* **What is a Twitter?**
* Twitter is an information network made up of 140-character messages called tweets. It is used by millions of people, organizations, and businesses to discover and share new information. Twitter users subscribe to receive tweets by following an account. Followers receive messages in their timeline that includes a feed of all the accounts they have subscribed to. These short, easy to read, public messages make Twitter a powerful, real-time way of communicating. These messages can be submitted by a variety of means, including text messages, mobile websites, or the website hosting the micro-blog (<http://www.twitter.com>)
* Twitter has become an important tool for connecting people interested in specific health and safety information. Twitter’s information network has grown at a fast pace, with 460,000 daily sign-ups and over 200 million registered users (Twitter, 2011). CDC uses Twitter to health and safety information in real time with people interested in CDC’s health topics. Twitter is more than a platform to disseminate information; it also provides opportunities to listen to conversations and gather information in real-time. [Twitter’s search engine](http://search.twitter.com/) is a great tool for monitoring conversations on any given topic on Twitter – it is generally limited to the past two weeks of public tweets.
* **Who uses Twitter?**
* Individuals, organizations (e.g. American Cancer Society), corporations (e.g. CNN, Microsoft) and federal agencies (e.g. National Institutes of Health and CDC) use Twitter. So do your patients and peers!
* Twitter use continues to grow since its introduction in 2006. As of May 2011, 13% of online adults use Twitter. The largest population of Twitter users is in the 18 – 29 age bracket, followed by the 30 – 49 age bracket. The number of 30 -49 year olds who use Twitter has doubled since late 2010. High adoption rates for non-whites continue. On a typical day, one in ten African American internet users visit Twitter, double the rate for Latinos and nearly four times the rate for whites. As mobile technologies continue to improve so does user access. Among cell phone-owning Twitter users, 54% access the service through their mobile phone.
* Weill tweeters: <https://twitter.com/MeyerCancerWCMC/lists/weill-cornell-folks/members>
* **What type of activities do Twitter users participate in?**
* A variety of activities are performed by Twitter users including sharing links, videos, photos and retweeting (RT) material posted by others.
* Since its inception as a simple message posting service, users have expanded their use to include the following Twitter events:
* **Twitter Chat**: Scheduled events allowing organizations or programs to communicate with their followers. Chats include free flowing discussions, question and answer sessions and the dissemination of information to a large audience through sharing or retweeting of content. *See “Twitter chats” section for tips.*
* **Live Tweeting**: Tweeting live from an event to highlight key points of a presentation, audience engagement and comments, and play-by-play moments. Live tweeting is often utilized for conferences to allow followers not attending to follow the events. *See “Conferences” section for tips*.
* **Hashtags**
* Hashtags are ways to reference topics that people might search for, such as #cancer. They are also used for events, such as tweetchats and conferences, and many disease-specific Twitter communities that have created hashtags so that relevant tweets can be easily found (e.g: #lcsm for the lung cancer social media community). *See the “Cancer hashtags” section for a list.*
* It is recommended that you consider using hashtags (up to 3 per tweet) to make your tweets findable. Ideally, you would either weave the hashtag into the main content, or add it at the end.
	+ Example: Interesting post by @theNCI on bringing precision to screening for #cancer. Many challenges remain [ow.ly/VZ81b](https://t.co/WVfhpCup1v%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank) #LCSM
* **Private vs. broadcast**
* If you **reply** to someone (by clicking on the single arrow under a tweet on Twitter.com) their Twitter handle will appear at the front of the tweet (e.g.: @ElementoLab: I agree! Important findings, worth sharing!) and your mutual followers will see.
* If your intention is to **mention** the person and make the tweet visible to everyone, then put a period before the name (e.g.: .@ElementoLab has published some great research on Big Data Analytics…).
* If your intention is to send the person a **private message** that only they will see, put a d before their name (e.g.: d ElementoLab Good job, we should collaborate!)
* **Account set-up recommendations**
* **Profile name**: Each Twitter account has a unique profile name that describes the subject matter of the account, name of the organization or contains a keyword describing the nature of the organization. (e.g. CDC\_eHealth, FluGov). The profile name should be short and concise (maximum 15 characters), and ideally mark you as a Dr. (e.g.: @DrGMcGinty; @NeeraGuptaMD). Many Weill accounts also contain WCMC.
* **Biography** - The biography is a 160-character description of the profile. It should state your position and affiliation with WCM/NYP/MCC, with references to the respective Twitter accounts if possible (@WeillCornell, @NYPhospital, @MeyerCancerWCMC). Can also include some personal info if you like. (e.g: Thoracic surgeon @WeillCornell and @nyphospital. Cancer researcher. Patient advocate. Hammerhead.)
