

Why you should be on Twitter



Richard English / Communications Manager / British Ecological Society
Richard@BritishEcologicalSociety.org

We at the BES love Twitter. It allows us to hear from and speak directly to thousands of people. It's not the only way we communicate with our members, but it's one with massive reach.

In the past few years, Twitter use has become more widespread in our field – and for good reason. People have seen its potential for disseminating research on a global scale, highlighting opportunities to get involved and networking with people in different disciplines.

Twitter is an informal, information network made up of 140 character messages called 'tweets'. 274 million people across the world are on Twitter – and they're not *just* talking about One Direction.

Set up a profile and you can craft your own newsfeed from tweets of people and organisations you like – by choosing who you follow, you will sieve out the extraneous noise for a fully tailored feed. Much of the breaking news appears first on Twitter – that includes career opportunities – so, chances are, you will hear things first.

It's also a great leveller as Twitter allows you to chat directly with someone you would ordinarily not meet – or not feel comfortable approaching.

Online communication can be faceless and it might be tempting to dispense with manners; before you tweet, think about whether you would say it to someone's face. Potential employers and collaborators might be watching...

WHY BECOME A TWEET:

World domination

Join up and extend your global networking possibilities by millions

Network

Don't be shy, connect with people by using their @username in your tweet, e.g. *Hi, @BritishEcolSoc do you run policy intern programmes?*

Talk, help, share

Tweet about what interests you. Need help? Tweet and someone can probably give it. Know the answer to someone's question? Tweet them. Found a tweet interesting? Tell them. It's easy to make a connection

Lurk

You don't *have* to tweet – just follow the people you're interested in, sit back and read

Be your business card

Show your personality; people are less likely to engage if you have a blank profile. Carve yourself a niche

Favourite

Click on the 'favourite' button of a tweet to store useful links, advice or contact details

HOW TO BECOME A TWEET:

1) Go to Twitter.com and download Twitter to your device

If you have it on your tablet or phone, you can more easily take a photo/video and share it immediately

2) Create an account

Your username could say something about you, whether it's your name or area of research, e.g. @Bill_Sutherland, @WaspWoman

A long username will eat into the 140 character limit and give people less room to talk. And no one likes that...

3) Upload a photo to your profile

People who keep the generic 'egg' image are less likely to be taken seriously. Change it to a photo of yourself for ease of recognition. Unless you look like an egg...

4) Follow people

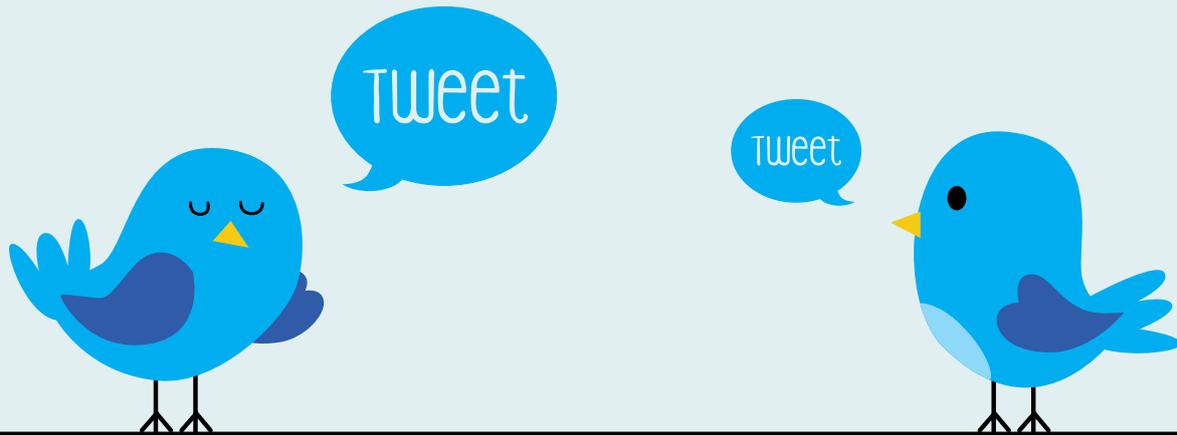
Look at @BritishEcoSoc to see who follows us and who we follow; get inspiration for people you might want to follow, then look at *their* followers. Click their 'follow' button to have their tweets appear in your timeline

5) Accruing Followers

Don't worry about this – you don't *need* a million followers. Most people are friendly and will follow you back

6) Find conversations

Click on the hyperlinked hashtag or type in the 'search' box to join in a conversation, e.g. #ecology, #womeninscience, #marine. Use the official hashtag when tweeting from a meeting, e.g. #BESSfe; that way, people can follow proceedings wherever they are based.



HOW TO BE A TWEET AT OUR ANNUAL MEETING

- Sign up before the meeting so you can build connections ahead of time
- Follow @BritishEcolSoc and @SFEcologie and search for the meeting hashtag: #BESSfe
- Put your Twitter handle prominently on your talk or poster
- Poster sessions will be busy, so let people know other times you will be available
- Tweet about your talk or poster before you are due to present
- Be confident and tweet at specific people you want to notice your presentation, e.g. *Hello @GMMace. My 09.45 talk on biodiversity directly links to your project. Be great to chat afterwards.*
- Tweet a photo of where your talk or poster will be. Even try a selfie, so people can more easily find you
- Remember that Twitter will not only help you connect with people at #BESSfe, but also those users not attending
- Questions for plenary speakers will only be taken via Twitter; this means questions will be succinct, shy delegates can participate and people outside of the meeting can join in, too
- Keep the conversation going – maintain connections you make after #BESSfe has finished. Twitter is for life, not just Christmas (well, until the Next Big Social Media Thing comes along...)

GLOSSARY

@

This identifies a username, e.g. *Hello @BritishEcolSoc!* People will use your @username to mention you in tweets or in a direct message

DM

Direct Messages are private conversations between people who follow each other. They also have a 140-character limit

Favourite

Favouriting a tweet indicates that you like it; you can also use the function to store information. Find your favourite tweets by clicking on the 'favourites' button on your profile. The author will see that you liked it

Follow

Click the 'follow' button next to their username to have their tweets appear in your feed

Hashtag or

This groups conversations and marks keywords, e.g. #fieldwork. Click on the hyperlinked hashtag or type it into the search box. Popular hashtagged words are often 'Trending Topics'

Mention

Inclusion of another Twitter user in your tweet, e.g. *Thank you @BritishEcolSoc for a great meeting*

Reply

A response to someone's tweet that begins with their @username. Click the "reply" button to comment on a tweet

Retweet (RT)

Someone's tweet that you forward to your followers; often used to pass along news, views or jobs

Username

Your name on Twitter; it is always immediately preceded by '@', e.g. @BESpolicy

Trend/Trending Topics

A topic or hashtag that is popular at that moment, e.g. #Christmas

Tweep

A Twitter user

Tweet

A message that may contain photos, videos, links and up to 140 characters of text

Would you prefer a practical Twitter 101 tutorial? Richard English, Communications Manager, will be on hand throughout #BESSfe and is easily bribed with biscuits and cake.

Thanks to @ASPB for providing a helpful blog on Twitter use at meetings: <http://blog.aspb.org/2014/06/23/social-media-increase-visibility-poster/>

Twitter itself has useful guidance: <https://support.twitter.com/groups/50-welcome-to-twitter#> and <https://support.twitter.com/articles/215585#>