

# Guiding Principles for Social Media Recruitment and Overview of Dynamic Facebook Ads



MEDICINE *of* THE HIGHEST ORDER

Cody Gardner, MBA  
Research Engagement Specialist

# Reach potential participants online

- Search engine ads
- Streaming ads
- **Social ads and forums (Facebook, dating apps, Reddit)**
- **Study webpage**
- Email lists (CTSI Participant Registry, department registry or past volunteers, community partners)
- URMC Communications channels

# 2016 UR RSRB Guidelines

**Table 1. Is the Proposed Use of Social Media Acceptable?**

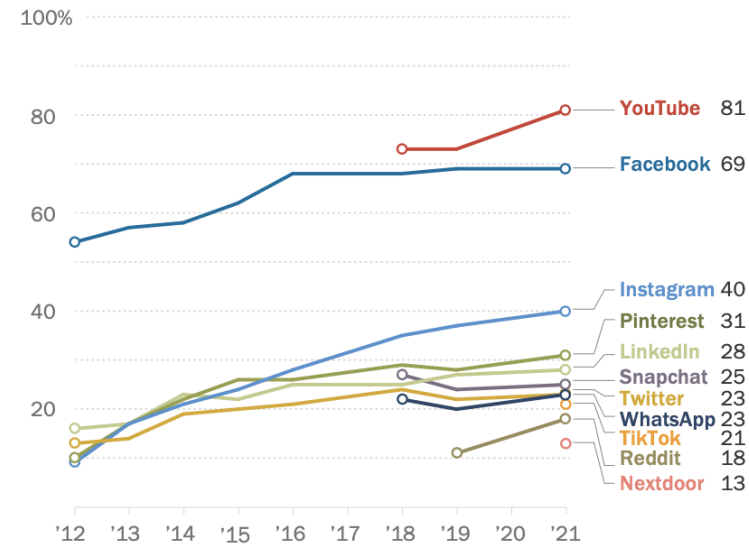
<b>Generally Acceptable</b>	<b>Probably, if done thoughtfully</b>	<b>Generally Not Acceptable</b>
Creating a study specific Facebook page	Interacting with subjects using Skype	Contacting individuals using Facebook, based on their information (e.g., spam messages/solicitations)
Tweets to research or related group about new studies	Approaching/Contacting members of a condition-specific blog in accordance with the blog site policies	Misrepresenting self as a person with a condition to gain access to potential subjects
Using secure internet-based survey methods to collect PHI*	Sending informative Tweets to study followers and/or study subjects	Looking for lost-to-follow-up subjects on Facebook

\*See Guideline for Computer and Internet Based Research

# Everyone is on Facebook

## Growing share of Americans say they use YouTube; Facebook remains one of the most widely used online platforms among U.S. adults

% of U.S. adults who say they ever use ...



Note: Respondents who did not give an answer are not shown. Pre-2018 telephone poll data is not available for YouTube, Snapchat and WhatsApp; pre-2019 telephone poll data is not available for Reddit. Pre-2021 telephone poll data is not available for TikTok. Trend data is not available for Nextdoor.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 25-Feb. 8, 2021.

"Social Media Use in 2021"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

- About 7 in 10 Americans report using Facebook. (Unchanged since 2016)
- About 7 in 10 of those that use Facebook use it daily

# Everyone is on Facebook

Facebook is broadly popular among all demographic groups, though some adults are more likely to use it than others.

- **77% of U.S. women use the platform**, compared with 61% of men.
- **73% of adults with a college degree use Facebook**, compared with 64% of those who have a high school diploma or less.
- **50% of those older than 65** use Facebook, which is the least likely age group to use the platform. But that still represents a 30 percentage point increase since August 2012, when just 20% reported using it.

Data collected by the Pew Research Center, 2021

# Targeting helps reduce wasted ad spend

“Social media as compared to mass media is quick, cost effective and reaches a targeted audience worldwide...It allows participants to express immediate interest by completing prescreening questionnaire.”

Agarwal, P., et al. (2019). "Strategizing Clinical Trial Recruitment in the Digital Age (P1.9-072)." Neurology 92(15 Supplement): P1.9-072.

# Do you need a social media account?

*Departments, faculty members, staff members, students, or student groups that wish to establish a social media presence that represents URMCM in any way, they must agree to preserve and promote URMCM's reputation – in terms of content, tone, and visual presentation.*

*To ensure that a consistent brand and voice is presented online, all official social media accounts (YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, etc.) that claim to represent URMCM entities must be initiated and/or authorized by URMCM Public Relations & Communications.*

Apply to create a URMCM-associated social media account: <https://www.urmc.rochester.edu/connect/social-media-toolkit/social-media-application.aspx>

URMCM communication channels that you can use to promote your study:

- URMCM Today
- @ Rochester
- Events calendar

**Research teams can use the UR Health Research Facebook account to promote their research studies, which is managed by the CTSI.**

# Two Approaches to Facebook Recruitment

## Paid Ads

- Using the UR Health Research page (CTSI)
- Targeted by age, gender, location, some other behavior and interest categories
- Receive performance metrics

## Organic Engagement (Non-Paid)

- Using personal profile
- Sharing on Facebook groups and partners



# Before you launch your Facebook campaign, try to answer these key questions

- How do Facebook ads fit into my overall study recruitment plan?
- Who am I trying to enroll with this method?
  - Am I able to target them on Facebook?
- How much might it cost per enrollment?
  - Would a pilot campaign help me learn this?
- What kind of support do I need in order to create my ads?

