

HOW TO LIVE TWEET A DIRECT ACTION

Live tweeting is simply reporting an event live with a running commentary on twitter, generally using an event specific hashtag. If you don't understand twitter, there are a range of excellent resources online – just go hunting sites like mashable.com to get a quick overview

Why live tweet?

Whilst twitter has a comparatively smaller audience to other social media platforms, it can be very influential – key journos, opinion leaders and MP's all watch for trends on twitter.

Getting an issue trending on social media can result in traditional media stories, or online pieces that might reach a different demographic to traditional “lefties”

You can also generate conversation and debate – its more two way than other social media.

In particular for nonviolent direct action & civil disobedience, it is a great way to involve people who otherwise can't participate, and people really enjoy watching events unfold live.

BEFORE

- Make sure you have the hardware you need: A completely charged phone, a back up charger if possible, plus your power adapter in case there is an outlet you can use. Some people find programs like hootsuite or tweetdeck useful if they can easily handle a laptop. It means you can have several columns open at once with your hashtag, and various lists.
- If people may be arrested, it can be a good idea to take nice portrait shots of them beforehand and get some short quotes from them... and feed them out during the day. This was done very effectively by the #Leardblockade
 - Ie: Margaret, 35, schoolteacher is taking action today because she wants to leave a better world for her kids #snappyhashtag
- Choose a hashtag that is short, simple and self-explanatory if possible. Recommend all your participants use ONE main hashtag, and maybe only a secondary one if time, or if relevant to certain ongoing conversations, ie #auspol Announce it regularly & remind folks
- Collect a list of key twitter influencers with large followings, journos who may be interested and any opponents or MP's you might like to tweet at, so they see your tweets
- Tip off allies the day before hand and ask them to signal-boost your commentary

DURING AN ACTION

Your goal should be to interact with new audiences, share the journey and story of your action, and aim to get the issue trending. It is actually not that hard to get things trending if a number of key people put a concerted effort in, and you get some RT's from people with decent followings

- Get on the front foot to make sure your hashtag is used
Think of some other terms that people might use to describe your action and search for them, if people are commenting not using the hashtag, Quote/RT their tweet and let them know the hashtag

I've heard mixed perspectives on tweeting at media... some people say you shouldn't do it, others say it is useful. I personally reckon it's worthwhile for journos that might have an interest in the area

EG:

Hey @Bencubby have you seen the action occupying @GreghuntMP office? High res pics here: flickr.com/hellyeah & release here: www.bit.ly

Young people standing up for their right to a safe climate future @TripleJHack available for interview @774melbourne @ABCEnvironment

Feed the beast.

A couple of tweets does not cut it. Content, content, content!

Pictures and updates are really important. It is happening more regularly that tweets are being featured in other pieces of media, or online forums like Buzzfeed and Junkee. They can feed into



other forms of media, and the pictures are often now lifted and put into different articles, so make them good.

Tell a story with your picture... try and get context in the photo... a sign or logo in the background that tells the audience where you are, a placard that states your message, etc. Crop photos so they don't show up random crap and look neat. Pics of piles of bags, food and water bottles aren't compelling. A well framed pic of committed people, that shows where you are, and why you are there is. It is ok to have a sense of humour but establish some credibility first.

Look like you are taking the action seriously. Pictures of people lolling around after being there for just 1-2 hours don't do

this.

- Use the twitter video function (30 sec only) to get quick snippets of chants, vibe, to give the picture. Try not to pan madly around the room, keep it slow and steady, or do static shots. Also, get short quotes from people as to why they are here.
- Remote support can be really useful. If you have supporters who can't make it to the action, set them up as social media supporters... Post updates and pics on various facebook pages, support on twitter, retweet everything, and engage with people who are using the hashtag
- Signal boost other people - If you see someone doing a great job of tweeting, retweet as much as possible. It is great to help each other out and get new followers for people starting out. For great live commentary on #refugeeaction check out @thiswonderfulperson
- RT all the good stuff! Reply to people wishing you well, direct them to places to take action, ask them to share. Don't get into fights with opponents, but try and respond civilly if you have time
- It is really important to be factual, and not tweet inaccurate information in your excitement to get the story out. Particularly around police behaviour and arrests.
- Make sure you check your notifications. Journos may contact you direct and ask for comment or photos.
- Ensure you say goodbye and give a final update. People often forget to do this, and it's important to thank people, and let them know things have wound up, people are safe and accounted for etc

AFTERWARDS

- Check your direct messages and notifications, and make sure folks aren't engaging with you that you have missed
- If it was an action with lots of good visuals and content, think about collating a storify article – it's a great way to capture the day and share with supporters. Check out [this example](#).
- Say thanks to people who supported you and give them stuff to do
- Evaluate – go back and see what tweets resonated with people, how many followers you picked up, and how you can improve for next time

END OF BASIC OVERVIEW – Next page is a list of tweeps – some of which is quite out of date.

This is a draft resource in response to an urgent need – we will collaborate with others on a final resource over the next few weeks. If you have ideas for inclusion email to info@counteract.org.au