



Pamela Baker-Masson

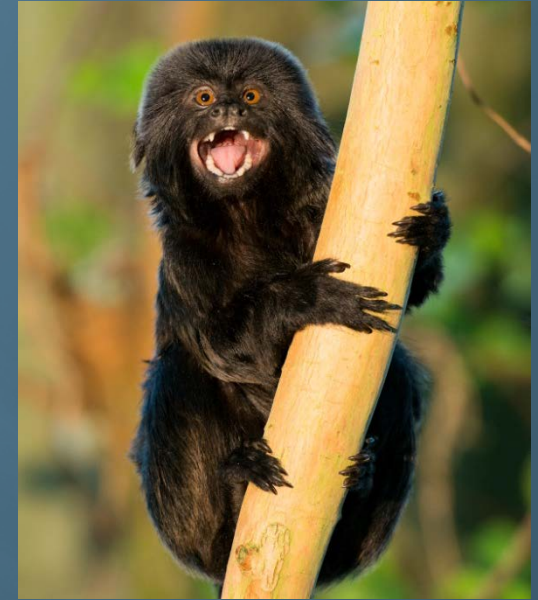
Associate Director of Communications

Smithsonian's National Zoo

@nationalzoo | [facebook.com/nationalzoo](https://facebook.com/nationalzoo)



“I’m on Twitter and I follow it a bit, but I don’t think I’ve ever gotten a pitch through it or even a story idea.” – Washington Post Columnist



“Twitter is one of the most valuable sources for leads/tips that I’ve come across in journalism.” – Washingtonian



“I think tweet-pitching is in its infancy.” – Washington Post Reporter

“So, I have a dark secret. I am awful, awful, awful at Twitter.” – NPR

# How Journalists are Using Social Media

- ▣ A new version of the AP Daybook
- ▣ It's viewed as a *news source*
- ▣ The character limit makes it a *tip sheet*



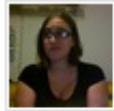
- *“I rely on it daily as a news source and particularly to send tips and tweets on to other writers to follow-up.” – Magazine editor*
- *“I limit the number of Twitter feeds that I follow directly to official sources from the agencies that I cover and some select news media. What I get are not so much story pitches as alerts to news I may cover.” – Bloomberg*
- *“I see some breaking news items appear first on Twitter as a lead that we then pursue for a story with phone calls, e-mails, etc. This happens more often with public safety stories, such as a school bus crash or police news.” – AP.*
- *“During the campaign, the Twitter feeds of both presidential campaign organizations made announcements, as did the White House, via Twitter that resulted in stories.” – Bloomberg*

**Best examples: Prince George County police; the Obama for America organization; JFK Presidential Library (“on this date” history tweets.)**

# Breaking News at the Zoo

More and more Announce news on

Par



Did my tax dollars go to #pandaAI? I hope so.

Megan Chialastri

6 months ago



Fascinating 2 follow the tweets 2day RT @NationalZoo  
Female giant pandas can only breed during a short  
24-72 hour window each year. #pandaAI

Suzy

6 months ago

LOC



for those of you outside of DC, the big thing here today  
is the @NationalZoo live-tweeting the panda  
insemination. #DC



Raisin Invasion

6 months ago

lly

onths ago



#pandaAI is the weirdest yet most fascinating live tweet  
event I've followed...

