

# YOUR FIRST STEPS AS A RESEARCHER ON TWITTER

15 December 2022

WHY TWITTER?

SOMETHING ON GOALS

# (SCIENCE) COMMUNICATION TOOL

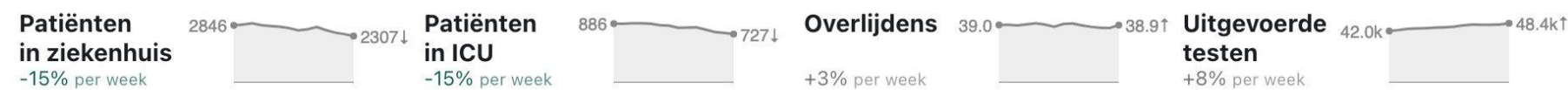
- **Disseminating** research results – To whom? Why?
- Getting people enthusiastic about science
- Making people scientific literate
- Fighting fake news
- Reaching **journalists & policy makers**
- ...

# BART MESUERE VISUALISES DATA

Situatie op 08/05/2021

@BartMesuere

Provincie	Trend besmettingen laatste 14 dagen <sup>a</sup>	Recente besmettingen per 100k inwoners <sup>b</sup>	% positieve testen laatste 14 dagen <sup>c</sup>	Trend hospitalisaties laatste 14 dagen <sup>d</sup>
Antwerpen 1.87M inwoners	-1% per week 508.1 → 447.4↓	335.9	8.5% → 6.2%↓	-8% per week 34.7 → 25.0
Limburg 877k inwoners	-3% per week 313.7 → 269.1	435.6	10.4% → 7.9%↓	+18% per week 17.0 → 15.1↓
Oost-Vlaanderen 1.53M inwoners	-7% per week 458.4 → 354.9	338.8	9.0% → 6.1%↓	-23% per week 27.6 → 17.7↓
Vlaams-Brabant 1.16M inwoners	-5% per week 256.1 → 223.4↓	277.5	7.6% → 5.6%↓	+12% per week 9.9 → 8.1↓
West-Vlaanderen 1.20M inwoners	-8% per week 292.1 → 272.0↓	331.6	7.8% → 5.9%↓	-27% per week 24.9 → 16.1
Henegouwen 1.35M inwoners	-15% per week 522.9 → 394.6↓	447.0	13.4% → 9.4%↓	-12% per week 39.3 → 29.9↓
Luik 1.11M inwoners	+2% per week 312.9 → 272.9↑	341.2	11.4% → 8.7%↓	-12% per week 21.7 → 18.7↑
Luxemburg 287k inwoners	-29% per week 104.1 → 69.0↓	404.9	11.0% → 7.1%↓	-45% per week 6.4 → 3.3↓
Namen 496k inwoners	-16% per week 211.7 → 170.9↓	527.0	13.5% → 8.8%↑	-30% per week 11.1 → 5.6
Waals-Brabant 406k inwoners	-11% per week 113.6 → 93.4↓	341.6	9.0% → 6.3%↓	0% per week 3.7 → 2.9
Brussel 1.22M inwoners	-14% per week 460.9 → 316.9↓	392.7	10.0% → 7.0%↓	-25% per week 37.9 → 25.0↓
<b>Vlaanderen</b> 6.63M inwoners	-5% per week 1828.6 → 1566.9↓	338.8	8.6% → 6.3%↓	-11% per week 114.0 → 82.1↓
<b>Wallonië</b> 3.65M inwoners	-12% per week 1265.1 → 1000.7↓	410.6	12.1% → 8.5%↓	-16% per week 82.3 → 60.3↓
<b>België</b> 11.5M inwoners	-8% per week 3633.3 → 2954.1↓	376.0	9.6% → 6.9%↓	-15% per week 234.1 → 167.4↓



