



What to Consider When Developing Publication-related Summaries to Support Field Medical



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Audience:

Medical Affairs professionals new to publications and new to the concept of integrating publications with medical content

Abstract

The flow of information in the digital age is unlikely to ease. Thus, the need for short-form digital content delivered across multiple channels will continue. Many journals now provide opportunities for digital publication summaries (sometimes called enhancers) designed to aid rapid understanding of research. Likewise, engagement between Field Medical teams and healthcare professionals (HCPs) is now often remote, and time is even more limited. Short, interactive publication enhancers that allow medical science liaisons to succinctly summarize a publication are useful in today's environment. Enhancers accessible via a journal may be developed by the journal editors or by authors and published with or without peer review. Alternatively, enhancers may be developed by the sponsor's Medical Communications team for use by Field Medical. We present planning, process, compliance, and copyright considerations for both author- and sponsor-led development pathways and highlight how collaboration between functions ensures all stakeholders' needs are met without duplication of resources.

Key words:

Publications, enhancers, copyright, digital, short-form

Introduction

In the age of information overload, healthcare professionals (HCPs) value short-form educational content that enables them to quickly grasp the key points of a scientific publication and decide whether to dive deeper into the full text of an article.¹ Such concise, engaging publication summaries – referred to in this article as publication enhancers – can also enable effective scientific exchange between HCPs and medical science liaisons (MSLs). Publication enhancers may be developed with authors under the guidance of the sponsor pharmaceutical company's Publications team and undergo peer review prior to publication in a journal. Alternatively, the sponsor's Medical Communications team may take the lead on developing publication enhancers specifically for use by Field Medical following a process similar to the development and review of other materials for field use. We discuss considerations for both processes (Figure 1).

Figure 1A

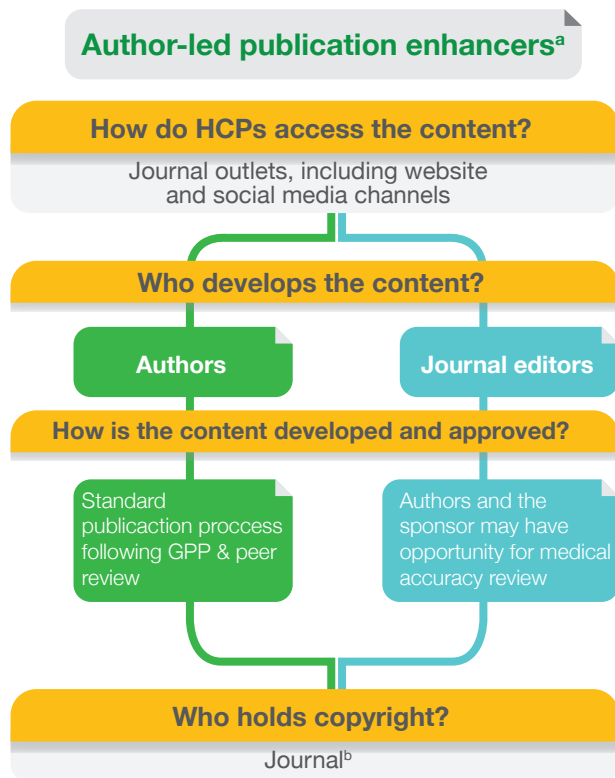
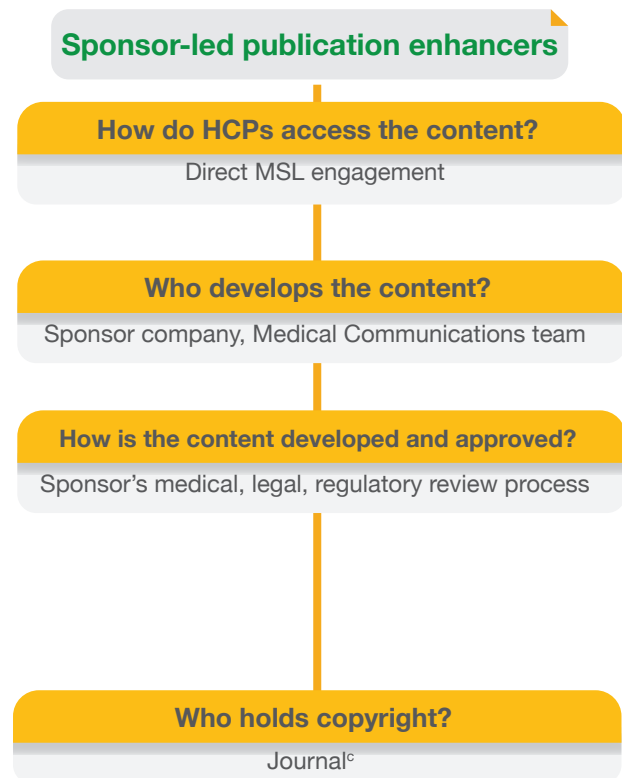


Figure 1B



Author-led publication enhancers are developed by authors under the guidance of the sponsor's Publications team or by journal editors. Sponsor-led publication enhancers are typically developed by the Medical Communications function. ^aAuthor-led publication enhancers might require an additional internal (sponsor) approval process before release for use by Field Medical. ^bJournal owns copyright unless the article is open access with a CC-BY license. ^cCopyright in this instance refers to unique content created for the enhancer. Copyright for illustrations in a published journal article are as per journal policy. CC-BY, Creative Commons Attribution; GPP, Good Publication Practice; HCP, healthcare professional; MSL, medical science liaison.