# You must have IRB approval to recruit volunteers through social media

- The recruitment plan section of your protocol must include how you will use social media to recruit participants
- All ad content, including images that are used alongside ad copy, must be approved by the IRB

# Put together your ad content in one document for IRB approval

Consider using the CTSI “Facebook and Instagram Ads Template for IRB Submission”:

<https://www.urmc.rochester.edu/clinical-translational-science-institute/clinical-research/recruiting-participants/recruitment-tools.aspx>

- **Collect images (or videos)**
  - CTSI has access to a few stock photo libraries (free downloads for research teams) – shutterstock, getty images
- **Write your own ad content**
  - Seek additional support from CTSI recruitment staff
  - Seek paid support from approved outside vendor
- **A landing page is required**
  - REDCap screener (requires IRB approval)
  - Study webpage
  - **Listing on the UR Health Research website (does not require IRB approval)**

# Dynamic Creative

Provide creative elements, such as images and headlines, and we'll automatically generate combinations optimized for your audience. Variations may include different formats or templates based on one or more elements.

**Benefits:** You can trial different creative elements, automatic optimization

**Drawback:** Cannot A/B test complete ads

# Image Databases Made Available to You

1. <https://www.gettyimages.com/>
  - Limited subset of the full Getty database called “Premium Access”
  - Helpful filtering options
2. <https://www.shutterstock.com/>

**Contact the Research Help Desk or Cody Gardner (CTSI) to search through these databases and download images.**

# Proportionally, white women respond most often to Facebook Ads

“Although the proportion of men who completed the survey was lower than those who didn't, interventions to increase male responses and enhance representativeness were successful.”

Ali, S. H., et al. (2020). "Social media as a recruitment platform for a nationwide online survey of COVID-19 knowledge, beliefs, and practices in the United States: methodology and feasibility analysis." *BMC Med Res Methodol* 20(1): 116.

# Fe Genes Study Ads



# Note: Facebook may reject your ads

- Reference to “compensation” may flag your campaign as promoting employment, which is a federally protected ad category. This will limit your targeting options.
- Targeting interests that are racially specific may lead to your ads being flagged as discriminatory.



# Easy-to-Make landing page with a built-in contact form


How to add your study to the UR Health Research website:  
<https://www.urmc.rochester.edu/clinical-translational-science-institute/clinical-research/recruiting-participants/ur-health-research-website.aspx>

Contact the Research Help Desk for assistance

# CTSI Can Build Your Campaign in the Facebook Ad Manager

- What's your budget? Daily spend vs. lifetime spend
- Will you launch with a pilot?
- Expect an influx of calls/emails; time your campaign based on staffing

# Interpreting performance metrics

Ad	Ad Set Name	Link clicks	CPC (cost per link click)	CTR (link click-through rate)	Impressions	CPM (cost per 1,000 impressions)	Reach	Cost per 1,000 people reached	Frequency	Amount spent
 Dynamic Ads	18-50, within 10 miles of Strong <small>0 active ads</small>	195	\$0.51	1.01%	19,227	\$5.20	9,038	\$11.06	2.13	\$100.00

# Interpreting performance metrics

- Average click through rate in Facebook ads across all industries: 0.90% (2021)
- Healthcare average CTR: 0.70%
- Fe Genes Study: 1.01%
- What are your \$ per contact, \$ per screen, and **\$ per enrollment costs?**

# Running Facebook ads begins with a free recruitment consultation from CTSI (Research Help)

1. Consult with CTSI recruitment staff
2. Assemble your ad content, including landing page
3. Seek IRB approval
4. Share approved document with CTSI recruitment staff so they can build your campaign. Include in email: **grant #**, **anticipated schedule**, **budget**, and any finance contacts that need backup documentation for the charge.
5. Respond to comments as needed, follow up with all interested potential participants
6. Review metrics, calculate cost per enrollment, decide on if/when/how to move forward with campaign

# We're here to help

Get support for any research-related need or question you may have:

[ResearchHelp@URMC.Rochester.edu](mailto:ResearchHelp@URMC.Rochester.edu)

You can also contact Cody Gardner directly to set up a consultation or to ask about CTSI recruitment/retention services:

[Cody\\_Gardner@URMC.Rochester.edu](mailto:Cody_Gardner@URMC.Rochester.edu)

