

# Research Week 2016: Social Media Report

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Duration: April 11-15, 2016

Social Media Platform: Twitter

User Name: @ECSU\_RW

Hashtag: #ECSURW16

## Objective

Elizabeth City State University (ECSU) aims to enhance the annual Research Week [1] experience by integrating social media, utilizing the platform Twitter, as a way to obtain honest and quantifiable feedback.

## Summary

In order to obtain honest and quantifiable feedback from participants, in addition to, enhance the Research Week experience, the social media team created a Twitter [2] account with the username @ECSU\_RW and crafted the hashtag #ECSURW16. To promote the Research Week Twitter page and hashtag, each team member used their personal Twitters and followed the Research Week page. The team members used their individual Twitter pages to like and retweet tweets posted from the Research Week Twitter page. Then, the team developed a week long social media competition using Twitter that encouraged participation and feedback from participants of ECSU. The competitions took place each day throughout the week and included prizes for the winners. The competition for the week is as follows:

- **Monday:** “Most Tweets” - The student who tweets the most utilizing the hashtag #ECSURW16 will be chosen as the winner and win a prize.
- **Tuesday:** “Randomizer” - An ECSU student who utilizes the hashtag #ECSURW16 will be chosen at random as the winner and win a prize.
- **Wednesday:** “Your Favorite Event” - Participants are encouraged to take pictures of his or her favorite event and include a detailed answer explaining why the event was his or her favorite. The “best” tweet aligning with the criterion will be chosen and the winner will win a prize.
- **Thursday:** “Guess the Picture” - The student who correctly guesses the image first will be chosen as the winner and win a prize. A pixilated image will be displayed beginning Monday and grow more clear each day leading up to Thursday. Thursday a winner will be announced.
- **Friday:** “Most Tweets at the Poster Session” - The student who tweets the most including an image of a poster presentation and explanation of what was learned will be chosen as the winner and win a prize.

The social media team highly encouraged participants to participate in the Research Week events and provide their feedback utilizing Twitter, incorporating the hashtag #ECSURW16. Those participants who did not have a Twitter account were recommended to sign up for one in order to participate in the week’s competition. Participants who already had Twitter accounts were recommended to participate and share information about Research Week.

From an accessibility standpoint, the team created a QR code [3] for participants so that they could access the Research Week Twitter page by simply scanning the code from their mobile device. The code, in addition to, information about the Research Week Twitter competition were printed and distributed to participants and faculty as a part of the Research Week pamphlets.

The social media team tweeted live from multiple events, posted about the Research Week schedule, and engaged with many of the followers, creating an interactive social media presence with the participants. Upon the conclusion of the week’s events and participation, the Twitter page had gained 31 followers, the team had given away multiple prizes to the winners of the competitions, and utilization of the Twitter platform had produced honest and quantifiable feedback.

## Methodology

In order to quantify the feedback the team received from Research Week, the team used a feature named Tweet Activity, available on Twitter. This feature provides data for each tweet that is posted from the account @ECSU\_RW. Tweet Activity information consists of the following:

<b>Tweet Activity</b>	
<b>Impressions</b>	times people saw this Tweet on Twitter
<b>Total engagements</b>	times people interacted with this Tweet
<b>Profile clicks</b>	number of clicks on your name, @handle, or profile photo
<b>Media engagements</b>	number of clicks on your media counted across videos, vines, gifs, and images
<b>Retweets</b>	times people retweeted this Tweet
<b>Hashtag clicks</b>	clicks on the hashtag(s) in this Tweet
<b>Detail expands</b>	times people viewed the details about this Tweet
<b>Likes</b>	times people liked this Tweet
<b>Link clicks</b>	clicks on a URL or Card in this Tweet

\*All information in chart is provided by Twitter.com

It is important to consider that Tweet Activity data is only available to the individual user account that is tweeting. Hence, Tweet Activity data from a different account is not available.

The team collected the available Twitter Activity data from each tweet and then categorized the cumulative data by each day. In addition to the data provided, the team noted tweet features, such as an image being used or a winner retweeting a tweet. The team concluded that such notes may be helpful in analyzing the data and understanding trends. Figure 1 is an example of the data

collected comprised into a spreadsheet.

