

Lunch and Learn: How to be a digital academic

Tips for using Social Media

24 September 2018

This document has been put together based on survey feedback provided ahead of today's Lunch and Learn session. If you have any Social Media-related questions that aren't covered in this document, please don't hesitate to get in touch with the LSE Social Media team:

comms.socialmedia@lse.ac.uk

Tips for getting set up on Twitter:

- Get in touch with the Communications Officer in your Department to let them know you're interested in establishing a presence on social media.
- Look at colleagues' and other academics' Twitter feeds for inspiration.
- Ideally, use your name as your Twitter handle. If you aren't immediately identifiable, you won't get tagged as often. More tags = more exposure.
- Make sure your area of expertise is evident to anyone reading your bio. It can help to identify your affiliation here as well:
e.g.: "Investigating health policy outcomes at @LSEHealth"
- You can also add some personality to your bio. This could set the tone for how you interact with your followers. Being yourself will make you more approachable and will make it easier to build professional connections.
e.g.: "Investigating health policy outcomes at @LSEHealth. Occasional beekeeper. Full-time Beyonce fan."
- Think about your first tweet. How will you introduce yourself in 240 characters or less?
- Leverage Departmental channels to spread the word of your research and media activities. Do you have a quote in the FT? Tweet the link with a short synopsis of your main argument. Ask your Comms person to share it on Departmental channels.
- It's okay to ask someone to follow you.
- Tell your colleagues once you've set up an account and ask for a shout-out. Whenever a colleague sets up a new account, give them a shout-out too.
e.g.: "A warm twitter welcome to my colleague @daasmith0. #partoflse"
- Make sure your Twitter handle is listed on the LSE website and where appropriate on other websites. Put your Twitter handle in your email signature. If you're presenting at a conference, put your handle on your introductory PPT slide.

Tips for building engagement and followers:

- Tweet regularly. What does this mean? Don't let your account sit inactive for more than a few days at a time.
- Can you tweet too much? As long as there's variety in your content, don't be too worried about this.
- Can you self-promote? Absolutely. But make sure you're engaging your network as well.
- You don't need to be quoted in a news article to tweet. If you are, you should definitely tweet about it. But if not, here are some other basic things you can Tweet about:
 - Events you're planning to attend, including on-campus events, conferences you're speaking at, etc. You could even live-tweet an event. (Make sure to use the appropriate hashtag!)
 - Upcoming media appearances.
e.g.: "Tune into @SkyNews from 3pm for my take on Chequers deal. #Brexit"
 - Research you're working on.
 - Observations from around campus.
 - Your two-cents on something you've seen in the news.
 - Don't be afraid to stray away from your area of expertise. Just because you've devoted your whole career to osteoarcheological exploration of the Iberian Peninsula doesn't mean you can't have other interests.
- The more you get involved on Twitter, the more mentions you'll get. Make sure you reciprocate others' efforts to engage:
 - If someone mentions/tags you in a tweet, reply to them.
 - Has someone shared an interesting article? Say thanks and share your thoughts.
 - Has someone asked a question you can answer? Let them know.
- If you've seen someone such a politician tweeting about something you know is wrong, you can call them out. Just know this can invite a lot of negativity from the opposite side of political spectrum.
- Always remember to tag relevant accounts and use appropriate hashtags.
- Make sure there's variety in your feed. Of course you'll be tweeting about your area of expertise, but why not also share updates from events you attended? Can't think of anything to tweet about? Observe and replicate other users in your field.
- Reach out to blog editors both within LSE and beyond. Pitch specific ideas or let them know your area of expertise and flag your interest in contributing in future.
- Recognise the value of visual content. Have you just published a paper that's full of graphs and tables? Would your followers find them interesting? Share one every couple of days to illustrate the argument you're making.
- Know the tone of voice you want to convey online. Do you want to share non-academic content alongside your expert commentary?
Example from Brian Schmidt (ANU VC, astrophysicist and Nobel Prize laureate):



Getting into the habit of using social media:

- Put Twitter and LinkedIn on your phone and turn notifications on.
- It's okay to duplicate content across platforms.
- Try to set yourself an achievable goal for activity: e.g. at least one tweet while you're on the train to work each day.
- Memorise the handles of the accounts you want to interact with.
- Watch what's trending online. If you can make a loose connection to your area of expertise, give it a go. Even if you can't, that doesn't mean you can't comment on something.
- Look at what your followers are tweeting about and liking.
- Recognise the difference between Tweeting from scratch and responding.
- Know when to use a "retweet with comment" versus a standard response. Often a retweet with comment will give you more exposure.

Using Twitter for a research project

- Don't hesitate to reach out to the LSE Social Media team to arrange a meeting to talk through communications objectives and strategies.
- Tweet whenever you have an update: every new publication, new blog post, etc.
- New journal article? Write a blog post to summarise the article and direct your Twitter followers towards it.

- Use hashtags. This will make it much easier for people interested in your area of research to follow the conversation and to get involved. It will also make it easier to assess how much conversation is happening around your research.
- Don't think of researchers in a similar field as competition. Tweet with them and help to grow a network of researchers. In the long run, this can help raise the level of debate, attract new audiences, and bring greater attention (and potentially funding) to your field.

Twitter vs. other platforms

- Twitter will likely be your best bet for building your academic profile and personal brand. It has many engaged users, and discussion never stops.
 - LinkedIn can be an effective tool for building your network and engaging with the public. It also has far fewer anonymous trolls than Twitter.
 - Facebook is not widely used for academia, at least not by individuals. Ask your Department/Institute/Centre to help spread the word of your research through their Facebook channels.
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Questions? Get in touch

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