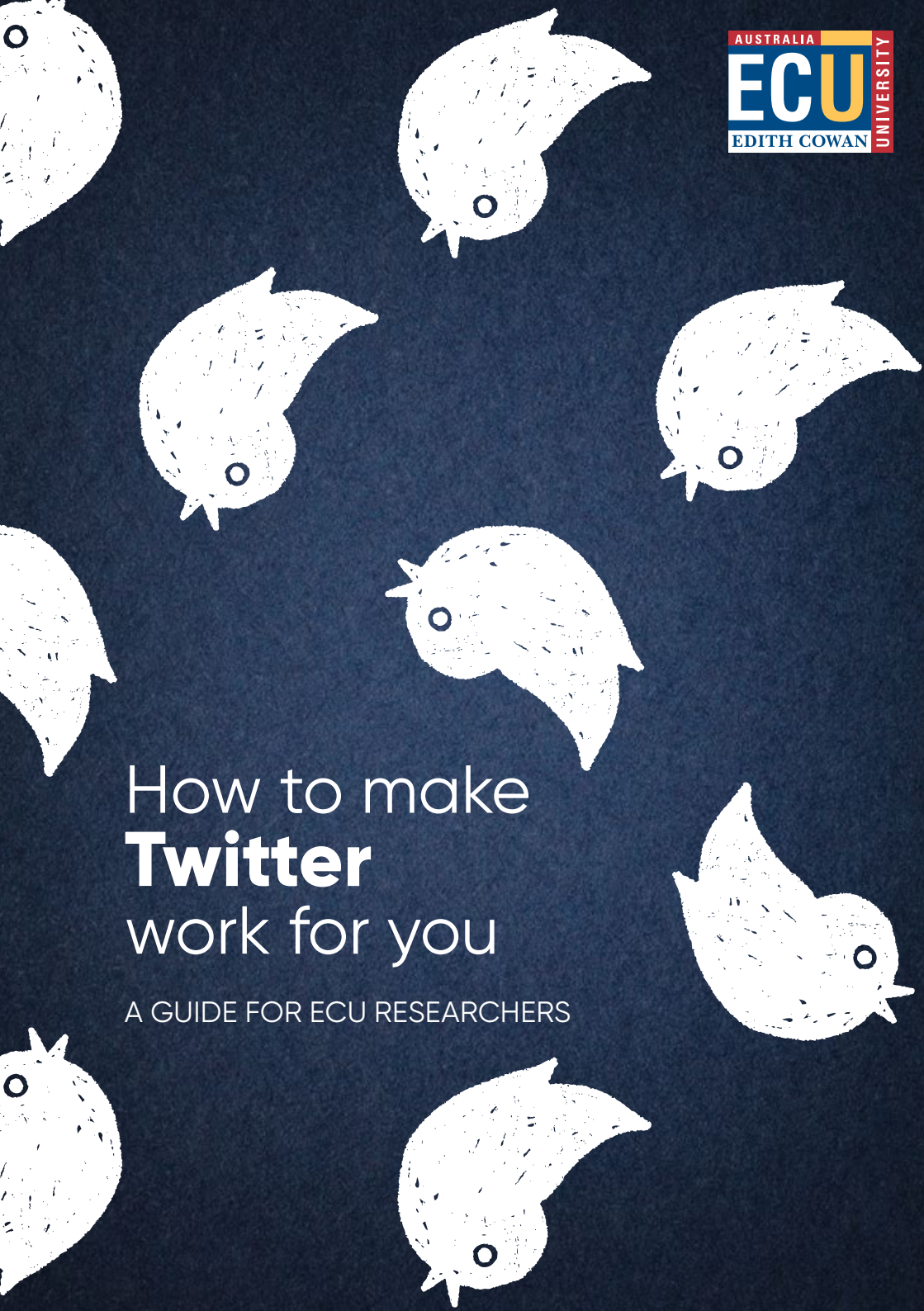


# How to make **Twitter** work for you

A GUIDE FOR ECU RESEARCHERS



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## Why Tweet?

Twitter has become an increasingly popular tool for academics. Here are 4 reasons why:

1. Twitter is an easy, free way to promote your research and allows you to easily promote your research outputs. Including papers, op-eds and videos. You can reach a large number of people quickly through tweets and retweets.
2. It's easy to follow the work of experts in your field and build supportive relationships over time. You can seek feedback about your research and give feedback to others.
3. Twitter enables you to be involved with those conferences and events you can't physically attend by following and contributing to discussions using the event hashtag.
4. There is growing evidence to suggest that communicating your published research via social media can result in higher citations.



