



EIGHT tips for using Twitter around health-related events

1 Remember, they're following YOU

If you have 100 followers or a million, they track you because of what you say and who you are. Try to relate what you hear during an event to your own knowledge and experience. 'Speak your world' by sharing your reactions and opinions openly. That's what your followers want to hear.

2 Be their ears and eyes too

For every person physically present during an event, there are probably hundreds (if not thousands) of remote participants watching from afar, many wishing they could have had the same opportunity. Try to stay conscious of what your followers and other remote participants might be most interested to read, see or find out – and not only what you want to tell them.

3 Use the event # hashtag

The more people who use the same hashtag, the more likely they are to connect with one another and share thoughts/ideas. Find out the hashtag the organizers have chosen for the event and use it – consistently.

4 Be original

Your tweets will be valued most by your followers if they include something they could not easily obtain or find out elsewhere: Your opinion; a useful link to an interesting site or article; a relevant hashtag (other than the event hashtag); another user's username. Don't hit the retweet button without including your own view or added value, and avoid posting overused rhetoric about an issue. Stay fresh.

5 No time like the present

Tweet as soon as something grabs your attention or evokes a reaction in you. Share your impression or mood as well as the information content. If someone posts something you agree/disagree with, say so and why, or ask a follow-up question of your own. It is hard to find the time when you are taking part in an event, but commenting and responding in real time to others' posts adds real depth and value to discussion.

6 Quote of the day... really?

If you must tweet direct quotes, listen out for particularly incisive or original comments, and quote them for what they say, not who said them. Find the speaker's username if you have time. Avoid repeating what the high profile speakers say, they'll be tweeted and reported by everyone.

7 A picture, a thousand words etc.

Use the same rules for photos/videos as you do for text content: Add value for your followers and give them something they cannot get elsewhere, such as photos of presentation, conclusion slides, new data or the cover of a publication you have seen for the first time at an event. Avoid photos of meeting rooms and high-profile speakers.

8 Be a Twitter advocate

Remind other delegates that they can also Tweet from the event. If someone tells you something interesting/important, encourage them to Tweet about it. If they are not Twitter users, take a few minutes to tell them why they would benefit if they were. Encourage them to sign up and follow you!

The use and popularity of social media have thrown open the doors of health-related events. Now a statement made during a conference plenary, a new health policy set by a government, or a funding decision by a major donor, can all be read about, watched or heard by thousands of interested onlookers all over the globe. In an instant.

Based on analysis of the use of social media around such 'moments', this brief guide offers eight tips for making the most of one social media platform – Twitter – around the next health event on your calendar.

It was prepared by @francetim and @GlobalHealthTom. Comments and suggested improvements are warmly welcomed.

Anatomy of a Tweet



Twitter glossary

Twitter	Information network made up of 140-character messages
Tweet	A message posted via Twitter
@	The @ sign is used to mention other users
Username	Your identity on Twitter (e.g. @BillGates)
#Hashtag	The # symbol is used to highlight keywords or topics (e.g. #mHealth13)
Link	Hyperlink to a useful website or online article
Follow	To follow someone on Twitter is to subscribe to their Tweets
Follower	A follower is another Twitter user who has followed you
Reply	A Tweet posted in reply to another user's message
Retweet (or RT)	A Tweet by another user, forwarded to/by you. Often used to spread news or share valuable information on Twitter