



DOCENCIA - INVESTIGACIÓN

Facebook pages for the broadcasting of media on evidenced-based nursing

Las Fan Page de Facebook como medio de difusión de la Enfermería Basada en la Evidencia

***Santillán García, A. **Cornejo Marroquín, C. **Ausín Lomas, S.**

*Enfermera asistencial y docente. Autora del blog "Enfermería Basada en la Evidencia" y responsable de su difusión por las redes sociales. E-mail: ebevidencia@gmail.com **Supervisora de Área.

Complejo Asistencial Universitario de Burgos (CAUB)

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ABSTRACT

Since the change that the Internet suffered earlier this century evolving into Web 2.0, a change in the model of how to manage information has been generated. This fact has not been indifferent to nurses, who are learning how to use 2.0 tools, among other motivations, for the benefit of scientific broadcasting. In turn, social networks have taken on a role such that the combination of social networks and 2.0 tools are the current scenario of the social web. Facebook and its Fan Pages are part of the social web and can be used by science for promoting the communication of information. This descriptive study shows the spreading of the contents of the blog called "Evidence-Based Nursing" through its Facebook page, which has a rapid and cross-cultural range. This describes the social context of Web 2.0 in the service of science.

RESUMEN

Desde el cambio que Internet sufrió a principios de este siglo evolucionando hacia la Web 2.0 se ha generado un cambio de paradigma en la manera de gestionar la información. Este hecho no le ha sido indiferente a la enfermería, que está aprendiendo a utilizar las herramientas 2.0 entre otras motivaciones, en beneficio de su difusión científica. A su vez, las redes sociales han cobrado un protagonismo tal que la combinación de redes sociales y herramientas 2.0 forman el escenario actual de la web social. Facebook y sus FanPages forman parte de esta web social y pueden estar al servicio de la ciencia fomentando la difusión de la información y la comunicación. En este estudio descriptivo se muestra la difusión de los contenidos del blog "Enfermería Basada en la Evidencia" a través de la FanPage de su perfil público en Facebook, que ha tenido un alcance rápido y transcultural. Esto nos describe el marco social de la web 2.0 al servicio de la ciencia.

INTRODUCTION

Recently, concepts such as Web 2.0, blog and social networks emerge frequently in the field of health and nursery ¹.

Facebook is one of these social networks and its FanPage (or pages) make the spread of contents easier. If these contents are directly related to Evidenced-Based-Nursery, the FanPages can become a tool for sharing the nurse's knowledge.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In the earlier 21st Century, the Internet suffered a very significant change because it evolved towards Web 2.0 ² and a change of paradigm regarding the way of managing information was generated.

At the beginning of the Internet, the user was limited to consult or to observe the contents, with few possibilities of interacting both with the Web and other users. Thanks to Web 2.0, the Internet has become a collective intelligent platform where information is generated, shared and discussed. This process is favoured by the use of light software without limitations that break with the updating cycle.

This fact has generated repercussions in the field of health, emerging new concepts such as Health 2.0 ³, or eHealth. With the appearance of new tools like webinars, wikis, social networks, chats, etc., the users (for instance health professionals, patients or relatives) can create, share, assess and spread information and they are changing from a passive consumer of information into a *prosumer*, neologism that adds the action of producer and consumer.

As paradigmatic examples of this type of 2.0 tools, we find Blogs (they will be further considered) and Wikis, but there exist other technologies that offer more possibilities, actually new tools appear daily.

These tools can be classified⁵ according to their functionality and in practical terms, we can talk about publication tools (for instance Blogger or Slideshare), tagged tools or social bookmarking (such as Delicious) and edition tools and collaborative building resources (for example, GoogleDocs).

These 2.0 tools, also called social tools, are flooding our informatics environment little by little, connecting each other and favouring the content exchange among the users. This flow of information is denominated collective intelligence and it is born from the social website ⁶.