# How to make Twitter work for you

1. **Be authentic.** Be yourself. A polite conversational tone encourages engagement and sharing of knowledge.
2. **Be generous.** Twitter is a collaborative network, not just a promotional platform. If you're only communicating your own research, you'll quickly find yourself in a vacuum. Show your network members you value them by retweeting their content and contributing to their conversations.
3. **Be patient.** Building a valuable network won't happen overnight, especially if you're not engaging regularly. Use keyword searches if you're unsure who to follow. Fortunately, Twitter is intuitive and will suggest people to follow based on your existing network and posts.
4. **Be inclusive.** Build your network more quickly with valuable engagement. For example, don't just retweet other people's posts – add a personal comment. Get involved with your followers by @mentioning them and tagging them in your posts. You'll find your network will expand and deepen the more regular attention you give it over time.
5. **Be interesting.** Make your published paper stand out from the crowd with an engaging description or comment about its relevance. Provide nuance and context. Posts with images (a photo or infographic) receive higher engagement. Similarly, don't simply retweet posts for the sake of being polite. Choose items you genuinely find interesting and say why it resonated for you. Be sure to @mention the person who first posted it and anyone else you think might find the post interesting.
6. **Be responsive.** Is your field of research in the news? Have they got it wrong? Do you have a fresh angle? Twitter is your chance to contribute to the debate in real time.
7. **Be snappy.** One of Twitter's defining attractions is its brevity. Even when the platform doubled its allowed number of characters from 140 to 280, most users didn't change their behaviour. The average tweet is just 33 characters long, according to Twitter. Only 5% of tweets are longer than 190 characters. Be succinct, be clear and get to the point.
8. **Be smart.** Yes, Twitter is renowned for hosting trolls, but there's an easy way to handle them: don't engage. Avoid pointless Twitter arguments. Ensure your comments are respectful.
9. **Be visible.** Promote your Twitter profile through your email signature, ECU website profile, Conversation profile, presentations, blogs etc.

# How to engage on Twitter

Social media is becoming increasingly integrated into academic life because of its capacity to enhance existing scholarly activities, including:

## NETWORKING AND COLLABORATION

You can't attend every interesting conference in person, but you can follow proceedings and join the discussion. Follow conference hashtags (eg #ExOncTC19), retweet your collaborators' posts when relevant, @mention people you want to specifically target with appropriate material.

If your particular field of research is not already represented by a hashtag, try starting your own. Participate in group discussions.

Use the Twitter search function to identify topics, people and events of interest.

## PROMOTION AND DISSEMINATION OF YOUR WORK

Tweet about new publications, blogs and project updates. Always make sure that a full open web version or summary of your publication or conference presentation is available. Tweet about policy development, government reports or news events that impact your current or past work, relinking to your paper or presentation each time.



## CONDUCTING RESEARCH

Twitter can play its part in most participant recruitment drives. Write an engaging and snappy invitation and, whenever possible, link to a survey or information about the project. Twitter also provides opportunities to crowdsource research activities such as data gathering, making observations, transcribing and editing documents.

## TEACHING

Twitter can be used by academics to engage with students by posting links to interesting content, running classroom polls and providing information such as consultation times and class announcements. Less vocal students may appreciate and utilise this form of engagement. Set up a unique hashtag for your unit or class and encourage regular use (NB You can't insist upon it). Remember that all discussions will be publicly searchable.

# Maximise your Twitter profile

## HEADER

This is the large image across the top of your Twitter profile. It's valuable social media real estate, so it makes sense to put some thought into what will best reflect you and your research. You can either treat your header as a backdrop to your profile pic (the small, circular pic of you) or as the main event. Have a look at what other people are doing in your field of research ... what catches your eye?



## PROFILE PIC

This may be small but it's important. When people communicate with you on Twitter, they're effectively talking to your profile picture. Be sure to choose something that sends the desired message in terms of both your personality and your research area. Be sure the picture is cropped well (ie don't cut yourself off at the neck or inadvertently remove your ears). Ideally have the look or colour contrast with your header pic so that it "pops". Look for the right balance between personal and professional.



## HANDLE

This is your username – the name that people will @mention you with and search for if they're looking for you. Chances are the first handle you'll try to register – your name – will be taken (there are at least 300 million active Twitter users), so you'll need to try some variations. Try shortening your name, using an initial or underscore, or adding a keyword relevant to your research. Be sure whatever new word you create doesn't accidentally say something you'd rather not! For the purposes of professional research, it's best not to make any kind of pun out of your Twitter handle. Play it straight.



## DESCRIPTION

Also known as your 'bio', this is one of the most visible and searchable descriptions of you on the internet. You've only got 160 characters, so make every one count. In the context of professional research, don't try to be too creative or funny. Humour is a very subjective thing best saved for accommodating barbecue banter. Be accurate and be human. Your bio should be written in the first person. You can also use @mentions and hashtags within a bio, but only do so if relevant.



# Tweeting: the basics

## LENGTH

A single tweet can have up to 280 characters – but don't feel you need to use them all. In fact, less is more.

## ADDING VALUE

You can add a pic, GIF, poll or location information to a tweet by clicking on the icon under the "What's happening" box.

