ON CALL

Lay Community Health Advisors

UNIT 4
Digital and Social Media

Contents

Introduction

Welcome to the Unit 4 of the Lay Family Health Advisors Curriculum. This Unit focuses on the online aspects of finding and sharing Health information.

In Unit 4.1 we will learn how to do online searches and evaluate the validity of information. Unit 4.2 covers the characteristics of today's key social media services and the nature of messaging in these channels. Unit 4.3 discusses the importance of visual formatting and presents tools and techniques for creating communication that best reaches the target audiences.

The face to face classes have some group work and introduce the key tools that will be used in creating and publishing Health information in the Self-directed learning section of this Unit.

4.1 – Social Media in Health Sector

The usage of Internet and Social Media is increasing fast in all sectors - and the health sector is no exception to this. In Unit 4 we will talk about health-related messaging in the social media, learn about searching for information in the Internet and evaluating information sources. We will also have a look at some health-related websites and mobile applications.

After completing this learning unit, you will have gained the following:

KNOWLEDGE:
- Basic knowledge of how and where to search for health information online
- Basic knowledge of how to evaluate sources of information online
- Basic knowledge of health-related websites and mobile apps

SKILLS:
- Search health information on national and international online network resources
- Evaluate online network resources and sites' reliability using specific appraisal criterion critically
- Utilise a variety of web applications to access social media services targeted to the health sector

RESPONSIBILITY & AUTONOMY:
- Take responsibility of sharing reliable information

4.1.1 Social Media: definition

Social media can be described and defined in many ways. One way to describe it is as applications and services, which combine communication between users and user-produced content. A social media user should not therefore be seen only as a consumer of content, but also they can create and comment on contents and connect with other users (Hintikka).

According to professor Andreas M. Kaplan and Michael Haenlein, it is "A group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user generated content". (Moorhead et al 2013)

Merriam-Webster has defined in 2019 social media as "Forms of electronic communication (such as websites for social networking and microblogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (such as videos)" (Merriam-Webster).

But which websites are Social media? Most often when talking about Social media, we mean sites like Facebook, Youtube, Wikipedia and Twitter. The reference usually covers websites that are mainly used for, or are based on social activities - like discussing, producing and sharing content or networking. (Pönkä, 2015, p. 34-36)

In the next section *4.2.* Choosing your Channels we will go into more detail in using these websites as forms of communication.

Most of the use of social media is related to leisure communication. Health information can be found - and is increasingly searched - online, also on social media. Health is one of the most searched categories online. The increased use and reach of target audience is also a reason why more health information has been made available online.

The general audience, patients and healthcare professionals use social media on their health-related communication. For comparison, 61% of American adults search for health-related information online and 39% of the same group use social media for searching. In Europe, for example in Germany, only individual hospitals use social media in their communication, whereas in Norway 22% of all hospitals are active on Facebook. In the UK, research shows that Facebook is the fourth most popular source for health information. (Moorhead et al. 2013)

Social media transforms the way we communicate. This change affects not only individuals, but also organizations and authorities. From the perspective of content production, the roles of expert and information consumer become blurred. Anybody can create health information and make it available online, making it more difficult to assess the validity and topicality of information. The reader becomes responsible of source criticism. (Helve et al. 2008).

Benefits of Social media in Health communication

Health information can be divided into two categories by the producer: Single user - produced (peer- and support groups) and institution produced health information (health care organizations, pharmaceutical companies etc). Helve et al. 2008).

Social media is a good channel for passing health information. The key benefits include speed of access and discussion related to information. The information is also often served in an easy-to-adopt and personalized form, which attracts the audience. (Helve et al. 2008).

Social media allows presenting information in non-textual formats, making it possible to reach audiences with special needs for example; videos can be used instead of text in situations where the target audience has weak reading skills. (Moorhead et al. 2013)

Social media cannot substitute a doctor, but it can offer new opportunities for sharing health information. At best, the innovative use of different means of communication produces new health information that can reach target groups that have been difficult to reach for health issues, such as those who have been excluded from previous one-way expert to citizen communications. (Helve et al. 2008).
Interactive health communication in Social media can also lower the threshold for people to seek a health care professional. (Wikipedia, 2019).

