Utilization and perception of live-blogging coverage of an international manual physical therapy conference

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ABSTRACT

Objective: The purpose of this study was to investigate the utilization and perception of live blogged sessions of a physical therapy (PT) conference.

Methods: Sessions at an international PT conference were covered in real time using a live-blogging platform. Session coverage could be viewed remotely using computers and mobile devices. Viewers could interact with the content by clicking on links and using the comment feature. Sessions could also be replayed following their conclusion. An online survey of user perceptions was made available the week following the conference.

Results: Twenty-four sessions were live blogged with an average session length of 67 min (range: 27–120). On average, live sessions received 27 views (range: 2–65), 18 clicks (range: 2–36), and 2 comments (range: 0–10). The average time spent viewing a live session was 28 min (32% of viewers <1 min; 68% >1 min). Following the conference, session replays totaled 7206 views and 2910 clicks. The average survey respondent ($n = 17$) watched five live sessions (range: 1–17) and found the updates easy to read (4.5 on a scale of 5.0). When asked if they learned something from the coverage, 94% of respondents said yes and 94% said they would view if available for an upcoming conference.

Discussion: Live blogging extended the viewing audience and facilitated viewer engagement. Survey respondents found the coverage educational, of high quality, and would participate again in the future.

KEYWORDS

Live blogging; distance learning; continuing education; social media; international conference; physical therapy; manual therapy; online survey

Introduction

The internet has changed the way physical therapists receive information. In recent years, the internet has evolved into a platform that any user with basic skills can edit and contribute to. As a result, users of the internet are relying less on the dissemination of information from an elite few and more on the relaying of information by many amateur content generators. Despite the benefits of utilizing social media to disseminate information, several threats have been identified [1]. The landscape is changing, as can be referenced by evaluating the changes in tradition media.

One such platform of information exchange is the 'blog.' The term 'blog' is a contraction of the words 'web' and 'log' and represents a method for distributing encapsulated stories, called posts, to audiences around the world. Blogs can be authored by anyone with a passion for their area of interest and are not subject to a formal review process, which has led to concerns over the quality of information sources used in the posts. It has been recommended that readers carefully evaluate the information being shared (e.g. checking for links to primary research articles) and check for potential conflicts of interest (e.g. information shared benefits author's financial interests) [1]. A multitude of blogs

are centered around the topic of physical therapy (PT). Another unique aspect of blogging is that the author can enable the ability for the reader to comment on the message of the blog post. This exchange of opinions presents opportunities for self-reflection and critical appraisal of information. It is widely believed that enabling voices to be heard in a public space is an efficient way of enacting policy change in a given profession [2,3].

Although blogging is a powerful way to relay information to large numbers of people, authoring a blog post (complete with citations and references) can be as time consuming as any attempt at academic writing. This results in a delay in blog post publication that renders real-time participation during an event nearly impossible. To circumvent this problem, live-blogging platforms have been developed to relay information in real time. During a live-blogging session, the contributing author(s) are on site at an event relaying information to an audience that can be anywhere in the world viewing the live-blog stream. During the coverage, a single post is continuously updated with time stamped updates that are placed above previous updates. The author does not attempt to type every word that is said during the event but

distills the message to its critical points, saving time for the reader. Just as with traditional blogging, live blogging is considered a form of journalism and author bias is an inherent part of the medium. Just as with all levels of evidence, the viewer needs to conduct their own evaluation on the validity of the source, and there are tools available for this on health information [4]. Evaluation can be aided by providing background about the author so conflicts of interest can be identified. Authors can also include digital photographs, interactive polls, and links with the stream of information provided during the live-blogged session. If allowed, questions from remote participants viewing the live-blogged session can be displayed. By moderating these comments, it is possible for the author to provide the presenter questions within a session from participants not even in the room. Following a live event, a transcript exists containing valuable information that can be read and shared amongst many people.

Live blogging represents a method directly in line with the objectives of the International Federation of Orthopaedic Manipulative Physical Therapists (IFOMPT) Constitution: 'To encourage scientific research and promote opportunities for the spread of knowledge of new developments in the field of Orthopedic Manual Therapy' (IFOMPT Const. art. 2, obj. c).