## LINKS

You can copy links within the wording of your tweet. Regardless of the length of the URL, it will be counted as just 23 characters, still leaving you with enough characters to say something about the link. You can also use URL shorteners like bitly.

## TAGGING PEOPLE

Every tweet you post can be seen by your followers, but they can also quite easily be missed. If you want to ensure someone within your network, or outside of it, reads your tweet, then you'll need to @ them within the wording of your tweet.

## USING HASHTAGS

The hashtag (#) symbol immediately before a word is used to index keywords or topics on Twitter. As you become more familiar with Twitter, you'll start to notice the most common hashtags used within your research field (eg #sportsmedicine #melanoma). Specific hashtags are usually established for key events and conferences. A few tips about hashtags:

- When used correctly, hashtags increase engagement with tweets (according to Twitter's own research).
- You can't include spaces or punctuation in a hashtag – it won't work.
- If you tweet with a hashtag on a public account, anyone who does a search for that hashtag may find your tweet.
- Using no more than 2-3 hashtags within a single tweet is best practice, although you can use as many as you like.
- You can type a hashtagged keyword in the search bar to find content and accounts based on your interest.

## RETWEET

This is when you re-post someone else's tweet or one of your own. Tip: don't retweet for the sake of it. Show why you've chosen to retweet this information by adding a comment. A retweet with a comment is known as a 'quote tweet'.



## GENERAL RESEARCH HASHTAGS:

#research, #exercise, #PhD, #medicine, #healthy, #NHMRC

## ECU HASHTAGS:

#edithcowanuniversity, #ecuresearch, #ecustudentsuccess, #worldready

**ECU School of Arts and Humanities** ..... #artshumecu

**ECU School of Business and Law** ..... #ecusbl, #ecubusinessandlaw

**Edith Cowan Centre for Global Issues** ..... #globalissues, #humanities

**Exercise Medicine Research Institute (EMRI)** ..... #vario

**Electron Science Research Institute (ESRI)** ..... #esri

**ECU Security Research Institute** ..... #ecusri

**Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet** ..... #healthinfonet

**Centre for Communications and Electronics Research (CCER)** ..... #ccer

**Centre for Exercise and Sports Science Research (CESSR)** ..... #cessr

**Centre for Innovative Practice (CIP)** ..... #cip

**Centre for Marine Ecosystems Research (CMER)** ..... #cmer

**Centre for Research in Entertainment, Arts, Technology,  
Education and Communications (CREATEC)** ..... #createc

**Centre for Schooling and Learning Technologies (CSALT)** ..... #csalt

**Fogarty Learning Centre** ..... #fogarty

**Sellenger Centre for Research in Law, Justice and Social Change** ..... #sellenger

**Systems and Intervention Research Centre for Health (SIRCH)** ..... #sirch

**Centre for Research in Early Childhood** ..... #crec

**Centre of Excellence for Alzheimer's Disease Research and Care** ..... #adrc

## ECU @S:

**News/media** ..... @EdithCowan

**Future students** ..... @EdithCowanUni

**School of Arts and Humanities** ..... @cglobal\_ECU, @newsvineWA

**School of Nursing and Midwifery** ..... @CNMHSR\_ECU

**School of Science** ..... @ECUSRI, @CMER\_ECU

## GLOSSARY OF TWITTER TERMS

**Tweet** – A Twitter message or post. Can contain up to 280 characters, as well as photos, videos and links.

**Retweet** – A tweet that is re-shared to the followers of another user's Twitter account.

**Quote tweet** – A way to retweet where a user can include their own comments along with the tweet.

**Feed** – Your Twitter feed is the main place where the steady stream of tweets from other users is presented to you.

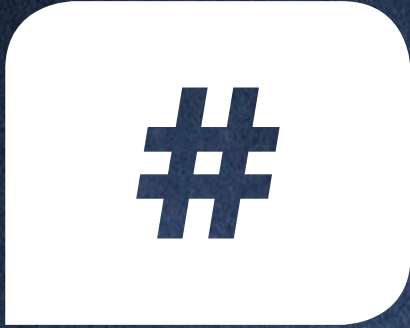
**Handle** – Your Twitter account name.

**Mention** – The act of tagging another person with an @ before their handle. Mentions trigger a notification for that user.

**Direct message** – A direct message (or 'DM') is a private Twitter message sent to one of your followers. They can only be sent to a user who is already following you and you can only receive DMs from users you follow.

**Hashtag** – A word or phrase preceded by the # sign. They're a simple way to mark a topic and make them discoverable to other people. They're also handy for finding other people tweeting in your area of interest.

**Follow** – Subscribing to someone's Twitter account is called "following" them. To start following, click the 'Follow' button next to the username. Someone who follows you is a follower.





For general advice about using Twitter, visit the platform's Help Centre via [www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com)

You can find copies of ECU's Social Media Policy and Media Policy on the ECU staff intranet. Go to: Staff > Professional Services > Brand and Marketing