

AI AND DIGITAL MEDIA IN SOCIAL WORK

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Abstract

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is becoming an important part of modern communication. The rapid growth of social media has created new opportunities for sharing information and creating awareness among people. Platforms such as Instagram and YouTube provides different forms of visual communication through images, reels, infographics, short videos and longer awareness programmes. AI can assist in preparing posters, images, captions, video scripts and other digital content. These tools can be useful in social work for creating awareness about health, education, women and child welfare, disability, poverty and environmental issues. This paper examines the role of AI-supported social media communication in community awareness, with particular attention to Instagram, YouTube, digital posters and online campaigns. The paper discusses the opportunities and challenges of using AI in social-work communication and proposes a framework connecting AI-assisted content creation, visual quality, message clarity, social-media engagement and community awareness. A survey-based methodology using a proposed sample of 200 respondents is presented for future empirical research. The study also discusses concerns related to misinformation, privacy, stereotypes, cultural representation and ethical use of AI. The paper concludes that AI can support faster and more creative communication, but human judgement and professional review are necessary to ensure that digital content is accurate, respectful and suitable for the community.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Social Media, Visual Communication, Community Awareness, Social Work, Instagram, YouTube, Digital Campaigns.

Introduction

Communication is an important part of social work. Social workers communicate with individuals, families, groups and communities to understand their needs and provide appropriate support. Creating awareness is also an important social work activity. People need information about health, education, government welfare programmes, child protection, women's issues, disability, poverty and other social concerns. Clear communication can help people understand these issues and participate in community activities. In the past, social awareness programmes mainly used newspapers, television, printed posters, radio and public meetings. These methods continue to be useful, but digital technology has changed the way information is created and shared. Social media allows individuals and organizations to communicate directly with large audiences. Information can be shared quickly, and audiences can respond through comments, likes, shares and other forms of interaction. Instagram and YouTube have become important platforms for visual communication.

Instagram is suitable for photographs, infographics, reels, stories and short videos, while YouTube provides opportunities for longer videos, interviews, educational programmes and discussions. These platforms can therefore be useful for social workers and social-service organizations to communicate social messages in a simple and attractive manner.

Artificial Intelligence has introduced another important development in digital communication. Generative AI can assist users in creating text, images, captions, video scripts and other digital content. It can provide ideas and help communication professionals prepare content in less time. UNESCO has highlighted the potential of generative AI while also identifying concerns related to privacy, equity, cultural diversity and human agency.

The use of AI in social work communication provides both opportunities and challenges. AI can help create awareness material quickly, but AI-generated information may not always be accurate. Images may also represent people or communities in inappropriate ways. Therefore, a human review is important before AI-generated content is published. This paper examines the relationship between AI, social media and community awareness, with particular attention to Instagram, YouTube, digital posters and online campaigns.

Ai And Visual Communication in Social Work

Artificial Intelligence refers to computer-based systems designed to perform tasks that normally require human intelligence. Generative AI can create new content based on instructions given by users. It can produce written material, images, captions, design ideas, video scripts and other digital content.

Visual communication is important because people can often understand information more easily when it is presented through suitable images, diagrams, posters and videos. AI can support visual communication by providing initial ideas for posters, illustrations, infographics and social media content. A communication professional then selects, edits and improves the AI-generated material.

For example, a social-work organization planning a campaign on child education can use AI to develop a poster concept, a short message, a social media caption and a video script. The social worker or communication professional can then check the information and modify unsuitable content before publication.

AI can also help prepare different versions of the same message. A detailed message can be converted into a short Instagram caption, infographic or video script. This makes it possible to communicate the same social issue through different media formats.

However, AI should not replace human judgement. Social work involves human relationships and sensitive community issues. AI-generated content may contain incorrect information or may not understand the social and cultural background of a particular community. Therefore, Professionals should verify facts and review images and language before publishing the content.

AI can also support multilingual communication. Social-work organizations working with different language groups can use AI-assisted translation as a starting point. However, the translated material should be checked by a person familiar with the local language and culture.

The main value of AI in this area is therefore its role as a supporting communication technology. The final responsibility for the content should remain with qualified human professionals.

Social Media and Community Awareness

Social media has changed the communication process by allowing information to be created, shared, and discussed by users. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) described social media as internet-based applications that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content. Social media therefore provides opportunities for both communication and interaction. Kietzmann et al. (2011) identified important functions of social media, including sharing, conversation, relationships, groups, presence and reputation. These functions are relevant to community awareness because social issues can be discussed, shared and promoted through digital networks.

