as *closed* Facebook pages and other password protected networks (which the public at large cannot access) may be an option instead, for a more internally-focused, easily-managed online collaboration space to engage members, share ideas, and have conversations. Other options such as [Slack.com](https://slack.com) offer password-protected discussion forums that are easy to set up and manage.

When exploring the use of online collaboration networks, your physician group should consider privacy and security, content ownership and online engagement pros and cons for physicians.

**Privacy, security / confidentiality of information:** In all cases, there is no guarantee that your content is ever fully secure, won't be hacked, or never shared, so you should take caution to avoid posting sensitive information relating to patient care, work plans, hospital business, financial information, etc. You will need to weigh the potential nature of the conversations and information you plan to exchange, in relation to the risk of it being shared.

**Ownership:** In their Terms and Conditions, most social media channels reserve a level of rights over ownership of content posted, including to share some of your metadata, activity, contacts and even content - which they may use analyze and improve their service offerings among other things. [Read Facebook Terms here](#) and consider if this is an issue for you.

**Professional Standards of Engagement:** In addition, professional standards of engagement should be reviewed and understood by your physician group and members to protect the reputation if your physicians and partners (even when not discussing patient care).

To guide you, please review the following links provided by Doctors of BC Doctors Technology Office:

**Privacy Impact Assessment – Key Elements**

[https://www.doctorsofbc.ca/sites/default/files/privacy\\_impact\\_assessment\\_-\\_key\\_elements.pdf](https://www.doctorsofbc.ca/sites/default/files/privacy_impact_assessment_-_key_elements.pdf)

**CMPA – Technology unleashed – The evolution of online Communication**

<https://www.cmpa-acpm.ca/en/advice-publications/browse-articles/2012/technology-unleashed-the-evolution-of-online-communication>

**CMA – Social media and Canadian physicians: Issues and rules of engagement**

[https://www.cma.ca/Assets/assets\\_library/document/en/advocacy/CMA\\_Policy\\_Social\\_Media\\_Canadian\\_Physicians\\_Rules\\_Engagement\\_PD12-03-e.pdf#search=social%20media](https://www.cma.ca/Assets/assets_library/document/en/advocacy/CMA_Policy_Social_Media_Canadian_Physicians_Rules_Engagement_PD12-03-e.pdf#search=social%20media)

**CPSBC – Professional Standards and Guidelines – Social Media**

<https://www.cpsbc.ca/files/pdf/PSG-Social-Media.pdf>

**Additional reading of interest:** Below is a recent Canadian study on physicians’ social media use and attitudes.

[Social media use by physicians: a qualitative study of the new frontier of medicine](#)

*EXCERPT: Most physicians voiced the opinion that the benefits of their participation in social media far outweighed any barriers they faced. The perceived benefits of their social media use included forwarding their career or research endeavors, self-improvement through reading others’ tweets and keeping up with the literature, increasing their reach, i.e., their audience, and providing a space for them to openly express their opinions. However, participants also identified several categories of barriers hindering their participation in social media. Examples of these included the time/work requirements, skill requirements, lack of institutional support, fear of saying the wrong thing online and lack of models/guidelines in how to conduct themselves online in their role as physicians.*

**Who should manage our social media network/s?**

Any social network should be managed by a dedicated individual on your team: someone comfortable interacting in the digital environment. That person should be responsible to establish membership rules, set out guidelines for engagement, ensure physicians know the risks and how to appropriately engage, monitor posts and remove sensitive posts, and ensure fresh content is posted often.