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# Social Media Has Become a Popular Platform for Information Sharing

## A Q&A With Daniela Hermelin, MD



### What is a Twitter chat?

A Twitter chat is a scheduled live discussion that takes place on the social media network Twitter. A moderator leads a discussion that may be broad or focused and that is unraveled through a series of pre-written questions. Usually the questions do not have a specific right or wrong answer but provide the opportunity to give and receive feedback and promote engagement. Twitter chats are an excellent tool to fill knowledge gaps and access a global, collaborative network within one platform.



### What type of information do Twitter users share?

From a blood center in India requesting a rare blood type to a Scottish biomedical scientist sharing a massive transfusion protocol drill, Twitter is an arena where all disciplines within transfusion medicine can share, learn, network and engage. A Twitter user can be an organization or an individual and Twitter posts, otherwise known as “tweets,” range from announcing regional conference events to recently published articles. The hashtag we use on Twitter to describe blood bank-related information is termed #Blooducation and embodies all things related to the field of transfusion medicine. A great example of this #Blooducation phenomenon is a recent post on the topic of allo anti-M antibodies in pregnancy. I wondered who had seen hemolytic disease of the newborn or fetus associated with this antibody? Within 51 seconds, more than a dozen individuals — medical technologists and transfusion

medicine specialists from Boston to Saudi Arabia — shared their experiences, articles and algorithms for working up antibodies, and advice on how to communicate with the clinical team on this topic. It was really exciting to see the #Blooducation community come together so quickly and share their resources.



### How can someone who has never taken part in a Twitter chat best prepare to join their first one?

If you are interested in participating in a Twitter chat, here are a few pointers to get you started: Obviously, you will need to have a Twitter account. It’s very simple to register for a new account and it’s FREE! Make sure you provide a professional picture and short blurb about yourself on your profile. Your profile description should primarily state your professional role, but adding a few words that characterize you on a personal level is also encouraged (i.e., dog lover, husband, Bruins fan, etc.). Also, mention that your tweets are not medical advice and do not reflect your employer. Setting up your profile may be the most challenging part about setting up a Twitter account since you are limited to only 160 characters. Next, you must “follow” other individuals or organizations. Start by following @aabb.

Ok. Now, you are ready for your first Twitter chat! The first thing you should do is to “follow” the designated moderator. The moderator is responsible for posting questions and feedback. Therefore, by following him or her, you will receive all the tweets included in the chat. A Twitter chat starts with a warm welcome and allows participants to introduce themselves.

This is a great opportunity to meet other individuals in your field and network. Make sure to follow them!

After the introduction, the first question is posed and the conversation begins. There is usually no one right answer, and the questions are generally meant to build a conversation on a topic that needs clarification, assess knowledge or experience and provide opportunities to improve a standard, process or concept in transfusion medicine. When responding to a question, make sure you add the hashtag, #AABBPEPTalk. A hashtag is a social media tool to find a post with a specific theme or content. Therefore, if you search #AABBPEPTalk in the Twitter feed, you can find all the responses from prior Twitter chats. This can also give you an idea of the type of dialogue and content based on prior Twitter chats. Although Twitter chats are very punctual, and “arriving” on time will allow for you to take advantage of the whole experience, they are also incredibly flexible. You can “enter” the discussion at any point, including after the official chat is over and contribute to the conversation.



### Favorite aspect of Twitter:

I am constantly amazed at the opportunity for global collaboration on Twitter. Within seconds, people from literally around the world at all levels of the field can connect on Twitter and provide their unique experience, insights, and expertise. For me, Twitter is evidence of the ivory tower — the ideal learning environment in which all are welcome to share, learn and build knowledge for one common goal: to help others. Looking forward to seeing you on Twitter. ■