

The Care and Feeding of Your Social Media Accounts

Jennifer Regala

Note to readers: In this column, I share with you some tips and tricks about how to select and then nurture the social media accounts you use professionally. I must be transparent about why I chose this topic. After intense back-and-forth negotiations with Jonathan Schultz, Editor-in-Chief of Science Editor, I was able to secure his promise for publication of a photo of my beloved canine bestie, Scotty Regala. In exchange for including a Scotty pic in my column, Jonathan asked me to write about "The Care and Feeding of Your Social Media Accounts." I am hoping that if this column knocks his socks off, perhaps I can sneak in 2 pictures of Scotty. Here goes.

Are You Ready for a Dog?

It's an important question. Dogs are the best, but they're not easy. Walking them, brushing them, feeding them, snuggling them. Dogs are not a set-and-forget situation. I must confess that I didn't really want to get a dog, and it's not because I don't love dogs. I already have an amazing husband, 4 awesome kids, and a demanding job that I love so much it hurts. How on earth would I find room in my heart for a dog? (Side note: My cavapoo entered my life in April 2019, and I am officially a weird dog mom who overshares dog pictures, talks about him way more than is appropriate, and talks to him in a secret language that only he and I speak. I am who I am.)

Social media accounts are not much different. If you start an account, you need to lavish love and attention on it. That account is not going to grow itself. You need to decide who you will follow, the voice and style you will use (see my previous column on this subject for guidance),¹ and most importantly, why you are doing it. Are you committed to the care and feeding of this new account?

It's also important to understand who this account is really for. Let's just pretend you are going to start a Twitter



Scotty Regala, Jennifer Regala's beloved dog, wrapped in the family's favorite blanket, which Scotty has first right of refusal to use.

account for one of your journals (assuming, of course, that you have the necessary permission from your organization and editorial board). What do you need to do next to take care of your new dog, um, I mean Twitter account?

Things Are Getting Real!

It's go time. You have buy-in from the powers that be. Authors are chomping at the bit to get their papers widely disseminated. What now?

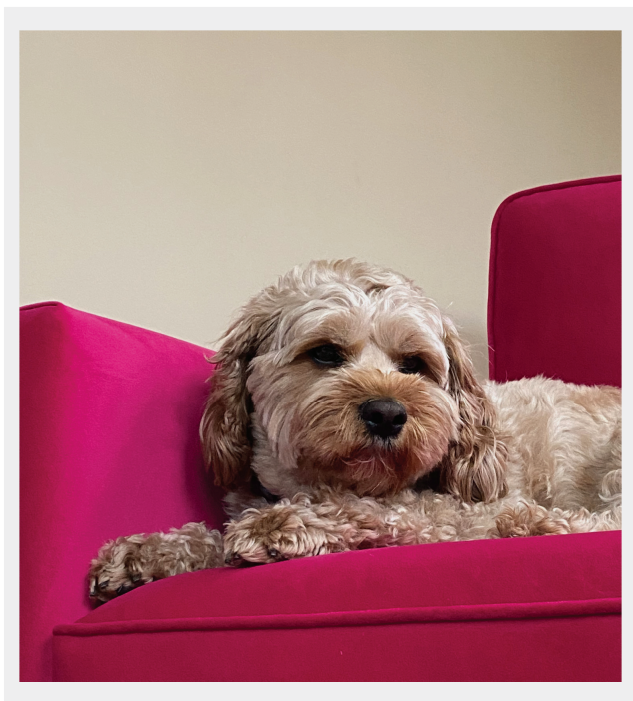
Remember when I said you can't set-and-forget a dog? You can't do that with your journal's Twitter account, either. But, just like you can set out extra water and leave out extra kibble for a furry friend, you can set a few things on autopilot for your new Twitter account, too:

- Develop an editorial calendar for tweeting every article in every issue of your journal. Don't leave anyone out. Every article gets a tweet. You can even have your authors self-write these tweets if you request wording

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Scotty enjoying Jennifer's new hot pink office chair. He's the only person in the family allowed to sit on it.

when you send an acceptance letter. While you're at it, collect authors' Twitter handles, too, so you can give them a shout-out when you tweet about their article.

