

LinkedIn: An Effective Global Publishing Network at Your Fingertips

Jennifer Regala

In the olden days (side note: I am qualified to say the “olden days” now because as of February 19, 2023, I am 50 years old and have declared myself a Scholarly Publishing Elder; capitalization is intentional), professionals had to connect with the rudimentary tools we had available. We relied on business cards, paper address books, snail mail, early iterations of rudimentary email clients, in-person networking events, and (GASP!) telephones with cords to keep in touch. To be linked in, one had to be intentional about it. Furthermore, valuable relationships tended to be localized to an individual’s geographic location.

Along came the emergence of the World Wide Web, and we all know the story: EVERYTHING CHANGED. Boom... our previously small orbits became global. The world was at our fingertips. I still remember the novelty of catching up on the Melrose Place episode from the night before in an Internet recap. And I love to reminisce about the first time I heard Google used as a verb. It was the summer of 2000, and I was working at Cadmus in my very first scholarly publishing job. I had a question for my boss, and she didn’t know the answer, either. She suggested: “Why don’t you just Google it?” Around that time, according to <https://about.linkedin.com/>, LinkedIn founder Reid Hoffman began the platform from his living room, officially launching it in 2003. As stated on their site: “The mission of LinkedIn is simple: connect the world’s professionals to make them more productive and successful.” Also according to this same page, LinkedIn, now owned by Microsoft, touts themselves as “the world’s largest professional network with more than 900 million members in more than 200 countries and territories worldwide.”

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This remarkable reach is almost impossible to comprehend. The sheer vastness of LinkedIn and the number of bonds it ensures was unimaginable to a Scholarly Publishing Elder like me when I began my career.

Let’s think about how we can use this tool to expand our own opportunities in the scholarly publishing community. The possibilities are endless, and it’s fascinating to me that I can keep track of almost everyone I’ve worked with as an adult. Even more compelling is the power that LinkedIn gives us to use these connections to grow our own careers.

How to Get Started on LinkedIn

Don’t have a profile? Or maybe you have one, but it’s collecting virtual dust? No worries, I’ve got you. Follow these easy steps to build a strong LinkedIn foundation (<https://www.Linkedin.com> or use the mobile app):

1. Find a great photo of yourself to showcase on your page. And don’t overthink it. If you have a professional headshot that you like, use it, but if you don’t, find a photo that captures your essence. It will need to be professional-ish but doesn’t need to be taken by a photographer. Professional-ish means that you are clothed, looking at the camera, and the photo was taken in the last 5 years. It really is that easy. A photo is always better than none. You want your connections to place your name with your face.
2. Fill in all of the blanks that you can in your profile. Education and current employer are most important, but go as far back in your career as you are able. Providing a complete history enables past coworkers to request you as a connection. Don’t forget to include your affiliations with professional societies like the Council of Science Editors (CSE)!
3. Search for connections. LinkedIn allows you to connect your own address books to get moving in the process.
4. Remember that the algorithm is fantastic in the year 2023. Once you start connecting with people, LinkedIn takes over with a veritable plethora of suggestions you forgot you even knew. Enjoy a leisurely stroll down

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memory lane of your work pals from your entry level job. Re-establish a friendship with someone you used to spend every single work day with but haven't seen in a hot minute. Check out an old boss and thank them for your thriving career today.

5. Think about whose connection requests you will accept. This one is important. Decide if it's important to you to know someone personally before you accept an invitation. My personal philosophy is that I will connect with someone if I know of them, know others from their organization, or have some other professional interest in them and believe they could enhance my circle of virtual colleagues.

What Can LinkedIn Do for You? And How Can You Use LinkedIn to Amplify the Voices of Others?

In a past *Science Editor* column,¹ I wrote about how to use social media to amplify your voice and the voices of others. I touched on LinkedIn briefly in that piece, but I truly believe that LinkedIn exists to magnify what is professionally important to an individual.

Easy ways to gain traction and use everything LinkedIn has to offer include:

1. Keep the world up to date on what you're up to! LinkedIn is your place to shine. Tell the world about your newest *Science Editor* article (Editor-in-Chief Jonathan Schultz is always open to new submissions).
2. Comment on accomplishments shared by those you're connected with on LinkedIn. Someone got a new job or promotion? That's awesome—tell them so! Your coworker won an award? Share your congratulatory warm wishes with them not only at the water cooler but on LinkedIn for all to see!
3. Use hashtags. Like Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and others, hashtags allow for connections across the platform. I like to use #scholarlypublishing and #councilofscienceeditors to promote my post beyond my own followers.
4. Repost an article or information shared by a connection. I learn so much from what others think is important.
5. Check out LinkedIn to make a big career move. In my opinion, LinkedIn has the best resources out there to improve your own skills and to find new employment. Happy where you are? That's great! Use LinkedIn for job listings in your department or organization.
6. Read, read, read! LinkedIn has so many interesting resources that have been curated for you by like-minded people. It's your own responsibility to maintain your personal relevance, and LinkedIn makes it simple for you to do so.
7. Find the places you need to spend your time. LinkedIn is the spot to check for free webinars, in-person conferences, and events that are new to you.
8. Watch your metrics. LinkedIn allows you to see who's looking at your profile, how many views each post receives, and more.
9. Enjoy the platform! LinkedIn is almost always a positive place to be. You get a unique glimpse into the triumphs of others. Think of LinkedIn as a place for you to be a cheerleader, and I think you'll find yourself lifted up by the encouragement you receive in return.

Connect with Your Professional Societies on LinkedIn

Let's use CSE as an example. Follow CSE here: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/council-of-science-editors-cse/>, plus you'll want to add other CSE members to your own network. CSE will keep you posted on what the most important topics in scholarly publishing today are—peer review transparency, editorial office management, the Office of Science and Technology Policy memo, Open Access updates, and more.

Want to get more involved with CSE? LinkedIn will keep you in the know on webinars, the annual meeting, short court registrations, and let you know when to sign up to serve on committees and working groups. LinkedIn also posts the latest editions of *Science Editor*, which you'll want to read the minute it comes out for the latest news in our industry.

After you've used CSE for practice, add other organizations you're associated with to your list of connections. Your college alumni group and a society you might like to join are great examples.

Reference and Link

1. Regala J. Amplifying your message 101: social media to promote yourself and others. *Sci Ed.* 2021;44:142-143. <https://doi.org/10.36591/SE-D-4404-142>

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