

Dark Social Strategy For Digital Healthcare Marketing

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“Healthcare’s objective perspective since 2004”

HMPD

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What is “Dark Social”?

- Dark social is social sharing of content outside of what can be measured by Web analytics programs
- It occurs when a link is sent via online chat or email versus shared over a social media platform but appears as direct traffic in analytic results –although it’s highly unlikely users are entering extended, complex URLs into browsers
- Technically, direct traffic arrives at a site without a referrer; a user enters a link into browser or clicks it when listed by search engine query



What is “Dark Social”?

- A referrer is the URL a user most recently visited before clicking over to the page referenced in the analytics
- It can be considered as “the word of mouth” dialogue in advertising, marketing and other communications in the digital space
- Increased sharing via Dark Social is often not strategically accounted for in standard social media monitoring



Examples of Dark Social

- Mobile apps A) trigger a browser instance in-app (like Facebook) or B) activate safari/chrome to open a new browser window (like Instagram) with URL in browser; for both a browser goes to the site and in Google Analytics this appears to be direct traffic
- Secure browsing a site using HTTPS and clicking a link to a site using HTTP won't reveal referrer
- Gmail, Outlook, Yahoo, Outlook email don't pass a referrer (user privacy)



Examples of Dark Social

- Chat-based native mobile apps (Facebook Messenger, WeChat, WhatsApp), web and desktop-based chat (Google Hangouts, IRC, or Slack) do not pass referrers

There is a false sense of confidence and completeness in e-marketing that most everything traversing the web can be easily tracked. Based on these examples and many others, there is a substantial volume of information sharing which is unaccounted for in analysis and good opportunities to cultivate its data or influence the sharing is neglected in **analysis, content and design.**



Healthcare digital marketing...

- Google estimates 2016 search traffic to be comprised of:
 - 1 out of 20 searches was related to healthcare
 - 60 million searches related to Alzheimer's
 - 200 million searches related to Cancer
 - 80 million searches related to Strokes



Healthcare digital marketing...

- A report by RadiumOne has these details:
 - Consumers exchanging brand content online are 9 times more likely to purchase
 - Self-sharing consumers (texting oneself a link or post to see later regarding a purchase) are 1.7 times likely to buy
 - Sharing is relied on "bots don't share", the activity is not fraudulent or invasive outbound marketing
 - Marketers may miss over 70% of consumer sharing data



Healthcare digital marketing...

- Walter Kluwer Health shares these details:
 - 72% of doctors access drug information from smartphones
 - 63% of doctors access medical research by tablet
 - 44% of physicians communicate with nurses and other associates from smartphones



Healthcare digital marketing...

- Indegene released a physician marketing study showing:
 - In 2016, preferred channels are brand promotional emails, KOL webinars, HCP portals
 - Life science digital marketing spending to be over \$14 billion by 2018
 - By 2018, the preferred channels will be social media, mobile apps and HCP portals



Digital marketing: simple to complex

- It was easier to track/analyze website and social media use; there was less traffic, fewer sites and not as many ways to share dialogue; devices being used were not as varied (desktop, laptop)
- Increasing internet use, more websites and diverse, easier venues available for content posting, multiple ways and devices to share dialogue and content have reformulated Internet use (mobile apps, smart phones, tablets, Twitter, Pinterest, Tumblr, Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, etc.)
- Healthcare use is growing but with more complexities due to privacy/security



Healthcare-focused venues

- BioSpace.com
- Drugs.com
- EverydayHealth
- FierceHealthcare
- HealthGrades
- Health Leaders Media
- Healthline
- Mayo Clinic
- Medical Marketing & Media
- Medical News Today
- MedicineNet
- Medscape
- Mercola
- MindBodyGreen
- NIH
- RxList
- WebMD
- Yahoo! Health

Various users frequent these venues; there are more to consider based on medical specialties, industry sectors



Open social-sharing venues

- Ask.fm
- Digg
- Facebook
- Flickr
- Google+
- Instagram
- LinkedIn
- Meetup
- Pinterest
- Reddit
- Snapchat
- Tumblr
- Twitter
- Vine
- VK
- YouTube

Monitoring trending healthcare topics, effectiveness of brand messaging, other strategic uses of social media is complex



Dark Social Strategies...

- **Analysis**
- **Content**
- **Design**



Dark Social Strategies - **Analysis**

- Focus on “direct” traffic data in analytics; filter on the landing page of traffic; determine those landing on homepage or top content pages as direct traffic
- Perform focused analytics on longer URLs, other variables to categorize them further and determine impact on results
- Assertively seek easier to use and improved analytic tools as they become available and continually improve existing analytic methods
- Establish business/analytic rules so data is defined and processed uniformly



Dark Social Strategies - **Analysis**

- Monitor channels as usage cools off in certain venues and warms up in others as audience preferences change
- Directly engage users/customers about their sharing habits and how they access/share dialogue and content: doctors, nurses, pharmacists, other clinicians --plus consumers or specific patient types and point-of-care settings
- Estimate a margin of adjustment in analytic results due to Dark Social and use this as an ongoing benchmark to cultivate better insights on it



Dark Social Strategies - **Content**

- Develop high quality content to ensure widespread sharing in mainstream and Dark Social channels
- Selectively place content in venues which have pivotal audience appeal for a healthcare need, brand, product, service or healthcare topic
- Better align content with the specific healthcare “buyer’s journey” audience (consumer, patient, clinician) be it informational or actionable



Dark Social Strategies - Design

- Use solid design to reduce the amount of traffic into dark social realms from the start; feature social sharing buttons, with trackable links throughout site content
- Many sites confine social sharing to Twitter and Facebook; selectively evaluate/add others; then assess what trackable results they deliver
- Repurpose content consistently, ensure key details, call-to-action is uniform; never underestimate appeal of infographs or bulleted lists to mule your messages
- Shorten URLs; users are more likely to engage and share them



Embrace Dark Social

- As content, venues, technology, usage exponentially grows in healthcare, so will complexity; having a defined Dark Social strategy now pays off moving forward
- Common expectations and consistent, broad analytic results are low-hanging fruit; Dark Social requires more work
- Account for Dark Social in analytics, content, design
- Excelling in Dark Social can be the **competitive edge** for the brand, product or service



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