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5 Methods to Develop Your Online Presence (for Researchers)

Make use of online sites and networks like LinkedIn and ResearchGate to improve your online visibility and highlight the information about your research that you want others to see.





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Much of the activity around the world now takes place online. Researchers store data online, communicate via e-mail, and of course, read scholarly articles published online. But there is more online than just one's data. As with any other job, it's very important for researchers to control their own online presence. When someone enters your name into Google, what will they find? What do you want them to find?

Here are some suggestions for improving your online visibility so that others find the information you want them to see.

1. LinkedIn

[LinkedIn](#) is a rapidly growing professional networking site. Many of you may already have LinkedIn profiles, but it may be time to improve them to maximize your impact. Your LinkedIn profile may very well be the top item on a Google search using your name, so be sure that the information there is accurate and engaging. Here are a few specific ideas:

- **Add a professional-looking photograph of yourself.** Profiles without pictures are far less likely to be read. Use a photo that clearly shows your face and fills the entire space available for the profile picture.
- **Customize your profile's URL to include your name.** This extra step will help increase traffic when people search for you online (for example, my public profile URL is <http://www.linkedin.com/in/benmudrak>). You should see your public profile URL underneath your picture on your profile page. Click 'edit' to choose your own (e.g., linkedin.com/in/FirstnameLastname).
- **Be sure to share your publication list, important conference presentations, editorial positions, etc.** If it is important to you, you can find an appropriate section on your profile. LinkedIn offers a number of options for section headings, so choose the ones that fit you best. You can also [customize which parts of your profile can be seen by the public](#) (your entire profile will be visible to any of your connections).

2. ResearchGate & other social networking sites for researchers

In addition to broad networking sites like LinkedIn or Facebook, there are sites geared specifically toward investigators. These sites provide an opportunity for members to discover new research (and sometimes full-text articles), find collaborators, and maintain another online profile that will show up when someone searches for you.

One well known academic networking site is [ResearchGate](#). On ResearchGate, users can build out their profile with information about their current projects, publications, and institution. It is an excellent way to connect with others in your field and across the research community.

[Connect with AJE on ResearchGate!](#)

There are also field-specific networking sites that researchers can use, such as [Malaria World](#). Having a presence on a research-specific networking site can benefit your work and open up opportunities for collaboration.

3. Profiles focused on your research products

Most scientists want to focus on their research when creating an online profile. Specifically, the publication record is still the major highlight of one's professional CV. Here are a couple of sites that specifically focus on your research. Creating and maintaining profiles on these sites will help others become aware of your productivity and help you see the impact your work has on the research community and greater public.

- **ORCID:** A non-profit organization, [ORCID](#) provides a [unique identifier for each researcher](#). This identifier helps make sure that you get credit for all your work, even if the name you publish under changes for some reason. When signing up for your ORCID number, you can fill in your profile to ensure that all your work is represented. One more reason you should get into this: [there are almost 3 million registered ORCIDs as of January 2017](#).
- **ImpactStory:** Another non-profit, [ImpactStory](#) lets you create an online CV of all your research products, not just published articles (data sets, websites, software, etc.). In addition to demonstrating the full picture of your productivity in one place, ImpactStory also provides information about how frequently your work is cited, mentioned, and discussed around the web. You can even embed your ImpactStory on your online CV or lab website using HTML from an "embed" link on your profile page.
- **figshare:** [figshare](#) is a repository where researchers can deposit any research output for public access. Each object (e.g., a raw data set, movie, poster, or preprint) receives a DOI, so it's citable in peer-reviewed literature. Putting some of your work on figshare is an excellent way to present your true expertise to the research community (and [provide access to data that others can build on](#)).
- **Kudos:** [Kudos](#) is not a research profile per se, but signing up for an account lets you provide more context for your publications and increase readership. You can [read more about Kudos](#) in our recent feature.