A New Dimension of Health Care: Systematic Review of the Uses, Benefits, and Limitations of Social Media for Health Communication – research found the following benefits and limitations in relation to health communication:

Benefits of Social media in Health communication (Moorhead et al. 2013):

	General Public	Patients	Health Professionals
Increase interactions with others	x	x	x
More available, shared and tailored information	x	x	x
Increase accessibility & widening access	x	x	x
Peer/social/emotional support	x	x	x
Public health surveillance	x	x	x
Potential to influence health policy	x	x	x

Problems of social media in Health communication according to the research (Moorhead et al 2013):

	General Public	Patients	Health Professionals
Lack of reliability	x	x	x
Quality concerns	x	x	x
Lack of confidentiality & privacy	x	x	x
Often unaware of the risks of disclosing personal information online	x	x	
Risks associated with communicating harmful or incorrect advice using social media	x	x	
Information overload	x	x	

Not sure how to correctly apply information found online to their personal health situation	x	x	
Certain social media technologies may be more effective in behavior change than others	x		
Adverse health consequences	x		
Negative health behaviors	x		
Social media may act as a deterrent for patients from visiting health professionals		x	x
Currently may not often use social media to communicate to patients			x

4.1.3 How to search the Internet?

Internet is a huge repository of information, which can be accessed easily and fast, when searched properly. Search engines that filter information based on keywords have been developed for this purpose - such as Google, Bing and DuckDuckGo.

A search engine is used by typing the keyword(s) into a search field. Using several keywords gives more accurate results. In addition to this, special characters can be used to further filter the results. It does not matter if you use uppercase or lowercase letters.
Examples of search phrases and characters:
- If a single keyword such as 'influenza' is entered, the search engine will look for web pages including this keyword;
- When using multiple keywords, like 'influenza symptoms', the search results contain primarily pages including both of these keywords;
- Wrapping the keywords in quotes "influenza symptoms" will cause the search to return pages that have the words appearing in sequence;
- When a keyword is prefixed with a minus (-), the search is made for pages including other keywords, but not the prefixed keywords. Search influenza -symptoms will return results that include influenza, but not the word symptoms;
- An asterisk (*) can be used to look search for results including words with a given beginning. For example influ* will search for pages that have words starting with 'influ', such as influ*x*, influ*enza*, influ*ential* or influ*ence*.

The search engines apply more parameters than just the given search keywords, including the search language and the location where the search is made. Best matches are displayed first in the result list. It is also possible to limit the search to specific content types like pictures or videos or narrow the search to be made only against websites written in selected language. (Perälä et al.)

More information and tips for doing web searches can be found on the search engines websites. To read more about using the most popular search engine Google, you can visit https://support.google.com/websearch/answer/134479?hl=en.

Google Scholar (https://scholar.google.com/) allows you to narrow your search to scientific articles, books and studies of different disciplines. Only part of the contents returned are usually accessible for free.

These general principles of searching the Internet also apply when searching for health information.

4.1.4 Evaluating information

An important step in processing information is evaluating its value. It is advisable to compare different sources of information, and any information presented should not be received uncritically. Source Criticism means evaluating the source's reliability.

Sometimes the source may contain incorrect or obsolete information, or it may be intentionally misleading. The topicality or accuracy of the information found on the Internet is not always a guaranteed, as anyone can publish information online in a cheap and easy way. The pages may look reliable at first, but you should look carefully at the content. Next, we will discuss some of the quality and source critique criteria, especially for electronic data sources. You should consider the following questions when evaluating the reliability of the information you have found. (Aalto University Learning Centre, 2018)

Some criteria for evaluating the quality of information and source criticism are listed below. The criteria apply to both printed and especially electronic resources:

Authority
Is the material produced by a known agency, organization or expert?
Does the creator have authority in the field or topic in question?
Does the URL address of the website tell you who has produced the material?
Can you find an e-mail address or other contact details for the author or organization responsible for the material online?

Validity
The information is thoroughly researched, objective and reliable.
A bibliography is included in online content.
The information can be verified. To confirm the accuracy of the information you can check works listed in the bibliography.
Online content has been reviewed by a third party such as a publisher, editor or peer review.

Content
Is the text content objective or subjective?
Is the information factual or does it represent the author's personal opinion?
Is the information unique, or can similar or more accurate information be found elsewhere?
It is very important that you distinguish factual websites from sites that present claims, opinions, propaganda or discussion threads.

The comprehensiveness of information
Does the material discuss the topic from more than one point of view?
How comprehensive is the information?
How detailed is the information?
Is the information limited to a certain time period?

Purpose /Aim
Why has the author or publisher published the material?
Why have they chosen to publish it online?

Target audience
Who is the information intended for?
Does the information match your information need?

Alternative information resources
Is the same information available from a different information resource, e.g. in an alternative medium or format?

