

2011 Second Annual Research on How Hospitals are using Facebook and Social Media¹

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Introduction

As an Anthropologist, this research is of great interest to me and to those healthcare institutions that we are working with to help them change their engagement with their patients, families and communities. Most significantly, the data speaks to culture change and who is leading it. Hospitals that are growing major communities of “fans” have established themselves as strong healthcare brands managing patients’ life experiences as they relate to their health. Those hospitals that are not seeing the potential of Facebook for any number of reasons—from risk avoidance to patients having a voice and speaking up—should rethink their positions and seize the opportunities before them to transform their roles in the lives of these patients and communities.

Overview

This document represents the results of the “2011 Second Annual Research on Social Media in Hospitals and Medical Institutions.” Our intent is to conduct this research annually to explore how institutions and communities are engaging or ignoring the value of Facebook and other forms of social media to create strong communities, build relationships with patients and families, and ultimately build their brands and marketing support for their medical center, hospital or health system.

In 2011 the Society for Healthcare Strategy and Market Development (SHSMD) published an excellent document for hospitals on social media. The study revealed that “Healthcare organizations are using social networking and professional networking sites in numerous ways to

connect with patients, potential patients, donors, and the community at large. They routinely use Facebook and Twitter to build a network of followers and then distribute news, promote events, and drive fund-raising initiatives through these tools.”¹

Consumers were unmistakably expressing their need for healthcare information. And they trusted their doctors to provide it. Similarly, the Pew Research Center’s Internet & American Life Project² showed very clearly that healthcare was the second most frequent reason people went on the Internet for information and that Facebook was definitely a place where people were very comfortable finding answers to questions and sharing information and insights.

Indeed, as Susannah Fox, Associate Director, Digital Strategy, Pew Research, wrote in her February 1, 2011 research, “Health information remains one of the most important subjects that internet users research online.” For its 2011 research, the Pew Internet Project and California HealthCare Foundation³ added eight new topics to its national survey measuring internet users’ interest in health information. The results suggest a platform waiting for hospitals to jump upon:

- 29% of internet users look online for information about food safety or recalls. □ 24% of internet users look online for information about drug safety or recalls.
- 19% of internet users look online for information about pregnancy and childbirth.
- 17% of internet users look online for information about memory loss, dementia, or Alzheimer’s.
- 14% of internet users look online for information about how to manage chronic pain.
- 12% of internet users look online for information about long-term care for an elderly or disabled person.
- 7% of internet users look online for information about end-of-life decisions.

Even more recently, PWC published research in April 2012⁴ stating that “liking, following, linking, tagging, stumbling: social media is changing the nature of health-related interactions.” As one of their illustrations captured the essence of the dynamic:

“When I was in the ER last night, I tweeted about the interminable wait. It seemed as though people who weren’t that sick got whisked in ahead of me! Guess what? Someone from the hospital heard me! They spotted my tweet and responded. And even sent someone down to talk to me in person. That’s what I love about social media. I can write what I want when I want, and

¹ Society for Healthcare Strategy and Market Development 2011

² Pew Research Center’s Internet & American Life Project, August 9-September 13, 2010

³ <http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2011/HealthTopics.aspx>

⁴ PWC Health Institute: “Social media “likes” healthcare: From marketing to social business” April 2012

send it to all my friends, groups, and followers in an instant. And, all of them can send it to all of their friends, groups, and followers. It's like my personal electronic megaphone."

Our original research conducted in November, 2010 and again in November 2011 makes us wonder why hospitals and medical centers are not responding more aggressively to the unmet needs of their communities and consumers. Why are they allowing their patients, families and friends to turn to www.WebMD.com or www.patientslikeme.com for information? Why are they permitting healthcare leaders such as Mayo and the Cleveland Clinic or the Children's Hospital in Boston to own the space that they could enter and play in?

In November 2010 we surveyed Facebook sites for 140 healthcare institutions, evenly distributed throughout each area of the US. To see the trends developing, we began our 2011 review in November and completed the survey in March 2012. When we looked at our data for both 2010 and 2011 it became very clear that:

- Approximately 25% of the hospitals and medical centers were using Facebook to build their community of friends and fans.
- Another 25% were not using Facebook, Twitter, blogs or other social media options at all.
- The largest portion (50%) were beginning to grow their fans as measured in "likes" but this was a slow process and often seemed to lack strategy or focus.

Despite the obvious value of social media and online information for consumers, most healthcare institutions were simply not developing robust social media and content marketing initiatives.

The two major exceptions were children's hospitals and major "destination" healthcare institutions with strong brand reputations as "leaders." Children's hospitals clearly seem to recognize that those who need them and support them—parents, families, friends and communities, and even their patients—have grown up digital, are social media savvy and are expecting children's hospitals to be similarly connected on Facebook and Twitter.

For these hospital leaders, embracing social media is something to look at very closely in order to learn 1) what is working well, 2) how they are leveraging communities of 5000-75,000 fans, and 3) how their fans are helping them deliver better healthcare.

Top-Line Results

Unquestionably, some hospitals, and certainly leading specialty and major clinical institutions along with children's hospitals, "get" social media. They are moving quickly to build communities, and engage patients, families and friends to ensure their brands are the ones that dominate in this medium. Their scope is beyond Facebook but it is a strong foundation for their social media efforts.

