

# Tweet to exist: Twitter as a tool for communicating results

## Problem

Communication is an inherent part of scientific work. The greatest challenge is to reach the targeted audience. Today's audience is shifting more and more towards nonconventional information sources on particular scientific issues and moving away from traditional online news media.

## Solution

Twitter is becoming the 'media of choice' for the general public as well as scientists. This platform is an emporium of information where they can follow other users they are interested in, hear and share ideas, information and either scientific or empirical knowledge.

## Benefits

A recent study (Côté and Darling, 2018) showed that below the threshold of 1000 followers, scientists are mainly followed by scientists as represented in Figure 1. In this case, the scientific audience is usually informed about recent scientific publications first in terms of funding and policies opportunities. Accounts with more than 1000 followers tend to attract a broader audience, including non-scientists such as farmers, farme advisors and other agricultural stakeholders, policy makers, and citizens. Non-scientific users can induce policy changes since decision-makers are particularly paying attention to public awareness.

## Applicability box

### Theme

Scientific communication

### Application time

Anytime

### Required time

A few minutes

### Period of impact

75% of potential engagement of a tweet: 3 hrs (Wyselytics, 2020)

### Equipment

Computer and/or smartphone

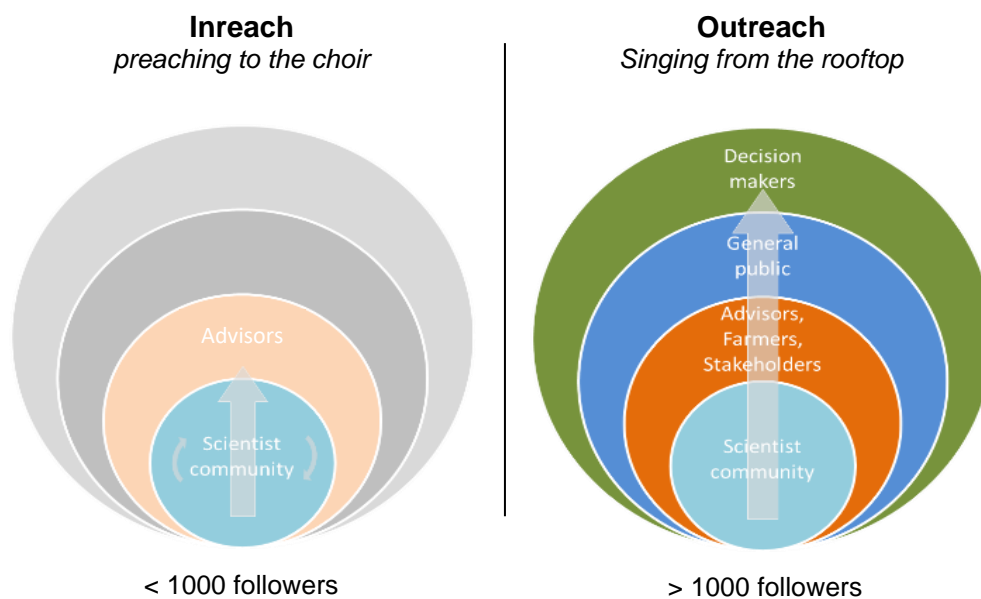


Figure 1: Illustration of the audience reached with the theoretic threshold of 1000 followers (based on study Côté and Darling, 2018)

## Practical recommendation

### Sharpen your profile

- When you create an account, select your **profile picture** so that you can be easily identified.
- For better visibility, add a relevant **bio** in a few words.
- Use relevant **hashtags** to broaden your reach.
- Your **header image** is a way to announce e.g. an event with a poster or a banner.

### The basics

- Short posts are specific to Twitter. Since November 2017, each tweet can contain up to **280 characters**.
- No permission is required to follow a Twitter account.
- Once a Twitter account is followed, users can see the tweets of their followers.
- **Weak relationship between users:** you can follow and unfollow users without notification.
- Tweets create interactions (**comments, likes, retweets**), and can amplify project dissemination, in collaboration with the project website, blog and scientific papers.

### In practice

- Put a word preceded by a **hashtag** (#) to have your tweet referenced in a “community of tweets” related to this-keyword (e.g. #agroecology). This will also help to engage the audience you want to see your research/posts.
- Insert a name (organization or person) preceded by the @ symbol to an account that will receive a notification. Tagging another account also increases visibility.
- Tweets containing **images** (maximum of 4 images per tweet), **links and hashtags** are more likely to be retweeted.
- Catch the attention by adding emojis related to your post (e.g. 📅 📢 💬 ).
- A **thread** is useful to bypass the 280 characters limit: specify it in the bracket [THREAD] and continue your tweet in the comments.
- You can measure the impact of your tweet using tweet analytics below the tweet you posted, see below:



- The number of **retweets** is a good measure of **influence**: proof of interest and credibility of the content.

## Further information

### Further readings

- Côté IM and Darling ES (2018), Scientists on Twitter: Preaching to the choir or singing from the rooftops? FACETS 3:682–694, doi:10.1139/facets-2018-0002
- Wyselytics (2020): Your tweet half-life is 1 billion times shorter than Carbon. The Wiselytics webpage. Available at <http://www.wiselytics.com/blog/tweet-isbillion-time-shorter-than-carbon14/>

Use the comment section on the [SolACE discussion forum](#) to share your experiences with other farmers, advisors and scientists! If you have any questions concerning the method, please contact the first author of the practice abstract by e-mail.



## About this practice abstract and SolACE

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**SolACE:** The project is running from May 2017 to April 2022. The goal of SolACE (Solutions for improving Agroecosystem and Crop Efficiency for water and nutrient use) is to help European agriculture face major challenges, notably increased rainfall variability and reduced use of N and P fertilizers

**Project website:** [www.solace-eu.net](http://www.solace-eu.net)

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