Is the information up-to-date?
Does the document have a date?
Is the information current?
Is more current information available somewhere else
Does the information need updating?
When has the content been last updated?
How often is the content updated?

Is the information well organized?
Does the material include a table of contents?
Is the text clear to look at and read?
Is the text written well and grammatically correct?

The following list helps you to check if health information found online is reliable.

1. Is the sponsor/owner of the website a Federal agency, medical school, or large professional or nonprofit organization, or is it related to one of these?
2. If not sponsored by a Federal agency, medical school, or large professional or nonprofit organization, is the website written by a healthcare professional or does it reference one of these trustworthy sources for its health information?
3. Why was the site created? Is the mission or goal of the website sponsor clear?
4. Can you see who works for the agency or organization and who authored the information? Is there a way to contact the sponsor of the website?
5. When was the information written or web page last updated?
6. Is your privacy protected?
7. Does the website offer unbelievable solutions to your health problem(s)? Are quick, miracle cures promised?

(NIH, 2018)

4.1.5 Health-related websites and mobile applications

Reliable health information is produced by, for example, hospital districts, health centers, patient organizations, research institutes, and municipalities, whose materials are produced by experts.

International health websites:

- World Health Organization: https://www.who.int/
- The Health Europa: www.healtheuropa.eu
  news and developments from across the entire spectrum of European Health Policy.
- NICE https://www.nice.org.uk/
  The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence provides national guidance and advice to improve health and social care.
- NHS: www.nhs.uk
  The NHS website is the UK's biggest health website
- National Institutes of Health: https://www.nih.gov/
- PubMed: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/
- US National Library of Medicine
- Patient: https://patient.info/
  Expert Health Articles, Tips and Information
- Healthtalk.org : http://www.healthtalk.org/
  Information and support for a range of health issues by seeing and hearing people's real life experiences.
- Patients like me: https://www.patientslikeme.com/
  PatientsLikeMe's mission is to improve the lives of patients through new knowledge derived from shared real-world experience and outcomes.

National websites (Finland) [*replace with relevant sources from your country*]

- Terveyskirjasto**:** www.terveyskirjasto.fi
  Terveyskirjasto tuo luotettavan, riippumattoman ja ajantasaisen tiedon terveydestä ja sairauksista jokaisen suomalaisen ulottuville.
- Terveyden ja hyvinvoinnin laitos**:** httos://thl.fi
  Tutkii ja seuraa väestön hyvinvointia ja terveyttä ja kehittää toimenpiteitä niiden edistämiseksi. Kerää ja tuottaa tutkimukseen ja tietoaineistoihin perustuvaa tietoa.
- Työterveyslaitos: ttl.fi
  Työhyvinvoinnin asiantuntija, joka tutkii, palvelee ja vaikuttaa
- Käypähoitosuositukset: https://www.kaypahoito.fi/
  Riippumattomia, tutkimusnäyttöön perustuvia kansallisia hoitosuosituksia
- Fimea: www.fimea.fi
  Lääkealan turvallisuus- ja kehittämiskeskus. Kansalaisen lääketieto sekä hakupalvelu lääkevalmisteiden tiedoista.

Yhdistykset, liitot ja yhteisöt:
- Hengitysliitto: ww.hengitysliitto.fi
- Suomen mielenterveysseura ry: https://mieli.fi
- Sydänliitto: sydan.fi

Mobile applications (mmHealth apps)

Mobile applications are, as the name implies, used with a mobile phone or tablet. A range of applications exist for all mobile operating systems like iOs, Android and the now discontinued Windows Mobile and they can be downloaded using the provided application stores.

A diverse selection of health-related apps is available on the market. They can be categorized by the intended use for example as follows:

1) Fitness - *MyFitnessPal, Endomondo, Fitocracy, Yoga Daily Fitness, Strava*
2) Tracking & analytics - *Instant Heart Rate, Cardiogram*
3) Food & Nutrition - *Lifesum, Plant Nanny, Fooducate, Lose it!, My Diet Coach*
4) Mind & Brain - *Sleep better, Sleep Cycle, Headspace, Buddhify, Happify, Lumosity,*
5) Overall health - *Apple Health, HealthTap*
6) Productivity - *Momentum Habit Tracker, Productive Habit Tracker, StickK, Habitify*

Applications are available for both consumers and health care professionals.
Source: (Alasaarela)

Mobile health apps are a part of today's life and they are rapidly increasing in number - even so that finding the right application can prove to be a challenge. Luckily services and applications are available to help in making the decision, such as myhealthapps.net (http://myhealthapps.net) and NHS apps library (https://www.nhs.uk/apps-library/) or mobile Health Library (mobile application)