The top-line research results are:

- **Children's Hospitals "get" social media:** Children's Hospitals are simply far and away the most energetic and successful at using Facebook to build a community of fans. We had to pull the Children's Hospital of Boston out of some of the graphs because it so distorted the results. They had grown from an amazing 453,000 "likes" in November of 2010 to over 750,000 this March, 2012 when we completed the research. We will spend more time showing you what they are doing and why it is so outstanding. But all the children's hospitals just "get it" and are using Facebook and their "moms" are using it as well.
- **Fifteen (15) are growing friends in dramatic numbers:** The overall number of hospitals building significant numbers of Facebook fans with over 10,000 "likes" increased from 8 in 2010 to 15 in 2011. While this is still a small number relative to the 140 we reviewed, it doubled in size and represented an increase from 5.7% to 10.7% of the total studied. Yet, they represent the few.
- **A few more are beginning to build their fans:** There was a small increase in the numbers of hospitals with 5000-10,000 "likes" from 5 to 7 institutions or from 2.8% to 5% of the total.

Startling to us was how few had major fan-clubs on Facebook.

- **Most hospitals are just starting out:** The number of hospitals with less than 1000 fans was 57 or 40.7% of those surveyed. Of those 57 there were still **26 with 0 "likes."** Still the majority of hospitals surveyed had not embraced Facebook, social media and community building despite the fact that their consumers and communities needed their educational and healthcare resources.
- **Yet, there are some giants emerging in social media exclusive of those Children's Hospitals:** Four (4) hospitals had over 10,000 "likes." These were specialty hospitals for cancer, heart or orthopedics and were destination sites. Their presence shows clearly how you can create a base of support with fans, friends, "fun" raising and fund raising initiatives that can grow a brand and a market space.

In summary, what is very clear is that there is no particular pattern among those institutions that were not engaged in social media. Among those not developing Facebook communities were major academic medical centers, leading regional medical centers, and community hospitals. Clearly, most hospitals still have not discovered the value of a social media community. Nor have they seen how to use it for transforming the health of their communities. They also have not grasped how to use social media to fulfill branding, marketing, educational, and brand positioning purposes. Why? I am not sure. But clearly the value of social media remains elusive to far too many healthcare providers.

The Research Methodology

In our November 2010 study, we conducted research to set a benchmark for how hospitals, medical centers and health systems were using Facebook to communicate with consumers, build a community of fans, share new health information and capitalize on the engagement potential of Facebook for their institutions. In that research we reviewed Facebook sites for 140 institutions, representing approximately the same proportion for each area of the US—Northeast, South, Midwest and Far West.

The second research was begun in November 2011 and completed in March 2012. We list the data as 2011 data but it did span a number of months as we went over these same hospitals. While we expected to see the same types of Facebook activity, we were surprised by the wide array of different utilization patterns. Of those surveyed, only 114 of the 140 hospitals had any social media presence. For the charting, we removed the 26 with zero fans or “likes” and focused on those that had some “likes” engaged with them.

The questions we asked in November 2011 were essentially the same as those we had posed in November 2010. We also asked several other questions to explore new uses for Facebook. In addition, we looked to see what people were doing on Twitter but this use was so limited that we paused and decided to wait until next season. YouTube, on the other hand, was another matter and we will discuss this further in this document.

Interestingly, we saw that there were some hospitals that were using Facebook for a wide range of purposes and to build large numbers of friends—from fan raising, to healthcare promotion, to fund raising, to celebrations of staff, to overall community building. As we reviewed their initiatives, we saw a pattern that suggested the emergence of a model for what makes for an excellent Facebook page for a medical institution. This began our development of a social media/Facebook model that others could emulate for building a community of fans, as well as some compelling reasons why they should. Those hospitals with high numbers seemed to be destination hospitals that drew from well beyond their local community setting.

We plan to follow this research with additional work focused on what consumers are looking for in healthcare websites. Recent research on consumer reasons for turning to Facebook for commercial purposes—to buy something—suggests that they are looking for information to make the purchase of an item simpler and easier. For healthcare, they are looking for those they trust to make accessing information, and getting the right care, simpler and easier. They have choice and the Internet maximizes the choice. Yet the paradox of choice is that people fail to make a decision, much less an appropriate one. Medical Centers could be those trusted advisors beyond the doctor’s office or the surgical center. They could be offering the information you can trust from those whom you believe care about you the most.

Why aren’t more institutions not using Facebook today to connect with their local communities, build audiences around key healthcare needs, offer solutions that might be innovative ways to transform the public’s health, and even in many cases influence broader regional, national and perhaps even international audiences?

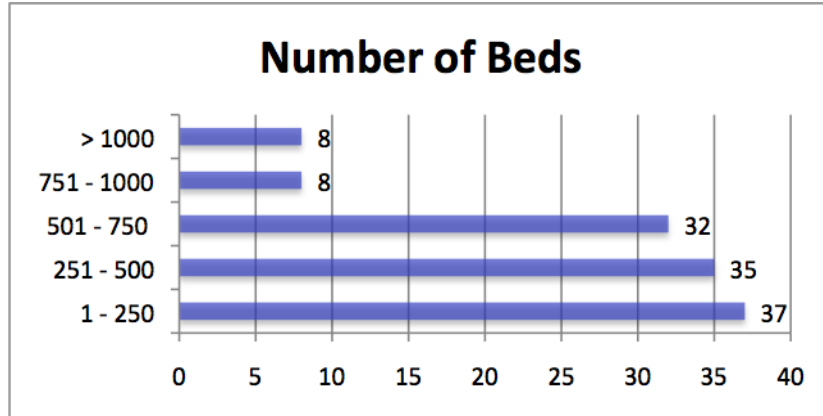
The questions we wanted to address:

- What type of presence does a healthcare institution have on Facebook?
- How many “friends” or “likes” do they have and how are they engaging with them?
- What level of engagement/participation do hospitals have with their friends? Do they encourage comments and how do they respond?
- Does a hospital provide health information and in what format? Can people ask questions, show pictures and get responses?
- Does the hospital offer incentives or offers? Games or contests? Fund raising opportunities?
- How do they share news and about what themes?
- Are there targeted advertisements?