Although live blogging was initially used to broadcast updates of technology conferences, many PT-related events are well suited for the use of live blogging. The expenses related to traveling to national and international PT conference can be prohibitive to many practicing PTs and PT students [5]. Live blogging presents an opportunity for those that cannot attend the conference in person to still benefit from the expert content presented. Although it is appealing and possible to create video recordings of sessions and post those for later viewing, the ability for real-time participation is lost. There is also a greater cost associated with the production and a delay in delivery of video content. There is also an opportunity for the presenter to extend the reach of their message. Recognizing a lack of information in the PT literature, the authors set out to investigate viewing, engagement, and ratings of live-blogged sessions at a 5-day international PT conference. These data have been presented in abstract form [6].

Methods

Conference setting

The IFOMPT represents physical therapists around the world who have completed specialized training in the field of neuromusculoskeletal disorders. IFOMPT has organized an international conference every 4 years since its founding in 1974. In 2012, the quadrennial

event took place 30 September to 5 October in Quebec City, Canada [7]. The conference program included a mix of keynote speakers, workshops, and focused symposia. The conference was attended by 1501 participants.

Live blogging

Selected sessions that took place between 1 October and 5 October were covered in real time using a live-blogging platform (CoveritLive, Scribble Technologies, Inc.). Awareness of live-blogging coverage was promoted through social media (e.g. author's blog, twitter hashtags). A timeline of the live coverage, as well as a list of upcoming live events and completed past events, was embedded in a webpage (<https://ptthinktank.com/ifompt-live-blogging/>) created by the authors (Figure 1).

All live-blogging coverage was generated onsite at the conference by the same author (MAP). Live coverage was publishing using the CoveritLive (CiL) website, which was accessed on a laptop connected to the convention center wireless internet (Wi-Fi). Live-blogging events were created ahead of time for each session that was to be covered. Events consisted of time-stamped entries that contained plain text, hyperlinks, or photographs (captured using an iPhone connected to the laptop via USB). During live coverage, the most recent entries appeared at the top of the event feed (Figure 2).

Session coverage could be viewed remotely using computers (Figure 3A) and mobile devices (Figure 3B).

Viewers could interact with the content by clicking on links (e.g. URL of the presenter's webpage), using a comment feature, and responding to polls. Sessions could also be replayed at a later time, which involved scrolling through the event feed at a pace determined by the viewer. The comment feature was not available to those replaying a completed event. Clicks were defined as the number times an event was clicked and/or interacted with (for either live coverage or replayed viewing). Pageviews were defined as the total number of times the event was loaded (for either live coverage or replayed viewing). Viewers were dichotomized into one of two groups, viewers that spent less than or greater than 1 min viewing content. This parameter could not be adjusted and was assumed to represent a threshold of meaningful attention to live blogged content.

Summary data for all events were exported as a comma-separated value file from the 'stats and analytics' section of the CiL website. The data were imported into a spreadsheet (Microsoft Excel, version 15.22, Microsoft Corp., Redmond, WA) for organization and the calculation of descriptive statistics.

Online survey

An anonymous online survey was designed to collect data to examine usage patterns and perceptions from

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IFOMPT LIVE BLOGGING

PTTT contributor [Mike Pascoe](#) had a successful pilot experience live-blogging five sessions from CSM2012 and is ready to step up his game for IFOMPT2012! We have dedicated a special page of PT Think Tank to [IFOMPT Live Coverage](#). Mike Pascoe will be live-blogging all day, every day! This page is the home base for all of the live blog madness! Remember, you can sign up for email reminders of the upcoming sessions [here](#).

Annelies Pool: For better or worse – how do lumbopelvic patients adapt?
(10/04/2012)

3:01

3:02

testing for a loose SI joint, vibrate the innominate and measure how much goes into sacrum

3:02

this measurement does not seem to say there are loose joints

3:02

so, maybe there are changes in motor control

#FOMPT Live Now!

There are no active events.

Upcoming #FOMPT Events

There are no upcoming events.