# Total Likes	6												
# Tweets from OTHER	0												
# ReTweets from OTHER	3												
# Likes from OTHER	1												
OTHER Notes:	CERSER, One of Winners, ECSU Johnson Admin, ECSU Campus Store												
OTHER Definition:	Those users other than Nigel, Jefferson, and Tatyana												
MONDAY - APRIL 11 TWEET ACTIVITY													
Tweet #	Impressions	Total Eng.	Profile Clicks	Media Eng.	ReTweets	Hashtag Clicks	Detail Expansions	Replies	Notes	Likes	Link Clicks		
1	188	10	4	3	2	1	1	0	Schedule of Day	0	0		
2	171	2	0	0	1	0	0	0		0	0		
3	244	30	3	15	2	0	9	1	"Guess the Picture"	0	0		
4	130	5	2	0	0	2	1	0		0	0		
5	128	4	0	3	0	0	1	0	Schedule of the Day	0	0		
6	72	6	1	0	0	0	5	0	ECSU_RW reply	0	0		
7	171	9	0	0	1	2	6	0		0	0		
8	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	Retweeted by Participant (Winner)	0	0		
9	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	Retweeted by Faculty	1	0		
10	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	Retweeted by Participant	1	0		
11	236	19	4	0	3	4	8	0	Reminder of Comp.	0	0		

Figure 1: Collection of Tweet Activity for Monday, April 11, 2016

Once the data was collected for the entire week, the team evaluated which portions of the Twitter Activity data were the most valuable in quantifying Research Week feedback from participants as well as assessing the use of social media as an enhancement to the week’s experience. The portions that were chosen were Impressions, Retweets, Hashtag clicks, and Likes. The team concluded that Impressions were relevant in understanding how hashtags and followers made a difference in the number of people who saw the tweets about Research Week. Retweets were important because they increase the exposure of tweets viewed, affecting Impressions and the total amount of times people viewed a tweet about the week. Retweets also reveal if viewers thought the tweet was valuable enough to share again. Hashtag clicks reveal those participants that were interested and were curious about the hashtag. Finally, Likes are an example of feedback, how many individuals actually liked the tweets that were posted by @ECSU\_RW. The following are the graphs generated from the averages of Twitter Activity data.

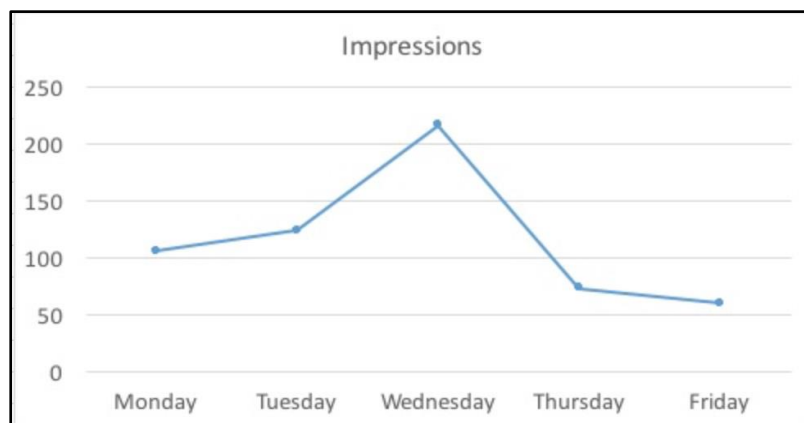


Figure 2: Graph displaying the Impressions for each day of Research Week

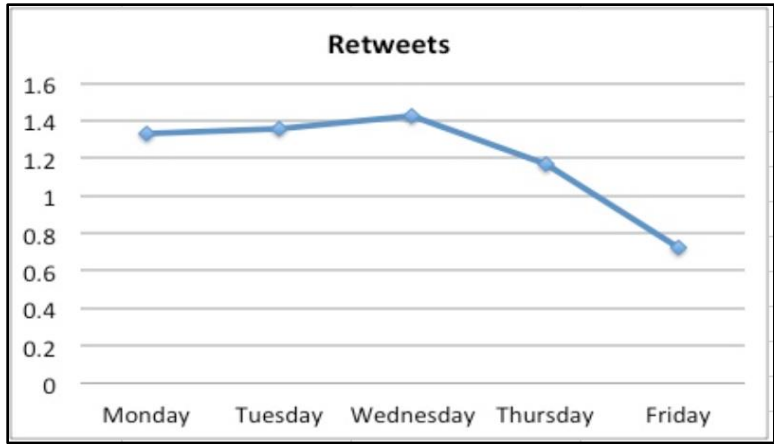


Figure 3: Graph displaying the average Retweets for each day of Research Week

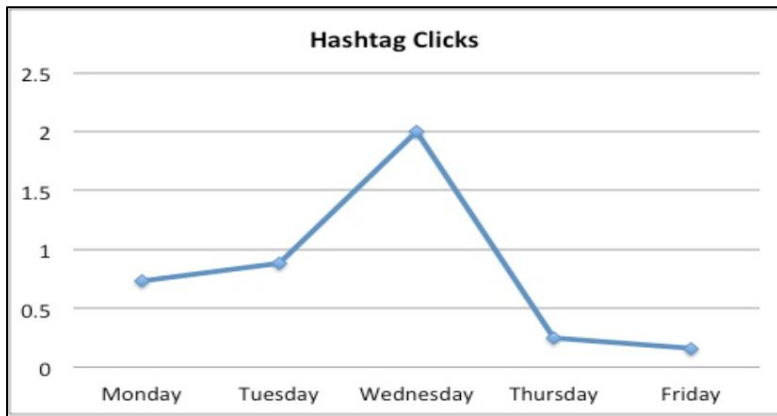


Figure 4: Graph displaying the average Hashtag Clicks for each day of Research Week