- Is Facebook integrated with other social media such as Twitter or Blogs or YouTube?
- Are pictures posted and how often?

The sample

We divided the sample by number of beds as follows:



When we look at “likes” by geography, we see important patterns with and without Boston’s Children’s Hospital. Because Cleveland Clinic, John’s Hopkins and other hospitals are outliers, we stopped trying to pull the outliers out of the pattern and instead showed geographic distribution with and without Boston’s Children’s Hospital to provide a more accurate reflection of the trends.

“Likes” by size showed no pattern. To illustrate, there were several hospitals in the 251-500 bed category that had over 12,000 “likes,” almost double what they had the prior year. Yet there was a five hospital system with only 1205 “likes” and virtually no growth from 2010. Commitment to social media seemed to be more a reflection of their understanding of its value to their patients, community and their own brand story than a reflection of their size in terms of bed number or number of hospitals.

Detailed Results

Overall Facebook activity for Healthcare Institutions

Of the 140 hospitals reviewed, only 114 had active Facebook sites, essentially unchanged from 2010.

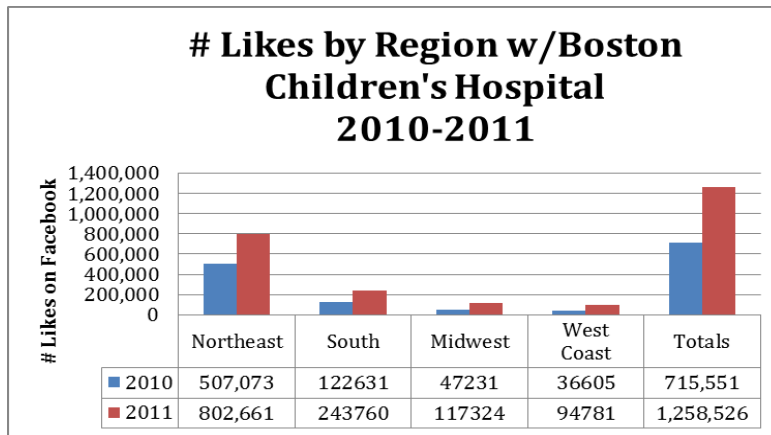
# Likes (as of March 2012)	# Hospitals 2010	# Hospitals 2011
0-1,000	70	40
1,001-5,000	31	52
5,001-10,000	5	7
>10,000	8	15
	114	114

What did change is that those institutions that are on Facebook are building fans, some very aggressively. On the accompanying chart, you can see the shift that is taking place. The number of hospitals with less than 1000 “likes” dropped from 70 to 40 (49% decline) while the number with 1000-5000 increased from 31-52 or (68% increase). There are still only a few hospitals (15 of the 140 in the sample or 12.5%) with very large numbers of fans (over 10,000) but these are showing dramatic increases.

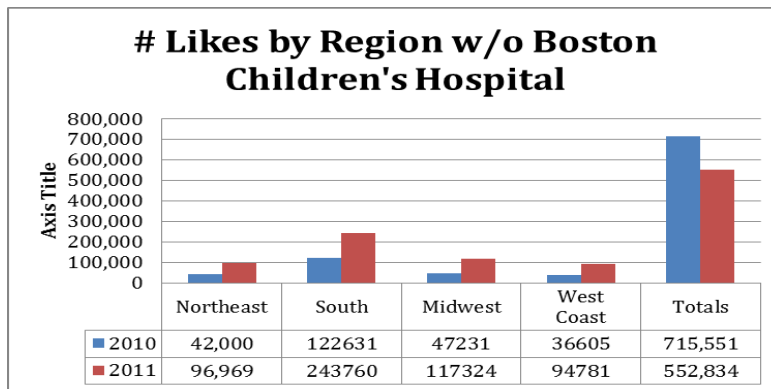
Regional Patterns

In each region there were outliers that caused us to question national trends. We finally decided to present the patterns with and without one major outlier, Boston Children’s Hospital. In November 2010,

Boston Children’s had already over 400,000 “likes” which increased by our current research to over 700,000. These numbers were so overwhelming that it made it difficult to show regional variations; consequently, we decided to show variations with and without that one outlier.



Because the number of likes for Boston Children's Hospital made it such an outlier we also include the regional breakdown with and without this hospital.



As you can see, the South essentially doubled its "likes" while Midwestern hospitals increased by 148%, albeit starting at a much lower base. West Coast hospitals also started at a very low base, but tripled their number of "likes." The Northeast looked much more like the rest of the country without Boston Children's Hospital, increasing by 58%.

How are they growing their communities?

