

Nutrition Education: challenges from a growing digital and social media ecosystem

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Abstract

The present digital revolution that we are living is making dramatic changes not only in entertainment but especially in education. A few decades ago, entertainment/education was consumed passively, and was created by companies or experts that decided what people should see and learn. Nowadays, everyone can be both a consumer and a creator, and the created contents can virtually reach any people in any place. Another important issue regarding all of this changes is the availability and accessibility of digital media interfaces and devices, especially in children and teenagers.

One of the contents that is more likely to be searched in digital media are nutrition-related issues. Brands and marketers have realized it and there is a strong investment in this field. Unfortunately, due to that there is a growing number of digital platforms that offer information about food and nutrition without any scientific background. Even worse, in a significant percentage of cases, the information is created and transmitted without the intervention of nutritionists.

So, it is important for science in general, and nutrition in particular, that nutrition professionals have a strong presence in digital media, with accurate ethic and professional standards. Some of the best practices that should be followed include the identification of the goals associated with the created contents. Perhaps the most important rule is to add value to the field of action. It is important to be innovative, and to disseminate new and reliable information. It is also very important to learn with colleagues that manage to reach success among digital consumers. The used platforms must be selected carefully, because it is not a good idea to try to become present in all platforms. Always keep in mind the audience: their preferences, their digital habits, their suggestions, their doubts. People like people, and so the posed questions and doubts must be answered in an authentic way. Finally, it is important to invest and to seek for

help, in order to create a digital presence that reflects your identity and simultaneously looks professional.

In conclusion, digital media brings new opportunities but also have several risks. Nutrition professionals must be aware of them, create a digital strategy and work hard in order to make the difference and deal with all of the available nutrition misinformation. Digital media needs accurate food and nutrition information, based on scientific knowledge and nutritionists are key players to accomplish that goal.

Keywords: Digital Media; Social Media; Nutrition.

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