* **Image** – A headshot or the WCM graphic which can be found here: <http://brand.weill.cornell.edu>
* **Useful links:**
* ASCO Oncologists: Why I Tweet:
* <http://www.medpagetoday.com/HematologyOncology/LungCancer/46176>
* The brilliant tool researchers aren’t using? Twitter.
* <http://www.vchri.ca/feature-stories/articles/2014/08/18/brilliant-research-tool-researchers-arent-using-twitter>
* A gentle introduction to Twitter for the apprehensive academic
* <http://deevybee.blogspot.co.uk/2011/06/gentle-introduction-to-twitter-for.html>
* Why do we need Twitter?
* <http://www.slideshare.net/nsmajhail/twitter-ebmt>
* **Identify objectives and audiences**
* ..and cater your content accordingly. Are you trying to reach patients? Peers? Both? Do you want to accrue people for clinical trials, inform people of your research, share health tips or uplifting stories, position yourself as an expert in your field?
* **Do your research**
* Follow organizations and people who share trusted information relevant to your goals and needs. Start with professional organizations, journals and media sources, then search for relevant terms and hashtags and assess who is interacting on a consistent basis.
* Take some time to see how others use the tool for guidance and tips.
* **Consider a social media management tool**
* There are several website tools and apps that can help you manage your Twitter activity, such as Hootsuite (<http://www.hootsuite.com>) and Tweetdeck (<https://tweetdeck.twitter.com/>).
* Why I like them:
* **They allow you to schedule tweets.** This is a great tool, especially if you only have limited time to use Twitter. You can spend an hour on Monday preparing a few tweets in advance, and plan to dole them out daily at strategic times (9-5pm, and especially lunchtime), which is better than bombarding your followers with 5 tweets in a row, then nothing for days. You can then dip in regularly and add additional tweets on the fly, or in response to live events/news, etc whenever you have time.
* **You can create shortened URLS for long links, right in the app (saving precious space and easing the eye)–** then track how many clicks they receive, if you are into analytics. Providing additional info via links to relevant articles, etc, helps get around the limited character count. It can also be a tool to generate traffic to a website.
* **They allow you to create several tabbed feeds, so you can organize your stream into more manageable chunks.** If you’re following hundreds of people, it can quickly become overwhelming to look at all those tweets! By creating separate feeds based on lists of people or search terms, you can visually see key content. For instance, the Meyer Cancer Center account Hootsuite dashboard displays tabs for “Home” (a stream of tweets from everyone we follow); “Mentions” (to quickly see if someone is talking about us); “Weill Cornell Folks” (a list of Weill-affiliated tweeters I created – an option in both Twitter and Hootsuite); “Retweets” (any tweets that I have sent out that have been retweeted by other people – a good indicator of which tweets are popular); and “Scheduled” (any tweets I have scheduled in advance). If you were to scroll right, you would also see a tab for “Messages (inbox),” (private messages that people have sent me via “direct message”/DM); “My Tweets” (everything I’ve sent out); and additional streams for search terms I want to keep an eye out, such as #lcsm (lung cancer social media) during Lung Cancer Awareness month.
* 
* **Content**
* Keep it short and simple. We recommend writing tweets of 120 characters so that messages can easily be retweeted, (the practice of posting another user’s tweet), without editing. If a tweet contains the maximum 140 characters, users who want to share your message by retweeting will need to edit the message to reduce the character count.
* Make your message stand out with photos, videos, or other graphics.
* It’s not all about you. Referencing other people’s work, promoting your peers, and engaging with your followers makes you more likeable and credible, and will result in good Karma of great value down the line. Referencing the foundation that funded the study you just linked to will gain you brownie points with the funder – if they then retweet your tweet, it could also gain you followers since they probably reach an audience of thousands, compared to your 50 followers. Consider the 1 in 4 rule, below:
	+ *1 in 4 rule*
		1. Tweets directly about your work
		2. A reply
		3. A link to something useful
		4. A retweet (RT)
* **Keep followers engaged**
* Setting a regular posting schedule will help engage followers. (See above about the scheduling feature of management tools)
* **Retweet** (by clicking on the double arrow below someone’s post on Twitter.com) posts from partners and followers, and mention them (use their Twitter names with @ symbol) as much as possible (I always do a quick google search for someone’s name and “Twitter” to see if they are on Twitter as I post), as well as relevant topics (with # symbol) at end, if room. Twitter now has the option to add a comment (or “quote” in Hootsuite), which I recommend; the original post will appear as a graphic below yours, and you will have extra room to add your insight, etc.
* Search Twitter for comments about your organization or health topic (can monitor via a Hootsuite stream), and engage with others who are conversing about them (reply to their posts, retweet them, etc.
