

## ***Twitter for Academics: Practical Tips for Tweeting Research and Networking***

### **Brand & Online Identity Construction**

- Topics:
  - You want to generally have a consistent tone and a smaller range of topics.
  - Don't try to sound like an expert in an area or topic you are not.
  - You want to look human and not a research bot.
    - This will also allow you to tap into non-academic followers.
      - There will be more overlap than you might think when you comment on popular issues.
  - Retweets are important.
    - Your timeline should not just be your voice.
  - Retweets and comments allow you to connect with other researchers and their audiences.
- Tone:
  - Think about how you want to be heard and keep it conversational.
  - When tweeting, consider how your tweet touches on: Humor, Emotional impact, Timing, Reliability.
    - I consider my tweets through these metrics as I find it helps to boost engagement in a more active way.
- Be careful what you retweet as well.
  - Your online identity is your brand and you want to ensure that it remains consistent and strong.
    - This is you marketing your ideas, your research, and yourself.

### **Networking**

- Follow people in your field and see who they retweet.
  - This will allow you to build your network in a cascading fashion.
- Early on, to help people find you, use trending hashtags and search what other people have tweeted under that hashtag.
  - Hashtags are not mandatory though.
- Twitter will allow people to keyword search as well.
  - Do not abuse hashtags or else you will seem desperate for attention.
- Things to consider:
  - Complimenting of people's work will encourage them to follow you back.
  - Even a short commentary on their area of focus may encourage them to visit your profile and see your tweets.
- Try to keep track of major policy and initiatives that are released and talk about them.
  - Quote tweeting larger organizations and speaking to their points may also help.

## **Promoting Your Research**

- Be prepared to break your work down!
  - No tweet or thread will be able to cover the breadth of your work satisfactorily, so be prepared to focus on parts of it.
- If there is a topic that is being discussed on twitter (e.g., poverty, basic income, high COVID 19 rates among the homeless, Long-term care homes) that your research is focused on or helps to give a different perspective, share it either in a thread or a concise tweet.
  - Look at what is being discussed on popular news networks to determine what people may have heard about a given issue.
- Keep your work accessible.
  - It's very easy to slip into jargon but you are writing for the lay public and should avoid using references and phrases outside of their expertise.
  - Remember, the majority of people will grasp ideas and appreciate your work when those ideas are made understandable and relevant to their daily lives.

## **Pitfalls**

- This is not a classroom.
  - Some people may react poorly if they feel you are condescending to them.
    - The climate online is, by default, defensive and potentially hostile.
  - Trolls are people who tweet provocative things and attempt to pull people into arguments simply for the sake of arguing.
    - There is no way to effectively win against these people and I would suggest either blocking or ignoring them.
  - Trolls can appear on virtually any tweet, regardless of how mundane it may be.
- Be discerning with who you follow.
  - Even prominent academics may not offer worthwhile content.
    - Researchers, socially active research hubs, and even your own students are often overlooked as valuable people to follow.
    - These people may be able to provide insights into the conversations and literature currently ongoing.
    - Try to avoid following too many people as it also makes you seem desperate and will bloat your timeline with potentially useless information.
- Use emojis judiciously.
  - They come across as much more colloquial so they should only be used on your humanizing tweets.
    - Also, be sure that you know what the emoji means before using it.
  - Picture and gifs can be very eye catching but can also be very distracting.
- Private versus public twitter:
  - You may want to set an anonymous twitter aside for use with family and keep it private.
  - Do not allow it to interact with your public facing twitter and your family and friends should only interact with that private twitter.

- This will allow you to follow other social medias which may be of more personal interest (i.e. crafts, hobbies, art, and other unrelated topics) without it impacting your professional environment.

### **Examples of Tweets**

- Judicious use of hashtags AND humanizing in an acceptable way.
  - <https://twitter.com/MrAhmednurAli/status/1220458156641411072?s=19>
- I made this tweet during the start of the BLM protests. This tweet was very relatable, very well timed, and very emotionally impactful which helped it go viral. Notably, it is also succinct.
  - <https://twitter.com/MrAhmednurAli/status/1268192609551482887?s=20>
- Making it palatable
  - Threads:
    - <https://twitter.com/MrAhmednurAli/status/1265814209276907522>
  - Single tweet: It is difficult to capture all demographics but this is what I suggest.
    - <https://twitter.com/MrAhmednurAli/status/1283097452103507971>