

Are HCPs leaving X? Analyzing the evolving social media landscape

Ken Truman^a, Leslie Rotz^a and Brittny LoPresti^a
^aMedThink Inc, Raleigh, NC, USA

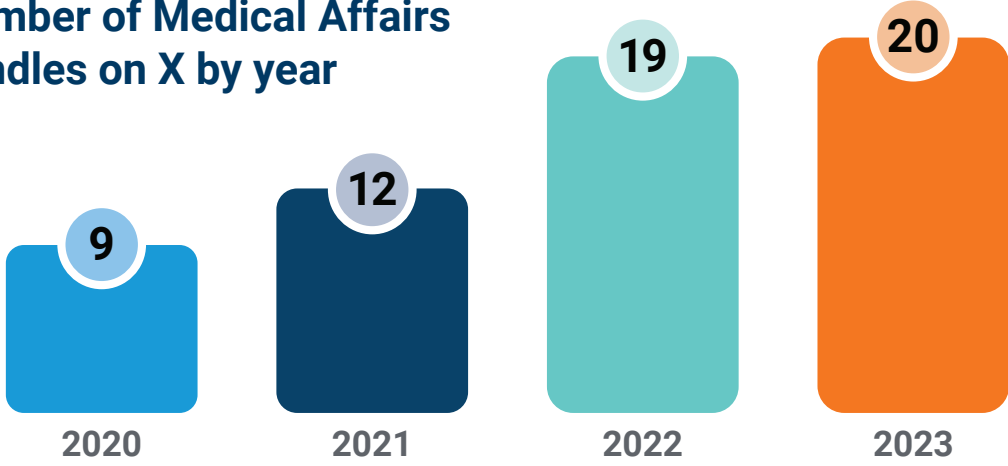
Presenting Author: Leslie Rotz; lrotz@medthink.com



INTRODUCTION

- Healthcare professional (HCP) channel preferences for clinical information are important for pharmaceutical companies to understand, as they inform where and how to engage with this audience
- Although corporate communications and commercial colleagues have been leveraging X (formerly known as Twitter) for many years, Medical Affairs has just recently begun to adopt X as a platform for data dissemination and scientific exchange

Number of Medical Affairs handles on X by year



- Amidst brand safety uncertainties at X in 2023, many within this community are seeking insights on behavioral changes of HCPs on social media
- This analysis focused on X and trends toward alternative social media platforms to discern potential shifts in preferred channels for scientific exchange

