

## Tips for engaging with journalists on Twitter

Here are some facts, ideas, and tips that were shared by Eric Eckl, Owner of [Water Words that Work](#).

**Eighty-three percent** of journalists use Twitter. A vast majority of those check Twitter daily, 1 in 5 check or post their accounts *hourly!* It is their source for breaking news; they use it to see what other news organizations are covering; and to find ideas and sources for stories. Twitter often drives reporter's perception of what's going on in the community. (Though they still want pitches via email.)

How to find and engage with a local journalist:

1. When you read an article on a local on-line paper on a topic of interest to your organization, you can click on the by-line of the reporter. That will usually take you to their 'bio page' which will very likely have the "Twitter bird" icon. Click on it. Then click the "follow" icon.
2. You can increase your engagement by "liking" a tweet (a heart icon)
3. If you comment (speech bubble icon) on something they have written or Tweeted, try to be positive and supportive. If you disagree or have additional thoughts, be POLITE, knowledgeable, and constructive. Show that you can be a trusted source for additional information and/or a new perspective.
4. Take it to the next level by "re-tweeting" something they have Tweeted (using the two-arrow icon)

*Why do this?* Because they will notice. The journalist you are following receives a notification when something they Tweeted gets liked, re-Tweeted, etc. And often, their bosses evaluate their work based on these metrics. So, you are actually doing them a favor when you engage this way. You are laying the foundation for the relationship that they will remember when you email and call them with your pitch.

A note on 'hashtags': Do not try to be overly creative with hashtags (#). Use ones that are intuitive to your topic of interest. If you want to promote "clean water in PA" use CleanWaterPA (caps don't really matter) not "KeepItKleenKeystone." If a journalist is researching a new storyline and wants to find out who is working on clean water in PA, they are going to search using an intuitive hashtag. Research what others with a similar objectives to your organization's are using and use those.

As for 'user tags' (@), they are linked to specific Twitter accounts and you must be accurate if you want your tweet to link back to that user. If you Tweet, "Great article about our stream clean up project by @talimacarthur" and my username is @taliPOWR it won't link back to my account, and I won't know I got a shout out from you.

Finally, when you use Twitter to engage with a journalist, use a professional account linked to your organization. Not your personal account.

A big thank you to Eric for these tips!