

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND LIVE “TWEETING”

The sharing of scientific results beyond the confines of conferences held in lecture halls through blogging and social networking blurs the line between journalists and researchers. Academics in competitive fields may be more reluctant to discuss new findings if they fear it will be posted on the internet within seconds. Talking to the press is generally discouraged before any research work is published. Live blogging or “tweeting” can create many issues for researchers. Academics may be cautious about revealing unpublished results at conferences for fear that rivals in the audience might note them down. With such note-taking now taking place live and on the web, the speed and distance that information can spread must be considered very seriously.

Instant exposure on the internet may create problems for many researchers. Here in the UK any public disclosure may prevent you from applying for and getting a valid patent. Talking even to friends and family, may constitute a public disclosure. Once your idea is released on the internet it will be in the public domain and you will no longer be able to apply for a patent. Your intellectual property will be indexed to search engines for all the world to access. This has led to many conference organisers banning digital photography.

There is no greater public disclosure than the disclosure of information online.



SUMMARY

Social media isn't negative or positive in itself; it's just a tool. As with any tool, you want to know how it works, when to use it, and where the potential issues are. If organizers, “tweeters”, and presenters are careful and knowledgeable, Twitter can amplify and deepen the conference experience. If such considerations are not acknowledged Twitter may have the potential to sometimes take the conference over.

In short, default permission for live-tweeting should be expected at any meeting or conference. Those using the Twitter publishing platform should be aware of the dangers, and presenters should be able to opt out easily if they wish.

Remember: Twitter and the like are public facing publishing platforms. Those that report live from conferences and events using social media publishing platforms should face the same scrutiny and restriction as those from the traditional press and media.



LIVE TWEETING AND SOCIAL MEDIA BROADCASTING IN CONFERENCES

Media usage and Copyright Advice

Library Services

LIVE TWEETS & LIVE BROADCASTS

In the past decade, social media has taken ever larger role on internet and in the media, offering great opportunities for academics and scholarly conferences.

Even small conferences and events on obscure topics can now connect with an audience all over the world. However “live-tweeting” in conference sessions can also be disruptive and damaging in ways that participants don’t always anticipate. As a response, many conferences have tried to develop new policies or guidelines around social-media use during meetings. It is not unusual for speakers to present unpublished work. While they may be willing to share unfinished work or sets of ideas to a group of peers, academic speakers may not wish to have such material broadcasted to the whole world.

“Live-blogging” or “live-tweeting”, just like live streaming- is a form of reporting and a form of publishing. Importantly it is a form of broadcasting content.

Guidelines are essential for those working with social media that report academic events as they take place.

ESSENTIAL LIVE SOCIAL MEDIA BROADCASTING RULES:

- Before an event decided on an official policy for “tweeting”, will it be permitted or not.
- Ensure key points you want disseminated from the conference are effectively published online by appointing some experienced social media users to be your 'official' “live-tweeters”.
- If taking photos, ensure there is sufficient signage and attendees are informed in advance. Attendees and presenters should be given the options to not be photographed.
- The person appointed to be in charge of “live-tweeting” the whole event or individual sessions must reliable and dependable. They will be representing the University and the conference to world.
- Attribution: Advise those attending to be clear in “tweets” about who is saying what. If you don't attribute people may assume it's you saying it.
- Always be polite and respectful. Don't “tweet” anything you wouldn't say to a person or group face-to-face.
- If you are “live-tweeting” an event, assume that they will be read. This includes people who don't follow you directly.
- **Remember:** You are using a worldwide public facing publishing platform!

WHY ALLOW LIVE “TWEETING” AT ALL?

Social media also has great benefits for Academic discourse. The practice of “live-tweeting” provides a record of events but can also be participatory, generating collaboration, discussion, as well as ideas or references that might be useful for a presenter. However, as a precaution it may be worth considering prolific social media users the same as you would members of the press or media and subject them to certain reporting restrictions.

BEST PRACTICE

It is important to remember that universities benefit from public comment, and that speakers at such events should, in general, be accessible and accountable to their audiences.

“Live-tweeting” may often be approached as a way to disseminate information and bring others into the discussion. Conference planners should also keep in mind the dangers and downsides of “live-tweeting”. Planners should alert attendees to potentially risky “hashtags” and encourage “live-tweeters” to use only official conference “hashtags”. Presenters should have the right to ask people not to “live-tweet” during their talk, and shouldn't have to explain their reasons.