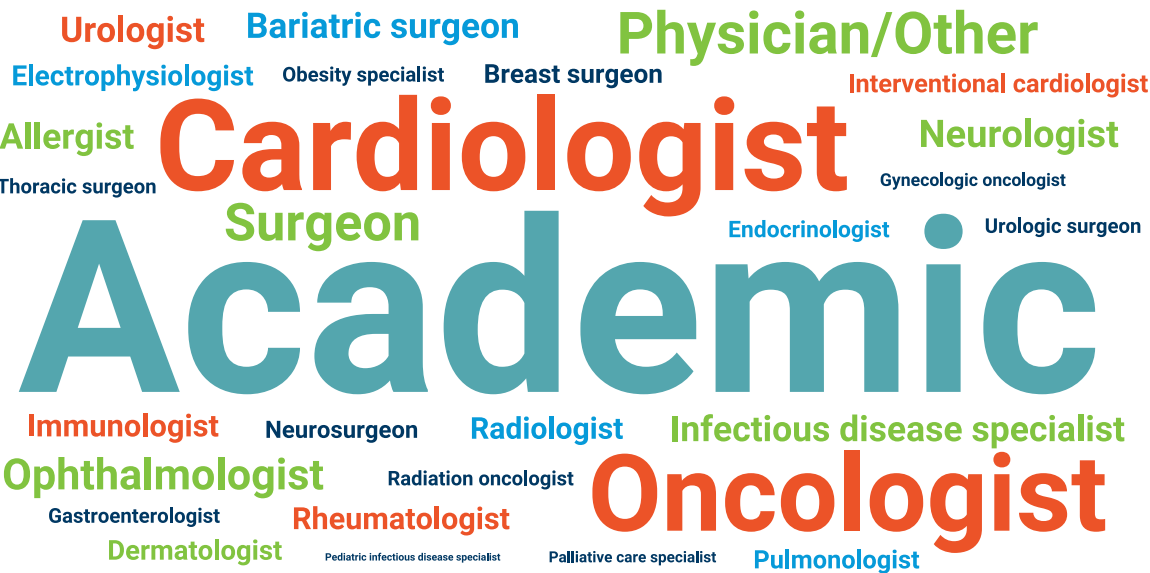
OBJECTIVES

- To determine content-generation trends on X from a cross-specialty landscape of HCPs illustrative of the medical industry
- To identify whether digital opinion leaders (DOLs), who often lead the charge in new trends and methods of communication among their peers, are limiting their interactions on X in lieu of other open social media platforms

METHODS

- A historical data audit, based on a GlobalData-curated and validated list of 512 physician influencers and spanning 2019-2023, unveiled insights into long-term engagement on X
 - The most common specialties represented among this list of DOLs were academic, cardiologist, and oncologist