Completed #FOMPT Events

[Acetabular Labral Tears](#)
[Cervical Arterial dysfunction](#)
[Peter O'Sullivan: Is it time to change how we man...](#)
[MRI and physiotherapy](#)
[Annelies Pool: For better or worse – how do lumbop...](#)
[David Lamb Memorial Lecture and presentation of ...](#)
[Aspects of Spinal Palpation](#)
[Ultrasound for Lumbopelvic](#)

Figure 1. Webpage that was used to share active live blogging, upcoming sessions, and completed events.

individuals that viewed live-blogging coverage (see [Appendix 1](#)). To achieve these goals, the survey consisted of 11 items that were grouped into four main content areas: (1) respondent information, (2) rating of quality of live blogging coverage, (3) interaction with live-blogged content, and (4) open-ended solicitation of thoughts or comments. The survey was administered using an online platform (Google Forms, Google Inc., Mountain View, CA). After testing the usability and technical functionality of the survey, potential respondents were contacted by sharing a link to the survey using social media (e.g. Twitter). The survey was opened 5 October and closed 7 days following the end of the conference (12 October 2012). There was no incentive for voluntary participation in the survey. A statement was included to ensure that participants were made aware of the purpose of the study. Respondents were unable to review and change their answers after submission. Data from items employing a 5-point Likert evaluation scale (very low quality, 1; very high quality, 5) are presented as the median because

it is the most appropriate measure of central tendency for ordinal level data [8].

Results

Live blogging

A total of 24 sessions out of 104 possible (23%) were live blogged ([Table 1](#)) with an average session length of 67 min (range: 27–120). On average, live sessions received 27 pageviews (range: 2–65), 18 clicks (range: 2–36), and 2 comments (range: 0–10). The average time spent viewing a live session was 28 min (32% of viewers <1 min; 68% >1 min). Since the end of the conference to 11 May 2016, session replays have totaled 7206 pageviews and 2910 clicks.

Online survey

Seventeen people responded to the online survey. We were unable to calculate a response rate because it

Figure 2. An example of the timeline feed of a live-blogged session depicting plain text and a photograph.

was unknown how many unique people viewed the live-blogged sessions or viewed the link to the survey on social media.

A majority of viewers of live-blogged content were reported being located in the United States

(11, 65%; [Figure 4](#)). Some viewers reported being located in Canada (five, 29%) four of which reported viewing on-site at the conference venue (Quebec City). One viewer was reported from Oslo, Norway.

Figure 3. An example of viewing live-blogging coverage on a laptop (A) and on a smartphone (B).

The average survey respondent ($n = 17$) reported watching five live sessions (range: 1–17). The quality of the live blogging was assessed using a 5-point Likert evaluation scale (very poor, 1; very good, 5). The group responses to these items are summarized in Table 2.

Three respondents indicated that they reviewed the live-blogged content from their own presentation at the conference. Of all respondents ($n = 17$), one indicated that they were a non-native English speaker and that the live blogging helped them understand the sessions better. When asked if they learned something new from the coverage, 94% of respondents said 'Yes' and 94% (16 of 17 respondents) said they would watch if available for an upcoming conference. A majority of survey respondents discovered live blog coverage by viewing a tweet (41%).

Other methods included advertisement on the author's blog (29%), through the conference organizers (18%), word of mouth (6%), and post on Facebook (6%). No respondents selected the 'Other' option. The most frequently reported device used to view the live-blogging coverage was a laptop (44%; Figure 3A). Smartphones represented 28% (Figure 3B), desktop computers 24%, and tablets 4%. The total number of devices reported (25) exceeded the number of respondents (17). Seven individuals used more than one device type during their course of viewing the coverage. Respondents indicated that their favorite aspects of the live-blogged coverage were the convenience (7 of 17; 41% of respondents) and the sensation of being there (4 of 17; 24% of respondents). Only one respondent selected cost and ability to comment/ask questions remotely. In addition, the following

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of the 24 conference session covered by live blogging.