* If someone mentions you, always offer a reply – even a simple “thank you” could go a long way!
* #FF is for “Follow Friday,” when some people post the names of people they think you should add as a follower. It’s a way to recognize some of your followers.
* **Promote your Twitter profile.**
* You can gain followers by interacting with others as outlined above, participating in Twitter chats and other events. But don’t overlook the obvious: Provide links to your Twitter profile on business cards, PPT presentations, name badge at conferences, website profiles such as POPs page, email signature, etc.
* Conferences
* **Nuts and Bolts**
* Add your Twitter handle to your conference materials (Powerpoint, poster, nametag, etc).
* Use the conference hashtag in all tweets - #AACR15, #ASCO15. This way, others who don’t follow you will still be able to find your tweets using Twitter search. At some large conferences, people also use hashtags for individual sessions (ie: #s402)
* Use a Twitter client like Tweetdeck or Hootsuite, where you can have multiple columns open at a time, including saved search terms (like #AACR15), to allow you to more easily monitor the feed.
* Don’t forget battery backup or phone chargers for whatever device you’ll be tweeting from!
* Keep it short
* Twitter allows you to type 140 characters, but if you keep your tweets to 120, it makes it easier for others to retweet them without going over the limit.
* RT your colleagues who are also at the conference to leverage your combined reach
* Select quotes that are powerful, highly relevant and/or succinct summaries. Follow up with links to relevant info, if available, or your two cents about what was said. If you’re really keen, you could have some of these tweets/links prepared in advance!
* **Know/respect your audience**
* What’s your objective for live-tweeting? Is it to connect with fellow attendees? To reach those who won’t be there? What about your followers who have no interest in the proceedings? You might consider warning followers that your feed will be taken up with conference chat for a few days, and/or limit the volume in case it turns them off.
* **Know/respect your speaker**
* As you build your conference itinerary, note the presenters and speakers and find their handles before the event (a simple Google search of their name and “Twitter” usually works) so you don’t need to search for them when the session is in full swing.
* If they are presenting unpublished results, you may want to ask if it is OK to tweet about the presentation, or stick to broad statement tweets rather than specifics. Avoid photos of slides that reveal results the presenter might not want to share. *Note that AACR has guidelines about taking pictures during the conference – generally they do not allow, unless they are scene shots. Check what your conference policy is.*
* Give credit – A big part of tweeting from a conference or other event is about curating the most relevant and important points that speakers make and sharing them with your followers. If someone says something interesting, use a format like “[name] says [their statement].” Whenever you can, use the speaker’s Twitter handle to attribute a statement to them — this allows an interested follower to immediately see their bio, picture and website. Make it as easy as possible for your followers to identify who’s speaking — you don’t want to run the risk of people taking a statement or idea out of context or simply getting confused by your tweets and unfollowing you.
* **Know/respect your fellow attendees**
* A benefit of tweeting from an event is that you can gain a large amount of quality Twitter connections in a short amount of time. Just as people will see your Twitter handle in the event’s livestream, discover your work and follow you if it is relevant to them (which is likely since you are both interested in the same conference), you should follow other people whose handles appear in the livestream. This increases the chances that other event-goers will discover you and you can make connections that overflow into offline meetings.
* Watch for statements that triggered interest among your followers or that many people in the event’s livestream retweeted. To the extent that it’s possible, reply to those who tweeted the same statements, either agreeing that an important point was made or by asking a follow-up question of your own. If the conversation gets interesting, you can tell everyone who is at the event to take it offline by tweeting something like, “Let’s talk more about this during the coffee break in the main lobby!”
* Take selfies with other attendees and tweet them, with conference hashtags and Twitter handles, so they appear on both of your feeds, and in the conference feed/archive.
* Chances are that someone will be live blogging the conference as well. This means that they will be recording more of what is said and in more detail. Look around — for instance by glancing at the hashtag stream — for live bloggers. After vetting them, share the links to these blogs with your followers. It’s a great idea to give your audience different perspectives on the event.
* Reconnect with your new followers by sending a “thanks for connecting at [event name]” tweet once the event is over. Part of tweeting from an event is about using the platform to make connections that can last beyond the event or even grow into organizational partnerships and collaborations.
* Twitter chats are scheduled events meant to engage organizations and individuals in a topic of mutual interest. Chats include free-flowing discussions, question-and-answer sessions, and the dissemination of information to a large audience through sharing or retweeting of content.
