



Twitter Best Practices

For journalists and newsrooms

Commonly asked questions

“Our followers have skyrocketed recently. **What did we do right?**”

“I only have 140 characters. **Why should I use a hashtag?**”

“How do I get my Twitter followers to **retweet my content?**”

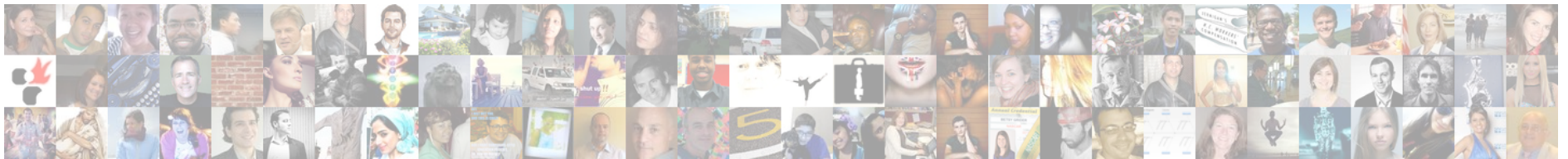


Research Methodology

150+ journalists and news publishers included in study

1000s of tweets over six-month period examined to uncover patterns of quality engagement

Data serves as a model for how others can create follower growth and engagement on Twitter



What you can do to drive follower growth

- 1. Tweet your beat**
- 2. Use hashtags**
- 3. Share what you're reading**
- 4. @Cite your sources**



Tweet your beat

For journalists who post a concentrated number of Tweets in a short time span, follower growth is 50% more than expected (1.5x).



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Sara Ganim

@sganim

Jurors, after seeing a reenactment of mike mcquearys testimony, are back in the deliberation room. #SanduskyTrial

22 Jun 12



Sara Ganim

@sganim

Pa. House passes bill to allow experts in child sex abuse cases. Going to Gov. To sign. A little too late for #SanduskyTrial

22 Jun 12

The Patriot-News' Sara Ganim (@SGanim) saw an increased number of followers when she tweeted the Jerry Sandusky trial, a part of her beat as a crime reporter.



Tweet your beat

Live-tweeting or posting several updates about a news event relevant to your beat is one way to increase engagement and follower growth.



tuscaloosaneews

@tuscaloosaneews

Per @tuscaloosacity, Mayor Walt Maddox has received confirmation of 32 deaths and 400 injuries in the wake of yesterday's tornado.

28 Apr 11



tuscaloosaneews

@tuscaloosaneews

Those working at volunteer stations, let us know what you need and what you have enough of so we can help spread the word.

1 May 11

The Tuscaloosa News (@TuscaloosaNews) posted up-to-the-minute updates on a local tornado to Twitter, including information on emergency resources. The Alabama newsroom was awarded the Breaking News Pulitzer for its coverage of the event.



Tweet your beat

Twitter users who continue to live-tweet news relevant to their beat often see a steady stream of new followers.



Anthony De Rosa ✓

@AntDeRosa

Top Obama adviser violated the Hatch Act by making political remarks regarding gay & lesbian rights reut.rs/QlvDcU

13 Sep 12



Anthony De Rosa ✓

@AntDeRosa

Are you an independent voter? Did #RNC2012 make you turn to Romney or Obama?

31 Aug 12

Reuters' Anthony De Rosa (@AntDeRosa) often posts or retweets news related to politics and government. De Rosa has seen a huge rise in followers and positioned himself as a go-to source for such news on Twitter.



Use hashtags for context

Hashtags can increase engagement almost 100% (2x) for journalists and 50% (1.5x) for news organizations.



