

How to Join and Participate in a Twitter Chat



What is a Twitter Chat?

A Twitter Chat or Tweet Chat is a coordinated, pre-arranged, live social media event wherein a host/moderator facilitates an open discussion on Twitter by posing a series of questions (typically identified as Q1, Q2, etc.) and participants share thoughts, opinions, and experiences in their answers (typically identified as A1, A2, etc.). Chats typically take place over the course of an hour and the questions and answers are aggregated and linked through the use of a single hashtag, which allows both the host and participants to follow the conversation.

GETTING STARTED

Joining in a Twitter Chat is fairly simple. Since Twitter Chats are live online events, those who wish to participate only need to have a Twitter account, the date and time (paying attention to time zone) of the chat, and logon to Twitter at that time/date.

Once on Twitter, click on or search for the chat hashtag (ex: #SOPHIAchat) to be able to see all of the chat activity taking place in relation to that hashtag. **It is possible to follow a small to moderate-scale chat conversation directly on Twitter, which is what we recommend for the SOPHIA/NNPHI Twitter Chat. This will notify the user of updates on new Tweets related to the searched hashtag.**

However, when taking part in chats with a large number of participants, it can be easy to get lost. There are several platforms, including TweetChat, Twubs, and TweetDeck that allow participants to easily keep up with the conversation in real time. These also allow users to login with their Twitter handle to tweet directly from that platform and automatically add the hashtag to any tweets sent out.



HOW TO PARTICIPATE

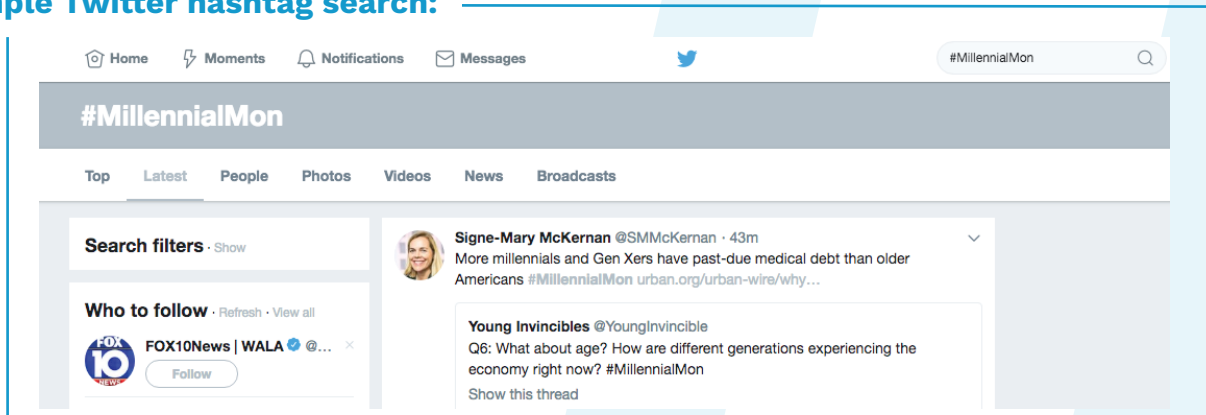
When the chat begins the host/moderator may ask for a brief round of introductions to see who is participating in the chat. It is a part of Twitter etiquette for those present to give some brief information about themselves (ex: first name, location, profession). It is also acceptable to greet friends or colleagues that are also participating. This should be done without the chat hashtag, unless the greeting also contains content that is on-topic with the chat.

The host/moderator will then pose the first question, the topic/subject is then open for discussion, and participants can tweet their responses. It is important to use both the answer ordinal tag (A1, A2, etc.) at the beginning and the hashtag at the end and of responses to help keep the chat clear and easy to follow for everyone. The answer ordinal tag corresponds to the question being responded to i.e. when responding to the third question (Q3), all tweeted responses to that question should begin with A3. It is not necessary to give a response as a reply to the question tweet or in a retweet of the question.

Example Twitter chat thread:



Example Twitter hashtag search:



Here are some other tips for participating in a Twitter chat:

1. Feel free to share tweets from within the chat with your network, perhaps by retweeting with comments (this should also include the chat hashtag).
2. Retweeting the posts of another user in the chat is a common way to support statements from other tweeters and share them with your networks.
3. When posing a question or responding to another participant in the chat, also use the hashtag.
4. If there is enough space in the tweet to share another participants' post and add comments as well, that is great. If not, retweet their comment intact and then @mention them with feedback and be sure to use the hashtag.
5. It is acceptable to send a private tweet to another participant if off-topic from chat to connect on a related issue, but do not include the hashtag.
6. It is typically considered unacceptable to use a Twitter Chat stream to market your own product or services.
7. It can be nice to notify your network/followers that you'll be participating in a chat in advance. This not only supports the chat and host, but also lets your network know there will be a high volume of content coming from you at that time.