

# Meet Social Media Sensation Kimberlyn Stuart

## Jennifer Regala

Enough about Jennifer Regala's boring thoughts about social media and scholarly publishing. I've been watching the @CScienceEditors Twitter handle recently, and I was thinking "DANG. Who's in charge of this account now?" Turns out it's the uber-talented Kimberlyn Stuart, Editorial Associate at the American Society of Nephrology (ASN). (Side note: Kimberlyn says we can call her Kim, but please don't call me Jen. Jenny is fine. Always ask. Never assume.) Kim is even more brilliant in person than the social media presence she is creating on behalf of all of us via the official Twitter handle of CSE.

I had the chance to meet and interview Kim via Zoom and talk to her about her amazing work. Join me to learn more about her perspective on her work at ASN, how she approaches her CSE volunteer work, and her thoughts on the future of social media and scholarly publishing. (Another side note: Jennifer Regala is as awkward as you might have guessed in an interview situation. Love me through it. I did not edit this interview to salvage my dignity. Enjoy.) Many thanks to Shari Leventhal, CSE President-elect, and Kim's ASN colleague, for introducing me to this social media star.

**Jennifer Regala:** Thank you for meeting with me to talk all things social media. My questions are not too scandalous, so we should be okay. The reason I wanted to talk to you was because I was talking with Shari about you, and I was just like, "Wow, she's awesome." The social media just looks so good for Council of Science Editors, and I've really appreciated that. So that's what prompted me wanting to meet you in person and then to see if you'd be willing for me to interview you. Can you tell me about yourself?

**Kimberlyn Stuart:** I'm Kim Stuart. I'm an editorial associate for the American Society of Nephrology, and in that role I manage social media for the *Clinical Journal of American Society of Nephrology*, the *Journal of American*



*Society of Nephrology*, and *Kidney360*, which is our online Open Access journal. I've really gotten to grow in my experience with social media. This is my first job out of college, but I had a little bit of experience in college with social media because I was a managing editor for the undergraduate research journal at my college [at James Madison University in Virginia] so I got to play around with it there too.

**Jennifer:** In your current role, I imagine that it's evolving, always probably quickly. What is your approach? How are you keeping up with those accounts, and what's your approach to handling them? I would assume that you have a measure of scheduling out certain content probably, but then there's also the organic things that happen where an author pops up maybe with something great or with a complaint? How do you approach handling these very diverse and important accounts?

**Kim:** I think the most important thing for me is consistency. I try to post twice a day, at least for each of the journals, and then promote articles each time I post. For the journals, the hardest part about writing a tweet for a medical article is condensing it down without changing the content. I tend to look just at the abstract because that's already the condensed version of the article. And then I take bits from that. Occasionally, there will be authors that are like, "Oh, it's not exactly how I wanted it to sound," so then I'll take the post down and then re-upload it. Or if they say, "Actually I wanted you to focus more on this aspect of the research," I'll

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change it to meet their needs. If something like that comes up, I'll try to do it right away just so the authors are happy, and they're more likely to share it when they're happy. And then that way the tweet will reach a larger audience in total.

**Jennifer:** Within your peer-review system, are you all collecting any important information from the authors at any stage? For instance, suggested tweets, Twitter handles, anything like that?

**Kim:** When the manuscripts are accepted, we send out an email to authors asking them to send me their Twitter handles or anything they'd like to use in the promotion of their article. And then we'll add that into our system so we have it for future reference if we want to tweet about the article. Again, the authors don't provide a suggested text, but for the *Journal of the American Society of Nephrology*, we have a science writer who will write a little blurb of text for articles.

**Jennifer:** Do you create images or do you use images that the authors have provided as figures or what's your approach on using anything visual? Do you do any kind of visual abstracts?