Use hashtags for context

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Fox News 
@FoxNews

#DNC refuses to reimburse #Connecticut town for thousands of dollars of overtime costs during #Obama visit fxn.ws/PxbTt2

22 Aug 12



Fox News 
@FoxNews

Possible tornado in Brooklyn, New York, as city is issued warning fxn.ws/QozCO4 #nyc #weather

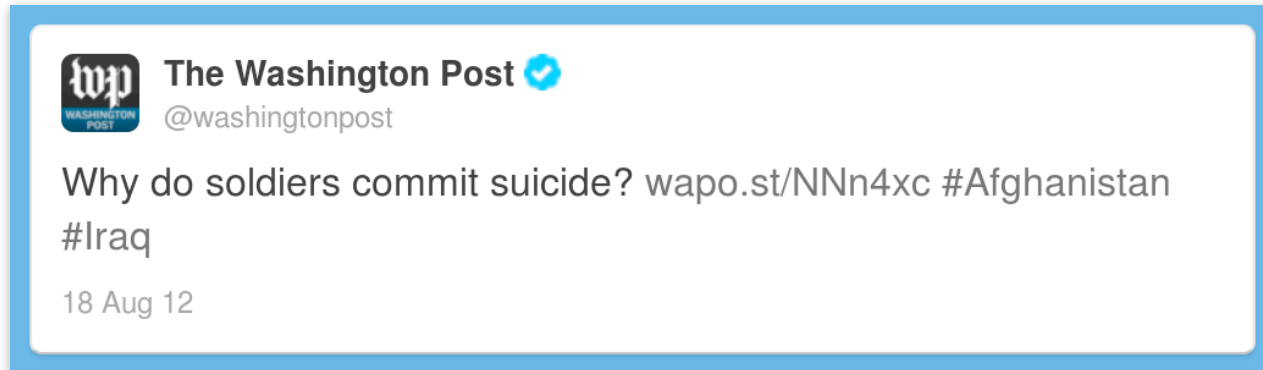
8 Sep 12

Fox News (@FoxNews) uses hashtags to identify the subject of its tweets and to join the greater conversation on Twitter about that person, place, thing or event.



Use hashtags for context

Tweets with hashtags (the # symbol, followed by the subject or keyword related to the tweet) draw higher engagement.



The Washington Post (@WashingtonPost) often uses hashtags to describe the content of its tweets or to add context.



Use hashtags for context

When you include hashtags in your Tweets, your Tweets become more visible and you eventually gather more Twitter followers.



CBS Chicago

@cbschicago

Men shot dead overnight in #SouthChicago, #Englewood.
cbsloc.al/MWUgE5

14 Aug 12



CBS Chicago

@cbschicago

The testimony that lead defense to once again seek a mistrial in
#DrewPeterson case. Read it here: cbsloc.al/TBzMzO

14 Aug 12

CBS Chicago (@CBSChicago) uses hashtags to group tweets into a conversation that Twitter users can follow or engage with. In the second example, the #DrewPeterson hashtag is included in tweets related to the local trial.



Share what you're reading

Journalists receive 100% more (2x) active engagement (on good Tweets) when a URL is included.



Share what you're reading

Journalists receive 100% more (2x) active engagement (on good Tweets) when a URL is included. When individuals share URLs to non-company sources, they experience a bump in follows.



Rachel Maddow MSNBC

@maddow

If you have Memorial Day off on Monday, read this before you leave for the weekend: is.gd/JvcJpW

25 May 12



Brian Stelter

@brianstelter

WSJ profile of @RyanSeacrest reveals he recently "started waking up later: at 5 a.m." on [on.wsj.com/PQUDDP](https://www.wsj.com/PQUDDP)

31 Aug 12



Share what you're reading

Journalists with above expected follower growth send 200% more retweets (3X) compared to journalists with below expected follower growth.



Karen Tumulty ✓
@ktumulty
Trying to adapt. Also, national political correspondent for the Washington Post.
Washington, DC · <http://www.washingtonpost.com>

 Follow 

7,996 TWEETS

720 FOLLOWING


29,871 FOLLOWERS


Tweets All / No replies



mike murphy @murphymike 2h
Today is first time in history that GOP prez campaign senior staff mtg is likely to begin with phrase "thank God for the Washington Post!"
 Retweeted by Karen Tumulty
[Expand](#)



Karen Tumulty @ktumulty 3h
New #wapo Poll: meet the new poll; same as the old poll Among likely voters, Obama-Romney close wapo.st/Szo0sP
 [View summary](#)



Rick Klein @rickklein 12h
[@gretawire](#) feels like another convention! almost. [@ByronYork](#) [@ktumulty](#) #greta
 Retweeted by Karen Tumulty
 [View conversation](#)



Share what you're reading

Use the Retweet button to curate content. Journalists and brands that retweet see a higher than expected follower growth.





