Using Twitter to build your profile

Twitter is a quick, immediate communication tool. It allows you to engage with real-time communication, respond to inquiries, and monitor conversations. It provides you with a fantastic opportunity to raise awareness of your work and reach users outside of your normal audience. Here are some best practices for managing postings and replying to tweets from your account:

Setting up a Twitter account

When setting up your Twitter profile you should consider the following:

- **Your Twitter Name** should reflect how people would search for you on Twitter – don't include acronyms unless that is how you are commonly referred to.
- **Your Twitter Handle** (i.e. '@...') should be short (15 characters max.) so that people can mention you in their posts – acronyms are more acceptable here.
- **Add your journal or society URL** so people know your account is official and can easily access your content.
- **If you are using your society or journal title as your Twitter Name**, in the description briefly identify the journal and then who will be running the account i.e. "Official account of [Journal Name], a peer reviewed multi-disciplinary journal. All tweets by [Editor 1], [Editor 2], etc."
- **Pick a thumbnail that clearly represents who you are** – journal covers/logos and society logos are most appropriate/effective.

Managing a Twitter account

Posting Guidelines

- **Post 2-3 times a day.** Frequency is important on this platform to build a good number of followers. This can include original content, as well as retweets or links to other content.
- **Tweets should be personal** and not written in the style of a press release, marketing email etc. – you are communicating directly with individuals who can respond to you immediately.
- **Brevity is important.** Twitter limits posts to 280 characters, including links. As such, you can abbreviate, write fragments, and do not have to use proper grammar.
- **Images and Videos** – posts with images and videos are much more highly interacted with, try to ensure there is a mix of posts including images, video and just text. Please remember to consider accessibility when posting text heavy images.

- **Link to content** – it is important to always link to external content within tweets. Exceptions are when positing a question, answering someone else's tweet, or engaging in an ongoing conversation (or Twitterchat).
- **Be aware of space** – with a 280 character limit, you now have double the space to clearly communicate your thoughts. However, brevity is still king on Twitter. Start with a strong lead, and only include details that are necessary. Also remember that all links (no matter the visual length) take up 23 of your 280 characters.
- **Schedule your tweets.** Keeping an active Twitter account can be time consuming. Scheduling your tweets in advance can help minimize your time spent. While it's important to monitor your account daily for people that are reaching out to you or to post current news pieces, you can schedule your planned tweets using free resources, such as Hootsuite. Twitter also has a scheduler native to its system. Both these options will also come with basic analytics so that you can review your successful tweets and adapt your strategy.
- **Check your notifications** for people who have followed you or mentioned you in a tweet. Always respond to these notifications as this will ensure engagement and a development of your Twitter community. If there is a negative comment, refer to the "Monitoring and responding to posts" section of this document.
- **Pin your tweet** to keep important content at the top of your profile. You can choose what to pin by tapping the icon at the top right of a tweet and choosing "Pin to your profile". Note that you can only pin one tweet at a time.
- **Create Twitter threads.** With a thread you can provide additional context, or an extended point by connecting multiple tweets together. Find out how to create one **here**.
- **Create Twitter lists** that allow you to customize, organize and prioritize the tweets that you see in your timeline. Find out more on how Twitter lists work **here**.

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Glossary of Twitter Terms

DM   Direct Message

RT   Retweet

TT   Translated Tweet

TMB   Tweet Me Back – good way of encouraging individuals or a small group to send you tweets

HT   Hat Tip – a quick way to give credit to the source you are taking something from when it is not a retweet e.g. when you use a news story from The Guardian end your tweet with HT @guardian

#FF   Follow Friday – a very widely recognised Twitter action carried out on Fridays, in which you recommend a set of Twitter accounts for others to follow

QT   Quote Tweet – the option to add your own comments, photos, or a GIF before retweeting someone's tweet to your followers

Content Suggestions

- **Issue alerts** are some of the most popular content on SAGE channels. Post a link to your e-Table of Contents each time an issue goes live. To further increase engagement, include an image of the issue cover.

- **Articles, podcasts, and supplementary material** can be the primary resource for content for your channel.

- **Celebrate your successes.** Whether it's an article getting picked up by the media, a paper award, or your impact factor going up, let people know about the positive impact of your journal.

- **Pictures and videos** are often top-clicked posts on Twitter channels. Consider taking pictures of yourself, authors, and editorial board members at conferences. Remember to get permission when posting a picture of anyone.

- **Discipline and industry news** are great sources of content and can solidify your channel as a key aggregator for all news within the discipline. This can be as simple as posting links to news and other research that you think would interest others.

- **Connect in person at conferences.** There's no better way to make personal connection from your digital efforts. Take notes at a conference, post meaningful quotes from the presentations, or let people know when you'll be giving a presentation or attending an event. Use conference hashtags so that your tweets can be identified by other conference attendees.

