

Vienna, 29 June 2017

## Sharing scientific insights effectively, particularly via social media

**Media professional and social media expert Armin Wolf (350,000 Twitter followers and 300,000 Facebook fans) took up the Austria Center Vienna's invitation to show a group of leading Austrian researchers how to make the most of social media to position themselves, network with fellow professionals and share their research findings with a wider audience.**

- **Social media works just like any other form of personal interaction** – users need to have something to say, learn to listen and take time over their content
- **Followers will mainly recommend and share content if it is useful, as well as entertaining**
- **The way that people consume media has changed radically over the past 30 years:** the majority of information is now acquired online
- **Twitter et al can be used as personalised news agencies and separate media channels**
- **Ambassadors Programme: flying the flag for congresses in Vienna**

Around 50 researchers, primarily from the world of medicine, accepted an invitation from Susanne Baumann-Söllner, Managing Director of the Austria Center Vienna, to attend the **Ambassadors Club Summer Lounge**, which featured a talk by Armin Wolf on the subject of social media in scientific communications. Events like this are just one of the ways that the Austria Center Vienna team is supporting **leading Austrian researchers** when it comes to advertising and hosting large-scale international congresses in Vienna. “With exclusive talks and networking opportunities, our Ambassadors Club provides valuable support to the country's academics, who have excellent contacts thanks to their seats on various international scientific committees and as such are very well placed to influence where the next major conferences will be held,” Baumann-Söllner explained.

“The inaugural event last autumn was a major success. We sat down with a group of editors-in-chief to discuss the best approach to communicating the latest scientific insights.” Hanno Settele, one of the keynote speakers at the first meeting of the Ambassadors Club, summed up the secret to successful media reporting: in his view, **topics have to be presented in the same kind of way that people might talk about them at a bar** – in other words, brought to life in a few sentences that everyone can understand. Settele also called on Austrian

researchers to **believe in themselves more**. While it is second nature for people in the USA to broadcast their personal achievements proactively and with pride, their Austrian counterparts still tend to be a model of restraint when it comes to communicating with the outside world.

### Changing media-consumption habits

There will be no way round using social networks in future, since the way that people consume media has changed radically over the past 30 years, as Armin Wolf explained. While fully 70% of 20-29-year-olds read a daily newspaper in 1985, the total had dropped to 29% by 2015. The share of readers did not increase with age, as previously assumed. In fact, the opposite was true. Instead, the influence of **online media**, with Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube leading the way, was **increasing massively**.

### Secret to successful social media content

“Content that is useful, entertaining and recommended by other people works particularly well,” Armin Wolf confirmed. “For researchers, publishing **useful content** is the most promising approach, but it certainly doesn’t hurt to provide a little entertainment from time to time.”

**Information** should be presented in such a way that it **triggers a smile or laughter**, as well as sharing knowledge. Ideally, contributors’ posts should be shared by other people, as **recommendations** are far more credible than advertising. The same principle applies here as with hotel reservations and other retail portals. 78% of users follow recommendations from people they know, and for users they do not know, the figure is still 60%.

### Personalised news agency and separate media channel

Twitter’s following and list functions enable users to build up their own personalised news agencies that give them access to all the latest information published by experts and universities, as well as data such as congress schedules. Dr. Wolf also gave a few tips on using hashtags to ensure users could quickly find information on specific topics.

He highlighted the importance of authentic communications – those that mirror personal conversations – on social media: users have to **have something to say for themselves**, **listen** to other people, **reply** to comments and consciously set aside **time for social media**. “But above all,” the media professional emphasised, “people really shouldn’t underestimate the amount of time it takes to read through all the comments, especially since they are legally responsible for everything that appears on their own social media site.”

### **Austria Center Vienna Ambassadors Club**

Congresses make a decisive contribution to the way that university research facilities are perceived on the international stage, and are major milestones in the careers of the professors behind them. The Austria Center Vienna uses the high-profile Ambassadors Programme to reach out to **top Austrian scientists and researchers** who can help influence which destinations are chosen for future events in the course of their involvement in international scientific associations. They receive tips on how to communicate the destination's strengths and can take advantage of exclusive networking opportunities, with high-calibre speakers covering topics related to congress organisation.

“This is the Austria Center Vienna's way of helping the Austrian scientific community to **bring even more international congresses to the city**,” Susanne Baumann-Söllner explained.

### **About IAKW-AG**

Internationales Amtssitz- und Konferenzzentrum Wien, Aktiengesellschaft (IAKW-AG) is responsible for maintaining the Vienna International Centre (VIC) and operating the Austria Center Vienna. The Austria Center Vienna is Austria's largest conference centre, with 24 halls, 180 meeting rooms, and some 22,000 m<sup>2</sup> of exhibition space, and is one of the top players on the international conference circuit. IAKW-AG and the Austria Center Vienna are headed by Chief Executive Officer Susanne Baumann-Söllner. Visit [www.acv.at](http://www.acv.at) for additional information.

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