# Social Media & Research:

Participant Recruitment Tips & Tricks

There are over 2 billion Facebook users, 700 million Instagram users, and 328 million Twitter users on a monthly basis...
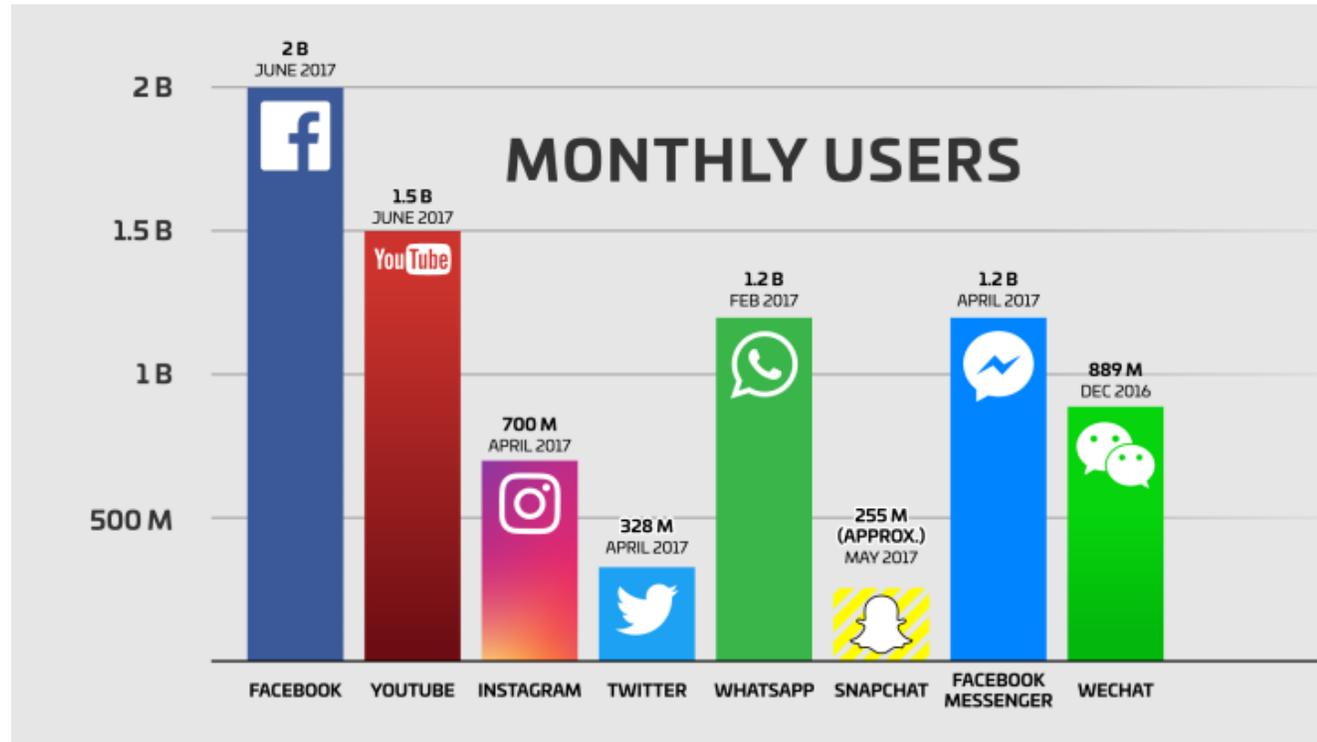
...do they know about your research study? With social media use on the rise, it is an easy and cost effective recruitment method to reach a broad audience.

*Graph courtesy of Tech Crunch

So, what are the top social media sites for recruitment?