No.	Date	Type	Title	Presenter	Length	Live pageviews	Live clicks	Comments	Replay pageviews	Replay clicks
1	1 October	Keynote	Management of cervical spine disorders: Where to now?	Gwen Jull	1 h 00 min	11	7	2	86	81
2	1 October	Keynote	Knowledge transfer in the age of information technology	S. Gowland	47 min	18	14	2	26	20
3	1 October	Oral presentations	Motor control of the knee	*	1 h 09 min	26	19	1	45	41
4	1 October	Oral presentations	Understanding cervical muscle	*	45 min	10	9	0	26	24
5	1 October	Keynote	Physical therapists' role in exercise prescription and 'exercise is medicine'	K. Khan	46 min	11	8	0	71	52
6	1 October	Invited speaker	Tendinopathy task force – guideline development	A. Scott	27 min	2	2	0	43	35
7	1 October	Focused symposium	Biological mechanisms of dizziness	*	1 h 34 min	7	3	0	36	32
8	2 October	Keynote	How docs think: Dual processing models of clinical reasoning	G. Norman	56 min	17	9	0	596	128
9	2 October	Focused symposium	Tendinopathy	*	1 h 06 min	17	9	1	2140	440
10	2 October	Keynote	The hip as a factor in LBP: Evidence why relative flexibility is key	S. Sahrman	52 min	38	28	10	1227	651
11	2 October	Invited speaker	The roles of central and peripheral deficits in the rehabilitation of shoulder	J.S. Roy	52 min	19	17	0	389	112
12	2 October	Focused symposium	Neurophysiological implications: Acute knees injuries to chronic pain	*	1 h 34 min	39	22	0	915	197
13	3 October	Keynote	Manual therapy in a neuroplastic world	D. Butler	57 min	38	31	9	219	194
14	3 October	Focused symposium	TMJ update	*	1 h 42 min	50	32	3	60	49
15	3 October	Invited speaker	Musculoskeletal physical therapists' solution to chronic spinal pain	T. Flynn	30 min	19	13	1	134	124
16	4 October	Keynote	Reconsidering how we look at movement	G. Cook	1 h 25 min	43	35	4	123	113
17	4 October	Oral presentations	Ultrasound for lumbopelvic assessment	*	1 h 08 min	29	11	0	24	19
18	4 October	Oral presentations	Aspects of spinal palpation	*	51 min	31	23	0	83	73
19	4 October	Memorial lecture	David Lamb memorial lecture and presentation of the Maitland Award	*	57 min	25	14	0	80	55
20	4 October	Keynote	For better or worse: How do lumbopelvic patients adapt?	A. Pool	47 min	7	3	0	75	61
21	4 October	Focused symposium	MRI and physiotherapy	*	2 h 00 min	43	22	1	117	56
22	5 October	Keynote	Is it time to change how we manage back pain?	P. O'Sullivan	1 h 16 min	43	36	4	159	132
23	5 October	Focused symposium	Cervical arterial dysfunction	*	1 h 51 min	33	22	0	96	73
24	5 October	Focused symposium	Acetabular labral tears	*	1 h 30 min	65	33	0	436	148
			Sum		26 h 42 min	641	422	38	7206	2910
			Mean		67 min	27	18	2	300	121
			Minimum		27 min	2	2	0	24	19
			Maximum		2 h 00 min	65	36	10	2140	651

*Indicates sessions with multiple presenters.

Figure 4. Locations where survey respondents reported viewing live-blogged content (·) and the location of the conference (◆). Note that viewer from Oslo, Norway, is not shown.

aspects were submitted using the 'Other' option: ability to sense what others were viewing; reading other perspectives; watching it while in the session or in another session; having access to summarized notes.

Nine of the respondents (53% of all respondents) submitted thoughts or comments to the open-ended survey item. Those responses are summarized in Table 3.

Discussion

This report summarized our experience employing live blogging at an international PT conference. Although detailed reports containing data analysis or of could not be found, others have published commentaries on the potential usefulness of live blogging of conferences in other academic disciplines [9–11].

Live blogging

A large number of sessions ($n = 24$; 23% of total conference sessions) were live blogged even though there was only one author providing coverage. It is feasible that with more authors, a majority of sessions at a conference structured like IFOMPT could be covered. One benefit to having one content generator is that viewers could quickly determine who the author was and evaluate whether there was potential for bias or conflict of interest. There was a wide range pageviews per live session (2–65 views). Viewers also interacted with content (e.g. website URLs) during the coverage. There were very few comments offered during each session (average: 2). The average session

length was 67 min and the average time spent viewing a live session was 28 min. Along with the large percentage of viewers watching for >1 min (68%), these results suggested that viewers tended to watch the coverage beyond the initial content. No identifiable trends could be detected (Table 1) that could account for differences between sessions.

One benefit of live blogging is that the sessions could be viewed after they ended and this has been highly utilized for these sessions. There have been 12× as many replay pageviews ($n = 7206$) compared with live pageviews of the same sessions ($n = 641$). Perhaps more interesting, a similar trend was observed (7× increase) for replay clicks ($n = 2910$) compared to live clicks ($n = 422$) of the same sessions. The total number of pageviews ($n = 7847$; live + replay) far exceeds the confirmed registered attendance for the conference (1501 participants), which signifies a substantial expansion of viewing audience beyond the actual event. It is difficult to know with certainty if each pageview represents a unique viewer. There was no tracking of viewer IP addresses or other identifiable information. The live-blogging platform would count a second pageview if an individual closed their browser, tried from a different browser, or initiated another pageview in private browsing mode. We speculate that a small percentage (<25%) of pageviews were generated from these scenarios and that a majority of pageviews came from unique users initiating one session. Both of the trends of increased replays clicks and pageviews might be explained by increased awareness of the session coverage after it was completed.

Table 2. Respondents evaluation of quality of live-blogging coverage.

Categories rated by survey respondents (<i>n</i> = 17)	Median (range)
Number and frequency of updates during coverage	5 (3–5)
Coverage of the Q&A sessions at the end of sessions	4 (1–5)
Ease of reading the updates	5 (3–5)
Ability to plan ahead for live coverage of specific sessions	4 (2–5)
Use of multimedia (e.g. hyperlinks, photos)	4 (2–5)

For all categories, a 5-point Likert evaluation scale was used with 1 = very poor and 5 = very good. *N* = 17.

Table 3. Responses to the open-ended question: ‘Any thoughts or comments on the live-blogging coverage?’.

1. Thanks. Please keep the replay option available for a couple of weeks.
2. Great job! Especially as Wi-Fi was so expensive!
3. The technology offered here takes the whole process to a new and wonderful level. Previously, I just added a #hashtag column to my TweetDeck. Thank you for your part in teaching me more useful ways to participated in social media. My next PT conference is TPTA annual conference – are you up for live blogging from there?
4. Thanks for blogging, I really enjoyed the education!
5. Just want to say thanks for doing this. I found out about it on Facebook and am glad I saw this. I wasn't able to be at IFOMPT this year so it was nice to watch the live blog. I would watch it live in between patients and go back and watch what I missed later. Other than having a live feed of the conference I think this was the next best thing. Kudos!! and Thank you. Cheers.
6. Great work!
7. Have to be careful because it seemed like they made a big deal about taking pictures of other people's content. Maybe you had permission, but I know one of the keynote speakers got upset and called someone out in the middle of the talk for taking pictures.
8. You did a great job. Really enjoyed all of the information. Obviously not like being there but as close as one can get without being there. Thanks so much for doing this it brought the entire experience a little closer to home.
9. Great job! With each lecture, it would be nice to continue with links to PubMed, etc. to research that they published or are referencing. Thanks.

Online survey

In order to obtain more information about the live blog viewers, we administered an anonymous survey. Although a good number of people submitted the survey (*n* = 17), there is no way of knowing how this compares to the total number of unique people that viewed the sessions or that viewed the link to the survey on social media posts. One approximate method to estimate total viewers would be to divide the total number of live page views (*n* = 641) by the average number of live sessions viewed (*n* = 5) as reported by respondents of the survey. This calculation yields 128 potential unique live viewers and an approximate survey response rate of 13%. This is a very low response rate and might be attributed to poor promotion of the survey link via social media. Alternative strategies we suggest to improve response rate to a survey include providing the survey URL at the conclusion of every live blogged session and to partner with the conference organizers, so sharing occurs through official conference channels. Given the international scope of the conference and its host organization, we were not surprised respondents viewed from three different countries. Cost has been indicated as a barrier to attending continuing education activities [12–14]. It is therefore conceivable that the majority of viewers in this small survey were those that were unable to financially support a trip to Canada from the United States.

