

Sharing Planetary Science Using Social Media

Organizers and Presenters

Emily Lakdawalla

Senior Editor, The Planetary Society
blog@planetary.org @elakdawalla

Dr. Alex Parker

Senior Research Scientist
Southwest Research Institute
@Alex_Parker

Dr. Edgard Rivera-Valentín

Staff Scientist
Lunar and Planetary Institute
Rivera-Valentin@lpi.usra.edu
@PlanetTrekky

Christine Shupla

Education and Public Engagement Manager
Lunar and Planetary Institute
shupla@lpi.usra.edu

Julie Tygielski

Communications and Media Supervisor
Lunar and Planetary Institute
Tygielski@lpi.usra.edu
@LPItoday @LunarandPlanetaryInstitute

Information and resources from AGU:

<https://sharingscience.agu.org/use-social-media/>

Notes from presentation by NASA's Jason Townsend (2016)

"Engagement is huge"

- Content needs to be about people who are making the discoveries, their partners and institutions rather than just the discoveries themselves
- Social media reduces the barriers to engagement

Social media is an evolving tool

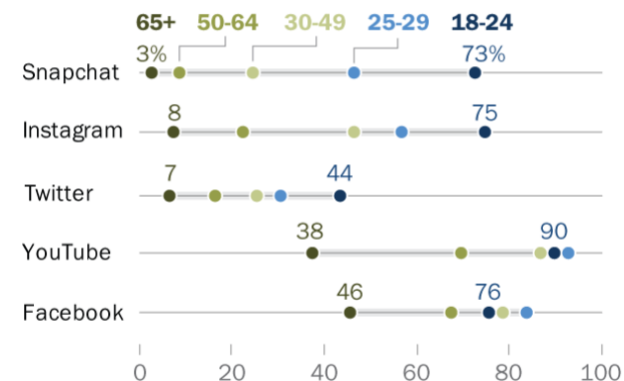
- Current emphasis is on video over images
- Ages 14-24 is a rapidly growing audience
- Tumblr can reach an audience outside of the normal voice (more fun, storytelling, less formal)
- Podcasts and vodcasts making a come-back provides longer-term connections

About videos

- 30 sec- 1 min. long
- Include specific title, and descriptions
- Sound is not always played; include text if needed
- Visually compelling (don't use talking head)
- Keywords are important, don't use acronyms

Snapchat and Instagram are especially popular among 18- to 24-year-olds

% of U.S. adults in each age group who say they ever use ...



Note: Respondents who did not give an answer are not shown.
Source: Survey conducted Jan. 8-Feb. 7, 2019.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Sharing Planetary Science Using Social Media

Sharing Science through Social Media: Lessons from @NASAMoon and the Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter.

Molly Wasser et al. <https://www.hou.usra.edu/meetings/lpsc2018/pdf/2884.pdf>

Visual content is vital. On social media, you have a matter of seconds to capture a viewer's attention – and visual content is better at doing so than text. Tweets and Facebook posts with videos or images are seen more, liked more, and shared more than those without attached media.

Consistent messaging across platforms. Each social media platform has slightly different user bases. For example, Snapchat's audience is primarily under age 35 whereas Facebook reaches older demographics. Spreading your message across platforms reaches a wider array of people and allows you to tailor your story for each platform.

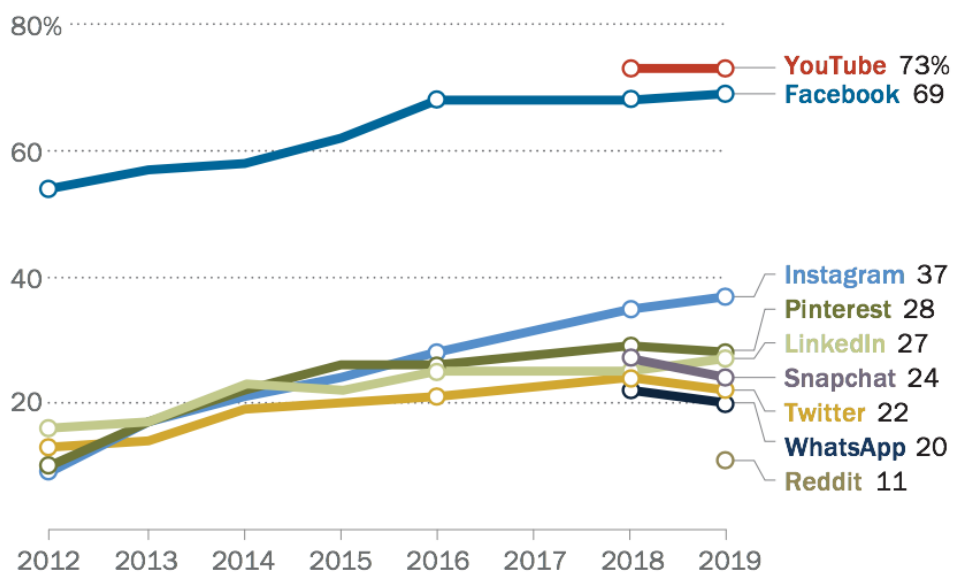
Collaboration. @NASAMoon's most popular tweet ever, which was also the most popular NASA tweet of power of collaboration.

Embrace the hits. In our world, there are some tried and true hits that bring the audience to us: Moon phases and supermoons. While these may not be the most scientifically interesting topics, they draw the audience in so we can continue to share new discoveries.

Silly can still be smart. Much of social media is funny and silly – and playing with the tropes of each platform can enhance your message and draw people in. The internet has distinctive vocabulary, including memes, acronyms, and hashtags. Incorporating the existing internet language into your messaging can result in the most clever and educational posts.

Facebook, YouTube continue to be the most widely used online platforms among U.S. adults

% of U.S. adults who say they ever use the following online platforms or messaging apps online or on their cellphone



Note: Pre-2018 telephone poll data is not available for YouTube, Snapchat and WhatsApp.

Comparable trend data is not available for Reddit.

Source: Survey conducted Jan. 8-Feb. 7, 2019.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER
