

# The Google+ Project and neurosciences: Will it be as supercalifragilistic-expialidocious as expected?

Sir,

It was first in a 1964 Walt Disney musical film that Mary Poppins used the term 'supercalifragilisticexpialidocious' for expressing her approval.<sup>[1]</sup> Ever since, it has been commonly adopted as a substitute for the word 'great'.

This word jumped into our minds when we read the release announcement of Google+ on Google's site.<sup>[2,3]</sup> During the last decade, Google Scholar has been extremely popular among neuroscientists (admittedly after PubMed) not only for literature searches,<sup>[4]</sup> but also for calculating faculty members' *h* index.<sup>[5]</sup> Even possible medical diagnoses have been proposed.<sup>[5]</sup> By releasing the Google+ network, Google has gone one step further.

But what is this brand new Google+ really all about? In fact, it is another social networking service much similar to Facebook which now has more than 650 million members. Users can share different things with different people (circles), look for articles and videos on specific topics (sparks), and have a face-to-face video chat (hangouts). There is also a Google+ mobile application for iPhones and Android phones that allows users to chat with groups and instantly upload photos and videos (huddle).<sup>[2,3]</sup> And which are the features that differentiate it from Facebook? First, users can receive other users' updates without sharing their own. Moreover, they can share with pre-selected groups and not the entire web. To end with, video chat and group text messaging are also offered.<sup>[3]</sup>

OK. Why bother? It is more than true that neurosciences have undergone tremendous change in recent years.<sup>[6]</sup> Implementing new technological advances could boost the education potential not only for medical students and residents, but for educators as well. Social networks are here to stay. Why not make the best of them? As in many other medical specialties, Facebook, Google+ and all other networks have helped establishing remarkable opportunities for communication among scientists. The development

of new projects, the report of adverse drug reactions, the presentation of the pros and cons of novel surgical approaches, the announcement of world and regional conferences and seminars, and the formulation of new ideas for publishing articles are some of the fields that this technology could substantially enrich. Consider, for example, how much easier and less time-consuming could become the process of papers' reviewing for journals or conferences if the reviewers agreed to integrate Google+ video-chat. In addition, imagine how much clinical trials' design or new guidelines' development would benefit in terms of time and cost from assimilating Google+ special features.

It seems to us that all this leads to a rapid, unrestricted and free communication ensuring the true democratization of knowledge and information.<sup>[6]</sup> This is of utmost importance to all professionals working in the arena of neurosciences, especially, in rural and remote regions. These regions are frequently extremely resource-limited and in such cases the instant sharing of the international experience that Google+ could offer renders academic knowledge truly useful for solving practical issues that arise. So, will Google+ prove to be as great as Facebook has been for neuroscientists? Well, since it is currently available only to a limited number of users (trial phase), no conclusions can be safely drawn. We should just wait and see. Perhaps it could turn out to be supercalifragilisticexpialidociously better!

**Georgios K Matis, Danilo O de A Silva,  
Olga I Chrysou<sup>1</sup>, Theodossios A Birbilis<sup>1</sup>**

*Neurosurgical Department,  
Weill Cornell Medical College, New York, NY, USA*

*<sup>1</sup>Democritus University of Thrace  
Medical School, Alexandroupolis, Greece*

**Address for correspondence:**

Dr. Georgios K. Matis, Olin Hall, Room 1007, 445 East 69th Street,  
10021, New York, NY, USA. E-mail: gkmatis@yahoo.gr

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