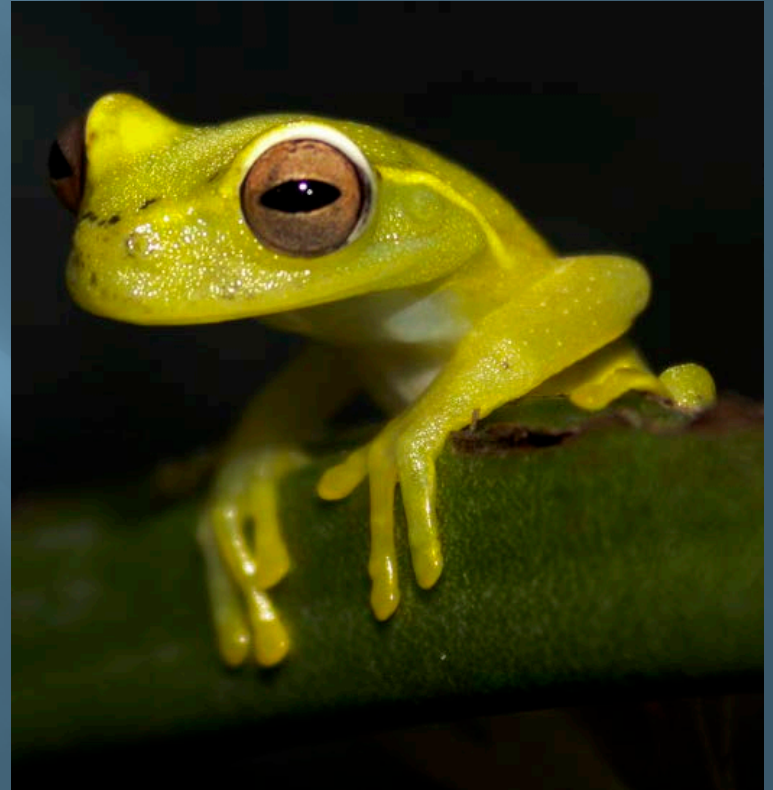
Stephanie

6 months ago

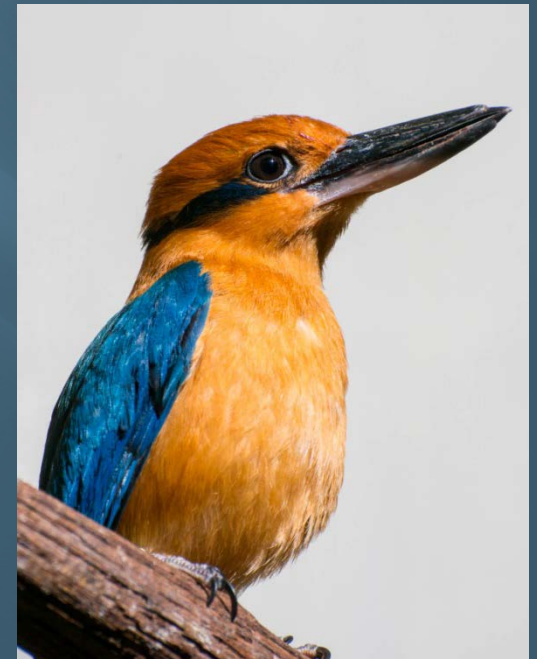
# What NOT to Do

1. One lie and you're sunk.
2. Journalists don't want random facts or old information.

*"Most of the tweets I see are pretty random factoids about things that have already happened." – Washington Post*



3. Media professionals will “unfollow” you if you:
- Tweet only information perceived as unhelpful. If you are tweeting both to a general audience and media, must strike the right balance between breaking news, helpful tips, and general information.
  - Be prudent about the volume of your tweets.
  - Incorrect use of Twitter. Understand how to use a hashtag and tinyurls. It will appear obvious to all if you don't use Twitter lingo.
  - Twitter is NOT the best place to offer an exclusive!
- “I would rather not have a first-time introduction for a pitch on Twitter. I am more receptive to hearing from PR folks on Twitter who I already know.” - AP*
- Better to PITCH via email or phone



How

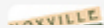


**Potter Park Zoo** @potterparkzoo

16 Nov

@nationalzoo Lovely post. Soyono will be missed by all of your fellow zoos and aquariums.

[Details](#)



**Knoxville Zoo** @knoxvillezoo

16 Nov



**Fernando Angel Garza** @fernandoagarza

19 Nov

@NationalZoo Condolences to you and yours.

[Details](#)



**Diane Wilshere** @petricat666

19 Nov

@NationalZoo she lived a long and fruitful life. Condolences to the lion/tiger staff.

[Details](#)



**Mrs Greta Nicholson** @MrsGretaNichols

19 Nov

@NationalZoo So sad to hear about Soy, I truly love cats domestic/wild tigers are so beautiful & magnificent.

[Details](#)



**Aimee W.** @aimeedubbs

19 Nov

@NationalZoo we are sorry for your loss, and are thankful for the joy she gave to so many!

[Details](#)



**Norma Valentini** @NormaValentini

19 Nov

@NationalZoo So sad to hear about Soy.. She was a beautiful animal. I always enjoyed visiting her at the zoo. Condolences to her keepers.

[Details](#)

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for





# Smithsonian

# Best Practices



1. Establish a relationship first with the journalist. Consider using a personal Twitter account rather than an organizational account.
2. Use your organization's account to follow all reporters and publications that have written stories about you.
3. Your tweets are public. One or more reporters will read what you tweet directly to one outlet.
4. Give credit where credit is due. If you retweet a story about your organization, give the credit to the journalist.
5. Provide an experience.

# And sometimes, your TWEET can become news.

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Posted at 03:24 PM ET, 05/01/2012

### The National Zoo's brilliant Twitter stunt

By [Martin Austermuhle](#)



AUSTERMUHLE

Yesterday just about anyone with a Twitter account was grossly fascinated by what has become an annual ritual in Washington: the National Zoo's attempts to produce another baby panda. See, instead of just putting out a staid press release saying the pandas had tried to produce yet another Butterstick, the National Zoo just decided to live-tweet Mei Xiang's artificial insemination.

While the end result is uncertain — Mei Xiang is 13 years old and hasn't produced offspring in seven years — the process was fascinating to watch. We all probably learned far too much about how scientists at the National Zoo go about trying to conceive another panda, and even came to know that the sperm that was used today dated back to 2005 — yep, it was "vintage sperm" from the year Butterstick was born. (Sadly, now we have to sit and wait to see if this process was successful.)

But it was a brilliant use of social media. With little more than a phone and a hashtag — #pandaAI — the National Zoo very literally threw open a process that was until now only known through after-the-fact accounting by the media.

[Here, in all of its glory, was how the process played out](#) — and how some people reacted.

[Martin Austermuhle](#) blogs at [DCist](#). The Local Blog Network is a group of bloggers from around the D.C. region who have agreed to make regular contributions to All Opinions Are Local.