4.2 - Choosing Your Channels

When selecting social media communication channels, it is good to identify the characteristics of channels and their users, as well as the advantages and disadvantages of different channels and applications for your own use. This section also introduces the principles of social media communication. After completing this learning unit, you will have gained the following:

KNOWLEDGE:
- Basic knowledge of social media channels and their audiences
- Basic knowledge of the advantages and disadvantages of social media channels
- Basic knowledge of the general principles of social media communication

SKILLS:
- Select and apply different channels of social media in communication for delivering your message
- Select a target audience and the appropriate communication channel to reach it
- Communicate in social media using communication styles that help to get your message delivered to the widest possible audience and get positive reception in the form of likes and related discussion
- Give information, interact online and handle negative feedback

RESPONSIBILITY & AUTONOMY:
- Use social media responsibly when delivering your message
- Perceive the importance of communication style in delivering your message

4.2.1 The most popular channels

The field of Social media is in constant change. It is good to be aware of what are the most popular channels today, but also of prognosis of what are the likely favorites in the future when deciding where to put your efforts.

Top 15 most popular social networking sites:

(Dreamgrow, 2018)

4.2.2 Social media channel characteristics

Each social media channel has their own strengths and weaknesses, which means that the choice of channels plays an important role in reaching your target audiences and goals - the key deciding factor being the target audience; you need to be on the same platform as they are. Next we will have a look at the characteristics of some of the most popular channels.

Facebook is currently by far the most popular social media.

Strengths
Enormous reach potential (widest audience)
Mobile users spend a lot of time using the application
Targeting (geographic, age, gender, interest)
You can share articles, videos, pictures and basically any kind of content

Weaknesses
Organic reach is almost zero
You have to pay for visibility
The most competitive channel
Young people prefer other channels
Facebook's internal algorithm that cannot be affected; not all posts are visible to everyone.

Twitter is the right channel when there is a need to communicate quickly, briefly, a lot, here and now. It is especially suitable for communicating current phenomena such as events, news, experiences, etc.

Strengths
For fast and tight communication
For sharing news, announcements, popular topics
Rapid reaction from the public

Weaknesses
Content lifetime short (you can of course publish again)
Twitter advertising can be expensive
Requires lots of content and active conversation: the more tweets, the more visibility you get
The increase in the number of users has stopped compared to other channels

YouTube is the world's most popular video playback service and the world's second largest search engine (after Google), millions of videos are viewed daily. Videos are an effective way to "teach" and share information and build the credibility of your activities. Much describing the nature of this channel, the most common search term that leads to Youtube is "how to".

Strengths
Engage viewers with image, sound, and text
The best platform for educational videos and tutorials
Videos are good for search engines
The audience prefers viewing videos to reading texts
You can create your own channel to host all your videos

Weaknesses
The service adds ads to the beginning of videos, which can be disturbing for the viewers

Instagram

With Instagram, you reach a younger audience than with Facebook and with a method suitable for younger people, based on pictures and short text sections. Products and services that highlight visuality are well suited for Instagram.

Strengths
A fast growing user base
Engage the audience effectively (10x better than Facebook)
Reaching Young People (Y and Z Generations)
Visuality, pictures and videos

Weaknesses
Limited audience (young people)

Sources: Errington, (2017); Kolowich, (2016); Hill, (2016); Kananen, (2017).

Network recommendations by industry

When comparing different networks by industry, we can see that the ideal options for Health Care are Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest
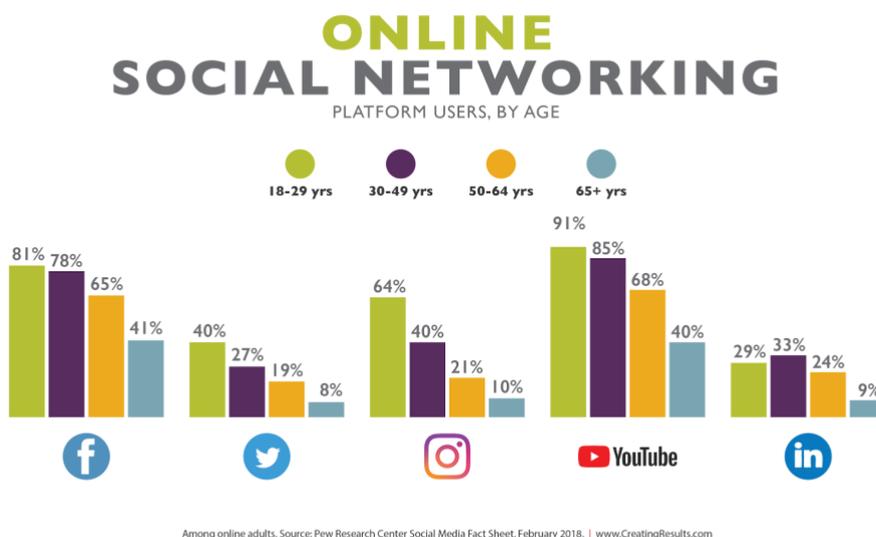
Instagram and Youtube might be good networks depending on your content strategy.