The average survey respondent watched multiple sessions, which was a good indication that most viewers found value in the coverage. The ratings of the quality of the live-blogging coverage indicated that it was of high quality (Table 2). High median scores (4 out of 5-point Likert scale) were reported for the number and frequency of updates during coverage, coverage of the question and

answer session at the end of the sessions, ease of reading the updates, ability to plan ahead for live coverage of specific sessions, and use of multimedia (e.g. photos).

Interestingly, three survey respondents indicated that they reviewed the live-blogged content from their own presentation at the conference. For this subset of respondents, the median ratings across the 5-point Likert scale questions were 5, 4, and 4. This offers an important viewpoint of the perception of live blog quality among presenters. Although there was a single response from a non-native English speaker, it was encouraging they reported that the coverage helped them understand the sessions better. It is interesting to note that this respondent also reported viewing the coverage from Quebec and it is possible that they were utilizing the live blogging as an assistive tool while attending the conference. There was near unanimous agreement that respondents learned something new from the coverage and that they would watch if available for an upcoming conference, similar to a previous report (7). Both of these reasons are strong incentives for conference organizers to consider this tool in the spectrum of continuing education opportunities. A majority (76%) of respondents indicated that they learned of the live-blogging coverage through digital means (e.g. twitter, Facebook, author's blog), while the other 24% learned through more traditional means (e.g. word of mouth). This suggests that those already present on digital platforms were more likely to become aware of the live-blogging coverage. It is possible that viewership would increase with better integration of announcements in conference materials and from the lectern during presentations. There was similar reported

usage of laptops, desktops, and smartphones for viewing the coverage. This represents a great degree of flexibility of settings in which the viewer can consume the coverage and is a reflection of the ease to consume information. It is also noteworthy that a subset of respondents reported using multiple devices.

The responses to the open-ended survey question provided insight into user experiences (Table 3). Comment 1 demonstrated the value of being able to replay coverage after a session had ended. We found that many individuals were interested in this ability (see replay totals in Table 1). Comment 2 described a fact that is still true as of today; access to conference Wi-Fi is expensive and often cost prohibitive. Comment 3 gave a good example of the interest in viewing live-blogged content from a future PT conference. Comments 5 and 8 indicated how live blogging can be used to give remote viewers a valuable way to acquire the knowledge obtained by live attendees without the loss of employable hours. These are some of the most compelling reasons to explore alternative methods to live conference attendance (3). Comment 7 raised an important concern, broadcasting presenter's content without permission. For the live blogging in this report, consent was obtained by all presenters prior to the start of the session. It is important to recognize that as sharing content on the internet becomes easier, the need to educate conference attendees is greater. Many conference organizers have become proactive and now offer policies that guide would be live bloggers. Comment 9 suggested providing links to studies published by the presenters or by authors referenced during the presentation. Although links were provided, the quality of the live blogging would be enhanced with the inclusion of links to published articles.

Limitations

Implementation of live blogging is associated with several limitations. Although live-blogged content can be viewed at no cost to the receiver, there is a cost associated with using a live blogging platform to produce the content. Another potential barrier is access to a reliable and fast internet connection. Collaboration with the conference organizers can often overcome this barrier. Production of high-quality coverage requires familiarity with the subject matter and blogging experience, which is not a ubiquitous skill. It is reasonable to consider that making live blogging available would lead to some not attending at all in order to simply receive the content from the comforts of home. It has been documented that there are many existing perceived barriers to attending an international conference, including risks of safety, inconvenience, and unfamiliarity with overseas destinations, distance, time, money, health problems, and possible security problems of overseas destinations [15]. We believe that live blogging may serve as a tool that is used secondary to an

individual deciding they will not attend a conference. As mentioned in Comment 8 of Table 3, 'it is not like being there but as close as one can get without being there.' We speculate that advanced knowledge of live blogging coverage would not discourage conference attendance. Rather, would we do consider is the ability of a large group of at home viewers to sample the content that is presented at a conference and make a decision to attend next year given that level of exposure.