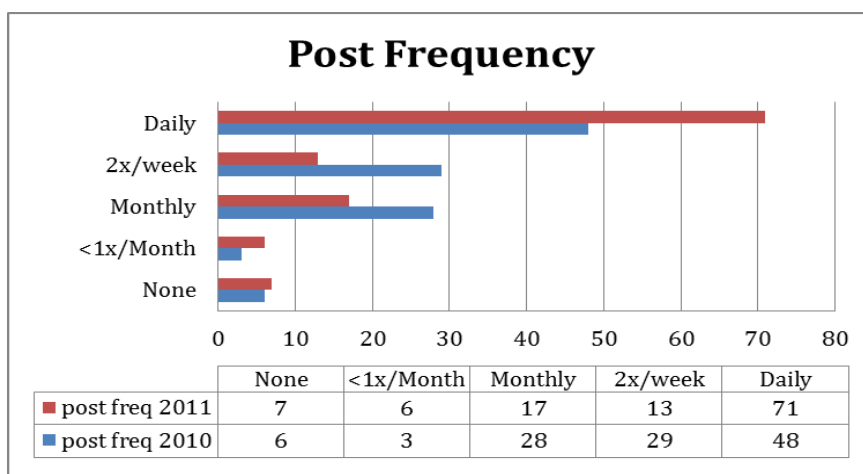
Post-Frequency

One of the key questions we were asking: For what purposes are healthcare institutions using Facebook?

In other industries, Facebook, as we know, serves a range of purposes. Some pages are used as connection hubs while others offer information pertinent to their fans. Community building is a critical objective. For others it is a way to provide consumers with updated information, incentives for purchase, ways to connect to other users including forums for resolving problems and discussion boards.

As we looked at the Facebook pages for hospitals, medical centers and healthcare systems, we were struck by the themes that seem to be emerging. It is premature to be certain of what is working best for consumers or for healthcare institutions. Clearly some hospitals are using their Facebook pages to share information to a broad base of consumers—patients, families, communities, friends and simply those engaged in the healthcare theme. To assess the hospital’s efforts and results, we looked at the frequency of postings to see how often these institutions were “speaking” to their fans, adding value to consumers and/or creating a connection with the style of healthcare brands.

What is clear is that those institutions building Facebook communities understand that they have to post daily. The number of hospitals posting daily went from 48 to 70, an increase of 46% while those posting twice a week or monthly went down by more than half. These institutions by and large migrated to daily postings. Some hospitals understand content marketing and are using daily posts to sustain engagement while others are not investing in the medium and are leaving their fans friendless. It doesn’t take long for people to stop coming to see what is new.



Use of Events Function on Facebook

As we know, the wall or timeline is where content is posted (ex: update your status, post a picture). It is also where you can generate a “News Feed” story so that the next time people log into Facebook, they see the content.

In 2010, only 6 hospitals (5%) used the ‘Wall’ to post hospital events. By 2011 that had shifted; 13 or 116% more hospitals used the wall to post events. And, there were 62 events posted.

	Events 2010	Events 2011	% Change
Wall	6	13	116%

Discussion Boards

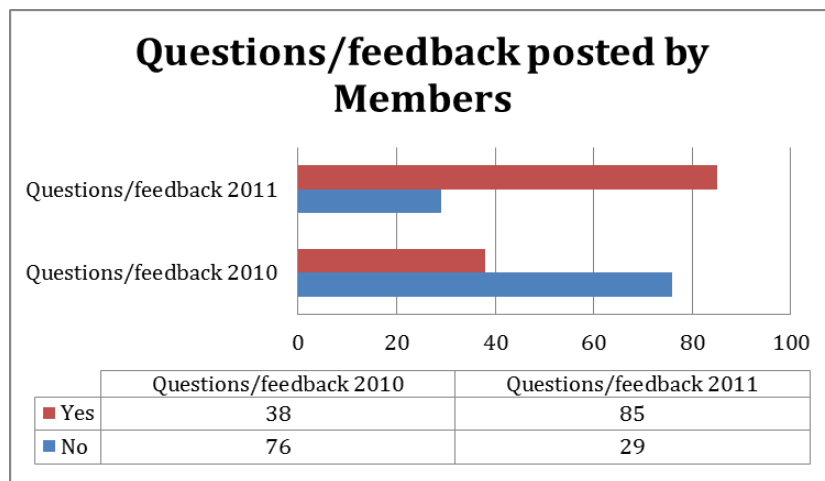
Virtually no one is using Facebook’s discussion boards. They are integrating discussions through wall postings. People want to see a quick snapshot discussion and add comments, not go to a separate board.

Feedback: Solicited & Unsolicited

As we noted in our first study, we were astonished by the limited comments and feedback being solicited and leveraged by the healthcare institutions. Facebook is a foundation for building communities and engaged relationships.

In 2010, only 38 hospital Facebook pages (32%) included unsolicited feedback from their Facebook members.

That has clearly and dramatically changed. In 2011, 85 (71%) hospitals sampled solicited feedback and only 29 (24%) did not. The discussions were in a wide range of areas from hospital experiences, events and good or bad experiences, “happy doctor days,” etc.

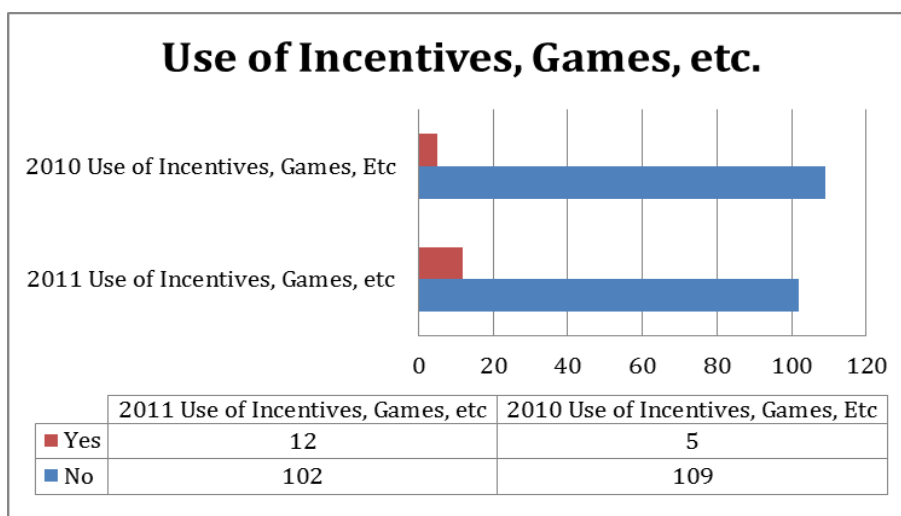


Engagement Opportunities: Incentives, Games, Apps, Contests:

This was an area that was simply not being used in 2010. At that time only 5 hospitals had games, apps, contests or incentives. **That has not changed.** While there are now 12 hospitals using the gaming or incentive area instead of 5 (a 104% increase), 108 (90%) are simply not using these elements for any purpose on their Facebook sites. Most hospitals, however, still did not see any value in these tools for consumer engagement.

Hospital for Special Surgery has made great gains since 2011 and part of this has been through incentives on their wall to lure fans to return. They post trivia questions and have fans post answers on the wall. They also post Fitness Friday tips with exercise routines that people can do at home. They offered a “Train Like a Knick” fitness incentive.

Other hospitals, such as Stamford Hospital, are using incentives to get more fans to “like” their site. If you click that “you like the hospital” they offer exclusive offers. Boston Children’s Hospital created a robot-naming contest. They also have a program called “There’s a MAPP for That,” a virtual mobile app that helps navigate your experience at the hospital.

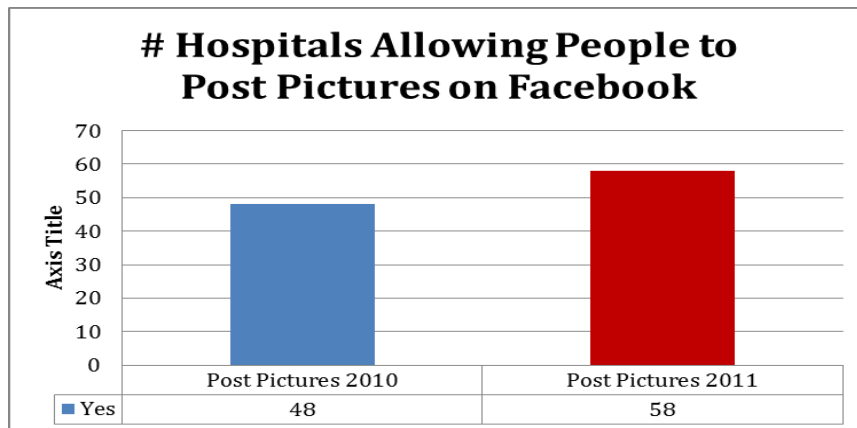


Engagement Opportunities: Photo Sharing

In 2010, the majority of hospitals, 48 hospitals allowed members to do post photos on the hospital’s Facebook page. That number increased to 58 hospitals in 2011.

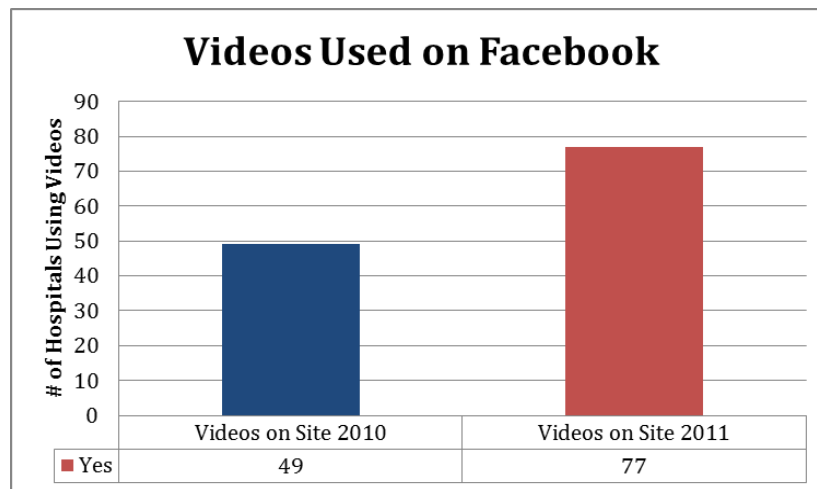
Some hospitals allowed members to post photos of diseases with questions about their condition, which the hospital responded to. These hospitals then drove the member to either other health information or asked them to call a number where they could get assistance.

In the case of children’s hospitals, several members posted photos of their ‘well’ children, with notes of thanks to hospital staff for helping make their children better during their stay at the hospital. They also had a lot of pictures of children who were very sick but celebrating birthdays. Many people used the opportunity to thank hospitals or the NICU for saving someone’s life.



Engagement Opportunities: Video Sharing

Videos, on the other hand, had become a major initiative on the part of hospitals using Facebook.



YouTube

There was no easily recognizable association between the number of videos on YouTube and the popularity of a hospital on Facebook. These are the top twenty hospitals in the survey ranked this time by the number of videos they have posted on YouTube.

One hundred (100) of the surveyed hospitals had at least 135 videos. When you move up into the top 50 ranked by the number of YouTube videos, they each had at least 500 or more videos.

Among the very top twenty as you can see above, the number of videos was quite astounding. Yet there were still hospitals, such as the highly regarded Robert Wood Johnson, which has neither a major Facebook nor a video presence on YouTube. And there are also hospitals like Parkland with over 4000 “likes” on Facebook that had only 35 videos.

