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Letter

Dermatology on Tumblr

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Abstract

Tumblr broke into the social media scene in 2007 as a micro-blogging platform that hosts 169 million blogs, 75 billion total posts, and 111 million posts daily to date. This study aimed to determine the presence of dermatology-focused journals, organizations, and groups on Tumblr. These were entered into the Tumblr search query to identify affiliated Tumblr blogs and 'dermatology Tumblr' was searched on Google to determine the first four distinct results that were active within the last six months. None of the dermatology-focused journals, organizations, or groups maintained a Tumblr blog and three of the first four blogs on Google were maintained by private practices. In conclusion, Tumblr remains a social media domain that lacks a strong presence from dermatology journals and organizations, remaining an untapped resource for information dissemination and interaction with the public.

Keywords: Tumblr, dermatology, social media, blogs, dermatology journals, professional dermatology organizations, dermatology-related patient advocate groups

Introduction

Since breaking into the social media scene in 2007, Tumblr has made a name for itself as a micro-blogging platform, boasting members from Obama to Lady Gaga. Tumblr hosts more than 169 million blogs, 75 billion total posts, and 111 million posts daily, with 47% of its users 35 years of age and above and 38% located in the United States [1, 2]. It allows users to create a blog that can be shared and to “subscribe” to other’s blogs, which are automatically updated on a personal dashboard (Image 1). The ease of content dissemination via Tumblr is owing to the simplicity with which it enables the sharing of text, links, photos, audio, and video. The presence of dermatology journals, professional dermatology organizations, and dermatology-related patient advocate groups on the popular social networking sites of Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn was recently investigated by Amir et al [3]. To expand upon this information, this study aims to determine the presence of the same dermatology-focused journals, organizations, and groups on Tumblr.

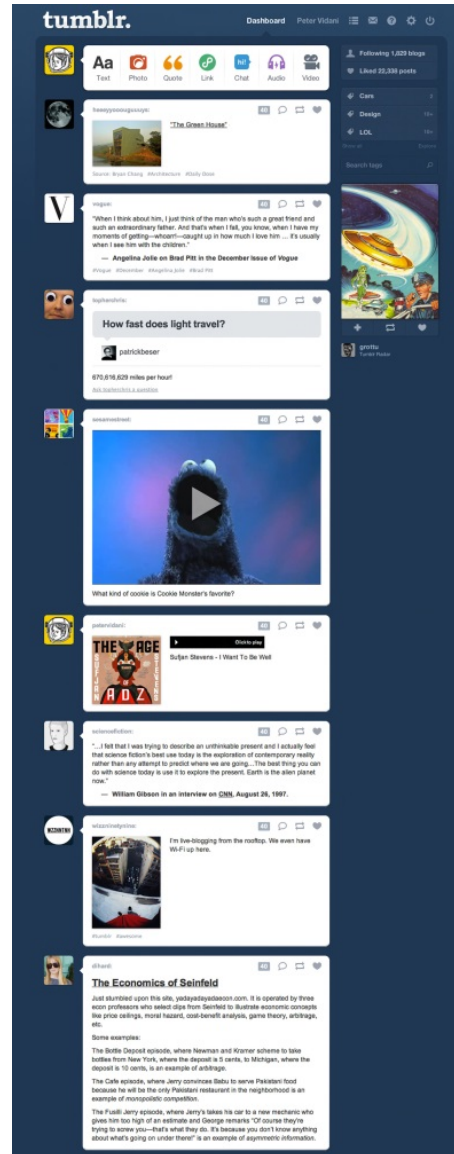


Figure 1. Example of Tumblr dashboard (courtesy of Tumblr press info). This figure shows the user interface which serves as a feed for all user-subscribed blogs.

Methods

Data was collected by the study authors (CC, LB, CK) on February 4, 2014. The top ten most popular dermatology journals, professional dermatology organizations, and dermatology-related patient advocate groups on social media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn) were identified from a recent study [3]. These were entered into the Tumblr search query to identify affiliated Tumblr blogs [4]. In addition, official journal websites were visited to investigate the presence of links to Tumblr blogs. Finally, ‘dermatology Tumblr’ was searched on Google and the first four distinct results that were active within the last six months were obtained (excluding ‘dermatology on Tumblr’ and ‘dermatologist on Tumblr’) [5]. Posts from these four dermatology Tumblr blogs were examined to determine the type of organization running the blog, months since the last post, number of posts, and content of the ten most recent posts. Blogs were considered active if updated within the last six months.

Results

None of the dermatology-focused journals, organizations, or groups maintained a Tumblr blog. Some of these searches, such as JAMA Dermatology, American Journal of Clinical Dermatology, Journal of Investigative Dermatology, Dermatology Times, and the American Academy of Dermatology, yielded instances in which the journal or group was referenced in the text of a blog or was highlighted with a hashtag (#) from users to note key subjects of a post. Table I demonstrates the first four blogs from the Google search for ‘dermatology Tumblr’. Three of the blogs were run by private practices and one was a personal/informational blog.

Conclusions

Tumblr remains a social media domain that lacks a strong presence from dermatology journals and organizations. It is interesting to note that three of the Google search results are Tumblr blogs run by private practices. Thus, it can be hypothesized that private practices are utilizing Tumblr, although journals and groups are slower on the uptake of this novel blogging platform. Areas for future investigation include determining the rationale for the lack of Tumblr usage and using other dermatology related search terms such as “skin” and specific conditions such as “psoriasis” and “acne” to assess their presence on Tumblr. In conclusion, Tumblr remains an untapped resource for information dissemination and interaction with the public for dermatology journals and professional groups.

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Appendices

Table I. First four Google search results for ‘dermatology tumblr’

Name	Months Since Last Post ^a	Number of Posts ^b	Type of Blog	Content of Last 10 Posts
Dermatology and Laser Center of Charleston	5	11	Private practice	Self advertising, general dermatology information, audio clip, products
Crutchfield Dermatology	4	13	Private practice	Self advertising, general dermatology information, products
Steven Greene Dermatologist	<1	2	Private practice	Self advertising, general dermatology information
TransSci on Tumblr, Transforming Skin: Trnsgender Dermatology	2	1	Informational/Personal	General dermatology information

^aBlogs not active within the last six months of February 2014 were excluded

^bWithin 6 months of February 2014