Twitter Tips for Brain & Mind Centre Researchers

Key Terms

- **Hashtag**: hashtags # aggregate conversations about key phrases and acronyms. People searching for those terms on Twitter can see what you’re saying about those topics. They’re a way to get found and to find others.
- **Twitter Handle**: a Twitter handle is almost like your email address on Twitter. It’s the name you use and the way people identify you. The Brain and Mind Centre’s Twitter handle is @BrainMind_Usyd
- **Tweet Chat**: a live Twitter event where people use one hashtag to discuss a general topic.
- **Trending Topic**: a ‘trending topic’ is a hashtag-driven topic that is immediately popular at a particular time. Trending topics across Australia and the world are listed on the lower right hand side of your profile.

Getting started – your Twitter profile

1. **Profile photo**
   - Change your profile photo - do not keep the generic egg graphic. Without a real photo of yourself, people will dismiss your account as spam. ‘Trolls’ (people that post inflammatory or abusive content online) often use the generic egg graphic for their profile so they cannot be identified.

2. **Bio**
   - Your bio should include hashtags (#) on your areas of expertise i.e. #dementia #autism #mentalhealth. These hashtags allow people to find you when they search for these key terms.
   - Include the Twitter handles (@) of organisations you’re affiliated with e.g. Research fellow on #dementia #FTD @BrainMind_Usyd @USyd_Westmead
   - A bio allows relevant parties to see a snapshot of who you are. Without a bio, stakeholders such as donors, patients, partners and collaborators, will be reluctant to engage with you on Twitter because they don’t know your area of expertise.

I’ve done my profile, now what?

- **Follow 200 people *strategically***

  Once you’re profile is ready, look for influential people in your line of work as well as colleagues you know are on Twitter. Click on their follower list and follow people you know in real life as well as those with similar interests. Read their bio’s to find out if they’re relevant to you. Follow colleagues, collaborators, industry associations, patient advocacy groups, journalists, politicians, patients. Find the right people by searching hashtags of key terms e.g. #dementia #ehealth #autism #mentalhealth #MS #Parkinsons. Follow about 200 people to start off with.

- **Follow reputable publications and news services that align to your interests**

  This gives you access to quality content that you can retweet, engage with and discuss with others.
What do I tweet about?

- Share your opinion on news in your field
- Promote the work of yourself and your team by sharing journal articles you’ve contributed to
- Comment on journal articles published by others in your field to invite a conversation
- When you’re at industry events and conferences, engage with other attendees by using the hashtag that’s specific to the event
- Share information you think is valuable to grow your influence
- Ask questions, respond to other people’s tweets and tell people you agree or disagree
- Take part in a ‘Tweet chat’ to build followers, spread your expertise, engage with likeminded researchers, patients, carers online. For a list of brain and mind related topics and the times they meet on Twitter, see: http://www.symplur.com/healthcare-hashtags/tweet-chats/

Make the most of each Tweet

Once you have content to share, here are some simple ways to ensure people see it and engage with it.

1. Tag relevant people

- Tagging is when you use the ‘@’ symbol before someone’s name. It’s like a tap on the shoulder that prompts whoever you ‘tag’ to engage with your post. Please tag Brain and Mind Centre in any tweets about your research/events you’re at so we can retweet you @BrainMind_Usyd.
- To tag the right person, search for their Twitter handle. To find it, Google their name + affiliation + Twitter.
- Using someone’s Twitter handle in a post directs your followers to that person. This can build their audience. Similarly, if someone mentions you in their post, their followers are directed to you.

2. Shorten links

- Your Twitter message is limited to 140 characters. Shortening links to publications or news stories gives you more room to write your message.
- Go to https://bitly.com/ and enter your link into the bar that says ‘paste a link to shorten it.’ Once it’s shortened, copy and paste back into your twitter message.

3. Hashtags

- Build hashtags into your Twitter sentence so people searching for those terms find your content. e.g. “New research in @nature finds #exercise can help prevent #Parkinsons http://bitly.syn”