

Getting the most out of Twitter

By Angie Abraham

Welcome to Chemistry Café. This column provides tips and tools to help you communicate effectively about your work, research, studies or activities and public engagement. Our goal is to help you tell your story about science and, in the process, put a human face on chemistry. Each column covers one topic. Let us know how we can support you by sending questions, suggestions and feedback to chemistrycafe@acs.org.

Learn how to get the most out of one the world's most popular social media platforms – Twitter. It's easy to get started. Simply create an account, find people to follow, track trends of interest and build your following. Whether you're a seasoned user or new to the twittersphere, consider these tips to optimize your experience:

Refresh your bio

Your Twitter profile portrays your presence to anyone who follows you or is about to. Be sure to update your profile photo, especially with a quality image, because it represents who you are with every Tweet. Include links or other relevant information in your bio, as these will help people find and learn about you. If your profile tends to mix work-related interests with personal use, consider adding the line, "Views are my own." Working professionals that include their career title and organization name in their Twitter bio's often opt to include this language as a protective tactic to help avoid legal or workplace predicaments.

A newer trend that's taking over twitter profiles is including your personal pronouns in your bio. ACS Communications Specialist Katherine Stevens suggests adding your pronouns to your Twitter bio to demonstrate support for the LGBTQ+ community, saying, "Including pronouns in your email signature and social media profiles is a small but effective way to both signal support for people of all identities and contribute to ACS' commitment to fostering diversity, inclusion and respect."

Clean house

Regularly review and remove old tweets. Oftentimes, celebrities have served as great examples of this. Years' old tweets may get drugged up and can paint users in an unflattering light. Scrub old content and be sure it's representative of who you are today. Explore tools that have been developed to delete tweets older than a certain time period. Another option is to consider operating two accounts, one for work and one for personal use. Be aware, however, that separating your accounts may not protect you if you engage in conduct on social media that violates your employer's policies and procedures.

Get more views on your research or interests

With a character limit in place, it's important to be conscious of how to pull the right statistic or quote from your research to gain more views. Graphics, videos and GIFs are a must-have for tweets. Studies prove that tweets with an added visual element garner more attention and engagement than those that do not.

Use metrics to inform your success

To understand what worked, what didn't and why, Twitter offers free audience insights and analytics. Discover the audience demographic of your followers and develop content relevant to them.

Keep up with the latest conversation in the field

When people use the hashtag symbol (#) before a relevant keyword or phrase in their tweet it categorizes those Tweets and helps them show more easily to other users in Twitter search. Clicking on a hashtagged word shows you other Tweets that include that hashtag. Keeping watch of hashtags that interest you help keep you informed and may lead to connections to users who share your passion.

Network with international colleagues

Build relationships with peers or contacts you'd like to develop by retweeting, liking, sharing or leaving a thoughtful response to their posts. Twitter can be especially useful to network internationally. Utilize the platform to create and sustain relationships that have the potential to turn into opportunities.