Breakdown of specialties considered

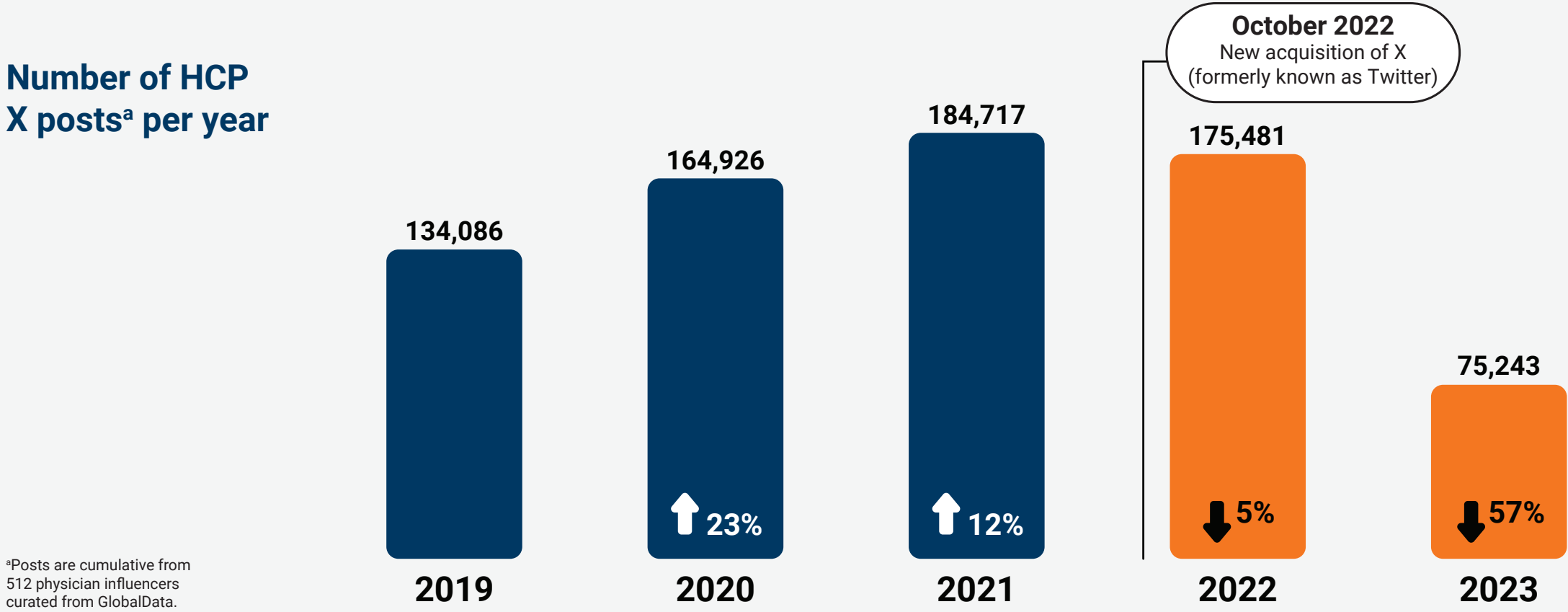


- The same list was used to assess other platforms, namely Mastodon and Bluesky, to explore shifts in communication preferences
- A separate analysis selected ~16,000 self-identified physicians on X based on platform biographies, filtering by profiles that post in English
 - Inclusive of academics, allergists, immunologists, rheumatologists, dermatologists, otolaryngologists, ophthalmologists, psychiatrists, cardiologists, hematologists, pulmonologists, infectious disease specialists, neurologists, gastroenterologists, nephrologists, endocrinologists, urologists, obstetricians/gynecologists, oncologists, pediatricians, surgeons, anesthesiologists, emergency medicine, and primary care
- Social listening involved ingesting ~100,000 posts containing alternative platform names, which provided insights into sentiments surrounding transitions to channels such as Mastodon, Threads, TikTok, Bluesky, and/or Discord

RESULTS

HCP Evolving Content-Generation Activities

Number of HCP X posts^a per year



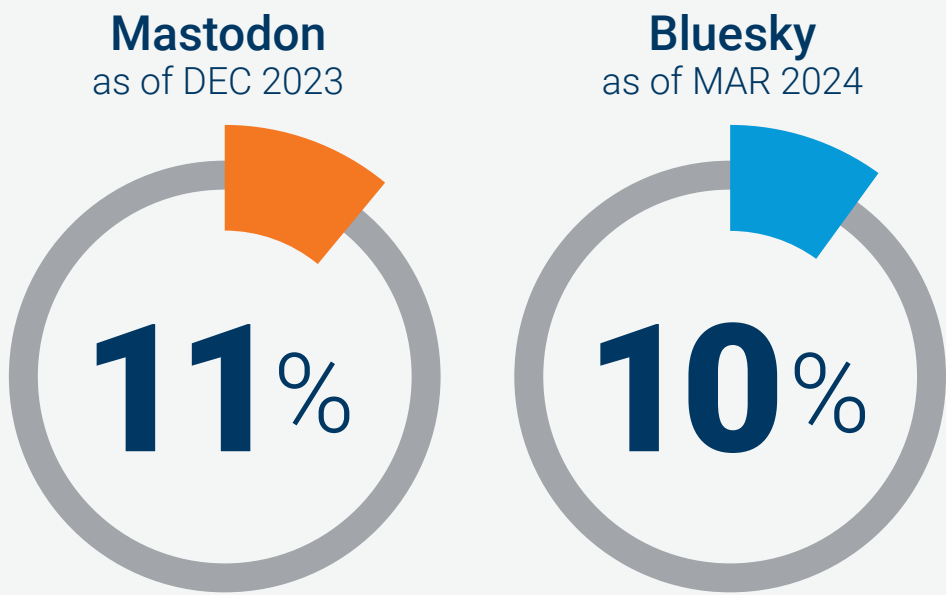
After annual X post increases from HCPs from 2019-2021, a shift occurred with post declines in 2022 and 2023

Total posts by the GlobalData-curated list of 512 HCPs **decreased from 134,086** in 2019 **to 75,243** in 2023

HCP Presence on Mastodon and Bluesky

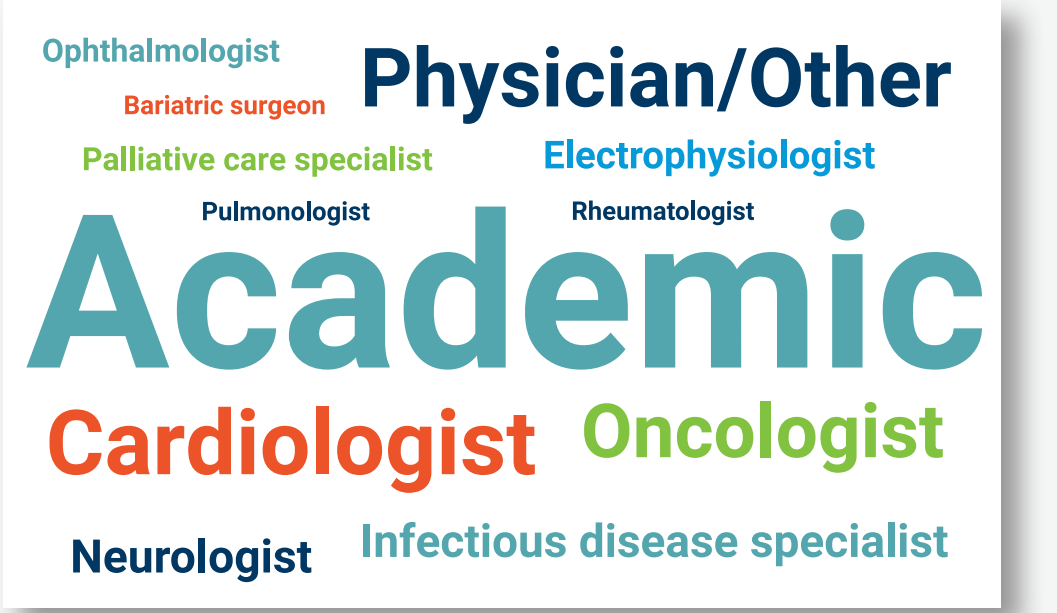
Percentage of DOLs with open accounts (N=512)