The social web relationship with the science has been explained by authors such as Codina ⁷. According to him, science is communication and science is collaboration. Without both ingredients the on-going of researching seems impossible, neither their spread. Making studies and working on research if the results aren't spread or used by the scientific community makes no sense. This idea was perfectly showed by the Research Gate ⁸ founders in their collaboration platform aimed at scientists from all the disciplines. The platform offers free access to the most modern Web 2.0 applications. It also shows that both things (communication and collaboration) can improve using instruments like social networks. These two ideas are well expressed by the founders of the ResearchGate:

“The vision of Science 2.0 is promising: Communication between scientists will accelerate the distribution of new knowledge. [...] Science is collaboration, so scientific social networks will facilitate and improve the way scientists collaborate. Cooperation on scientific publications can be facilitated through Wiki-like concepts (*ResearchGate*, 2009)”.

The fact that the communication and collaboration binomial converges in the concept of science 2.0 and that it helps scientists to spread their knowledge emerges from this contribution.

The image of the digital social networks or virtual communities exists as an active part of this Social Web. It is true that the practice communities have been described as higher levels of human relationships in contrast to social networks because they imply a higher level of compromise among the components, a common goal and a common code that favours the interrelationships⁹. There still exist divergences among the own components of these groups and discrepancies regarding the self-denomination of these virtual groups persist¹⁰.

The social interactions mediated by the Information and Communications Technology in the context of the society of information have been studied¹⁴ from a sociologic and anthropologic point of view. To this respect experts believe that the level of the so called “physic reality” mustn’t be detached from the level of virtual reality, as both share convergent (and divergent) components. In fact, the interest for these social interactions as 2.0 communities of practice in the environment of health professionals is increasing because they are an interesting method of learning and constant formation and elements that promote the collaboration and team work¹¹.

In contrast, the popular digital social networks such as Facebook and Twitter are more and more present in our lives. They have several utilities but there is no doubt that they are shown day by day as powerful tools of communication.

It is a fact that the use of social networks is being spread significantly in the field of health. Professionals, institutions, organizations, associations and patients use these networks to spread their labour, to share knowledge and to generate collective intelligence¹².

According to the last reports published in Spain^{13,14} the main social networks in our geographical context are in first place Facebook (used by 8 out of 10 surfers) followed by Twitter (that decreases its average of age and increases in terms of users thanks to the incorporation of a younger public and it becomes the net with the highest expanding expectances) and Tuenti (which is consolidated as the second great social network in Spain)

Regarding new media it is worth mentioning the figure of the Blog. A blog (also called Weblog) is a log where one or more authors write texts called post and they remain published in the net. The experiences of nurses using blogs as tools of improvement of communication are positive¹⁶ and it has been seen that more than the half of the sanitary blogs from the United States are written by health personnel¹⁷.

The utility of blogs has a special interest in the field of the nursery formation as they are easy tools. Their use promotes the process of learning of the nursery students because it helps them to develop their skills in the sphere of communication¹⁸.

The interest of sanitary people in the use and characteristics of the use and characteristics of the blogs ¹⁹ provokes heterogeneity in the health “blog-sphere”. It encompasses health professionals of diverse categories, and as it normally happens in other social networks, it has institutive representation and official organisms ²⁰.

Due to the existence of precedents in Spain that point out that a sanitary blog is a powerful and cheap media ²¹ and because of the presented phenomenology, a blog aimed at the spreading of the methodology on Evidenced-Based Nursing that encouraged the practices based on evidences was created. At the same time, profiles for the blog in Facebook, Twitter, Tuenti and a Fan Page in Facebook were created. The contents of the blog were linked to the social networks by specific tools (widgets).

The 21st of July 2010, the public profile of the “Evidenced- Based Nursing” (www.ebevidencia.blogspot.com) blog in Facebook began its activity.

Simultaneously, the Fan Page was created (<https://www.facebook.com/home.php#!/pages/Enfermeria-Basada-en-la-Evidencia/104505709603682>) in order to cover people who wanted to follow the published contents without sharing their profiles.