Task - Try out Pinterest and read more about its benefits - see Self-directed learning resources for more information

(Image: Spredfast, 2018)

The age distribution of the most popular social media channels users (Creating results, 2018):

ONLINE SOCIAL NETWORKING
PLATFORM USERS, BY AGE

● 18-29 yrs   ● 30-49 yrs   ● 50-64 yrs   ● 65+ yrs

Facebook: 81%, 78%, 65%, 41%
Twitter: 40%, 27%, 19%, 8%
Instagram: 64%, 40%, 21%, 10%
YouTube: 91%, 85%, 68%, 40%
LinkedIn: 29%, 33%, 24%, 9%

Among online adults. Source: Pew Research Center Social Media Fact Sheet, February 2018. | www.CreatingResults.com

4.2.3 Communication

Social media content production should be goal-oriented and systematic in order to get the most out of it. By developing a clear strategy, you can implement your social media communication systematically. The simplest way to create a social media marketing strategy is to start with these five questions (the 5 W's):

1. Why do you want to be on social media?
2. Who is your target audience?
3. What are you going to share?
4. Where are you going to share?
5. When are you going to share?

(Lua, 2019)

Planning your social media strategy is covered in more detail in the self-directed learning materials.

Creating Content

Social media content should be:
- Relevant, useful, and interesting;
- Easy to understand and share;
- Friendly, conversational, and engaging;
- Action-oriented.

Relevant: Relevant social media content makes people think "This matters to me." Relevant information can be based on; time, geography, audience, interests, useful.

Useful: When people can use social media information to see their lives in new ways, change behavior, or learn something they didn't know before, it's useful. Make information useful by suggesting practical steps or citing convincing statistics or report findings.

Interesting: To capture a reader's attention, create content that piques curiosity. Interesting social media content is more likely to be shared. Of course, content should always be professional and relevant to a health topic.

Easy to understand and share: In social media channels, your message competes fiercely with others for your readers' attention. That is why it's important to use plain language and craft your message so the information you present is easy to understand. Also, consider how easy your message is to share or "like" on Facebook or "retweet" on Twitter. If users must modify your message to share it, they might get frustrated and quit or change the message so it's not as accurate as the original. Here are some ways to ensure your messages are easy to understand and share:
- Put relevant, intriguing information at the beginning of your post. Can you ask a question?
- Use fewer characters than allowed to make sharing easy;
- Keep messages short but relevant;
- Test your message on a cold reader. Could someone "get it" in less than 2 seconds?
- Provide enough context so your message can stand alone.

Friendly, conversational, engaging: It's no surprise that social media is, well, social! Social media content generally has a more informal tone than other communications. That's not to say social media messages are not also professional. Here are some ways to help you achieve a balanced, conversational tone.
- Use contractions (can't, don't, haven't);
- Write in first or second person (I, we, you);
- Avoid colloquial language (y'all, ain't, you guys);
- Avoid trendy abbreviations (UR for "you are").

Action-Oriented: You can use social media tools to help build awareness and direct readers to take action or find more information. Social media messages should have a call to action, urging people to take the next step. Here are some ways to make your messages action-oriented:
- Use action verbs such as "learn," "watch," or "join";
- Include links to Web content that offer more detail or supply a phone number or e-mail; address, but not e-mail addresses for individuals;
- Use ALL CAPS sparingly, for emphasis only. "
(CDC, 2016)

When writing about health issues, you should pay close attention to the above-mentioned issues, as well as to the fact that the **information you share is based research** and that you **mention the original sources**. If needed, revisit Section 4.1: Evaluating information.