A small percentage of the 512 HCPs included in the analysis had opened accounts on Mastodon (11%) and/or Bluesky (10%)



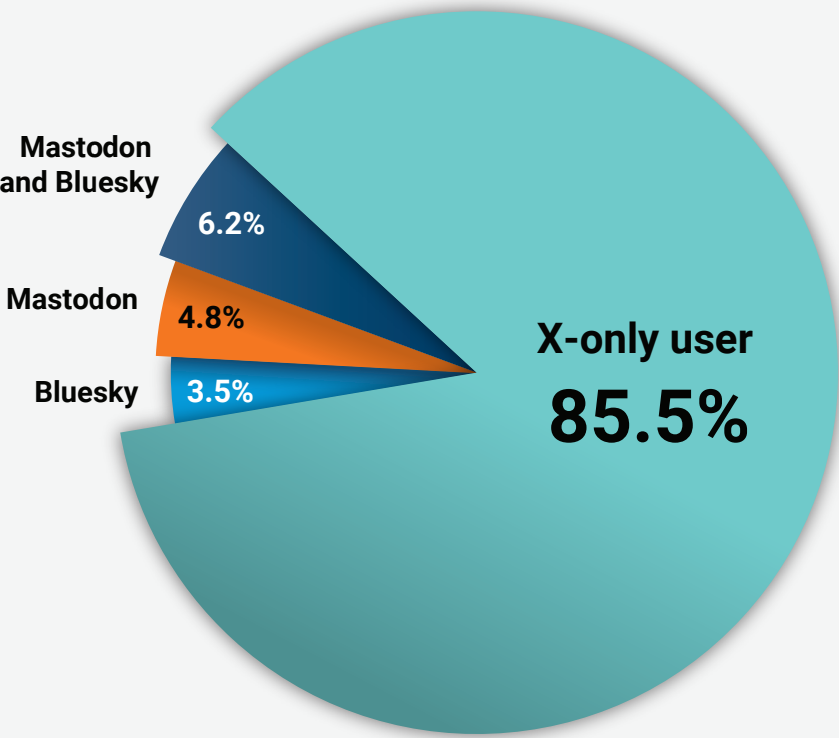
Mastodon/Bluesky users by specialty

Top specialties among Mastodon and/or Bluesky users include academic, cardiologist, physician/other, and oncologist, which is reflective of the breakdown in the overall list of DOLs



Platform presence comparison

When identifying which of these 512 HCPs were opening profiles on new platforms, there was a small percentage (6.2%) identified who created accounts on both Mastodon and Bluesky



Discussions Regarding Alternative Platforms

Example HCP conversation re: Leaving X

Despite considerations of platform transition, conversations among the 16,000 self-identified physicians contemplating departure from X amounted to only 23 mentions in 2023

Qualitative analysis showed limited discernible shifts toward alternative platforms

CONCLUSIONS

- While X post volume from HCPs declined by 59% in the past 2 years, only a small percentage have created accounts on Mastodon and/or Bluesky as an alternative
- Qualitative feedback does not strongly indicate a preference for departing X, but instead, increased scrutiny on what content is shared on that channel and how often
- This nuanced narrative emphasizes ongoing vigilance in monitoring dynamics to inform pharmaceutical communication strategies effectively, especially concerning channels not included in this analysis
- The key to an informed channel mix strategy is to identify not just where HCPs have accounts but where they are actively consuming, sharing, and engaging with medical content