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This year's ISMPP European meeting saw around 350 medical Publication Professionals from across industry, publishers and agencies come together – the highest number of delegates to date. The meeting theme was *Precision Communication: Achieving Clarity, Reach and Value* and sessions highlighted some of the challenges and opportunities faced by Publication Professionals.

Access to new sources of real-world data and advances in machine learning provide exciting opportunities to gain new insights into all aspects of society. With these new sources of information come communication challenges, both in how we present these data and how we target our audiences. Digital platforms provide potential solutions to many of these challenges, but consideration needs to be given to how these can be effectively incorporated into more traditional communication platforms. As the field of big data continues to evolve, Publication Professionals will need to continually innovate to ensure we keep pace with these exciting advances.

## Key Themes:

## Leveraging the Medical Writers' Armamentarium

Medical Publication Professionals can leverage an array of different communication platforms to help maximise the impact of publications. However, with this abundance of choice comes challenges; for example, selecting appropriate communication channels to target specific audience types can be difficult. If used inappropriately, audiences may not engage, key messages may be missed, and valuable resources will have been wasted.

Some key considerations:

- 1 | Digital technologies such as augmented reality, podcasts and video summaries can help to engage time-poor professionals, but they need careful planning. For example, to promote engagement, content should be readily available and easy to access.
- 2 | Congresses are becoming increasingly supportive of digital content, providing new opportunities to engage audiences.
- 3 | Traditional communication platforms such as journals and congresses are effective at reaching certain audiences; combining these with digital options will help maximise impact.
- 4 | Patient engagement is unlikely to be achieved through traditional communication platforms; most content is consumed through social media. Although publishing content on social media poses significant challenges, overcoming these will result in improved patient engagement.

### Considerations for Publication Professionals:

- At project outset, identify your audience and plan appropriately. Tagging on digital components towards the end of a project can result in compliance challenges and delays.
- Discuss options for added content with journals and congresses.
- Patient materials are only effective if accessible – consider how these will be shared and accessed.



## The Use and Visualisation of Big Data

The use of big data and real-world evidence is increasing and there is now greater recognition of the importance of patient-related outcomes alongside more traditional clinical safety and efficacy. However, it is important that inherent biases associated with real-world data are accounted for and appropriate statistical techniques are applied (e.g. propensity matching).

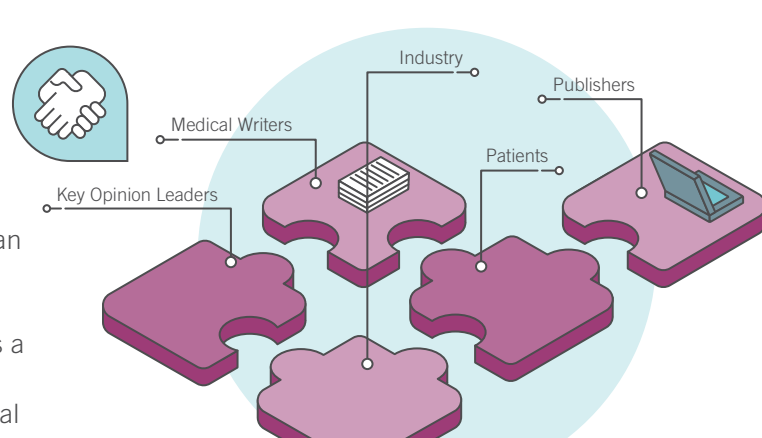
In an era of big data and information overload, which will continue to grow as technology advances, Publication Professionals need to challenge the status quo with respect to data presentation. Information needs to be concise, accessible and targeted, while maintaining scientific integrity. Data journalist David McCandless demonstrated how, by embracing concepts of storytelling and creativity, new patterns may emerge from data, and shared several visualisation techniques to effectively communicate data to ensure they are understandable and memorable.

### Considerations for Publication Professionals:

- Make no assumptions, cover the basics and inspire trust in data through transparent and candid reporting.
- Use story telling techniques to ensure data is being communicated effectively, increasing audience engagement.
- We can increase engagement by improving the graphics we use, see here for examples: <https://informationisbeautiful.net/>

## Building Effective Partnerships

A lack of standardised guidelines within the industry can make it challenging to know how best to develop wide-reaching communication strategies. However, all strategies seeking to engage multiple audiences across a range of platforms will benefit from fostering positive cross-industry partnerships between the pharmaceutical industry, authors, publishers and patients.



Developing enhanced content (such as author interviews, video abstracts and plain language summaries) in collaboration with authors and patients will improve the accessibility and impact of publications and ensure they are tailored to your target audience. Reaching out to publishers, even when journals do not publish enhanced content as standard, can result in these add-ons being published and shared, and encourage other Publication Professionals to consider alternative communication strategies.

### Considerations for Publication Professionals:

- Planning ahead and engaging all stakeholders early in the project can help minimise unexpected challenges and delays.
- Monitor the impact of the different communication strategies trialled – this will provide evidence for why such strategies are worth investment and highlight those that are most successful.<sup>1</sup>

## The Future of Medical Publications

As with all industries, the continued evolution of technology is set to transform how Publication Professionals perform their roles and communicate to audiences.

### A new artificial intelligence-based publication tool to assist with manuscript quality assessment and journal submission<sup>2</sup>

- Deep neural algorithms are used to generate a quality assessment report along with potential solutions.
- The tool can help authors reduce errors, ultimately reducing the time to journal submission.

### Congress innovations

- Technology can be used to increase congress reach, for example by holding virtual sessions with attendees unable to travel.
- Digital enhancements can be introduced to improve audience engagement, for example by introducing virtual patients, or by streaming live medical procedures.

### New "value-based" metrics<sup>3</sup>

- A new framework to provide a richer assessment of publication value versus traditional and alternative metrics.
- Potentially could be used to understand the characteristics of impactful publications, and in assessing the effectiveness of publication enhancement solutions.

### Good publications practice

- Update to GPP3 – this provides an opportunity improve guidance on how enhanced content is used and shared.
- A Twitter hashtag – #GPP4 – is available to share topic areas for possible inclusion in the updated guidelines.