Nos. of YouTube Videos	State	Hospital	# likes on Facebook 2011
8880	FL	All Children's Hospital	30494
7120	TX	Children's Medical Center	12391
6160	SC	The Regional Medical Center	0
5020	TX	MD Anderson	26562
3670	CA	California Hospital Medical Center	106
3130	PA	University of Pittsburgh Medical Center	4546
2760	TN	St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital	66,976
2740	NY	Hospital for Special Surgery	9786
2600	OR	Oregon Health & Science University	3154
2510	RI	Rhode Island Hospital	1758
2480	MA	Children’s Hospital Boston	705,965

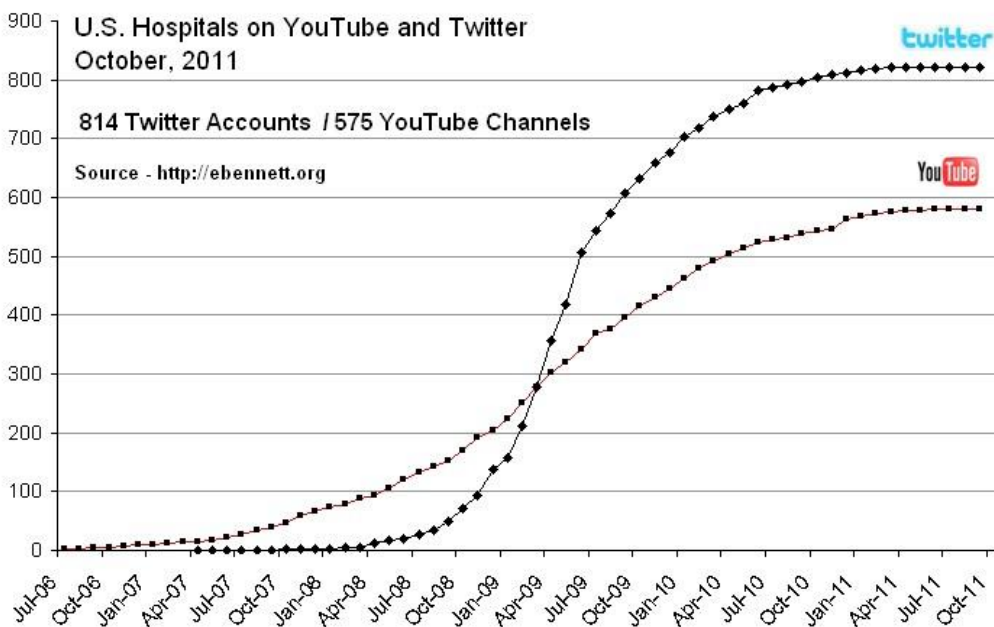
- Those YouTube videos playing a broad array of roles in communicating to consumers.
- YouTube is strong way to increase search optimization for their websites.
- Growing up digital is also very visual. Video is often an easier mode for understanding.

People “buy from people.” Consequently, the more an institution can show its doctors, nurses and other staff in formats that show them representing the brand and expressing the values and

beliefs of the consumer, the more likely consumers will be more comfortable choosing and using that institution. This is as important for building physician reputations and personal engagement as it is for patients and family.

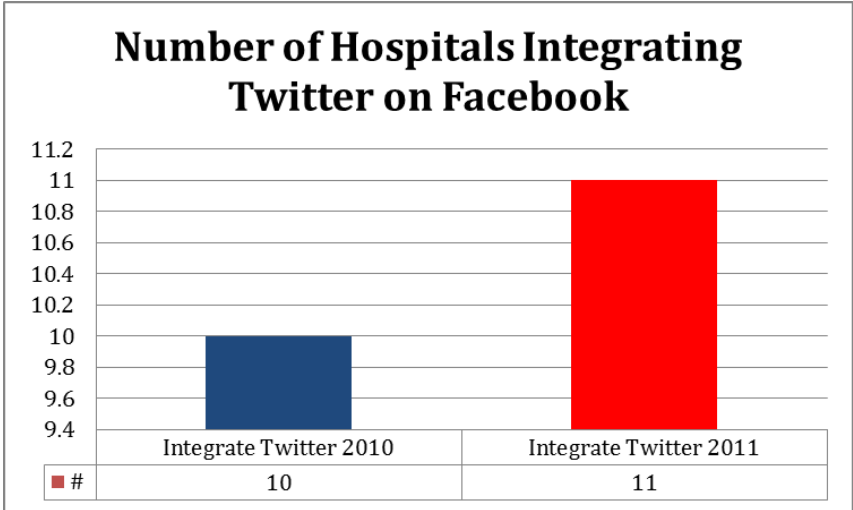
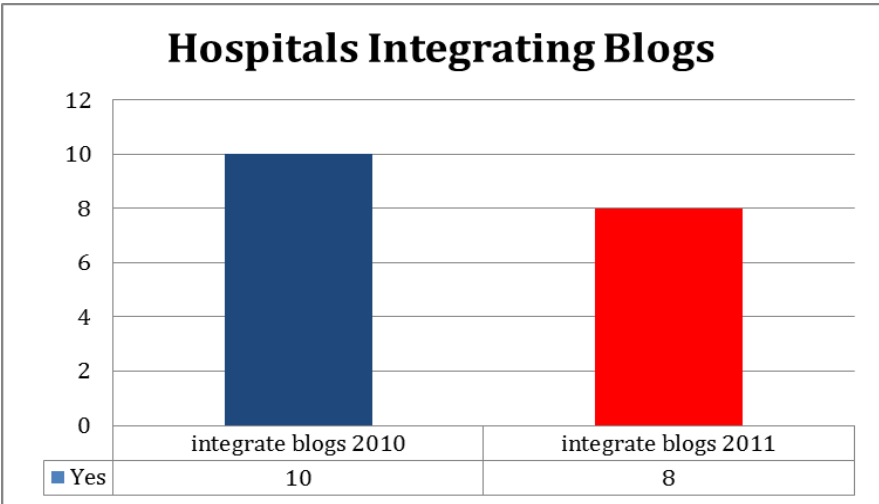
Blogs and Twitter