4. Twitter

[Twitter](#) is [increasingly popular among scientists](#) as a place to share opinions and recent publications, with instant feedback possible from colleagues around the world (including people you may never have the chance to talk to in person!). Consider signing up for a Twitter account and connecting to the sea of colleagues, journals, publishers, universities, and other groups already on Twitter. Some additional thoughts

- **Choose a short user name!** You only have 140 characters in each tweet, and if someone wants to mention you, your name counts against that limit. Make it easy by going as short as possible while still being recognizable.
- **Look for hashtags used in your field.** You will encounter these terms, which begin with the hash or pound symbol (#). Click on a hashtag (such as [#peerreview](#)) to find out what people are saying about that topic. Many conferences also suggest a hashtag so you can see tweets about the event, even if you're not there!
- **Use URL shorteners like [bit.ly](#) to help save space when you are sending links.** If you include short links, you are more likely to be retweeted or mentioned by others.

5. Lab or group websites

Lastly, it is very helpful to maintain a current and detailed lab website (if applicable). Researchers do not always have control over their own website, but be sure to tell your university to update your publications list and section about research interests when necessary. You can also consider a lab blog, where you would control 100% of the content. Services like [WordPress](#) are free and not very difficult to use.

Here are some examples of lab websites that do a good job of describing their current research, publications, lab members, and positions:

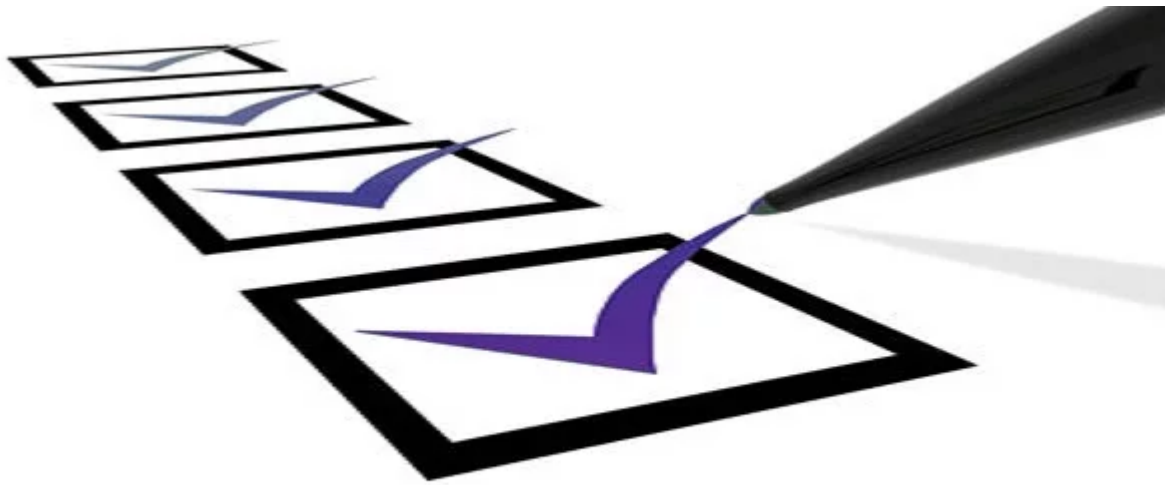
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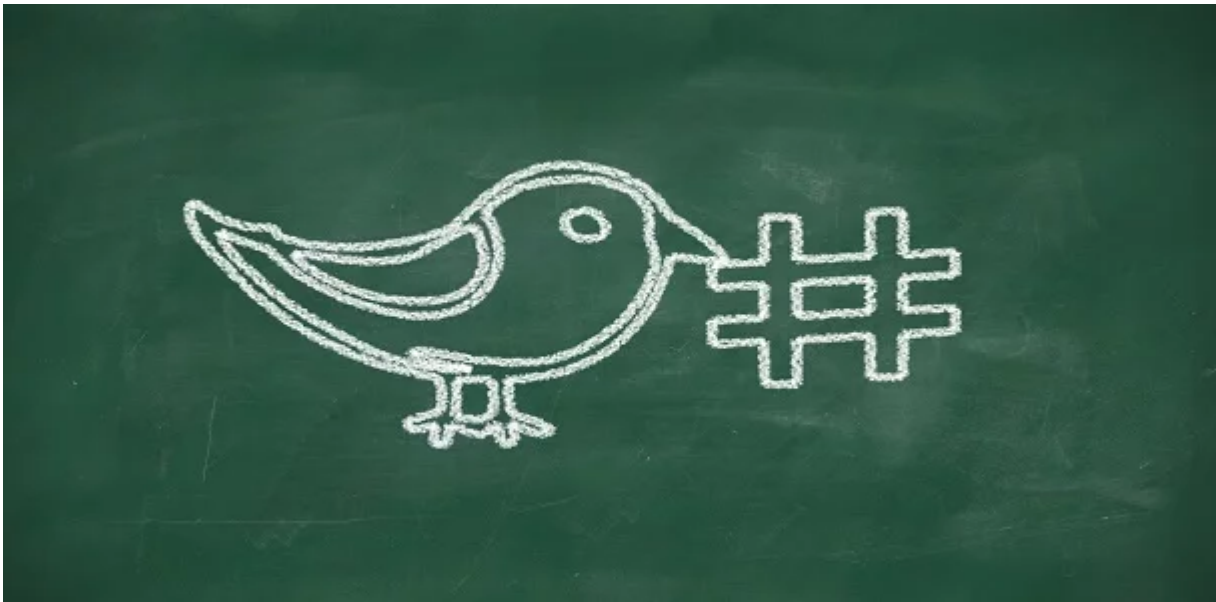
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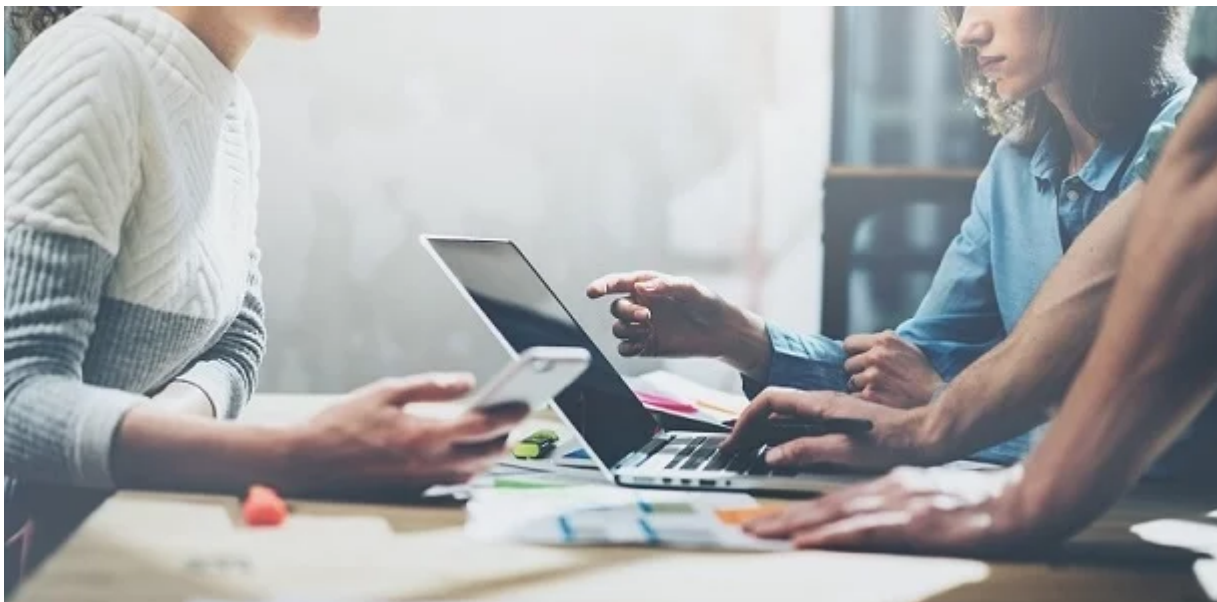
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