Facebook
- Over 2 billion monthly users
- Average user profile: There isn't one. Among gender, race/ethnicity, and age demographics, over 60% of each group reported using Facebook
- Advertising costs range based on type of advertisement chosen. Average paid advertisements are around $0.27 per click, with the CPC for health care tending to be slightly higher. The more specific and targeted you are with your chosen advertisement, the more the cost can increase, however, you are more likely to be reaching the specific population you need
- Paid advertisements are adaptable and created based on your needs and budget
- For more information, please reach out to OHSU Social Media at socialmedia@ohsu.edu

Instagram
- Over 500 million daily users
- Average user profile: 18-29 year olds are the biggest user demographic. There is not a significant difference between demographic groups for gender and race/ethnicity
- Advertising costs range based on type of advertisement chosen. Average paid advertisements are around $6.70 CPM (cost per thousand impressions). Instagram ads are set up through the Facebook Ads Manager and frequently ads for both sites are purchased and scheduled to run simultaneously
- Paid advertisements are adaptable and created based on your needs and budget
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Top social media sites continued...
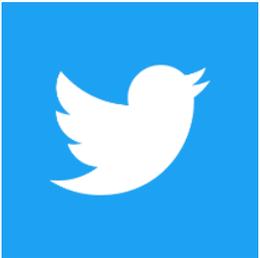
Twitter
- Over 300 million monthly users
- Average user profile: Like with Instagram, 18-29 year olds is the biggest age demographic group. Among gender and race/ethnicity demographics, the numbers are almost evenly split. The site is also a good space to connect with fellow researchers and those in health care
- Advertising costs range based on type of advertisement chosen. Average paid advertisements are around $1.35 per engagement
- Paid advertisements are adaptable and created based on your needs and budget
- For more information, please reach out to OHSU Social Media at socialmedia@ohsu.edu

LinkedIn
- Over 500 million users
- Average user profile: Though there is no significant difference amongst gender and race/ethnicity demographic groups, 30-64 year olds is the largest age demographic group
- Advertising costs range based on type of advertisement chosen. Average paid advertisements ranged $2 to $5 per click
- Paid advertisements are adaptable and created based on your needs and budget
- For more information, please reach out to OHSU Social Media at socialmedia@ohsu.edu

Wait, what do all these terms and acronyms mean?

There are a lot of terms to describe how the viewer is engaging with your content. Are they viewing it? Clicking on it? These terms, and how you want the viewer to engage, determines things like which advertisement type is best for your study and the cost of that advertisement.

Impressions: The number of people who view your advertisement

Engagement: A viewer interacting with your content. Engagement can include such things as liking, sharing, reposting, retweeting, and commenting on your advertisement

CTR (Click-Through Rate): The number of people who click on your advertisement after viewing it

CPC (Cost-Per-Click): Cost structure based on the number of people who click on your advertisement. CPC rates vary per social media site

CPM (Cost-Per-Thousand-Impressions): Cost structure based on the number of people who view your advertisement (i.e. impressions), in this case for each group of 1,000 people. CPM rates vary per social media site

CPE (Cost-Per-Engagement): Cost structure based on when users actively engage with your advertisement. CPE rates vary per social media site

CPS (Cost-Per-Send): Cost structure based on the number of direct messages you send to users. CPS rates vary per social media site

So which engagement style is best for me?

CPC (Cost-Per-Click)
- Pay when people click on your ad
- Best for when your goal is to drive traffic to your website or generate leads

CPE (Cost-Per-Engagement)
- Pay when people engage with your ad
- Best for when your goal is to connect with users and increase interest

CPM (Cost-Per-Thousand-Impressions)
- Pay when people view your ad
- Best for when your goal is to increase awareness

CPS (Cost-Per-Send)
- Pay when messages are delivered
- Best when your goal is to target high quality leads or event registrations

What type of advertisements are there?

There are two types of advertisements for social media – "organic" and "paid/sponsored"

"Organic" Advertisement:
- The social media user posts content on their personal/business page to their followers
- There is typically no cost associated with this type of advertisement*
- Pros: 1) Low cost and 2) Simple process that involves posting content to your own site
- Cons: Small recruitment reach, ad views limited to those who follow your site

"Paid/sponsored" Advertisement:
- The social media user pays for advertisements that will be seen broadly by users on the social media site
- Costs for paid advertisement vary based on social media site, needs, and budget and range from $0.27 to $50 per click
- Pros: 1) Broad recruitment reach, able to have your ad viewed by a larger number of people and 2) The ability to tailor your advertisement to better reach your desired population
- Cons: The cost. The more specific and tailored your advertisement becomes, the more expensive the cost of the advertisement can become

*Please refer to "Promote or Boost" under Tips & Tricks

Now that I know the type of advertisement I want, what do I need to consider?

