Leveraging Technology and Social Media to Disseminate Child Maltreatment Research

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TRANSFORM RESEARCH CENTER

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Introduction

- Child abuse and neglect (CAN) remain a serious problem in the United States, though research on the impact, prevention, and treatment of CAN rarely reaches audiences beyond other researchers.
- In an effort to improve dissemination of CAN research to a broader network—including students, child welfare leaders, practitioners, parents, educators, and policy makers—The Universities of Rochester and Minnesota collaborated to create the TRANSFORM Prevention Center. TRANSORM leverages various modalities, including Twitter, to reach a broader audience.[1]
- This project sought to evaluate current Twitter practices to make recommendations to improve engagement with and reach of TRANSFORM's Twitter.

1. *Schedule* Tweets in advance, at least 3 per week (*M/W/F*) in the *AM.*
2. Include *media* with at least 1 Tweet each week.
3. Leverage others' networks and request re-Tweets.

Method

April 2019
Twitter established.

December 2020
Initial Twitter Data collected. Systematically identified patterns in data to make recommendations.

January 2021
Implemented recommendations.

April 2021
Final Twitter data collected. Evaluated change in outcome measures of interest (favorites, re-tweets, quotes, impressions, engagements, followers).
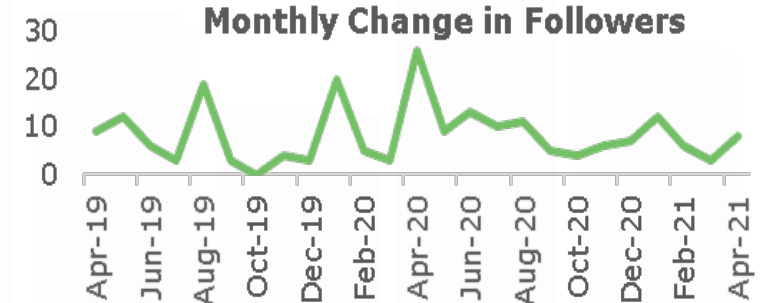
Results

- Mondays with most quotes, impressions, and engagements per Tweet.
- 8 am – 12 pm Tweets outperformed 12 pm – 4pm Tweets on all measures except impressions.
- Tweets with media consistently outperformed pure text Tweets.

	April '19 - Dec. '20	Jan. '21 – April '21	April '19 – April '21
Favorites	2.22	**2.46**	**2.29**
Re-Tweets	.80	**1.27**	**.93**
Quotes	.37	.16	.09
Impressions	473	462.60	**489.38**
Engagements	17	10.60	15.4

Monthly Change in Followers

Discussion

- Average number of favorites and re-tweets per Tweet increased following implementation of recommended changes in tweeting practices; average number of impressions per Tweet increased when considering all Tweets together.
- Though followers continue to increase, they do not appear to do so in tandem with changes in tweeting practices.
- Implementing a Twitter strategy with scheduled Tweets may help increase reach of TRANSFORM, contributes to reduced staff time with Twitter, and allows for more strategic event promotion.
- Limitations: All findings are correlational in nature. Twitter data were likely impacted by additional factors such as increased traffic after webinars, increases in followers, or the natural passage of time.
- Future work may explore how different social media platforms compare to Twitter regarding audience characteristics and engagement.

[1]Cerulli, C., Cicchetti, D., Handley, E. D., Manly, J. T., Rogosch, F. A., & Toth, S. L. (2021). Transforming the paradigm of child welfare. *Development and* Psychopathology, 1-17. doi:10.1017/S0954579420002138

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