

It's Time to Stop Reinventing the Wheel; Let's Connect Those Dots Instead

Jennifer Regala

A constant question I see come up for anything related to scholarly publishing—or really anything related to life in general—is: “How do I get started?” And now that I have entered the “halftime” of my life, as my husband so lovingly calls it, I see the hardest part of really any project is just figuring out how to get going. (Side note: Jonathan Schultz, our beloved Editor-in-Chief, is nodding his head knowingly as he reads this wee-bit-late column that I promised him would be early this month. We are all guilty of not knowing where to start.)

Publishing used to be so much simpler. I copyedited an article and saved it on a floppy disk. I marked up paper page proofs with my purple editing pen using old school copyediting marks. I had a pica ruler and a hardcover dictionary along with paper style guides. I even used to hand code articles with XML for overtime. I will always love those overtime opportunities both for the XML knowledge and the Christmas gifts they bought my kids. Articles were published and then largely forgotten as we moved on to the next ones. Glossy journals piled up in stacks and collected dust as the same cycle repeated itself again and again.

Thank you for indulging my walk down memory lane, but I am here to tell you that the way we do things today is so much better. Looking back, I think of all of those amazing articles that readers missed out on because they were hidden in a dusty stack in a publisher's office, university library, or lab storage room. What a shame!

Flash forward to 2021, almost 2022. We are all clawing for revenue and relevance, working to make authors know they chose the right journal to publish their very important work. Unlike in the past, this work does not stop when an

article is published; in fact, as we sit in our editorial offices, we confront a new set of challenges:

- How do we achieve maximum impact and exposure for each article our journal publishes?
- How do we link each article to other relevant content in our own organization and beyond?
- How do we make an article accessible and understandable to as many global audiences as possible?
- How do we keep an article alive long after it has published?

Today, we have so many tools that are free and easy to use with just a little training that can make an article live long after it is accepted and published. Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and more have become acceptable tools in the promotion of scholarly publications. A simple tweet, with a great graphic, article link, and some well-written, succinct text, can garner unfathomable attention. As one example, a recent tweet from @JUrology, the Twitter account for *The Journal of Urology*®, the flagship journal of the American Urological Association (my employer), had approximately 50,000 impressions and 2,000 engagements. In the past, it would have been inconceivable to think of audiences that large engaging with such an article.

Getting Started

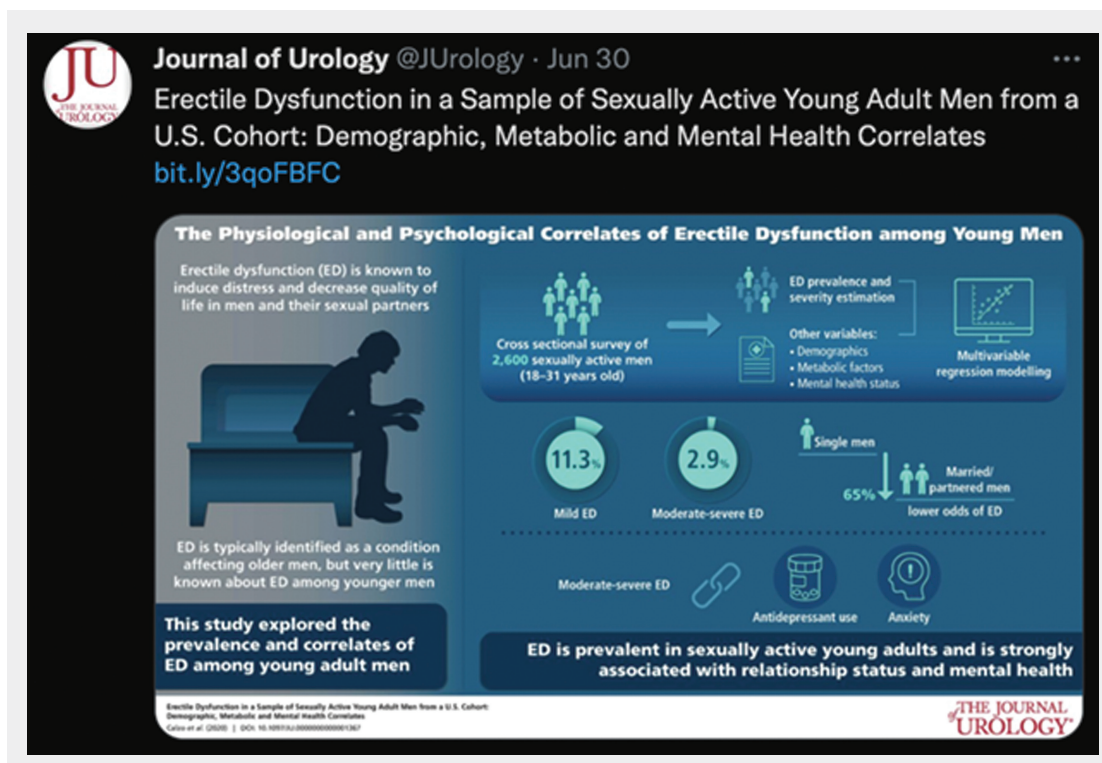
So, that brings us back to the question: How do I get started? How do I create a social media strategy for my journal(s)/publication(s) that is manageable for the staff on hand and the resources available? How do I help authors to keep the passion and effort that went into their article burning forever? How do I write compelling text and create aesthetically pleasing artwork that tells a story and makes the research accessible?

The answer is easier than it sounds. None of us should be doing our jobs alone. Who can help you internally? Do you have colleagues in your editorial office who have a social media background? Do you have marketing or communications colleagues in your organization who can contribute to your strategy and maybe even to scheduling posts and monitoring your account activity?

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Credit: AUA, 2021. @JUrology Twitter, June 30, 2021. Visual abstract created by Editage/Cactus Communications.

Learning from Others

Don't reinvent the wheel! Go have some fun and see what others are doing. See what you like and don't like. Check out the social media of your authors and editors who embrace social media and use it well. Here are some Twitter accounts that I really admire and look to for new ideas and fresh perspectives:

- @CJASN, American Society of Nephrology
- @AHAHistorians, American Historical Association
- @plantae_org, American Society of Plant Biologists
- @BloodAdvances, American Society of Hematology
- @DAupresses, Dogs of AUPresses

(Are you paying attention? Why, yes, I did slide in a scholarly publishing dog account. Just making sure you're still with me!)

How can the scholarly community help you? The CSE listserv was ablaze this past week with a poster who asked: "We are looking for insight around social media promotion for organizations with multiple journals!" The response was enormously helpful. CSE members provided so many wonderful tips and tricks that everyone, from social media novices to experts, could learn something about how to use social media in their editorial offices effectively. CSE

Connect, industry meetings and meet-ups, and social media itself offer connection opportunities to learn more about developing an effective plan. If you are a member of CSE, you can access the archive of CSE Listserv correspondence at <https://cse.simplelists.com/csel>.

How can a vendor or vendors help you? In the tweet I shared from my own organization, we work with Editage/Cactus Communications to create a limited number of visual abstracts per year. Schedule meetings with vendors who can support your social media strategy and learn more about what they offer. Maybe you can work to add that expense into your budget, but even if it doesn't work out, you will have a new connection and definitely walk away with some good ideas from those meetings.

Now, who out there can help me with my eternal questions of how to start eating fruit instead of gummi bears and how to exercise every day and like it? Feel free to answer those questions and chat with me and the rest of the scholarly twitterverse about your publishing social media strategy, plus any healthy lifestyle tips you are willing to share (@JenniferARegala). I promise to make you feel welcome and that you can ease gently, and with lots of support, into the not-so-daunting world of social media.