

HOW-TO GUIDE

Science Network Watchdog Toolkit

The president uses Twitter to communicate with the country. Members of Congress and congressional committees interact via Facebook. Livestream video shows the world what's happening in real time. And cross-sector networking is made possible by LinkedIn. The fast-paced transmission of information and ability to reach people at all levels and places in society makes social media an important tool for achieving policy goals.

Connect with people and organizations. Social media helps you reach potential partners and allies, and builds up the number of people in your group or network. Follow groups that are similar to yours, and communicate with people in those groups. Let your unique perspective and experience shine while supporting others. Remember that people are more likely to share what you create if you return the favor.

Offer information and keep others (and yourself) up to date. Share information about your expertise and interests. Following others who have expertise and interests that will provide you with new insights. When you see important events unfolding, share your insights in real time. Consider posting several tweets on the same subject (known as a Tweetstorm) if you need more space to provide information.

Create attention for your issue. Tag and tweet at decision makers and encourage other constituents to do the same. Use Thunderclaps (www.thunderclap.it) to get a large number of people posting about the same issue. Elevate other actions, such as letters to and from policymakers or videos or photos of a town hall meeting or letter writing party.

Tips for Success

- Be transparent about who you are.
- Personalize your profile and tweets. (Connections are strengthened when people get to know you.)
- Add new ideas and perspectives to the conversation and reinforce the perspectives of others.

- Repost and retweet content from those with whom you want to build relationships.
- Check out trending topics and any interesting hashtags that catch your eye; see if there is anything you can add.
- Use accessible language. Try to avoid jargon, but if you must use it, define or explain the terms.
- Respond to comments, have conversations, but...
- Avoid engaging with trolls or anyone else whose goal is to waste your time or who isn't willing to listen.
- Consistency is key—the more consistent you are with posting/tweeting, the more you will build up a following.
- Don't be afraid to post about the same subject repeatedly, as one tweet is likely to be missed. (Changing pictures or writing is helpful so that it is catchy for those who have already seen previous posts.)

Resources for Engaging on Social Media

- Watch the Science Network Workshop Series webinar, "Social Media for Scientists: Science Communication for the Web" at <https://youtu.be/cXQILih3uY0>.
- Read about "What Makes a Good Tweet" with Hootsuite's blog post <https://blog.hootsuite.com/how-to-get-twitter-followers>.
- Search keywords your congressional members are using on Twitter using www.tweetcongress.org.
- Following and connect with scientist watchdogs via the Science Network's "Defending Science" twitter list at <https://twitter.com/SciNetUCS/lists/defending-science>.

If you have any questions or would like specific advice as you prepare to speak up at a public event, email us at ScienceNetwork@ucsusa.org. See our Science in the Age of Scrutiny guide at www.ucsusa.org/ScienceUnderScrutiny for support if you are confronted with aggressive communication.