- **Use common hashtags (#)** to increase the impact of your tweet. Check #s by searching on Twitter and seeing what is being used by accounts discussing and posting content similar to your own. Avoid using #s that are actively used as part of a different subject. Capitalize hashtags for accessibility.

- **Repeat important content.** To increase article usage and discoverability, repost important content one or two times spread out by several days or even weeks. There are only benefits to repeat posting of content. It will further benefit you to vary copy slightly to avoid fatigue, and place on opposite sides of the day to ensure new audiences see your post. However, do not post the same content more than 5 times in a weekly period, to ensure that you do not seem like you are spamming your followers or failing to produce new content.

- **Remain on subject.** People follow you for a reason. While it is important to stay personal, adding posts outside of your subject specialism may lose you followers if these posts are more frequent than the reason people are following you.

Building your Following

- **Mention a SAGE channel** that links to your article, and we will retweet your message. This will raise the visibility of your account and your article.

- **Retweet content you find interesting.** A retweet is not an endorsement.

- **Connect with influencers.** If an article author is also on Twitter, mention them in your post when you post a link to their article.

- **Follow people that you want to follow your channel.** As a good rule of thumb, you should keep the total number of people that you follow a little lower than the number of people following you.

What not to do on Twitter

- **Don't ask for followers.** People ultimately follow you on Twitter because you provide value. Concentrate on your content, not increasing your number of followers. This will happen naturally if your content is of value.

- **Don't publicly thank all your followers.** The quickest way to get people to stop following you is to provide a lack of good content or engaging dialogue. Thanking each of your new followers is a nice concept, but not practical. Keep in mind that tweeting the names of those following you is not valuable content to anyone. If you really do want to thank each follower:
  - Use the direct message feature and thank them privately – this is much more personal.
  - Retweet good content they have posted and give them credit for it (the ultimate thank you!).

- **Don't worry about those that unfollow you.** Those who unfollow you on Twitter may want to connect with you on a different network, or search your info at their leisure. They will also likely reconnect with you on Twitter at a later date if you continue to build your community and provide engaging content.

Monitoring and responding to posts

- **Check your account daily** for comments or communications about your journal or society. Depending on the frequency of the tweets from your account, you may need to check more often than daily.

- **Respond to direct messages or tweets to your account.** All these messages should be replied to. As the messages are already in the public space, i) users will see if you haven't replied and ii) it gives you a chance to address their concerns.

- **Keyword searches may reveal further comments** about your journal or society. There is no definitive answer when determining whether to reply to these tweets – you should use your judgement based on the content of the message. Obviously, if the message doesn't make sense or it isn't clear whether they are referring to your society/journal or a different society/journal you may decide not to reply. If a message is clearly someone complaining about your society/journal then you should respond to this tweet to demonstrate you are proactive in addressing such concerns. If you decide to respond by telephone or email (away from Twitter) you should reply saying you are doing this. It is important that you are seen to be replying, as the complaint will be visible in the public domain.

- **Negative comments will happen** whether or not we reply. By replying you have the opportunity to address problems and change someone's perception and you may enter an opportunity to engage in a productive conversation.

Check out these free tools to help build and monitor your community:

- **Hootsuite** – the easiest to use social media scheduler, also provides great analytics and reporting.

- **CrowdFire** – great tool for monitoring your followers and easily find relevant and valuable people to follow.

- **Commun.It** – An excellent companion to CrowdFire as it informs you about your Twitter "community", not just followers and following but those who have ever interacted with your tweets, tweets that mention you, etc.

- **Tweeps Map** – a tool that allows you to see the geographical location and spread of your followers.

- **Canva** – a free platform that can be used to create social media images and includes free templates for you to use. Images are a great way to drive engagement. Just remember to add text to your tweet/post and not only to the image, in case your readers cannot see the image.

- Free image banks – **Shutterstock**, **Pixabay** and **Pexels** are all sites offering copyright free images that you can use in your social media posts, Wikipedia may also contain some images that are public domain. Please be aware that images on free sites can sometimes contain elements that infringe on copyright or privacy rights.
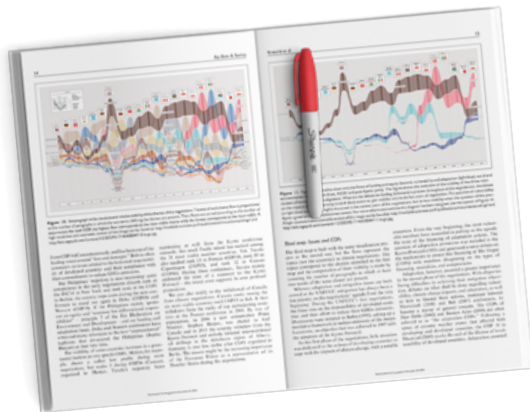
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