

TOP TIPS FOR TWITTER

COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS BRIEF

You only have 280 characters – use them wisely

Why use Twitter?

- Using Twitter can help you reach new audiences.
- You can use it to build networks with other researchers and students working in your field.
- It can help you promote your blog, articles and books.
- Research has indicated a positive correlation between citation counts and exposure on social media*.
- Its fast-moving nature makes it a great place to see breaking news as it happens.
- Being forced to communicate in 280 characters will train you to write for broader audiences.
- You might like it!

Your profile

- Describe your area of expertise and interests so people know what you tweet about.
- Add a profile picture.
- Pin one tweet to the top of your page so that it's always at the top – use this function to promote your latest publication.

What you need to know

- A handle is your Twitter name and always starts with an @ symbol, eg @joebloggs.
- Twitter moves fast, tweet and tweet again to ensure your audience reads what you have to say.
- Use Tweetdeck to manage multiple accounts, track conversations, and to schedule your tweets.
- Tweets with pictures get more likes and retweets.
- The more active you are, the more followers you'll attract, but beware, some accounts are fake.
- You can use Twitter to send direct, private messages to others you follow but everything else you publish is public.
- Use hashtags (#) to categorise your tweets and join debates.

Who to follow

- Friends, colleagues, other researchers in your field.
- Your research stakeholders.
- Speakers and people you meet at conferences.
- Relevant politicians, parliamentary committees and Whitehall departments.
- Think tanks and research institutions.
- Journalists writing about your subject.
- *Just keep connecting...*

What should you tweet about?

- You are positioning yourself as an expert – stick to your subject and don't dilute your message.
- Your research findings and publications.
- Publications and events relating to your area of expertise that interest you.
- Share the work of others, always including their handles.

Writing a top tweet

- Write as if you are writing a headline, grab people's attention.
- Ask questions to encourage interaction and discussion.
- It's not a megaphone, don't just talk at people, engage people and organisations by including their handles.
- Use short URLs when using hyperlinks.
- Check your tweet before publishing, you cannot edit it once it's published.

Retweets and responses

- Consider carefully before you retweet. You are displaying your editorial judgement to the world.
- Respond politely and respectfully to comments but sometimes it's best to ignore.
- If someone is abusive or offensive don't engage. Block, mute or report them.

Remember it's public

- Don't share anything confidential or sensitive.
- Don't publish anything you wouldn't want your students or colleagues to see.

Don't forget

- You don't need to let it rule your life for Twitter to be useful – take a break once in a while.

* Shema, H. et al. 2014. 'Do blog citations correlate with a higher number of future citations? Research blogs as a potential source for alternative metrics' Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology and Thelwall, M. et al. 2013. 'Do altmetrics work? Twitter and ten other social web services' PloS one. 8(5), pe64841.