HuffPost Sports 
@HuffPostSports
The latest news and views on the sporting life. Send tips: sports@huffingtonpost.com.
New York, NY · <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/sports>


 

11,695 TWEETS
4,703 FOLLOWING
18,832 FOLLOWERS


Tweets All / No replies




ESPN Stats & Info @ESPNStatsInfo 10h
The replacement refs have called 28 defensive pass interferences in Week 1 this year, more than 2x as many as called in Wk 1 of 2010-11.
 Retweeted by HuffPost Sports
[Expand](#)



HuffPost Sports @HuffPostSports 10h
Longtime wrestling star [@JerryLawler](#) collapses during [@WWE](#) event in Montreal huff.to/QB5E7a
[View summary](#)



WWE @WWE 11h
Update from [@MichaelCole](#) on [#RAW](#): [@JerryLawler](#) taken to local medical facility in Montreal, breathing on his own, receiving oxygen.
 Retweeted by HuffPost Sports
[Expand](#)



@Cite your sources

News organizations that tweet 20% fewer URLs and 100% more @mentions grow followers 17% more than expected.



@Cite your sources

Instead of just posting Tweets that contain include URLs, mix up the content of your Tweets. News organizations that tweet 20% fewer URLs and 100% more @mentions grow followers 17% more than expected.



In the above Tweet, The Guardian (@guardian) includes the Twitter handles of journalist Elizabeth Day (@elizabday) and actor Stephen Mangan (@StephenMangan), the subject of the article.



@Cite your sources

Including the Twitter handle of your sources in your Tweets increases follower growth and engagement.



Inside Breaking News

@breaking

Moscow police arrest 10 environmental activists, 4 dressed in polar bear costumes, at Gazprom's Moscow office - @AP
photoblog.nbcnews.com/_news/2012/09/...

5 Sep 12



Inside Breaking News

@breaking

Photo: 20 people trapped 301 feet above ground after Knott's Berry Farm ride in California malfunctions - @ABC7
twitter.yfrog.com/n7r1k9j

20 Sep 12

Inside Breaking News (@breaking) frequently includes the Twitter handle of the source of the links, photos or videos in its Tweets.





What works for you?
Tweet at us
[@TwitterForNews](https://twitter.com/TwitterForNews)

I'm a reporter. How do I gain more followers?

Tweet your beat

- For journalists who post a concentrated number of Tweets in a short time span, follower growth is 50% more than expected (1.5x).

Share what you're reading

- Journalists with above expected follower growth send 200% more retweets (3X) compared to individuals with below expected follower growth.
- Use the Retweet button to curate content. Journalists and brands that retweet see a higher than expected follower growth.



I'm a reporter. How do I create more engaging tweets?

Use hashtags and @cite your sources

- Hashtags can increase engagement almost 100% (2x) for journalists.
- Including the Twitter handle of your sources in your Tweets increases follower growth and engagement.

Share what you're reading

- Individuals receive 100% more (2x) active engagement (on good tweets) when a URL is included.



I'm a news organization. How do I gain more followers?

Tweet your beat

- Live-tweeting or posting several updates about a news event relevant to your beat is one way to increase engagement and follower growth.

@Cite your sources

- Brands that tweet 20% fewer URLs and 100% more @mentions grow followers 17% more than expected.



I'm a news organization. How do I create more engaging tweets?

Use hashtags for context

- Hashtags can increase engagement 50% (1.5x) for brands.
- When you include hashtags in your Tweets, your Tweets become more visible and you eventually gather more Twitter followers.

@Cite your sources

- Instead of just posting Tweets that contain include URLs, mix up the content of your Tweets. News organizations that tweet 20% fewer URLs and 100% more @mentions grow followers 17% more than expected.



Additional Resources

bit.ly/TwitterForNews

@TwitterForNews

