

ASA Sounds Out on Social Media

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Social media has changed the world. It is an omnipresent and seemingly unstoppable force. How has science embraced it and how is it used by the Acoustical Society of America (ASA)?

An insightful article by Collins et al. (2016) suggests that “while social media usage has yet to be widely adopted [...] scientists perceive numerous potential advantages to using social media in the workplace.” Interestingly enough, these results mirror the social media experience within the ASA.

For many years, the ASA did not focus on social media even though many other professional organizations began to adopt its use. However, a grassroots ASA Facebook group (<http://acousticstoday.org/asafacebook>) was started and administered several years ago by David T. Bradley and other members. Yet the first officially sanctioned initiative using social media was the Twitter handle @acousticsorg (<https://twitter.com/acousticsorg>) that was created in 2014 for none other than this publication, *Acoustics Today*. Editor Arthur Popper tasked *Acoustics Today* intern Dr. Laura Kloepper with formulating a strategy to engage members, particularly at meetings, using Twitter hashtags. The two-way communication and instant “publication” of ideas, commentary, and activities inherent to Twitter were an instant success. ASA Twitter followers quickly grew to 600 and then to over 2,000 a year and a half later under the stewardship of Dr. Lawrence Norris.

Members currently use Twitter at all the biannual meetings, but more importantly, they do so throughout the year for their specific research or industry activities, just as Collins et al. (2016) suggest, “[...] there is evidence that scientists are using social media for communicating specific aspects of their research, as well as science more generally, as a means of outreach to increase engagement and science literacy.”

With the launch of the newly revised www.ExploreSound.org outreach website this year, it was a natural fit to take Twitter and all new social media in-house. Dan Farrell, ASA Web Office Manager, is overseeing the management and strategic planning for social media and L. Keeta Jones, ASA Outreach and Education Coordinator, is curating the daily substantive scientific input.

ASA is leveraging social media usage to support both our membership and our partner organizations like [It's a Noisy Planet](#), [DOSITS](#), and [Inside Science](#) as well as to encourage others to get involved in the field of acoustics. Below, you will find brief explanations of how ASA is currently using various social media outlets.

Facebook

The ASA Public Group (<http://acousticstoday.org/asafacebook>) was created in June 2007 by David T. Bradley and has 1,145 followers.

Facebook is a space for members to share individual work, seek information from other members, and make announcements or encourage others' efforts and accomplishments. The ASA office posts general ASA news, journal announcements, and meeting information as well. Although this group is public, Facebook users must be approved by the ASA group administrators.

LinkedIn

The ASA group (<http://ow.ly/WoOU30eGsRG>) was created in August 2008 by Jeffrey E. Babich, of Babich Acoustics LLC, and has 7,434 followers.

Similar to Facebook, LinkedIn lets members increase traffic to their own private or public industry work, publicize job openings, and connect with other professionals in related fields. Typically, this is member driven, with the ASA office occasionally posting about publications or announcements.

Twitter

The Twitter account @acousticsorg (<https://twitter.com/acousticsorg>) was created in May 2014 by Arthur Popper and Dan Farrell and has 2,717 followers.

ASA Twitter content is derived from ASA-produced materials as well as retweets from regional and student chapters, the ASA journal *Proceedings of Meetings on Acoustics (POMA)*, and ASA committees. These tweets drive traffic to ASA content such as *The Journal of the Acoustical Society of America (JASA)* and *Acoustics Today* as well to our partners such as the American Institute of Physics (AIP) Inside Science website. Twitter is great because it allows non-ASA members to learn about what is going on in the field of acoustics.

YouTube

The ASA YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/acousticalsocietyofamerica>) was created in November 2016 by L. Keeta Jones and Dan Farrell and has 154 subscribers.

As one of ASA's newest social media outlets, YouTube has given the Society a chance to share Hot Topic talks presented at meetings and produce acoustics-themed videos to share with a general audience. The ASA also links to other quality acoustics-themed videos by other YouTube content creators.

Why Use Social Media?

Many of our members have questions about social media.

Why should I bother? What can it do for me? How can it enhance my teaching or my research or my scientific business bottom line?

Echoing many of the findings of the Collins et al. (2016) study, one ASA member states it this way: "When used effectively, social media can help your work reach a broader audience. As *POMA* editor, I've promoted the journal through Twitter and Facebook during the past year. I've highlighted over 100 papers, shared journal news, and reached out to prospective authors. Like many scientists, I have asked the question, 'Is it worth my time?' My experiment is ongoing, and I haven't been as consistent I'd like, but my answer to that question thus far is an emphatic 'Yes!' Social media and related forum-based platforms (like Reddit and Quora) may not be places to publish new science, but they can be great tools for increasing awareness and enthusiasm for acoustics" (Kent Gee).

The Society will continue to take advantage of social media and to grow it where logical and feasible. ASA's presence on Facebook will be amplified by creating an official ASA page, which will allow for greater tracking of its social media impact. This initiative will allow the ASA to post "official" Society news and material from the headquarters, while the more informal Facebook group will continue to facilitate information sharing among the group's members.

The ASA is now embracing social media more than ever to support both our members and our partner organizations, and to encourage others to explore the field of acoustics. Please join us! You can always help the Society by liking, following, subscribing, sharing, and retweeting.

References

Collins, K., Shiffman, D., and Rock, J. (2016). How are scientists using social media in the workplace? *PLoS ONE* 11(10), e0162680. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0162680>.