Below are some guidelines for incorporating social marketing into your communications.
- Highlight the positive aspects of your health message.
- Answer the audience's question, "What's in it for me?";
- Respect your audience;
- Encourage your readers to take a particular action or to learn more;
- Tie messages to specific products or services when possible (such as "Find out where to get tested" or "Know your status");
(CDC, 2016)

Communication styles

Your communication style matters. Communication style is at least as - or in some cases even more - important as the content. The style is affected amongst other things by choices of words, the writer's person, the level of formality and level of literacy and the layout of the text. The goal of efficient use of styles is to match the style of communication to the target audience, but at the same time try to preserve authenticity. (Traphagen, 2017)

Before you head on to writing to social media, consider the following:

What is your style:
Who communicates? Define your own style and personality, what kind of image you want to give. Are you a seasoned professional, communicating in a very formal and right on point manner, or relaxed and informal?
Whom do we communicate with? What is the appropriate communication style for the target group - familiar and relaxed or discrete and factual?

Maintain same style across different channels:
Uniform communication (including visually) on different social media channels raises public confidence.

Linguistic means:
Relaxed: writing in first person, talking directly to the public, using questions and prompts. Emojis make communication more casual, but they do not fit in all situations. Use reasonably, excessive use makes the message look cheap! Factual: Gives an image of expertise and professionalism. Literal and well thought communication. Focus on message content.

Grammar:
Whatever your communication style, it is important to remember the grammar. Poor spelling easily gives an unprofessional image. Using dialect or spoken language can act as a powerful tool or be used as a part of image building.

What to publish:
In addition to the language, the communication style is influenced by the kind of updates you intend to publish. Are you passing on news, things related to everyday life or carefully thought out content? Remember again to keep a uniform style!
(Määttä, 2018)

Responding to feedback

What do with different types of comments and feedback you receive? Simply put, you should answer everything with the exception of offensive content, which you should delete.
Questions/Concerns – If someone posts a question or concern onto your page, reply back and answer their questions. Not only will it make your customer feel better, but everyone else that comes to your page will see how attentive you are.

- Bad Reviews – If someone writes a bad review to your page or challenges your principles, do your best to reply back to address their concerns or assertions. For the same reason as stated above, your tactful reply will explain your point of view and show others that not everything that people post has truth to it. J*ust be careful not to hit below the belt, even if they do;*

- Informative comments – Like you, others on social media want to establish their credibility in their given industry. On LinkedIn, many people can and will share relevant information or content to your groups or company page. When someone does this, be sure to not only read the information, but give your feedback as well! Start the conversation – they will remember you at critical points if you have a relationship established;

- Praise/positive reviews – The best kinds of posts are the ones full of love. If someone writes on your accounts with positive feedback, you can still respond to show your thanks. Let these people know that their compliment didn't go unheard.

(Carter, 2013)

4.3 - Creating and sharing your message

The Internet and social media are flooding with different information and messages. Standing out and creating a reliable image are crucial, especially when sharing health information. This section focuses on producing visually attractive and high-quality content; the general principles of content production, communication styles, and the use and production of images and presentation graphics. After completing this learning unit, you will have gained the following:

KNOWLEDGE:
- Fundamental knowledge about the production of social media content: content design principles, messaging styles, references, and utilization of images and graphs

SKILLS:
- Apply the possibilities offered by social media in delivering messages
- Produce and publish content via selected channels for delivering your message
- Design a message directed to the target audience in terms of content and layout

RESPONSIBILITY AND AUTONOMY:
- Choose the best channel and content of message considering you target audience
- Estimate the right time to publish the message to reach your target audience

4.3.1 Your message

In Unit 4.2 we focused in written communication and producing textual content. Any message you share on social media consists of several components: the information content, the writing style, any pictures included and visual choices and styles. The choice of social media services and channels is also a part of your message.

Always think of your communication as a whole and build visual elements to support your message. The visual identity of your posts should be in line with the content. Ideally the reader should get a feeling of the content of your message without reading a word. At best, the visual choices you have made and the use of images and graphical elements convey to the user the idea that your page or channel is a source of health information.

As mentioned in unit 4.2, **the information you share must be based on valid research** and **you should always reference the information source**. The same goes for graphic elements. For example, when using charts copied from other sources, make sure that the information in the image is correct, that you have the right to use the image, and whether the image author should be mentioned in the picture. Permissions are further discussed in section 4.3.7.

4.3.2 Why visual appearance matters

Visuality plays a major role in the Internet and social media. In a study that analyzed 100 million articles, it was found that a photo-featured Facebook release was distributed three times more than the same publication without a picture. On Twitter, the photo release was distributed twice as much. (Okdork, 2017)

The power of Images is not a new insight, "an image is worth a thousand words" is already a cliché, but it is true, even though it negates the effectiveness of the picture.