Author-led publication enhancers

Journals have evolved to combat information overload by supporting the inclusion of bite-sized and visual digital content suitable for viewing on tablets and phones and making the short-form content easy to share on social media. This supplemental content can variously be referred to as publication enhancers, publication extenders, or supplemental digital content. Formats can include graphical abstracts, video/animated abstracts, and author podcasts that summarize the full publication. Publication enhancers are increasingly being included with key industry-sponsored publications, with infographic summaries and plain language summaries the most commonly used formats.²

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Articles with digital features are downloaded more frequently and have higher impact metrics³”

An introduction to enhancers and their benefits may be needed for authors, Publication teams, and other stakeholders. It is recommended that the inclusion of enhancers is discussed within your Publication teams as early as possible during the publication planning process. Consider the data or information to be conveyed—what aspects may benefit from graphical representation, and which type of enhancer may be most useful? Developing a proposal for an enhancer that includes examples can help orient authors during the publication kickoff call.

Researching journal offerings is an important step in the planning process. Check with target journals about whether they accept author-developed publication enhancers and, if so, which types of content they accept. Determine where the enhanced content is located on the journal site, as it may not be obvious. Learn how an HCP would become aware of the content—for example, does the journal have a social media account that alerts readers to new or additional content (Figure 1A)? If a target journal does not currently accept enhancers, ask if they will consider working with authors on a pilot.

Be aware that some journals create their own bite-sized summaries to accompany manuscripts published in their journal (Figure 1A). For example, editors at the *New England Journal of Medicine* create “Quick Take” video summaries and 1-page graphic “Research Summaries” to accompany select articles. If the journal provides their own enhancer content, it’s important to know how the journal selects those manuscripts that will have enhancers, and if, how, and when the authors will be involved in approving the content.

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Visit the Enhanced Publication Options Navigator (EPON) website for enhanced publications content (EPC) and licensing information on > 450 journals—it’s free!”

Recognize that some journals may limit open access license options for manuscripts reporting the findings of industry-sponsored studies. If you are not planning an open-access article, determine whether readers will be able to access and share the publication enhancer without a subscription. As part of the conversations with your Medical Communications colleagues about whether to make the author-led enhancer available for use by Field Medical, it’s important to know if journal license fees will be required.

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Some journal options may meet the needs of MSLs
but, if not, consider creating content specifically for
Field Medical use
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Sponsor-led publication enhancers

The increased need for digital tools in medical publishing is mirrored in the interactions between Field Medical teams and HCPs. HCP engagement is now frequently remote,⁴ and time is more limited; MSLs may lack the right tools for rapidly conveying detailed information in this new environment. For example, to discuss a recent publication, an MSL could display a manuscript in a standard PDF format, but this requires that they slowly scroll through the document to find the details relevant to an HCP’s question. Instead, a short, interactive publication summary that enables the MSL to rapidly access the requested data in a single click might be more useful in today’s fast-paced remote environment.

A first step in planning for publication enhancers developed specifically for field use (Figure 1B) is to understand the guidelines that govern scientific exchange at your company and to decide how the enhancer will be shared with HCPs. Discussions among internal stakeholders, including MSLs, are key to ensuring that teams understand the value of short-form publication summaries. Consider the communication goals, dataset, audience, and typical setting for MSL and HCP discussions (e.g., remote or in person) to determine the best format for each enhancer (Figure 2). Ask MSLs how they present publications to HCPs. What formats work best? Considering the data presented in the publication, will HCPs respond best to a verbal, visual, or text summary?

Figure 2

Enhancer	Visual abstracts	Plain language summaries	Interactive publication summaries	Video abstracts	Expert video or podcast
Description	Visually display key data and study information	A short summary of a publication written in plain language, often in a visual, infographic, and/or digital format Summarizes all information in the manuscript	Digital format that provides a top-line graphic summary of publication from which a user can navigate to more detailed information Summarizes all information in the manuscript	Provides a full summary of a publication Enables complex information to be understood more easily Can be developed in various formats, including animated, whiteboard, and talking head	Formats include interview or author panel Can be combined with animation/visuals
Suggested uses	When shared directly by the MSL, posted on social media, or freely accessible on the journal website, may encourage HCPs to download and read the full article	May be most useful for non-specialist HCPs and members of the broader care team	Works well for remote scientific exchange allowing rapid access to information of interest	Helps to explain complex data, study design, or mechanism of action	Useful to place data into wider clinical context to aid decision making

HCP, healthcare professional; MSL, medical science liaison.

In selecting an enhancer type for a publication, be sure to consider the content management system the Field Medical team will be using to display materials during engagements, as some systems may not be compatible with all content types or features.

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Involve your MSLS when planning publication enhancers!

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Collaboration between Medical Communications and Publications functions is key

Ensure that both the Medical Communications and Publications teams are aware of any publication enhancers under development by either team to enable pull through of content, manage timelines, and conserve resources. Be aware of and plan the approval process. Content created by the Medical Communications team for the purpose of scientific exchange is governed by regulatory guidelines, including the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers and Associations Code of Practice⁵ and typically follows a separate development process involving different stakeholders compared with author-developed content that is published with a journal article (Figure 1). The author-led publication enhancer will be developed according to Good Publication Practice. However, in order for MSLS to share an author-led enhancer, it's likely that the enhancer would need to undergo an internal approval process similar to approving the original manuscript for field use.

Summary

The flow of information in the digital age is unlikely to slow down. Thus, the need for short-form digital scientific content delivered across multiple channels will continue. Recognizing this evolving environment, many journals now provide opportunities for publication enhancements designed to aid rapid understanding of new data. At the same time, Medical Communications teams are realizing the need to equip MSLS with similarly bite-sized, consumable content to streamline scientific exchange. Communication between the Medical Communications and Publications teams is key when considering creation of publication enhancers to ensure that the needs of all stakeholders, including MSLS, are effectively met without duplication of effort or resources.

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Short-form digital content Capsule

ELEVATE

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