Social media can help social work organizations communicate with people without depending completely on traditional communication methods. An organization can publish an awareness poster and receive feedback from the public. People can share the information with friends and family members. In this way, social media can extend the reach of a campaign.

Visual content is particularly important on social media. A simple poster or short video can communicate a message quickly. Infographics can present statistics and important information in an easy-to-understand form. Videos can provide detailed explanations through interviews, demonstrations and personal stories.

A 2024 systematic review examined the use of social media for dissemination of research evidence in health and social care and included platforms such as Instagram and YouTube and formats such as images, infographics and videos. This indicates the relevance of visual digital communication in health and social care settings.

For social work, social media can also support communication between organizations and communities. It can provide information about available services, awareness programs and community activities. It can also provide a channel for receiving public feedback.

However, the number of views or shares alone cannot prove that community awareness has increased. A person may view a post without understanding or acting on the information. Therefore, future research should measure awareness using suitable questions rather than depending only on social media engagement.

Role of Instagram, YouTube and Digital Posters

Instagram is a highly visual platform and can be used to communicate short and attractive social messages. Social work organizations can use photographs, infographics, reels, stories and short educational videos to communicate with audiences. For example, an organization working on women's welfare can prepare posts explaining available support services, while an organization working with children can create simple educational material for parents.

AI can assist in preparing Instagram captions, poster idea and short video scripts. It can also help convert a longer message into a short format suitable for social media. However, the final material should be reviewed by a person who understands both the subject and the target audience. The visual design should be simple, readable and appropriate to the social issue.

YouTube provides opportunities for longer forms of communication. Social workers and organizations can use YouTube for interviews, awareness programs, expert discussions, educational videos, community stories and training programmes. For example, a social-work organization working with elderly people can create a video explaining welfare services. A social worker can conduct an expert interview about a community problem.

AI can support YouTube communication by helping prepare video scripts, subtitles, translations and storyboards. This can reduce some of the preparation time. However, all factual information should be checked before publication. Permission should also be obtained when photographs, interviews or personal stories of individuals are used.

Digital posters remain useful even in the age of social media. Unlike printed posters, digital posters can be shared quickly through Instagram, websites and messaging platforms. AI can help create initial ideas for poster layouts, images, headlines and short messages.

Digital posters can be used for health awareness, education, child protection, women's welfare, disability inclusion, elderly care and environmental protection. A good poster should contain one clear message, simple language and suitable visual elements. An attractive poster is useful only when the information presented in it is correct and understandable.

The three formats can therefore perform different communication functions.

Platform/Format	Main Purpose	Suitable Content
Instagram	Quick visual communication	Posters, reels, infographics
YouTube	Detailed communication	Interviews, awareness videos
Digital Posters	Short information	Campaign messages, announcements

Using all three together can create an integrated social-awareness campaign.

Review of Literature and Research Gap

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) examined social media and explained its role in user-generated content and online interaction. Their work provides a foundation for understanding social media as an important communication environment.

Kietzmann et al. (2011) examined the functional characteristics of social media and highlighted identity, conversation, sharing, relationships, groups and reputation. These characteristics help explain how social media can support communication between organizations and communities.

Dwivedi et al. (2023) examined the opportunities and challenges associated with generative conversational AI. Their work highlighted the growing importance of generative AI across different fields and the need for responsible use.

UNESCO (2023) provided guidance on generative AI and emphasized a human-centred approach. The guidance discusses privacy, equity, cultural diversity and human agency. These issues are particularly relevant when AI is used to communicate about communities and social problems.

A 2024 systematic review examined social media for dissemination of research evidence in health and social care. The review included Instagram and YouTube and considered visual formats such as images, infographics and videos.

Research on social service workers has also examined professional use of social media. The findings indicate that social media has become relevant to professional information sharing and social-service activities.

The existing literature therefore shows that social media and AI can provide useful opportunities for communication. However, there is a need for more focused research on the combined use of AI-generated visual communication, social media and community awareness in social work.

Research Methodology

The proposed study uses a descriptive research design to examine people's perceptions of AI-supported social-media communication. An empirical study can use a sample of 200 respondents from different groups connected with education, social work and visual communication.

Respondent Group	Proposed Sample
College Students	100
Social Work Students	50
Social Workers	30
Media/Communication Respondents	20
Total	200

The final study should use actual respondents and actual collected data. The proposed sample is presented as a research design and should not be reported as completed survey data.

A structured questionnaire can be used for data collection. The questionnaire can use a five-point Likert scale ranging from **1 – Strongly Disagree** to **5 – Strongly Agree**. The questions can cover AI use, visual quality, message clarity, Instagram, YouTube, digital posters, social media engagement, community awareness and ethical concerns.