A research by John Medina highlights the superiority of the vision compared to other senses and the effectiveness of the image compared to the verbal message.

John Medina's rule Brain rule number 10: "Vision trumps all other senses"

People remember about 10% of the information given orally/verbally to them, measured 72h after reception of information. They remember 65% of pictorial information.

- The pictures reign over text, partly because reading is so ineffective for us. Our brains see words as small letters, from which we need to recognize certain qualities of the letters to be able to read the words, and it is time consuming;
- Why is vision so important to us? Maybe because we have always used it to identify threats, edible plants, and reproductive potential.

(Medina, 2018)

4.3.3 Principles of visual content production - positioning and composition

The use of images for sharing information is efficient, but the creation of images and graphic elements requires expertise as well as a systematic approach.

There are several rules in traditional graphic and print media design that also apply in social media.

Buffer lists 11 key principles for using and positioning images:
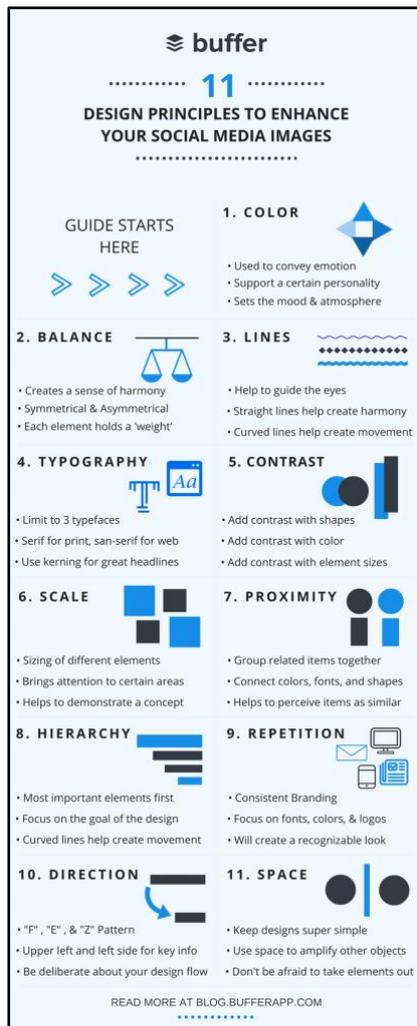
- **color:** used to convey emotion, support a certain personality and set the mood and atmosphere;
- **balance:** creates a sense of harmony, can be symmetrical or asymmetrical, based on 'weight' of each element;
- **lines:** help to guide the eye, straight lines create harmony, whereas curved lines help to create movement;
- **typography:** don't use more than 3 typefaces. Serif is ideal for print, sans-serif for web use. Use kerning for great headlines;
- **contrast:** add contract with shapes, color and element sizes;
- **scale:** sizing of different elements helps to differentiate them, bring attention to certain areas and helps to demonstrate a concept;
- **proximity:** Group related items together. Connect colors, fonts and shapes;
- **hierarchy:** place most important elements first and focus on the goal of the design;
- **repetition:** remember consistency, stick with selected fonts, colors and logos to create a recognizable look;
- **direction:** "F", "E" & "Z" are natural eyesight patterns; Upper left and left side is reserved for the key information;
- **space:** keep your design as simple as possible and use space to amplify objects. Don't be afraid to leave out elements.

(Peters, 2016)

Color can also be used efficiently to give the elements a lot of attention (using the warning colors of nature and environment) or little attention, for example by using light blue elements which are perceived as distant due to air perspective (in nature the objects are lighter and bend towards blue he farther – e.g the closer to the horizon they are). Thus, use light blue as image backgrounds and strong shades of yellow and red to draw attention.

Further reading about creating visual materials can be found on Sprout Social:
How to Create Engaging Social Media Graphics (https://sproutsocial.com/insights/social-media-graphics/)

4.3.4 Principles of visual content production - High quality photos

A successful site, page or other social media entity is made up of individual elements; for the outcome to be of high quality, each of the individual elements must also be of high quality. Kodak has tips and listings of things you need to consider to produce good images.

- Look the photographer in the eyes;
- Use simple (even) background;
- Use flash when shooting outdoors;
- Position yourself close to the target;
- Do not place the target in the center of the image;
- Keep focus on the target;
- Know the range of your flash;
- Be aware of the direction of light;
- Take vertical pictures as well;
- Guide the people you are shooting.

