

## 2013 North American Society for Sport Management Conference (NASSM 2013)

### From Social Networking to Professional Networking: (Re)introducing Your Students to Twitter

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**Professional preparation**

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**60-minute symposium,  
roundtable, or workshop  
(Room 408)**

**Abstract 2013-270**

**11:15 AM**

Since the advent of the Internet and the proliferation of social media, consumers have been afforded new ways to communicate with businesses, celebrities, athletes, and other Internet users. Social media usage in the sports industry is an ever-growing field of research (Clavio & Kian, 2010; Hutchins, 2011; Hutchins & Mikosza, 2010; Pegoraro, 2010; Sanderson & Kassing, 2011). Twitter, in particular, has enabled interaction between fans and members of the sports industry as well as with sport organizations, athletes and other stakeholders such as sponsors and non-profit organizations (Hambrick, Simmons, Greenhalgh, & Greenwell, 2010).

Twitter can also be used as an educational and professional networking tool. Organized conversations on Twitter are an example of how social networking can help build digital bridges across geographic boundaries. These conversations are more commonly known as Twitter chats and are scheduled, virtual gatherings where people on Twitter discuss something of interest to them, using an established subject #hashtag to keep track of the conversation (Spinks, 2009). Though social networking relationships are created, fostered, and maintained in a virtual space, they can be just as “real” or genuine as offline relationships in their impact on the individual (Booth, 2010; Guimarães, 2005; Mackay, 2005). Therefore, the bonds that form between those who interact on Twitter chats may produce connections between people of various backgrounds and across networks that may otherwise not have been linked (“A world of connections”, 2010; Chao, Parker, & Fontana, 2011). For example, a sport management student who actively participates in sport industry chats such as #sbchat, #smsportschat, or #sportsprchat may impress top executives or academics, putting them in a prime position to then connect over future job opportunities.

Twitter chats are also increasingly being integrated into post-secondary teaching plans because they promote cooperative, collaborative, and long-term information retention (Angelo, 1993; Chao, Parker, & Fontana, 2011; Dobler, 2012; Millis, 2007; Parker & Chao, 2007). Studies show that today’s students benefit from a variety of pedagogical approaches that promote active learning (Bart 2011; Junco, Heiberger, & Locken, 2010). Those who are digital natives “prefer multi-tasking and non-linear access to information, they have a low tolerance for lectures and prefer active rather than passive learning, and they rely heavily on social media for social and professional interactions and accessing information” (McCarthy, 2010; as cited in Chao, Parker, & Fontana, 2011, p.324). As students are typically already familiar with Twitter and use it regularly, they recognize how effective this participatory tool can be for their education as well (Prensky, 2007; Weisgerber & Butler, 2010). Twitter integration in the classroom has also been shown to help students develop peer support, learning communities, and professional networks, as well as to increase student engagement and grades (Junco, Heiberger, & Loken, 2010; Retelny, Birnholtz, & Hancock, 2012; ScienceDaily, 2009).

The purpose of this workshop is to: 1) show educators how Twitter can be used as a pedagogical tool for post-secondary learning in sport management, and 2) provide a hands-on Twitter chat learning experience for educators and students who may be interested in participating in educational and/or industry chats. The workshop will take place in a Wi-Fi-enabled room (if available at the conference) and participants will be asked to bring a device through which they can access their Twitter account (cellphone, tablet, or laptop). The workshop will provide strategies for running a Twitter chat in the classroom. The format, grading, and gauging of students’ experiences will be discussed, and examples of best practices will be given based on feedback from professors, students, and industry professionals who currently use Twitter chats for educational and/or professional purposes. The session will conclude with a question and answer Twitter chat that will familiarize participants with the unique experience of tweeting with others who are in the same physical space.