Another limitation of the analytics provider by the live blogging platform was the inability to determine how many unique viewers there were between the 24 sessions. This impairs our ability to estimate the total number of remote viewers (live + replay clicks = 3332) and compare this to the number of in-person conference attendees ($n = 1501$). In addition, there is some reason to believe that some in-person attendees viewed the live-blogged coverage as well. Since the survey was distributed through posts on social networks, the survey items asking about the way respondents learned about live blogging may be biased toward social media sources.

Future directions

Given the rapidly changing landscape of social media and communications technology and the paucity of in-depth analysis of live blogging coverage in the literature, it would be beneficial to examine the contemporary usage of live blogging by covering another PT conference and drawing comparisons to the data presented here. It would also be beneficial to survey conference organizers to estimate their level of support in sponsoring live-blogged coverage of their events. Future work could also explore the perceived need for such alternative coverage of PT conference sessions by conducting a needs analysis.

In light of the lack of literature available to perform a traditional comparison, we offer several ideas to improve the way to improve live blogging coverage and its study. First, ensure that during the live coverage, any stated claims are substantiated by a PubMed URL (or equivalent). This has been suggested as a means of viewers to verify findings and judge the quality of the works for themselves [1]. Second, to combat author bias and conflicts of interest, each live-blogged session should begin with the author reminding the viewers who they are, where they work, and disclosing any potential conflicts of interest [1]. Third, when possible, enlist the help of a secondary author covering the same live blogged session. This can assist with the removal of bias as viewers can compare the coverage from both streams side by side to watch for discrepancies between authors.

Conclusions

In conclusion, our study demonstrated that many conference sessions could be live blogged by one author,

live blogging was a highly rated and highly viewed means to promote PT presentations beyond the confines of the conference venue. Our findings on live blogging of content from PT conferences support the suggestion that conference organizers should consider implementing strategies that would facilitate the use of live blogging in the dissemination of relevant and useful information to a potentially wider audience.

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Notes on contributors

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Appendix 1

Online survey distributed to viewers of live-blogged content.

Please complete the following brief anonymous survey about the live blogging coverage from the IFOMPT conference in Quebec City, Canada; 1–5 October, 2012. Your responses will be collated and included in a report summarizing usage and perceptions of live blogging of an international PT conference. Many thanks –Mike Pascoe & Eric Robertson.

- (1) Where are you viewing the live blogging from? (e.g. Denver, CO)
- (2) How many of the #IFOMPT12 live blogging sessions have you watched? (e.g. 2)
- (3) Please rate the quality of the live blogging in the following categories:

(Very low quality, 1; very high quality, 5)

	1	2	3	4	5
Number and frequency of updates during coverage	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Coverage of the Q&A sessions at the end of sessions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ease of reading the updates	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ability to plan ahead for live coverage of specific sessions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Use of multimedia (e.g. hyperlinks, photos)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

(4) If you were a presenter at #IFOMPT12, did you check out your live blogged session?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

(5) If you are a non-native English speaker, did the live blogging help you understand the sessions better?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

(6) Did you learn something new as a result of watching/replaying a live blogged session?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

(7) What type of device(s) did you use to view the live blogging? (select more than one if necessary)

- ☐ Desktop computer
☐ Laptop computer
☐ Smartphone
☐ Tablet computer

(8) If available, would you watch live blogging at your next PT conference?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

(9) What was your favorite aspect of the live blogging?

- ☐ Cost
☐ Convenience
☐ Sensation of being there
☐ Ability to comment/ask questions remotely
☐ Other: _____

(10) How did you learn about the live blog?

- ☐ I'm a regular follower of PT Think Tank
☐ Saw a tweet
☐ Saw something on Facebook
☐ Through IFOMPT
☐ Word of mouth
☐ Other: _____

(11) Any thoughts or comments on the live blogging coverage?