SOCIAL MEDIA IN PRACTICE (SMS2D)

Module
Communicating Research Through Social Media

Format
Guest speaker and large group discussion

Purpose
In this session, a guest speaker who is active on social media as an influential user can speak to the group about his/her experiences.

Time Required
• 1 hr.

Activity Description
In this optional session, a guest speaker can present to the group about his/her experience as a blogger or influential social media profile. The facilitator will need to identify and invite a relevant guest speaker. Possible speakers include an academic blogger or a researcher or advocate who has built up a substantial following on Twitter and/or Facebook (consider upwards of 2,000 Twitter followers as an indicator of a substantial following). Possible discussion areas for the speaker include:

• How did he/she generate a large following on social media?
• How does his/her social media activity enhance his/her research or advocacy work?
• Have social media connections translated into connections or collaboration in his/her professional work?
• What types of negative experiences has she/he had, and how did she/he respond?
• What tips/advice can he/she share to young researchers or advocates who want to leverage social media for their own work?

The facilitator can consider using social media to reach out to potential guest speakers—for example, through some quick social media research you will likely be able to identify possible speakers. Start to follow and engage with those individuals via social media, and see if they might be willing to speak. If you have a reliable internet connection, you can even consider hosting the discussion via Skype or another online communication platform.
Ask the speaker for a short bio and try to share with participants in advance. Encourage participants to think of questions for the speaker in advance as well, so that they are ready for a productive conversation. Ensure that the speaker allows time for question and discussion after a short (10-20 minute) presentation to the group.

**Key Learning Concept(s)**

- An opportunity to talk and learn from researchers, advocates, or technical experts who are active on social media.
- Discuss the benefits and challenges of using social media to enhance your work in other areas.
- Reinforce workshop messages with external voices.

**Materials Needed**

- None, unless hosting the discussion via an online communication platform.

**Required Preparation**

- Share bios about the speakers ahead of time, if possible

**Associated Exercises**

- Social Media for Research and Policy (SM1L)
- Academic Blogging (SM3L)