* *Basically, a bunch of people interested in a topic all log in to Twitter at the same time and converse by sending tweets with the same hashtag (ex: #sabcschat).*
* NCI has hosted several: <http://www.cancer.gov/social-media/events> and AACR also participates (often in the weekly [#abcDrBchat](https://twitter.com/search?f=realtime&q=%23abcDrBchat)) <http://blog.aacr.org/twitter-chat-101/> Many disease-specific groups have sprouted up, and some patient groups host regular chats, sometimes weekly. Here’s a pretty comprehensive list of healthcare tweet chats: <http://www.symplur.com/healthcare-hashtags/tweet-chats/>
* Ex: #BCSM (breast cancer social media) – Monday nights <http://www.bcsmcommunity.org/>
* If you’re planning on participating, help advertise the event in the days/hours/minutes leading up to it, using the hashtag that has been selected for the chat, or by retweeting announcements by the event organizers.
* **Nuts and bolts**
* The "chat" will start at a pre-determined time, usually with introductions. So you'd tweet something about yourself like:
* + “Happy to be here! I'm a researcher @WeillCornell studying the tumor microenvironment and mechanisms of cancer metastasis  #sabcschat”
*
* The questions will then start, with someone asking them in the format of “Q1: How is breast cancer usually diagnosed? What are the standard treatments? #sabcschat”
* You answer by starting your tweet with A1, etc.
*
* *Twitter chats can go pretty quickly, so it might be a good idea to:*
* 1) Use a special twitter chat client to help you follow the conversation
* 2) Prepare a few tweets in advance
*
* In regards to 1: You can use free online sites like Tweetchat.com to follow the chat. You simply go to the site, sign in/authorize your Twitter account to be linked, then it asks you for a hashtag to follow. In this case, it would be #sabcschat. Hit enter and the next screen will show you all the tweets with that hashtag, and thus the "conversation" as it is happening. Hopefully, it will update it continuously, but if not, you may have to refresh the stream. You can enter your tweets at the top - it also gives you an option to shorten URLs (you paste the URL into the top space, press the "shorten" button on the right, and it will paste it into the tweet box below. this way you can save some precious tweet space. **Be sure to add the chat hashtag to the end of each tweet, as this is the only way ppl following the conversation will see your messages.**
*
* In regards to 2: In some cases, you may be able to obtain a list of questions in advance, so you can prepare a few answers beforehand (making sure they're the right length) and simply cut and paste into the tweet box at the appropriate time.
* Any opportunity to plug your research, offer links, etc, are bonus! Also, use other relevant hashtags where possible, such as #bcsm.
* You don't have to answer each question if you don't have anything to add. Conversely, you can contribute more than one tweet to questions of particular interest/expertise.
* Don’t forget to engage! If you are able to follow the conversation in time to read other ppl's tweets, and you agree with any of them, you should retweet them or reply.
* **Example questions and responses:**
*
* Q1:  What are some of the key research findings and priorities in pancreatic cancer research? #PanCancer
* **A1: Understanding the tumor microenvironment a growing research interest. We're also exploring how tumors spread** [**http://qub.me/xeaNmJ**](http://qub.me/xeaNmJ) **#pancancer #pancsm**
*
* Q2: Is immunotherapy an option for treating pancreatic cancer? #PanCancer
* **A2: Immunotherapy exciting prospect: @WeillCornell we're studying... #pancancer #pancsm**
* **A2: I'm excited to lead several early & late phase clinical trials examining combination immunotherapy #pancancer #pancsm #WageHope**
*
* Q3: What about the use of targeted therapies in treating pancreatic cancer #PanCancer?
* **A3: Precision medicine is allowing us to tailor therapies based on specifics of each patient's tumor @Weillcornell  #pancancer #pancsm #WageHope**
*
* Q4: What are some of the major research challenges in pancreatic cancer? #PanCancer
* **A4: Research $ always a challenge. Clinical trials also key! More pts should participate to get cutting-edge treatment #panccancer #pancsm**
*
* Cancer hashtags
* #adcsm Adrenal Cancer
* #ancsm Anal Cancer
* #ayacsm Adolescent/Young Adult
* #BCSM Breast Cancer
* #blcsm Bladder Cancer
* #BTSM Brain Tumors
* #CRCSM Colorectal Cancer
* #esocsm Esophageal Cancer
* #gynCSM Gynecologic Cancer
* #hncsm Head and Neck Cancer
* #hpbcsm Hepatobiliary Cancer
* #kcsm Kidney Cancer
* #LCSM Lung Cancer
* #leusm Leukemia
* #lymsm Lymphoma
* #melsm Melanoma
* #MMSM Multiple Myeloma
* #pancsm Pancreatic Cancer
* #PCSM Prostate Cancer
* #pedcsm Pediatric Cancer
* #scmsm Sarcoma
* #skcsm Skin Cancer
* #stcsm Stomach Cancer
* #thmcsm Thymoma
* #thycsm Thyroid Cancer
* #tscsm Testicular Cancer