SOCIAL MEDIA WITHIN COOPERATIVE EXTENSION: OPPORTUNITIES, RISKS, & BARRIERS

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Research Questions

• How does Cooperative Extension utilize social media to connect with people in a different way?

• Is Social Media seen as an effective communication platform? Is it worth it for Cooperative Extension to utilize this resource?
Literature Review

• Social network sites are powerful tools that can improve a group’s welfare and rate of information exchange (Skelly, 2005).

• Social media have transformed non-profit organizations in not only the way they function internally, but in how they connect with those they serve (Kanter, 2009).
Methodology

- **Study 1**: In-depth interviews with 27 Cooperative Extension agents (17=NY, 10=Wisconsin)
  - Both rural (80%) and urban areas
  - Varying amounts of social media & extension experience
  - Transcription and analysis of interviews
- **Study 2**: Survey of NY exec directors (42 responses out of 56 requests)
Key opportunities

Figure 2: Perceived Benefits of Using Social Media

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential Benefit</th>
<th>Degree of Benefit (0=None)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Connectedness</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speed of Communication</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publicness</td>
<td>0.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Relations, Media</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Relations, Stakeholders</td>
<td>0.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trendiness</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effectiveness of communication</td>
<td>0.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good use of time</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Building</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings

• “I think a lot of it is that connectivity. [Social media] let you have friends and fans and stuff. It’s an easy way of reaching out to people who are also interested in the services that we provide.”
Key Risks

**Figure 1: Perceived Risks of Using Social Media**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk of Medium</th>
<th>Degree of Susceptibility (0=Not Susceptible)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Privacy, personal</td>
<td>2.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Privacy, professional</td>
<td>2.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rudeness from other users</td>
<td>2.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liability</td>
<td>2.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publicness of medium</td>
<td>2.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor use of time</td>
<td>2.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addiction to the medium</td>
<td>2.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatigue from overuse</td>
<td>2.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ineffective medium</td>
<td>1.94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Additional Issues

- pressure to use social media
- access

Perceived mode of stakeholder internet connection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Connection</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dial-up</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cable or Satellite</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Broadband</td>
<td>47.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings

• In rural areas of NYS where internet connectivity is low, extension respondents reported less social media use.
“I don’t see us using Facebook as a way to get the word out. The traditional methods, right now, seem to be working the best.”
Discussion

• Social media is a low-cost supplement to traditional outreach communication.
• Technological challenges, low internet constituent use & perceived lack of control are major barriers to use.
Recommendations

• train in Facebook Insights, etc. to understand evaluation & metrics of social media effectiveness
• divide up roles (promotion vs engagement)
• use tools to pre-schedule “liveness”
Other Issues in Using Social Media for Outreach
Context Collapse
Privacy

Privacy is the ability to control who has access to personal information, that is, information about an identifiable person.
Teens, Privacy, & Social Media

What do teens post?

- **PERSONAL INFORMATION**
  - Real name: 92%
  - Interests: 84%
  - Birthday: 82%
  - City or town: 71%
  - School: 71%
  - Relationship status: 62%

- **PHOTOS & VIDEOS**
  - 91% of teens have a photo of themselves
  - 24% have posted videos of themselves

- **CONTACT INFORMATION**
  - 53% of teens have posted their email address
  - 20% have their cell phone number
The Good News

Managing Privacy

- Deleted people from friend network: 80%
- Deleted or edited something they've posted: 70%
- Blocked people: 60%
- Cloak their messages: 50%
- Deleted comments from others: 40%
- Removed their name from photos: 30%
- Deleted or deactivated entire profile: 20%
- Post false information: 10%
What's on your mind?
Facebook Revenue 2015

- Advertising
- Other
If you’re not paying for it, you’re not the customer. You’re the product being sold.
Thanks

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Best Practices?