- Develop a large, evergreen collection of "assets." Collect a big folder of social media "assets," which are appealing visual images to accompany a tweet, to highlight initiatives your journal is promoting. Open access? Author services? Sign up for eToC alerts? Here's your chance to market your journal! Set your marketing campaign monthly as part of the editorial calendar.

The rest isn't quite this easy. Sure, these two items will create a lot of content, but you want people checking your account each and every day to make sure they aren't missing anything exciting. Here are some ways to engage meaningfully with your intended audience:

- Who is your audience? Figure that out and start following people: your authors/editors/reviewers, other journals, and anyone who might be interested in your journal's mission. Then, think about how you can help amplify messages of your important stakeholders. Maybe you see an author tweeting about a recent research success. Hit that retweet button!
- Respond to people who engage you. Unless it's a rude or disrespectful message, you should answer. Is someone asking where their print journal is? What

your submission turnaround times are? What's your rejection rate? Be transparent and answer as often and as honestly as you can.

- Be on the lookout for opportunities. The problem is, I can't tell you exactly what you're looking for here; however, I can give you an example. Recently, a first author reached out to say that he had created a visual abstract for his paper. When I saw it, I was flabbergasted. This visual abstract was brilliant. Perfect graphics, well written with minimal yet clear wording—just an ideal specimen. I asked his permission to allow our social media manager to tweet the abstract. Then, he ended up writing instructions for other authors to create their own visual abstracts, which we added to our Web site and have added to our social media rotation. Now, he has agreed to create a webinar on this topic. Don't be afraid to reach out and ask for creative input from your own audience!
- Request videos and photos from your audience. Ask a group of authors to share a photo of themselves posing with their article. Ask a top reviewer to film a quick video on how to be a good reviewer. The possibilities are endless, and you'll be surprised at how many people will agree to help you.

And While We Are All Here Chatting...

And because I need to figure out how much care and feeding I may or may not want to give to yet another social media tool, I need to ask: Are any of you on Clubhouse?

According to the App Store, "Clubhouse is a space for casual, drop-in audio conversations—with friends and other interesting people around the world. Go online anytime to chat with the people you follow, or hop in as a listener and hear what others are talking about."

I started seeing scholarly publishing colleagues and members of the American Urological Association (AUA) buzzing about this app on Twitter. I didn't give it much thought until I went to the monthly AUA meeting of our online content editors, who work to guide the social media strategy and content for our peer-reviewed journals, *The Journal of Urology*® and *Urology Practice*. The online content editors were interested in the possibility of starting a journal club on this platform. Next thing you know, my colleague is sending me an invite (yes, a member needs to send you an invitation; each member has a limited number to share), and I'm exploring the great unknown of a new-to-me app. The drawback is that only iPhone users can access the app. The upside is that there are more people on there than you might think. I found science editors, urologists, real estate agents who work with my husband—you name it. I can best describe it as a living and breathing podcast where one can lurk or participate or do a bit of both.

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I can see how Clubhouse will be very useful when it is more widely accessible and doesn't require an invitation. But will it take off? I'm not sure if I have room in my life for another "pet" right now, but I'll keep you posted. Let me know how you're using this tool or any other new platforms for personal or organizational business purposes. Perhaps you're piloting Twitter Spaces, which is quite similar to the premise of Clubhouse! Tell me more!

Parting Thoughts in the Hopes I'll Earn a Second Scotty Photo

Just like deciding whether you can handle a first pet and/or plant and any subsequent furry/feathered/scaly/leafy additions, give that same thought to your social media

accounts. Do you have time to feed and water and nurture and love on those accounts? Just like a pet or a plant, you get what you give when it comes to your social media presence.

Reach out to me with your social media success stories, your failures, and your favorite tips and tricks. I would love to feature input from my colleagues in a future column. Find me on Twitter @JenniferARegala or email me, JRegala@AUANet.org. I look forward to hearing from you!

References and Links

1. Regala J. Putting your best voice forward: considering voice and style in your social media posts. Sci Ed. 2021;44:27-28. <https://doi.org/10.36591/SE-D-4401-27>

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