Despite the power of Twitter, particularly among young men, and the value of blogs to discuss topics of interest to different market segments, from breast cancer survivors to new moms, neither blogs nor Twitter were being used by most of the hospitals. In fact the number of hospitals with blogs integrated into their Facebook sites had decreased. Yet we know from other research⁵ that Twitter is growing very fast.



One hospital in the survey, Seattle Children’s Hospital and Dr. Wendy Sue Swason, are using both blogs and Twitter very effectively. Her blog is <http://seattlemomadocblog.seattlechildrenshospital.org> and she has over 10,000 blog followers and over 9000 Twitter followers.

⁵ Ed Bennett: <http://ebennett.org/hsnl/data/>



Children's Hospitals

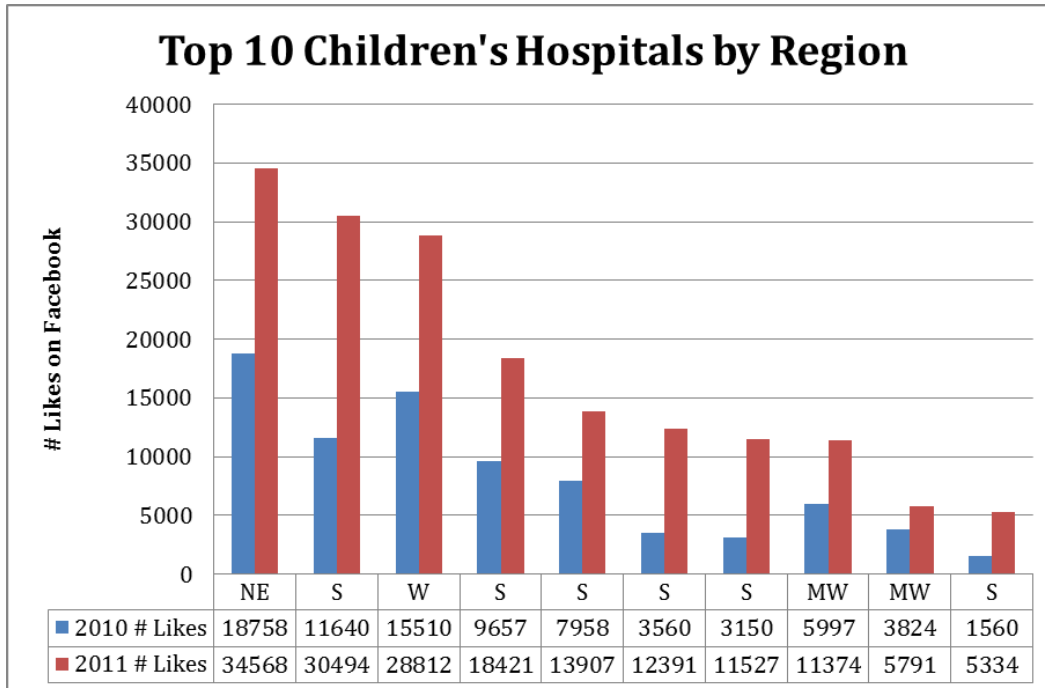
With or without Boston Children's Hospitals, the children's hospital segment is surging ahead of the rest of most hospitals or medical centers in their attention to Facebook. The two following charts suggest that this is the case regardless of region.

Of the top 20 of those surveyed, 11 (over half) are children's hospitals and they are highlight in the chart below.

	# Likes 2011	Hospital/Medical Center
1	705,965	Children's Hospital Boston
2	75,049	Cleveland Clinic Hospital
3	66,976	St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital
4	34,568	Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
5	30,494	All Children's Hospital
6	28,812	Seattle Children's
7	26,562	MD Anderson
8	18,792	Johns Hopkins Bay View Medical Center
9	18,421	Children's Healthcare of Atlanta
10	13,907	Winnie Palmer Hospital for Women & Babies
11	12,453	Phoenix Children's Hospital
12	12,391	Children's Medical Center
13	11,527	Miami Children's Hospital
14	11,374	Children's Memorial Hospital

15	10,405	Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center
16	9,786	Hospital for Special Surgery
17	8,265	Riley Hospital for Children
18	6,811	C.S. Mott Hospital
19	6,566	North Shore University Health System
20	6,132	Ohio State University Medical Center

When we look at all the Children’s Hospitals, they clearly dominate among all of those surveyed with the number of likes and the scope of their Facebook experience.



There are several themes to highlight here that emerge from a review of these Facebook pages:

- They really understand that their “customers” are moms, dads and kids who have grown up digital. Facebook is how they communicate, and they expect a strong Facebook environment for them to participate in if they have any interest in children’s health, for their own or for other children.
- Fund raising is as important on these sites as is friend-raising.
- Engagement is multi-faceted and runs from:
 - Events going on at the institution that they can and should participate in
 - Events going on for the institution
 - Discussions/Conversations taking place among interested participants. People helping people or celebrating or sharing concerns or pain.
 - Videos being used to educate, inform or ‘sell’ services that are both synchronous and asynchronous.
 - Webinars
 - Theme of the month
 - News about new doctors or nurses or programs to form relationships □
News relevant to raising your child
- In most cases they use Twitter and blogs to complement their Facebook page

Women and Children’s Hospital of Boston offers an experience built on the culture of the hospital, with a tab on the culture of the hospital. They seem to use the page not just for patients but for employees as well. The “Culture Club” talks about the “adopt a garden project” that staff can volunteer to participate in, birthday cards being signed personally by the director of the departments, and employee bowling and softball clubs.