**Kim:** We tend to have visual abstracts for each article, so those are what I mainly use. If they don't have visual abstracts, like research letters, they normally will include figures, and I'll use those. But if the authors don't have figures, I normally don't put in a figure because I don't want to risk using something that the author doesn't approve of. If it's not an article and just something we're promoting, I'll try to find a copyright-free image and use that because normally posts do better if you have an image attached to them.

**Jennifer:** What's your strategy about timing of posts? It sounds like you have a very regimented schedule.

**Kim:** With Twitter analytics, we were able to see what time most of our posts were interacted with the most. Right now for us, our followers are mostly active between like 10 and 11 in the morning and then after noon and before 5. I'm assuming based on that, that they're scrolling, like when they have a free moment during their workday. And right now I'm experimenting a little bit more with readers in different time zones. I want to see if we can include them as well. I've been scheduling some posts to go later in the day and seeing how they compare. I think it's important to keep track of how much engagement you're getting with the time that you're posting.

**Jennifer:** I love the analytics approach to it. How are you supported in this important role? How are you supported by a larger social media team internally at ASN? And then also

do you have editorial input? I'll give you an example. At the American Urological Association where I work, we have a team of online content editors who are providing us strategy input. Does anything like that exist at ASN?

**Kim:** Right now, the main ASN account is run by our communications team. If I have a post that needs to reach a wider audience, I'll reach out to them, and they'll share it on their platform. As far as the content for the journals goes, I'm mainly the one who handles that. Like I said, we have a science editor for the *Journal of the American Society of Nephrology*, and they'll write text and I'll use that for those. But the other two journals don't have that, so I'm the one who's mainly making that content. For data analytics, I have a teammate, Susan Willner, who is amazing with data, and she goes in and tells me what's working and what's not working based on data. And then she gives me suggestions for how to improve.

**Jennifer:** We've talked a lot about Twitter. Do any other social media platforms play into this professional approach for the journals? Facebook, LinkedIn, TikTok, Instagram? Are you using any other platforms?

**Kim:** Not for the journals, but for CSE, we are using LinkedIn and Facebook as well. I think you just really have to think about your audience. For the journals, I really think Twitter's the best way to go because of how many articles are being posted at such a rapid pace. Twitter is designed to have several posts every single day. But I think if you did that on Facebook or Instagram, it might overwhelm people. I think for journals, with the amount of articles you have, it's really important to consider which source would be the best for you to post on.

**Jennifer:** Another question back into the analytics territory. Of course, you know, journal impact factor is the unfortunate metric that we all live and die by, but how much are you looking at Altmetrics data, if at all? Are you reporting out on those data internally and/or externally and paying attention to how much traction your articles are getting through more nontraditional sorts of analysis?

**Kim:** Yes. Internally we're using Altmetrics. We do quarterly reports to see which articles are getting the most traction and then where from, and that's another great way for me to check how we're growing on social media to see what outside sources are bringing in eyes on papers.

**Jennifer:** That makes me think of another question: How do you try to get new followers?

**Kim:** Right now, I like natural engagement because our newest Twitter account is for our Open Access journal. It's at about 7,000 right now. And our other two journals are

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close to 20,000. I'm trying to grow that but also keep an audience that's genuine and wants to interact with our content. I'm not going to follow anybody that Twitter suggests because I want them to have an interest in what we're posting. I found the best way to do that is to look at similar pages to yours and then follow people who you think would also be interested in your content. The tool we're using right now is called followerwonk, and we're able to compare different Twitter accounts to ours and then see which followers overlap and which followers don't. And then I'll go through and look at Twitter's users who are interested in nephrology or have a medical background and then follow them as well.

**Jennifer:** I love that. That organic approach is the secret to success. What percent of your day is spent handling social media?

**Kim:** I'd say probably 40% is social media right now because most of what I do in the day is helping managing editors and authors of the three journals with their day-to-day tasks. When I'm not doing that, I am focusing entirely on social media.

**Jennifer:** I love to hear this. It's so important to have that commitment and that dedicated person like you to promote research. Do you use social media at all in a professional sense to promote yourself? Or to form a professional community for yourself?

