

SOCIAL MEDIA BASICS FOR RESEARCHERS

CHOOSE YOUR PLATFORM.

1

FACEBOOK: *Demographics:* 79% of all internet users and 38% of scientists and engineers. *Characteristics:* more personal than business, but a portal to news for many. *Uses:* staying in touch with former lab members and classmates, sharing research-related news and inviting people to events.

INSTAGRAM: *Demographics:* one-third of all online adults. *Characteristics:* photos (many with moody filters) and videos. *Uses:* interesting science images, videos and gifs; selfies in the lab, in the field or at events.

LINKEDIN: *Demographics:* 28% of all users are from the United States. *Characteristics:* business-oriented. *Uses:* networking and job-hunting.

SNAPCHAT: *Demographics:* trends younger, with most being under 30. *Characteristics:* auto-deleting messages and animated filters. *Uses:* sharing photos, gifs and videos related to your research.

TWITTER: *Demographics:* 13% of all scientists and engineers; it's also very popular with media. *Characteristics:* 280-character limit. *Uses:* following discussions and headlines (including #hashtags) and sharing links to your news releases and journal articles.

CONNECT AND ENGAGE.

2

1. **Build your network** by following people and asking them to follow you.
2. **Post frequently** (daily or at least multiple times a week) to keep followers interested.
3. **Share content** from other accounts to build your reputation as a source of science news.
4. **Tag other accounts** related to your research — co-PIs, grad students and your college — to boost impressions and engagement.
5. **Use photos, gifs and videos** to draw readers in and keep algorithms happy; Facebook and Twitter both prioritize videos.

FOLLOW BEST SECURITY AND ETHICS PRACTICES.

3

1. **Be cautious that your posts may alert people that you are away from work or home.** With the current ability to geotag and trace a person's whereabouts, you want to keep the focus on research and not attract unwanted attention.
2. **Be certain to follow the approved IRB protocol** if you plan to use social media to recruit research participants.
3. **Use different passwords** for each account to help protect your identity. Two-factor authentication adds another layer of security.
4. **Be careful when sharing** someone else's post. Stick with reputable sources, and if a news article or post gets corrected, share the correction.
5. **Double-check the accuracy** of your posts, including spelling and grammar, before sending. If you make a mistake, comment on your own post with the correction to help ensure your readers see it.