

A Guide to Using Social Media for Conferences

Why use social media networks to promote an event?

- Leverage your networks
- Link your event to ongoing conversations
- Encourage ticket sales for your event!

If you do plan on having a social media presence, you should browse the Middlesex's [policies on social media use](#) before committing to anything.

Live Tweeting Conferences

Live tweeting is a method of engaging conference delegates in an online conversation about the event in real time, presenting a coherent and immediate picture of the event for those who are interested but not physically attending, and co-creating a digital archive of the event that can be analyzed in terms of reach and interaction. In "[How People are Using Twitter during Conferences](#)," Reinhardt et al. say that communicating and sharing resources seem to be one of the most interesting and relevant ways in which one microblogs. Other microblogging practices in conferences include following parallel sessions that otherwise delegates would not have access to, and/or would not receive such visibility.



Functionally, live tweeting is a way of keeping delegates up-to-date with conference changes to schedule or speakers, ushering people on their way if they dally over lunch, or any other number of practical applications.

How do you choose which social media networks to use?

Decide on the goals of the social media conversation
What are your objectives?
Where are your networks?
Are they personal or professional?
Are you engaging with the university's social media networks?

Make this a multi-media event. Use pictures as appropriate to set the stage, follow slides, make sure everyone has access to handouts, etc. A couple of videos are nice if you keep them very short. Try to provide links to material that is relevant in terms of topic. In his article, "[Twitter as a Tool for Conservation Education and Outreach: What Scientific Conferences Can Do to Promote Live-tweeting](#)," D.S. Shiffman says that "[s]uccessful conference tweeters always attempt to make each tweet a stand-alone thought so that if it is retweeted, it will make sense without having seen the other tweets in the series." Make sure to respond to tweets and keep the discussion going. Be sure to include the conference hashtag in every tweet!

Finally, the end of the physical event is not the end of the live tweet event. Finish things up by thanking participants. Write a [blog post](#) about the event and tweet it. Do a [hashtag analysis](#) and tweet it, so that everyone knows about the popularity of the live tweet event.

Suggestions for Successful Live Tweeting

Basic Preparation

1. Make a hashtag
2. Register your hashtag ([here](#), for example)
3. Promote the hashtag
4. Write up some quick Tweeting guidelines (see [example](#))
5. Think about posting an anti-harassment policy (see [example](#))
6. Think about recruiting some high influencers
7. Get volunteers for tweeting before and during the event
8. Get Twitter handles for speakers
9. Use analytics in the post-event story

Several weeks before the event

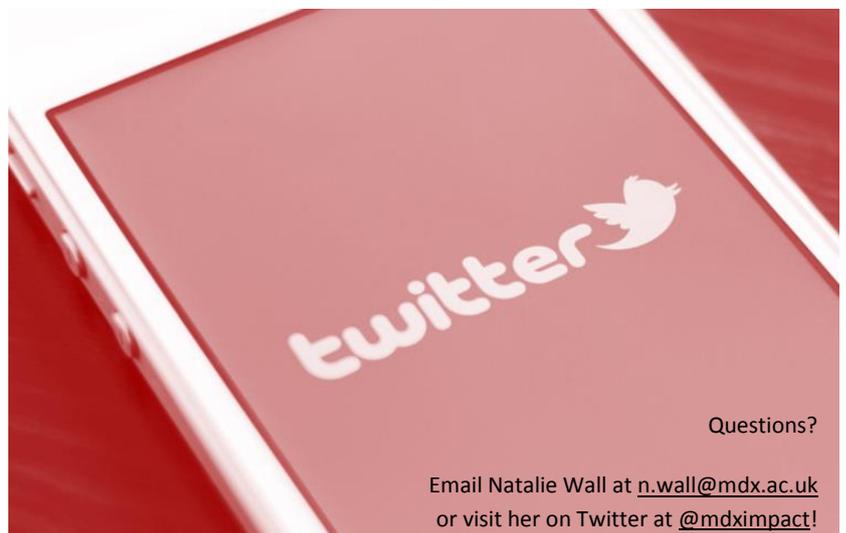
Start with some slow releases of information. This is an attempt to extend the reach of the event as far as possible beforehand.

- Videos
 - Interviews with upcoming speakers (30 seconds or less)
 - Speakers can do this themselves easily enough on their phones
- Photos
 - Tweet photos that are relevant to and attach quotes from researchers/practitioners/workers/etc.
- Material/News Articles
 - Tweeting and retweeting relevant educational materials or news articles with short, punchy questions/comments on how these relate to the event
 - The event should be tagged. Tag speakers, participants, partners, and any groups or organisations that would be interested

A couple of weeks before the event

Think of ways to engage your current audience and market the event to its social media connections.

- Polls
- Contests (with prizes!)
- Stories



Questions?

Email Natalie Wall at n.wall@mdx.ac.uk
or visit her on Twitter at [@mdximpact!](https://twitter.com/mdximpact)

The week before the event

At this point, reuse some of the already created content and really create buzz about the upcoming event. If increasing ticket sales is your goal, focus on getting your networks retweeting!

- Behind the scenes
 - Photos taken during preparation for the conference
 - The venue
 - Any material being handed out
 - Organisers
- Retweeting of previous tweets (especially any interviews or introductions of speakers)
- Revisiting polls and thinking about results in terms of theory and practice
- Making short videos (30 seconds or less) of anything that people have tweeted or shared

During the conference

Use Twitter to expand conversations, promote speakers and organisations, and direct attendees' attention to changes in schedule, directions to lunch, social events, etc.

- Continue to promote the conference hashtag with signage and having speakers remind the audience to tweet
- Get volunteers to tweet in different parallel sessions to maximise conversations
- Use screens set up in prominent locations to display the Twitter Wall (you'll need a platform like [activitywalls](#) for this)– promoting the online conversation and encouraging others to join
- Tweet pictures of locations and hide a prize somewhere at the locations
 - Great way to direct people towards particular areas of interest

After the conference

- Put together a conference story using [Steller](#) or [Storify](#), making sure to thank everyone who participated
- Use an analytics site (like [Tweetbinder](#)) to let your audience know the reach of the event

EVALUATION!!!

Make sure that you are keeping track of shares, likes, subscriptions, etc. You will better understand the reach of your event when you tally in your social media analytics with your physical attendance numbers.

Blogging

Blogging is a great way for researchers to disseminate findings, ideas, and responses.

Blogging Platforms

- [WordPress](#)
- [Blogger](#)
- [Medium](#)
- [Tumblr](#)

Guest blogging is a great way to gain visibility

- For your research
- For your blog
- For your event

Potential guest blogging platforms

- [The Conversation](#)
- [MDXminds](#)
- [The Guardian](#)
- [Times Higher Education](#)
- Or a discipline specific association's blogging site