**Kim:** I think in college I did more when I was searching for a job, but now that I have one, I have what I like to call social media anxiety. I don't like to post as myself very often, but I don't have that issue when I'm posting for one of the journals. I used to use LinkedIn, but now that I have a job, I don't tend to as much.

**Jennifer:** I understand all of that. So all of this sounds so easy, but I know for a fact that none of it is easy. An outsider to social media or someone who just doesn't do that job day today thinks, "Oh, how hard is it to put together some tweets and get some followers?" But trust me when I say I know it's really, really challenging. I think that is a stumbling point for a lot of people, especially in scholarly publishing and especially folks who have been doing this kind of work for a long time. This is a new turn that things are taking, and it's super important to have this social media engagement to keep research alive. What would be your best advice to someone who's just starting out using social media for professional purposes or on behalf of their organization and particularly on behalf of their publishing program or separate journals? What are things that must be done, and what are things that should be avoided at all costs?

**Kim:** I think the most important thing is to keep your audience in mind. I know when I got hired, and I learned that my job was going to be social media, I was a little nervous because in college I had a job with social media as well and that audience was completely different than the medical profession. In college, it was all college students, so I had to be up to date on trends, especially with people who are constantly on the Internet. It was just keeping in mind that my audience is online all the time, so I have to also be online all the time. With journals, I think it's a little easier because your audience knows what they're looking for already, and they're not really going to spend more time than they need online or to look up things. My advice is to know who your audience is and speak to them directly. If you try to address everybody on social media, you're not going to find as much success.

**Jennifer:** A follow-up question to knowing your audience. How have you developed the voice of these platforms? I follow ASN's accounts, and they're really well done. That's easier said than done. What is your advice for having that voice that is very professional yet still engaging?

**Kim:** I think if your journal already has an established brand, it's probably going to have a voice whether or not it's intentional. I try to use language similar to what's already either within the manuscripts or in the site itself for the journal. For *JASN* and *CJASN*, they're a lot more established and traditional. I try to be a lot more serious and straightforward. I try to be more informational than getting feedback from the audience because I think that's what that audience is looking for. For *Kidney360*, we're trying to be a little more experimental because it's new and online and Open Access. We think the viewers might be a little more open to experimenting. We'll do polls and ask for audience feedback to try and create different engagement. I think going with what your journal has already set up is a great way to find your voice.

**Jennifer:** Do you do anything a little out of the ordinary ever? Emojis? Do you solicit video content or anything that's a little above and beyond?

**Kim:** I think when I'm not tweeting about articles, yes, because when I'm trying to promote general stuff, I feel like people like to see emojis. For tweetorials, we've started doing those for some of our *Kidney360* articles because I think they catch attention better. And then when you're reading a long thread, it's easier to have your eye drawn to important points if you're using emojis. We haven't really solicited video content, but I don't think it's out of the realm of possibility. It just has to be for the right scenario. Maybe for Peer Review Week, like getting personal testimonials

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from authors about the importance of peer review, I think that would be a great opportunity to use video testimonies.

**Jennifer:** What are your favorite scholarly publishing-related accounts to follow and why?

**Kim:** Well obviously CSE, and then I like to look at I think SSP (@ScholarlyPub on Twitter) as well. I think they have fun engagement. And then also *Environmental Health Perspectives* (@EHPOnline on Twitter) I think does a great job of promoting articles. Then J&J Editorial (@jjeditorial)—they always interact with us a lot on CSE.

**Jennifer:** Tell me more about your volunteer work with CSE. How did you get involved? And I have to say, like I said at the beginning, I've been following the CSE Twitter handle and I love the difference and escalation of the dissemination of information that has evolved under your leadership. Tell me more about how you got involved and what that looks like and what's your strategy to share content?