(Kodak Moments)

4.3.5 Optimising images

Image optimisation means not only improving the qualitative and visible features of the image, but also reducing the file size of the images and finding the optimum between quality and file size. Attention should be paid to file sizes, multiple images with large file sizes on the same page can slow down the page load significantly.

If you want the best possible image quality, image optimization should be done with a separate image editor. Changes in image size made by social media applications vary qualitatively, in some cases the quality of optimized images is poor.

When using image editing software, it is good to know how to save your images. The following table shows the main features and uses of the most common types of storage:

	Tone images / photos	Line pictures/ logos and graphs	Transparent	Notices
JPG (JPEG)	x	-	-	Good choice for photos - produces small files, lossy compression (the quality deteriorates progressively with compression)
GIF	-	x	x	Limited tones, rough edges when transparency is applied, enables short animations
PNG-24	x	x	x	Lossless compression, good quality but large file sizes. Enables transparency with soft edges
PNG-8	-	x	x	Limited tones, rough edges when transparency is applied

Optimising images using Adobe Photoshop **(Attachment)**

4.3.6 Graphic elements and diagrams

What can you achieve with graphical elements and graphs, why use them?
As stated earlier, visuality plays a major role in the Internet and social media. Sharing information and getting attention is enhanced by using graphical elements, infographics and tables.

Search Engine Journal lists the following eight benefits of infographics:
1. The human brain process visuals better than text;
2. Infographics are a great way to tell visual stories;
3. Infographics are easy to digest;
4. Infographics are linkable;
5. Infographics are shareable;
6. Infographics help establish you as an expert;
7. Infographics can help to increase sales;
8. Less infographics are being promoted today.

(Brockbank, 2018)

Further reading for Self-directed Learning (attachment): Creating infographics with Canva

Channel-specific:
The social media and devices used are in a state of constant change, so the recommendations for different media, such as the recommended picture sizes and aspect ratios, are also subject to change.

You can find the latest and up-to-date instructions for different media online:

Facebook
Facebook automatically resizes and resamples images on upload to server. However, Facebook has recommendations on the image sizes, for example, using images that have their width converted to 720, 960, or 2,048 pixels before upload, to maintain good quality.
https://www.facebook.com/help/266520536764594?helpref=uf_permalink

Twitter
As Twitter is based more on text content than on Facebook or Instagram, it does not have similar guidelines for images as the other two. Twitter's instructions relate to the nature of communication and the production of text. Use of pictures is encouraged, but no instructions are given for the size or format.
https://business.twitter.com/en/basics/what-to-tweet.html

YouTube
Instructions for creating high-quality videos for Youtube can be found following this link:
https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/4603579?hl=en

Instagram
Information about image sizes and aspect ratios:
https://www.facebook.com/help/instagram/1631821640426723?helpref=related
Hints and tips for Instagram pictures
https://www.facebook.com/help/instagram/427910070604293/

The principle of copyright is that the work may be used only with the permission of the author and as permitted by the author. Social Media Examiner lists the main principles of using images on your website, how to use images correctly and legally in social media:
1. Understand copyright basics;
2. Read the terms for your social media platforms;
3. Choose the right license when using stock images;
4. Get permission from the image creator;
5. Don't assume fair use applies to your use of someone else's image.

(Kornblet, 2017)

Fair use is a term in the US copyright law that, in exceptional circumstances, allows the use of material that would otherwise be protected by copyright. This a US-specific law that does not apply generally in the European Union. European and US copyright laws are different, but there are also national rules and regulations within the EU. Check out the copyright laws of your country.

Like many other things in the digital world, copyright issues are also changing. The planned and already implemented changes to copyright may greatly affect social media and all Internet publishing in the future.

Article 13 is the part of the new EU Copyright Directive that covers how "online content sharing services" should deal with copyright-protected content, such as television programmes and movies.
It refers to services that primarily exist to give the public access to "protected works or other protected subject-matter uploaded by its users", so it is likely to cover services such as YouTube, Dailymotion and Soundcloud.

However, there is also a long list of exemptions, including:
● non-profit online encyclopaedias;
● open source software development platforms;
● cloud storage services;
● online marketplaces;
● communication services.

(Fox, 2019)

Traditionally, the Visual Guidelines contain a visual representation of the organization, including at least the following elements; logo and its permissible usage, Typography (fonts used in print and electronic media), colors and instructions for their application, and instructions on the application of all of the above in various contexts (web, social media, printed media, banners, signs and signage, workwear etc).

You can find information about different Visual Guidelines and Brand styles here: https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/examples-brand-style-guides

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