

## Social Media and the ISMR

In case you haven't heard, social media is big. Really big. LinkedIn is populated by executives from every company on last year's Fortune 500 list. Leaders from Latvia, the Philippines, Israel, Denmark, New Zealand, Malaysia, Norway, Canada, Chile, UAE, Japan, U.K., U.S.A, and even the Dalai Lama post on Twitter. Facebook transformed activism in Libya, Tunisia and Egypt. Wikis have turned education into a medium that is collaborative and accessible. The instantaneous nature and ability for anyone to broadcast from anywhere has transformed global methods of communication in a very short amount of time. Simply put, social media has made the world smaller. Web users are able to travel the globe and bypass physical communication constraints with a few clicks of a mouse.

The sheer mass of information and the rate at which it is produced can be intimidating for many individuals not already engrained into the culture of social media (and for many that *are* engrained). According to YouTube, you would need to live for approximately 1000 years to watch all of their currently hosted videos. So where do you start?

There are a range of sites that fit into a variety of categories which include, but are not limited to: communication, collaboration, multimedia, opinions and reviews. Many of these sites developed out of niche interest as opposed to widespread demand. Words such as Bebo, Vimeo, Reddit, Ning, and Yelp will likely sound foreign to most individuals because they blossomed from a small collective that developed from common interests. This can result in powerful collaborations that eventually transform niches into global communication standards that were inaccessible until a few years ago. But again, where do you start?

Social media is a set of tools, and like any device, understanding its usefulness in relation to your needs is paramount. Physical networking at conferences, workshops and meetings is of incredible value, but interactions are limited by in-person availability and events are relatively infrequent (depending on your travel budget). Social networking facilitates constant interactions of less magnitude, focusing on communication and collaboration through multimedia sharing. You can visually see every friend, colleague and connection through social media which facilitates the strengthening of existing relationships and the development of new ones. Information spreads through collective sharing as opposed to hierarchal dispersement. Every member of a group has equal opportunity to educate and inspire their colleagues.

So how can the ISMR leverage these (free!) tools to enhance membership engagement? The Communications Committee has chosen LinkedIn as the ISMR's first venture into the realm of social media. We chose this due to LinkedIn's focus on professional relationships as well as the site's inherent ability to share multimedia. We encourage you to join LinkedIn so that we can learn from each other and bridge the gaps of communication in between meetings. Not everyone has time to post every day; and that isn't the expectation. We ask that you interact with the group when you can,

and hopefully you will find that the more you interact, the more you will *want* to interact. Social media is a conversation. So join us in making our world a little smaller. We would love to hear your voice.

**Ben King**

Co-Chair

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