In this period of time, the profile has generated more than 4000 “friends” and the Fan Page 750 “fans”, and 350 supporters by means of “like”. Altogether, more than 5000 people have chosen Facebook as a way of updating their knowledge regarding the Evidenced-Based Nursing. Several studies show how the social networks are a way used by professionals and patients to search information about health. Scientists must bear in mind the role of these new media in the broadcasting of this scientific information. A higher and personalized diffusion is achieved by the automation of contents with the applications and direct connections between the web pages and the social networks.

OBJECTIVE

To discover the scope and diffusion of contents published in the Fan Page “Evidenced-Based Nursing”.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

This is a descriptive, observational and retrospective study about the analytic results of the Fan Page of the Blog “Evidenced-Based Nursery” in Facebook.

The field of study has been the already mentioned Fan Page and the population were all those people who had been subscribed when measures were taken to the contents of this Fan Page through the “like” button (N=738).

Data were directly taken from the statistics page of Facebook (Facebook insights). A univariate analysis was realized, with the representation of descriptive statistics (percentages)

The contents of the Fan Page belong to the entries of the mentioned blog, which are automatically updated by the free application “NetworkedBlogs”. The described data have been gathered from the 1st August 2010 to the 1st June 2011.

The studied variables have been grouped into three blocks: users, contents and interactions.

RESULTS

Users: 738 profiles have been added to the Fan Page. The average of active users by month is 317 (considering active users those who open at least one link of the website). The 75% belongs to female profiles and the 24% to male profiles, being

more frequent the age rank from 25 to 34 years old in women and from 35 to 44 years old in men.

The geographical location of the fans is mainly Spain (n=308), followed by Argentina (n=166) and Venezuela (n=124).

Contents: The published contents are the posts of the blog “Evidenced- Based Nursery”. They correspond 100% with the 99 post published in the blog. The method of publishing the contents was automatized from the own page of the blog and its connection with Facebook. None post has been lost, duplicated or modified due to the automation.

Interactions: 44221 views and 140 comments. The most visualized content corresponds to the title “Implementation strategies” and the one that has received more feedback has been “participative health care”.

DISCUSSION

Most of the users (75%) are women and this figure seems to be in keeping with the one registered in Spain by the INE (Statistics National Institute) in 2010 883.3%)²². Moreover, the age border of the fans matches up with the last tendencies in the use of the Internet and the ICT's in Spain ²³.

We consider that the total users who interact with the Fan Page is one of the most revealing data regarding the running of the page, because we can't assure that the passive users (those who click one “like” and they do not interact any more) access to the contents. In the case of study, the active users' average is approximately 50% per month.

The automatized publishing method of the contents has succeeded as it hasn't lost, duplicated or modified any post. As a result, these facts and its easy and intuitive use encourage us to recommend its use.

The number of views of the contents is high. The direct views of the contents through the own blog in a similar period was more than 43000 ²⁴, so the Fan Page duplicates the visibility of the contents of the blog “Evidenced-Based Nursery”. However, it does not match the most visited contents in both channels.

Limitations

Facebook Insights is not available for all the accounts, being a requirement today at least 30 fans for Fan Page to use its statistics. The exploitation of data through Facebook is still very restricted but the technical team assures its statistics significance.

CONCLUSIONS

The contents published in Facebook arrive quickly to people who are interested in that information. It is a transcultural scope and it can be managed by means of free tools.

Since patients are using more and more this way for searching information and health support, and the fact that the own professionals also resort to this net in order to be updated; Facebook and its resources are elements to bear in mind by nurses both in communication between pairs and health education for the citizens.

At this point, it should be thought about the necessity of regulation in the use of the social networks on the part of the health professionals²⁵ and the students²⁶. There is no doubt that the individual freedom of speech is unquestionable, but it is necessary to bear in mind that when some institutional environments are used or when somebody acts as a health professional, it is necessary to be aware of certain terms and conditions like the ones which have already been spread by the Vasc Country²⁷, the Generalitat de Catalunya²⁸ or the maternal-infant hospital Hospital Sant Joan de Déu²⁹.

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