- **Who is your [ideal participant]?**
  - What describes this person?
  - What does their life look like?
  - Imagine what would attract this person to your advertisement

- **What type of advertisement will you create?**
  - Will you upload a copy of your recruitment flyer and add text to the post?
  - Will you upload a generic image/graphic and add text to the post?
  - Will you upload a video?
  - Will you use already created advertisement materials?

- **What will the advertisement look like?**
  - Will your advertisements catch the user's attention?
  - Focus on the use of [colors, font type, wording], images, etc.
    - Does the advertisement have too many words on it, too much to read?
    - Is the font size large enough and one your intended audience can read?
    - Are the word choices sensitive to your audience's feelings, culture, etc.?
    - Is the advertisement written at a [6th grade reading level] and use [lay language]?
    - Are the images appropriate to your intended audience?

- **Use more than one advertisement style and social media site**
  - Every person responds to ads differently. By creating at least 2 to 3 versions of your advertisement, each with different images and wording, you are able to attract more people and expand your recruitment reach
  - Don't limit yourself to one site. Each social media site attracts different users and user demographics, to reach the broadest and largest amount of people, it is best to post advertisements on multiple social media sites at a time

Things to consider continued...

- **How will you engage the viewer?**
    - Is there an action item?
    - Should they like, comment, or share your content?
    - Is there a website link to send them to a study website?
    - What is the next step you want them to do after viewing your advertisement?

- **When should you post?**
    - Think about what days and times are the best to reach your ideal participant – will they be most likely to be online during their daily commute to work, after dropping the kids off at school, during the evening, etc.?
    - Think about what days and times your preferred social media site sees the most user engagement

- **Where should you post?**
    - There are various ad placement options on social media sites. Ads can appear in the newsfeed, video/stories, banner, and many other options. Think about where you want these ads to be seen and where your ideal participant is most likely to see these ads

- **How often should you post?**
    - Posting an advertisement one time is never enough. It is important to run your advertisement multiple times during your recruitment period and for paid advertisements, to have each individual ad run be long enough (~1-2 weeks)
    - Based on your recruitment goals, how many times will you repost the advertisement?
    - How much time will you have between re-postings?
        - Don't forget to consider the time to gather enough responses relative to study activities (i.e. lead time, response time, screening, scheduling, etc.)

- **Will your advertisement be viewable on both desktop and mobile?**
    - Social media users are more often using their handheld devices over their computer to go online. Is your advertisement created in a way to be readable to both the desktop and mobile user?

Recruitment Tips & Tricks

Stay aligned with organizational or industry standards
- When creating and posting content, make sure to stay within your organization's or the sponsor's standards and policies

Consider other sites (if a multi-site trial)
- For multi-site trials, remember to check in with the coordinating center first about your ideas for recruitment. If OHSU is the coordinating center, think about the other sites as you create your advertisement(s) and how this ad can be created to reach participants for all sites

Add value, not just asks
- In social media, it is important to be constantly engaging the user and adding value to their experience. Organizations who post a mixture of 'value added' content and requests tend to see more of a response to their requests than those who only post requests
- 'Value added' content can be as simple as sharing links to articles about health tips or information about upcoming events
- Sharing value added content also helps to build trust with your followers, which in turn increases their chance to respond to recruitment campaigns

Stay engaged
- Make sure to monitor your social media sites and posting(s) for any user engagement, questions, and other important items that are best to respond to in a time sensitive manner

#Promote #Visibility
- To promote visibility of your advertisement, take advantage of all of social media's available options and tricks. Make sure to add such items as hashtags, keywords, a geotag (i.e. geographic location), and any other items that can promote your post and make it easier for users to find

'Follow' other organizations on social media
- 'Follow' other organizations that are related to yours in some way. For example, another department at your organization, a local community group, or a disease association. In social media, it is typically standard practice for organizations to 'follow back' those who have followed them. This has the potential to increase traffic to your site and in return, increase viewership of your advertisement

Tips & Tricks Continued...