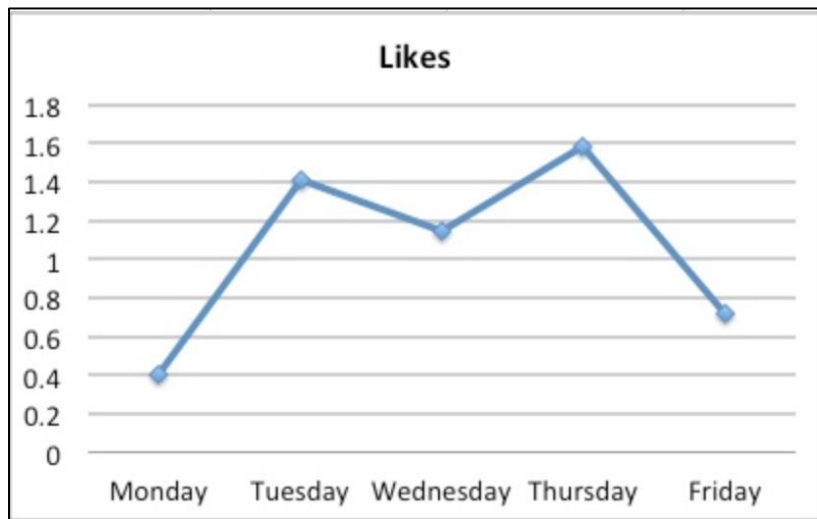


Figure 5: Graph displaying the average Likes for each day of Research Week

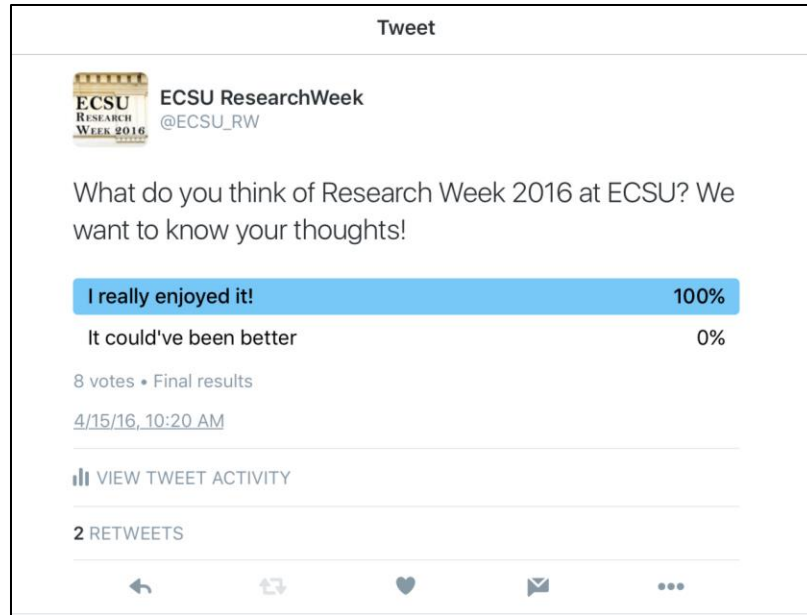


Figure 6: Twitter survey feedback from participants

## Results & Analysis

According to Figures 1 and 3, Wednesday had the highest average number of Impressions and the highest average number of Hashtag clicks from the entire week. What is interesting about Wednesday is that out of all the days, Wednesday posted the least number of tweets, that being seven. However, it is important to consider the content of Wednesday's tweets in order to assess why the abundance of tweets is not the cause for Figure 1 and 3's graphical trends. In reference to data collected in the spreadsheet, Wednesday was the first day in the week that contained the most media content in tweets. The media consisted mostly of images, a few of which were live from the NASA events, and one video concerning promotion of the Jazz Festival. Also, Wednesday was the first day in the week that contained the most tweets with the hashtag #ECSU. It can be concluded that by integrating the popular hashtag #ECSU, in addition to #ECSURW16, the popular hashtag increased the exposure of the team's tweets. For any individual on Twitter who searched the hashtag #ECSU, the team's tweets for that Wednesday were seen, affecting the number of Impressions. Furthermore, for any individual who searched the hashtag #ECSU and saw the team's tweets, the individual also saw the Research Week hashtag #ECSURW16. Therefore, according to Figure 3, it can be inferred that those individuals who saw the team's tweets with the hashtag #ECSURW16, in accompany with the hashtag #ECSU, were interested in the Research Week hashtag and were prompted to click on it --- affecting the trend in Figure 3.