**Kim:** Shari Leventhal is my supervisor, and she recommended that I join the Marketing Committee to learn more about social media because they were looking for more members and had two people that were very experienced in social media. I joined earlier this year because I was awarded a partial scholarship with CSE. I had a discounted membership and was encouraged to join a committee, so I joined the marketing committee. I was given the opportunity to slowly take over the social media. Now I have control of the CSE accounts. I've been posting there, and I think my main goal is to be posting more often because before it was probably like every other day and now I'm trying to do every day just to see if we can boost our followers on any of the platforms with more consistent content. And then I think the biggest push for content has been promoting *Science Editor* articles more often. Darisa Clarke has been helping me by creating posts for the articles and then I schedule them and find images to use for them. That's been a real great help in promoting those articles and then having more consistent posts being able to be scheduled.

**Jennifer:** What do you want from all of us on committees, from the Board, etc.: What could all of us do to support you and your efforts of social media development for CSE?

**Kim:** I think the biggest thing would be to follow all the accounts and then share them in your personal and professional spheres so that they can reach a wider audience. Our biggest push is to grow follower accounts on all platforms and then that way we can naturally improve the interactions with our posts. Sharing posts and sharing events that are relevant to each of the professional committees would be a great way to support the Marketing Committee.

**Jennifer:** What do you envision as the next big thing in scholarly publishing social media related or not social media related? I'm always curious what folks think is coming.

**Kim:** I think with the Office of Science and Technology Policy memo (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/08-2022-OSTP-Public-Access-Memo.pdf>), Open Access is going to be the next big thing, and I think that's going to push a lot more authors to be online more than they might have been because their articles are going to be open to a wider audience. I think there's going to be a push towards video-related content with the popularity of TikTok, but I know TikTok can be intimidating for a lot of people, especially those who aren't as familiar with social media. It's intimidating to me, and I'm online every day. I think there is going to be a push for it, but I feel like it's going to start slow. Instagram added a "reels" function, Twitter's added something, there are more video-focused functions recently. And then there's also Twitter Spaces where you can directly communicate with your audience. I think there's going to be a push for more direct feedback, whether that be videos where you can read the comments immediately and then respond to those or a space where you can directly interact with your audience.

**Jennifer:** I completely, thoroughly agree with you. Moving back to ASN, when it's time for your annual meeting, how much connection will your journal social media presence have with your overall social media presence?

**Kim:** For our annual meeting in November, my current plan is to schedule posts for that whole week before I leave. Then we also have a session at our annual meeting that focuses on the best articles posted in each journal that year. I think we will highlight those more during the annual meeting and then maybe post clips from the presentations or highlights from that session.

**Jennifer:** Tell me what I didn't bring up today but you expected me to bring up that's important to this conversation?

**Kim:** I think you covered most of it. We talked briefly about how I think journal articles are best on Twitter or maybe even Facebook if you're posting less frequently. but if you're an image-based organization and have a lot of images, I think Instagram's a great way to share those because it's built around images. I think an issue a lot of organizations have is that they tend to put their eggs in every basket when they don't really need to. So if you're not an image-based organization, I wouldn't focus on Instagram at all. If you don't have someone who can dedicate time to creating videos, I wouldn't mess with TikTok yet because I think the biggest

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issue is consistency for all platforms. I think it's best to focus on one or two sites that you think your content works with the best rather than trying each site and seeing what works.

**Jennifer:** Gotcha. That brings me to another question. Say you're out there and you're noticing that something is taking off again, like maybe it is time to start the TikTok or whatever the new platform might be. What's the best way to make that recommendation to your organization? Or maybe someone's not even doing Twitter yet, so how does somebody make that argument that this is important to the organization?

**Kim:** I'd say finding people in your organization that would be best equipped to assist you in this new task. So if you are trying to launch a Twitter account, talking to either the communications department or someone who has a heavy Twitter presence in their personal life, I think that would be a great way to set the ball rolling and then understand what you're kind of looking for with launching a new social media platform.

Kim, thank you so much for your time. I learned so much from our conversation and from following your accounts on social media. Thank you for all that you do for our community.