Don't be afraid to ask
- Reach out to other organizations you've connected with on social media and ask if they can share your advertisement with their followers. This is a great way to expand your recruitment reach

'Promote' or 'Boost' any 'organic' advertisements
- Posting advertisements to only your followers is a simple and cost effective recruitment option. However, that runs the risk of your post being lost amongst all of the other posts filling your viewers' newsfeed. By paying to 'promote' or 'boost' your post (an advertisement option within social media sites), you are able to make your posting more visible to your followers and target who your content is seen by (ex. age, geographic area, etc.). This is a low cost option to increase viewership of the ad. Promotion rates vary per social media site and average cost begins at $10 per boost

Use the buddy system
- Have a fellow study team member or colleague review the advertisement and its content for you
- Did the layout and images draw them in? Did they find the content readable? Did they understand the content? How did the advertisement make them feel (i.e. positive or negative response)?
- Feedback is an important step that allows you to update your advertisement now in order to produce better results once it's released publicly

Don't forget the budget
- Social media sites offer advertising tailored to your budget. Based on your finances and recruitment needs, there are many advertising options. Whether your study is investigator initiated or industry sponsored, it is possible to work within your costs. Don't forget to include social media advertising within your recruitment budget, allowing for what monetary amount is best to meet your recruitment goals

Get proper approvals!
- Are your materials and plan for social media approved by the sponsor?
- Are they approved by OHSU communications team?
- Are they approved by the IRB?
- Remember to have all of the required approvals before beginning any recruitment via social media sites

Most importantly...Measure and Adapt

Knowing your social media metrics is an important tool for recruitment success. By understanding how well the advertisement is doing, you are able to update your recruitment strategy if needed to produce better results.

How to measure:
- To understand your social media metrics, it is best to begin by determining what specific elements your organization will track and measure to determine success
- You can measure through counting the number of likes, comments, or shares of your post
- It can be measured through the number of people who completed a certain action you requested of them on your post
- Or through the number of people who clicked through to your website from the post
- It can also be measured through the use of social media metrics sites like Google Analytics or HootSuite

Adapt! And then adapt again!
- With the information gained from the metric(s) you chose, it is best to update your recruitment strategy to produce better results
- Was there a day or time that saw more user engagement and would be the best time to advertise?
- Was there a certain advertisement type or design that produced better results?
- What were the lessons learned from the metrics that can be used to update your strategy?
- Measuring and adapting your social media advertising should be a recurring part of your recruitment strategy

Where can I find more information on using social media in research?

OHSU Social Media
- All social media advertisements for OHSU, whether 'organic' or 'paid', must be run through OHSU Social Media
- To request an advertisement, complete the 'Social Media Request Form' or contact socialmedia@ohsu.edu
- Costs for social media advertisement begins at $50
    - For 'organic' advertisement, the average cost is $50. This fee covers the cost to "boost" or "promote" the post within the social media site, allowing for targeted and increased viewership of the ad
    - For 'paid' advertisement, the cost varies and is based on your budget and needs
- When creating advertisement content, you can utilize OHSU Branding and their available resources to help you in your content creation
- Always make sure to stay within OHSU branding and social media guidelines

National Institute of Health (NIH)
https://www.nih.gov/health-information/nih-clinical-research-trials-you/guidance-regarding-social-media-tools

Recruitment Innovation Center (RIC)
https://trialinnovationnetwork.org/recruitment-innovation-center/

Forte Research
https://forteresearch.com/resources/

Sprout Social
https://sproutsocial.com/insights/topics/social-media-advertising/

For more information, additional resources, and to request a recruitment consultation, please visit our website at https://www.ohsu.edu/octri or email us at OCTRIrecruitment@ohsu.edu