Some suitable statements are: AI can help create social-awareness content quickly; AI can assist in preparing awareness posters; Instagram is useful for community-awareness campaigns; YouTube is useful for detailed awareness programs; digital posters are easy to share; visual content can improve understanding; social-media campaigns can increase awareness; AI-generated content should be checked before publication; privacy should be protected; and human professionals should remain responsible for final content.

The data can be analysed using percentage analysis, mean, standard deviation and Cronbach's Alpha. The Chi-square test can be used to examine relationships between categorical variables. A t-test can be used to compare two groups, while ANOVA can be used to compare three or more groups when the assumptions are satisfied. Correlation can be used to examine relationships among variables, and multiple regression can be used to examine factors associated with perceived community awareness.

The main variables can be organised as follows:

Variable	Measurement Area
AI Use	Usefulness of AI for content creation
Visual Quality	Attractiveness and design
Message Clarity	Ease of understanding
Social-Media Engagement	Likes, comments, shares and views
Trust	Perceived reliability
Community Awareness	Understanding of social issues
Ethical Concern	Privacy, misinformation and representation

The proposed study can therefore provide quantitative evidence about people's perceptions of AI-supported visual communication.

Discussion, Challenges and Ethical Issues

AI and social media provide new opportunities for social-work communication. Instagram can be used for short and visually attractive messages, while YouTube is suitable for detailed videos, interviews and discussions. Digital posters can provide quick information and can be distributed through different online platforms.

The literature indicates that social media can support information dissemination in health and social care settings. Social media is also relevant to professional social-service activities. AI can extend these possibilities by assisting with the preparation and adaptation of communication material.

However, the effectiveness of AI-generated content cannot be judged only by visual quality. The content should also be accurate, understandable, trustworthy and culturally appropriate. A visually attractive poster containing incorrect information cannot be considered effective social communication.

One important challenge is misinformation. AI may produce incorrect or incomplete information. All important facts should therefore be checked before publication. Privacy is another major concern because social work activities may involve personal information and sensitive stories. Such information should be protected.

AI-generated images can also create problems of representation. Images may unintentionally reinforce stereotypes related to poverty, gender, age, disability or other social characteristics. Cultural Representation is another concern because an AI-generated image may not accurately represent a particular community.

Another issue is the possibility of manipulated or synthetic media. AI can create realistic images and videos that may appear genuine. Audiences may therefore have difficulty distinguishing between authentic and generated material.

For these reasons, ethical principles should be followed when using AI for social-work communication. Content should be accurate, privacy should be protected, and representations should be fair and culturally sensitive. Where appropriate, audiences should be informed when content has been substantially generated or altered using AI.

The role of the social worker remains important. Social workers understand community needs and can identify whether a message is suitable for a particular audience. Visual communication professionals can contribute their knowledge of design, layout, typography and storytelling. AI can provide technological support within this human-led process.

A useful model is therefore:

Social Worker + Visual Communication Professional + AI Technology → Responsible Digital Communication

This approach maintains human responsibility while making use of the benefits of AI.

Conclusion And Future Scope

Artificial Intelligence and social media are creating new possibilities for visual communication in social work. Instagram, YouTube, digital posters and online campaigns can help communicate information about important social issues to wider audiences. AI can support the creation of images, captions, scripts, infographics and other forms of digital content.

The main advantage of AI is its ability to support faster and more flexible content creation. It can provide ideas and assist professionals in preparing communication material for different digital platforms. Social media can then help distribute the material and provide opportunities for audience interaction.

At the same time, AI-generated communication creates challenges related to misinformation, privacy, stereotypes, cultural representation and trust. These challenges are particularly important in social work because communication may involve vulnerable individuals and communities.

Social work is based on human relationships, professional knowledge and understanding of communities. Therefore, AI should be used as a supporting technology rather than as a replacement for social workers or visual communication professionals. Human review should remain an essential part of the communication process.

The proposed framework connects AI-assisted content creation, visual quality, message clarity, social media engagement and community awareness. Future empirical research can test these relationships using actual responses from students, social workers and communication professionals.

Future studies can compare AI-generated posters with human-designed posters, examine audience trust in AI-generated videos, compare Instagram and YouTube campaigns and study multilingual AI communication. Researchers can also conduct pre-test and post-test studies to determine whether digital campaigns actually improve people's knowledge and awareness.

Responsible use of AI, combined with effective visual communication and social media strategies, can provide useful opportunities for community awareness. The success of such communication depends not only on technology but also on accurate information, ethical practice, human judgement and respect for the communities being represented.

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