Referring to Figures 2 and 4, Wednesday had the highest average for the most number of Retweets and Thursday had the highest average for most number of Likes. However, the data for these two graphs is heavily skewed. Refer to the spreadsheets and note the definition of "OTHER", which is defined as "those users other than Nigel, Jefferson, and Tatyana". Looking at the total number of Likes and Retweets for both days and then taking the actual number of "OTHER" Likes and Retweets, the percentage of Likes and Retweets from "OTHER" on these two days is actually not the highest. In fact, by performing the calculation for each day of the

week, Tuesday has the highest average for the most number of Likes (Figure 5) and Retweets from “OTHER”, that being 18% Likes and 32% Retweets. On the other hand, Friday had the least number of Likes and Retweets from “OTHER”, that being 6% Likes and 0% Retweets. This skew of data is due to team promotion of the Research Week Twitter with their individual Twitter accounts.

Figure 6 shows a survey that was created by one of the team members, in which 100% of the 8 individuals that took the survey really enjoyed Research Week at ECSU. The social media team took no part in participating in the survey, as to prevent the skewing of data.

## **Conclusion**

In brief, it is vital to consider the frequency of tweeting and incorporation of relevant content. Including popular hashtags are important for increasing the number of people that are exposed to the tweets about Research Week, consider Figure 1 and 3. Incorporating relevant media in tweets, like images and videos, are also significant for prompting student interest in Research Week tweets, possibly leading to more likes, retweets, followers, and exposure to the ECSU student body.

The team also learned to take into account the live events taking place on campus. During Wednesday of Research Week, Student Government Association (SGA) elections took place. The elections did not depreciate Wednesday’s data, but it may have enhanced Research Week tweet exposure for that day. As noted in the Results, many of the tweets from Wednesday contained the hashtag #ECSU. For participants that may have wanted Twitter updates about ECSU or the elections, is it possible that #ECSU was searched. It may have been during this time that many participants were exposed to the Research Week tweets that contained the #ECSU hashtag, accounting for the high number of Impressions that day. Moving forward, it is important to take advantage of those popular events and times on campus when ECSU participants may be using social media as a way to share their experience. It will be helpful to use the popular #ECSU hashtag and make tweets that stand out from the rest, prompting participants to not only view Research Week tweets, but interact with them, like them, share them, retweet them, follow the Research Week page, and provide feedback.

Early promotion of Research Week and the Research Week Twitter competition and goals is beneficial for participants to learn about research week events and encourage student participation, creating early interest and enthusiasm. Aspects that were very helpful in spreading the word about Research Week were Student List Moderator emails sent to the student body, Research Week pamphlets that were distributed to participants, winners of the Twitter competition sharing their experiences, social media sharing across platforms, interactive tweet engagement with followers and participants (replying to tweets), and popular ECSU associated Twitter pages that retweeted and liked Research Week tweets. It is hoped that with early effective promotion of Research Week, the social media team will not be the only individuals, early on, promoting the Research Week Twitter page, attributing to the high number of likes and retweets using their personal Twitter pages. In practical terms, heavy incorporation of likes and retweets from “OTHER” users, in addition to campus organizations sharing can prevent skew of Likes and Retweet data. Also, when generating graphical representations it is important to

generate those representations based only on “OTHER”, with the social media team members excluded.

Lastly, it is valuable to consider the time in which tweets are posted. The team did not make careful note of this aspect throughout the week, explaining why there is no data supplied concerning this idea. Moving forward, one should document closely the time when tweets are and are not receiving the most Interaction and Impressions. Although, Twitter does not provide this information for the general user, it may be something to investigate in the future ---how timing can affect the response of followers and their interaction with tweets (i.e. tweets late at night may receive low responses versus tweets during the early afternoon).

In brief, the team concluded that integration of social media in Research Week was a success. The team learned about those events that really peaked student interest, providing the feedback needed. Also, the team was able to produce quantifiable results that were helpful in analyzing the week’s success and discover improvements for the future. In order to look firsthand at the feedback from participants, one can visit the Research Week Twitter page: [https://twitter.com/ECSU\\_RW](https://twitter.com/ECSU_RW).

## References

- [1]"ECSU Research Week 2016", *Nia.ecsu.edu*, 2016. [Online]. Available: <http://nia.ecsu.edu/ur/1516/rw16/index.html>. [Accessed: 26- Apr- 2016].
- [2]"Twitter", *Twitter.com*, 2016. [Online]. Available: <https://twitter.com/>. [Accessed: 26- Apr- 2016].
- [3]"QR Code Generator - Create QR codes here", *Qr-code-generator.com*, 2016. [Online]. Available: <http://www.qr-code-generator.com/>. [Accessed: 26- Apr- 2016].