

# Lst wk I had g8t fun @ #hcsmeucamp

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Last Wednesday I attended the Health Care Social Media Camp in Berlin. Healthcare Social Media in Europe – #hcsmeu for short – is a community of healthcare twitterers and social media users from Europe, started in August 2009 by Silja Chouquet and Andrew Spong. I am interested in #hcsmeu not only because I am a physician treating cancer patients, but also because there is a lot of overlap to many other things that interest me in doing and communicating science online, e.g. doing clinical research with online tools, reporting about cancer in the media, or better access to public health and medical information.

Me listening to Andrew starting off the meeting. #hcsmeucamp Twitter feed in background. Flickr photo by dikomci.

The meeting was a small gathering of about 45 people in the unconference format, so we started with collecting questions we wanted to discuss during the day. For each of the four sessions (patient perspective, health care professional perspective, pharma perspective and #hcsmeu mission and goals) we first split up in 3-4 smaller groups to talk about some of the questions, and in the second half summarized and discussed this as the whole group. Some participants demonstrated excellent skills with the whiteboard.

How do we get scientists interested in social media? is something we have talked about many times, e.g. Scientists Still Not Joining Social Networks. Healthcare professionals are also reluctant to use social media, and we come up with some interesting suggestions to do something about this:

Flickr photo by dikomci.

We also talked about the dangers of getting involved with social media. The doctor-patient communication is something that is difficult to translate from personal communication to social media (lawyers and some other professions have similar problems), but otherwise the dangers look familiar to many scientists:

Flickr photo by dikomci.

The last part of the meeting was about #hcsmeu, and what next steps to take. #hcsmeu is very focused on moving the agenda forward, and that spirit

penetrated the whole meeting. After a very productive discussion we come up with some good action items:

Flickr photo by dikomci.

#hcsmeu is very much built around Twitter, including regular Tweetups every Friday, and heavy use during the meeting. I am a big Twitter fan, but have argued before that Twitter is not the best tool for conference microblogging, as it is difficult to have connected discussions around a topic, and archiving is complicated. And pictures, documents and links are better collected in places like Flickr, Slideshare and delicious. My suggestions for the #hcsmeu knowledge hub therefore include more use of other social media tools, plus FriendFeed or a similar aggregation/microblogging tool to connect all the social media in one place. Facebook is actually a perfect tool to do all this, but unfortunately is still perceived by many as a tool for private social networking. I met many very smart and friendly people during the meeting and hope to hear more about #hcsmeu at Science Online London 2010 in September or the Medicine 2.0 conference in November.