

Tips for Tweeting at Conferences

A few years ago...

...you would be forgiven for seeing someone at a conference on their phone, tablet or laptop and privately tsking them for being rude.

What we now know is that people who tweet at conferences are actually active participants in learning and disseminating conference proceedings. It's a really important job and adds a new dimension and social aspect to conferences. However, Tweeting at conferences works best when as many people are involved as possible.

If you aren't already on Twitter, now is the time to start!



Getting started

Make sure you upload a profile photo of yourself – don't be an egg head! A picture helps you to be recognised both online and in the flesh. A single head shot is best, preferably one that doesn't crop out someone else and enables you to be recognised if you are using your Twitter account for professional purposes.



Take the time to give yourself a brief description, where you work and/or study and your interests (or what you will be tweeting about). You may really like gardening, but if you are not tweeting about gardening there is no need to mention it.



It's pretty common to have a cover yourself statement such as "views are my own" in your profile. If you are feeling iffy about saying anything really controversial that could embarrass your employer, we suggest you familiarise yourself with your organisation's social media policy. Think before you tweet, especially if you are feeling a bit uneasy about the implications on your organisation.

So you are ready to tweet!

At conferences, remember to quote the presenter either by last name, or last name and first name (or initial). E.g.

"Prof J Smith: Questions whether we use the most effective strategies to reduce health inequalities #pubhlthconf"

Remember to use the conference hashtag on **all** tweets.

Here is an example of the Twitter feed from the 2013 Health Promotion Association Conference.





We recommend referring to this helpful checklist of tweeting from events:

Hashtag – for the event

Attribution – have you made it clear whether you are quoting and whom?

Varied – mix up your tweets, with mood tweets, information, big ideas, challenges (your own or the speakers), photos etc

Engaging – is it? Tweet things people will relate to, think about the language you use, keep your followers in mind. Good speakers often hand you great, tweetable soundbites

You – Don't be afraid to show that you are a real person! Sometimes comment on what you hear. This could also stand for Your organization; share your organization's values and interests through what and how you tweet

Others - consider adding Twitter handles to target your tweets

Useful - does it add value? Remember to include links etc where appropriate. Being useful makes it more likely that you'll be retweeted and people will be keen to follow you.

(Source: <http://evidentlycochrane.wordpress.com/2013/09/12/weve-got-a-handy-checklist-for-live-tweeting-from-events-have-you/#more-757>)

Use Twitter lingo such as RT (retweet) and MT (modified tweet)

Retweet or RT: Forwarding another user's tweet, usually with an added comment, letting the RT abbreviation mark the end of the forwarder's comment and the start of the original tweet.

e.g. *"Great work happening at this organisation RT @Heather: Interesting research project www.healthresearchproject.com.au"*

Modified tweet or MT: This means the same as RT but used to show that you've edited the original tweet, usually due to space restrictions.

(Source: <http://mashable.com/2013/07/19/twitter-lingo-guide/>)

Who to follow – getting started

To get started on Twitter here is a list of some key organisations and individuals you might like to follow. Remember to check out your local politicians and relevant organisations including local government.

Public Health Association of Australia	@_PHAA_
Australian Health Promotion Association	@AHPA_AU
WePublicHealth	@WePublicHealth
Peter Dutton MP	@PeterDutton_MP
Fran Baum	@baumfran
Melissa Sweet	@croakeyblog
ANPHA	@ANPHAagency
Rob Moodie	@ARobM
Simon Chapman	@SimonChapman6
Health in all policies	@hiap2013
Ilona Kickbusch	@IlonaKickbusch
Zockmelon	@zockmelon

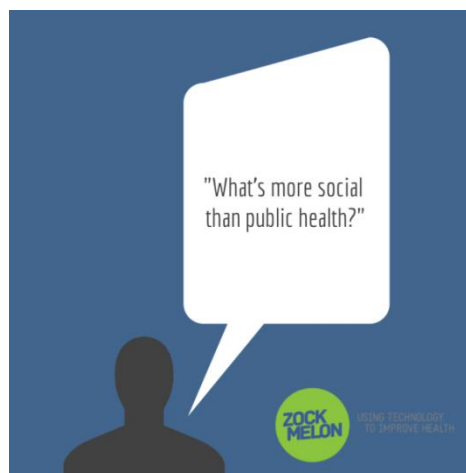


What's next

It's ok if you don't tweet every day, or every week. Heck, it's fine if you dust off your Twitter account just for the occasional conference or workshop. No problem. It's a tool that must work for *you*.

However, we recommend setting up some lists or following hashtags of interest and checking in when you can to enable you to really get the most out of Twitter. You should also consider setting up some Twitter lists to help categorise the people and organisations you follow (e.g. you may have a 'public health category', or a 'politicians' category). This can make it so much easier to find tweets of particular interest rather than trying to keep up in real time. You can always 'favourite' (star) particular tweets as an effective way to bookmark important tweets to refer to later.

Finally, enjoy the social aspect of tweeting. Say hi and introduce yourself IRL (in real life) to fellow tweeps. It's a fantastic way to network, break the ice and also share and disseminate conference learnings.



About Zockmelon

Zockmelon's mission

Our aim is to combine best practice health promotion with best practice use of technology.

How can Zockmelon help you?

We specialise in public health specific professional development relating to using technology, tailored social media consulting and app planning and development.

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