Leaders in Facebook Social Media

If we pull out the Children’s Hospitals we can see a clear pattern among those who have embraced social media and are building friends and fans on their pages. These were the top 20 of the 114 that had any presence on Facebook.

	# Likes 2012	Hospital/Medical Center
1	75,049	Cleveland Clinic Hospital
2	26,562	MD Anderson
3	18,792	Johns Hopkins Bay View Medical Center
4	10,405	Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center
5	9,786	Hospital for Special Surgery
6	6,811	C.S. Mott Hospital
7	6,566	North Shore University Health System
8	6,132	Ohio State University Medical Center
9	5,653	Duke University Hospital
10	5,109	University of Michigan Health System
11	4,546	University of Pittsburgh Medical Center
12	4,157	Parkland Health & Hospital System
13	4,004	Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital at Rahway
14	3,884	Detroit Medical Center
15	3,860	UCSF Medical Center
16	3,656	Aurora Health Care

17	3,559	Cedars-Sinai Medical Center
18	3,445	Hackensack University Medical Center
19	3,305	University of Pennsylvania Health System
20	3,164	Northwestern Memorial Hospital

Who isn't doing Facebook?

We do not list those 26 hospitals that have not discovered the value of Facebook. Neither do we list the lower 50 hospitals that are working their way into social media building. Rather, we would urge them to find a soul-searching moment to examine what is holding them back: perhaps it is the fear of letting their employees use social media; or their resistance to having communities talking about them online; or the staffing needed to sustain the community building; or their own lack of understanding that people are having these conversations about them anyway. Those people need their help whether they provide it or others do it for them. Abdicating their role is unfortunate. Most importantly, the social media experience is extending well beyond Facebook and with mobile apps coming the entire communication process and community building initiatives are going to change once again.

What can the leaders teach others?

When we began the research we were interested in establishing a benchmark and then trending over time how hospitals, medical centers and healthcare systems were using Facebook in particular and eventually social media in all of its dimensions. As the high performers begin to pull away from the rest, they offer important insights to share for those that wish to compete in capturing brand ownership of the healthcare space, much less the social media space. The issue is whether or not you are going to control the conversation, influencing how people engage with your institution and how your institution will serve important roles in delivering healthcare and health or wellness to the public's health.

What becomes rather clear is that these are all high performing institutions. When we looked at the hospitals that had the highest number of "likes," it is clear that these are "choice" hospitals. These specialty hospitals have formed lasting relationships with patients and patients feel linked

to them and want to continue to stay connected. They are also destination hospitals. People are choosing to go to these hospitals, and it is not just because they are convenient to where they live.

Mayo Clinic was not on our list of randomly chosen hospitals for the research. However, they have assumed such a major leadership role that they are worth mentioning. They have 95,092 “likes” and 125 videos. They have the Mayo Clinic Center for Social Media. They use social media not just to advertise services but to gather research on rare diseases. It helps to connect healthcare providers and consumers.

If you want to see their short, pointed policy, go to this site:

<http://socialmedia.mayoclinic.org/2012/04/05/a-twelve-word-social-media-policy/>

When you look at Mayo’s pages, you see that they understand and use Facebook to achieve core branding, marketing and community building objectives.

We began this report with research published in 2011 from 2010 survey material. In a just year, things continue to change—and fast. In their March 1, 2012 research, Pew Research⁶ reported that:

- “Of particular importance is that 17% of cell phone owners, or 15% of adults, have used their phone to look up health or medical information. Among certain socio-economic segments that may lack easy access to computers, mobile is quickly becoming a better option to find what is needed.”

Social media is becoming a core component to communicating with that audience. In particular:

- “This finding is of particular interest to those interested in trends related to young people, Latinos, and African Americans, since these groups are significantly more likely than other groups to have mobile internet access.
- “The most commonly-researched topics are specific diseases or conditions; treatments or procedures; and doctors or other health professionals.
- “Also, keep in mind that the typical search for health information is on behalf of someone else -- information access by proxy.”

⁶ <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/2296/mobile-cell-internet-web-access-phone>

The Role of Healthcare and the Place of Social Media

If transforming health is going to become one of the core missions of healthcare organizations in the future (not just fixing people when they are broken but helping them get healthy and stay that way), then social media, mobile applications, Facebook communities, YouTube videos and the various methods for engaging adults and children provide a platform for truly treating consumers how they want to be treated.

Isn't it time that hospitals and medical centers begin to embrace the social media communities? At the same time they are building these communities and engaging them in their health and healing, they can also better define their own value to those who need them the most—enabling them to live healthy lives and get the right information at the right time for their healthcare needs.

About the author

Andrea Simon PhD is an Anthropologist who uses her training and skills to help guide corporations through the challenges of doing business in the 21st Century. Dr. Simon, a Corporate Anthropologist, works with companies across a broad spectrum of industries and organizations. She has held high level positions in Healthcare, Banking and Education. Simon Associates Management Consultants (SAMC) is a certified woman-owned business located in New York but serving the entire US and Canada. Dr. Simon can be reached at www.simonassociates.net or info@simonassociates.net.