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Discussion: 2 Units 3

Use of Media in Public Health

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Discuss the impact of social media on the delivery of public health information.

Novel applications of social media that have impacted public health include emergency response and epidemic tracking. Nonetheless, as easy as it might be to disseminate good information, there is little that can be done to screen for inaccuracies. And, unfortunately, some of these inaccuracies can lead to adverse health and financial outcomes. When people voice their opinions on a public forum, potentially hazardous public health effects may follow. More recently, the anti-vaccination movement promoted by several high-profile public figures caused alarm among public health experts. What's even more worrisome is how these views spread across country borders. One study attributes 26,000 cases of measles in the past year in Europe to social media influence.

How do social media function differently than traditional broadcast media, such as newspapers, television, and radio in this regard?

With a user base of nearly 600 million worldwide, online networkers provide business with a global audience and a good reason to learn about what Internet-based social networks are and to use them to reach a target audience. Social networks can help businesses to connect and market themselves toconsumers.Through an exploratory research, this study shows that social media as vehicle for advertisement have great potential. Book, articles, blogs and websites analysis bring us to two confronting ideas: traditional and social media are in competition and traditional and social media complement each other.

Indeed, as time allocated to media has remained the same, consumers can‘t be receptive to traditional media and to social media. Consumers are either, passive with traditional media, or active, with social networking thanks to Internet-based activities. A time displacement, referring to the idea of having a new form of activity replacing an older one, is caused by new activities usually technology-based such as the Internet as regards of television. Indeed, both technologies are in competition and one causes decline of usage to the other. Asocial networker user may spend time on social networks using it as a substitute for other activities that served similar function such as watching television, listening to radio or reading printed media. In that, they appear ascompetitors.On the other hand, this study also approaches the social media from marketing point of view, by analyzing the effectiveness of the usage of Internets a media for advertising products. As a result of this analysis the study shows that the effectiveness of such media depends on the characteristics of the product advertised and the degree of involvement of the customer in the purchase decisions.

What are some of the strengths and weaknesses of using social media in public health?

Possible advantages

 Facilitates open communication, leading to enhanced information discovery and delivery. Allows employees to discuss ideas, post news, ask questions and share links. Provides an opportunity to widen business contacts. Targets a wide audience, making it a useful and effective recruitment tool.

 Possible disadvantages:

Opens up the possibility for hackers to commit fraud and launch spam and virus attacks. Increases the risk of people falling prey to online scams that seem genuine, resulting in data or identity theft. Potentially results in negative comments from employees about the company or potential legal consequences if employees use these sites to view objectionable.