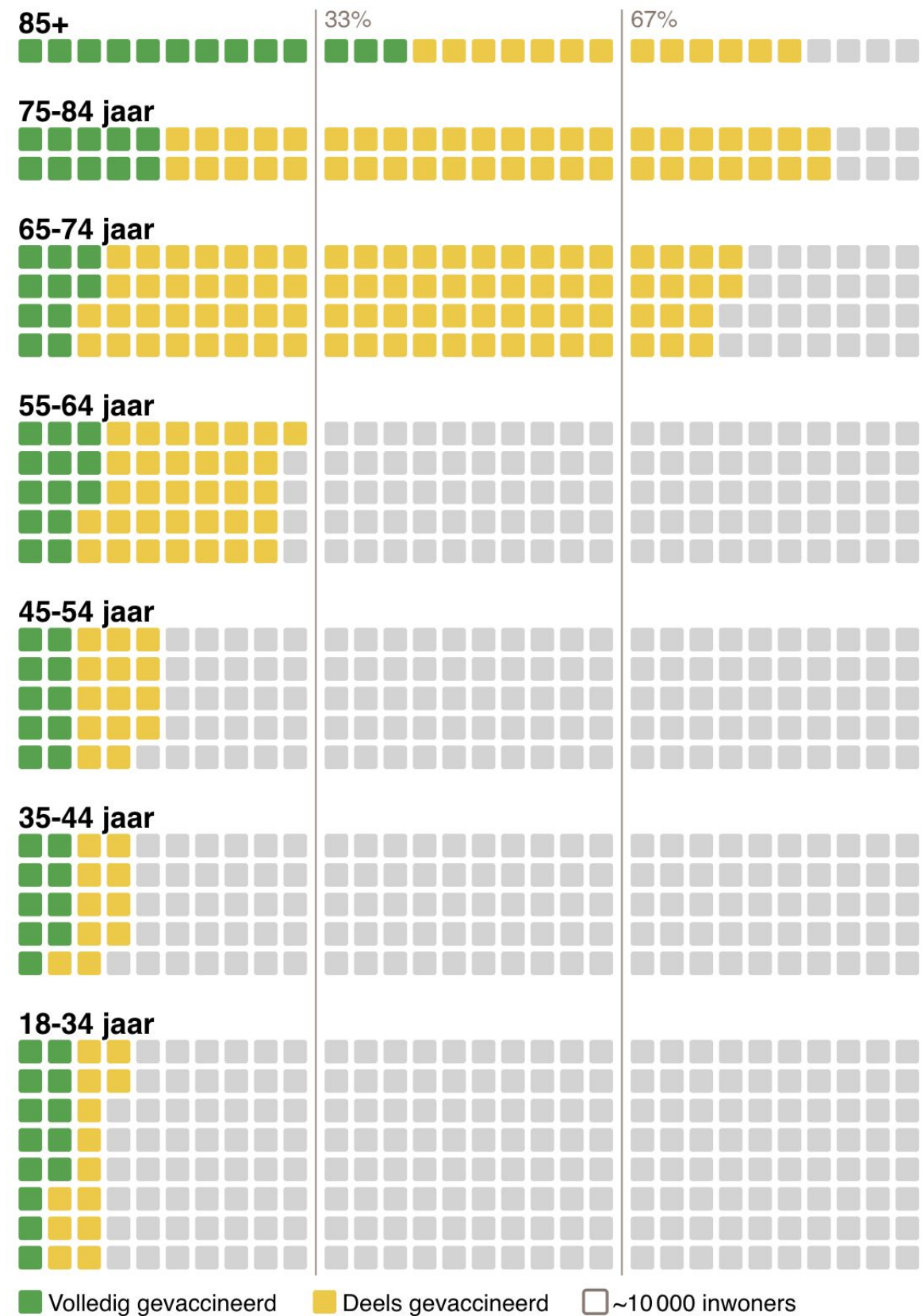
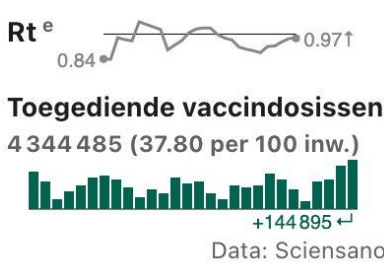
<sup>a</sup> Verschil van het 7-daags gemiddelde van nieuwe besmettingen afgelopen week en verloop gedurende de laatste 14 dagen. De laatste waarde voor België (2954.1) is het gemiddelde voor de periode van 2021-04-28 t.e.m. 2021-05-04.

<sup>b</sup> Deze waarden tonen het aantal besmette personen gedurende de laatste 14 dagen per 100 000 inwoners.

<sup>c</sup> Gemiddeld percentage positieve testen gedurende de laatste 14 dagen.

<sup>d</sup> Verschil van het 7-daags gemiddelde van nieuwe hospitalisaties afgelopen week en verloop gedurende de laatste 14 dagen. De laatste waarde voor België (167.4) is het gemiddelde voor de periode van 2021-05-01 t.e.m. 2021-05-07.

<sup>e</sup> Geschat op basis van het aantal besmettingen naar voorbeeld van het Robert Koch Institute met serieel interval 4. Drempelwaarden: 800 besmettingen per dag; incidentie van 20, 100, en 400; 3% positieve testen; 75 opnames per dag



# BART MESUERE VISUALISES DATA

- He tells **stories** through **data**
- **Twitter** (@BartMesuere)
  - Reaching influencers, journalists, policy makers, ...
  - ‘Threads’
- **Modest** about what he knows and doesn’t know
- On a regular basis > *expectation management*



# JORIS MEYS DEBUNKS FAKE NEWS

## Thread reader

 Tweet

 Share

THREAD BY JORIS MEYS (@JORISMEYS)

Number of positive cases in Belgium in function of the number of tests since may 1st. If cases rise due to more testing, you'd expect a stable positivity rate (grey lines). Some interesting patterns emerge. 1/2 (created with #gganimate, thx @thomasp85)...

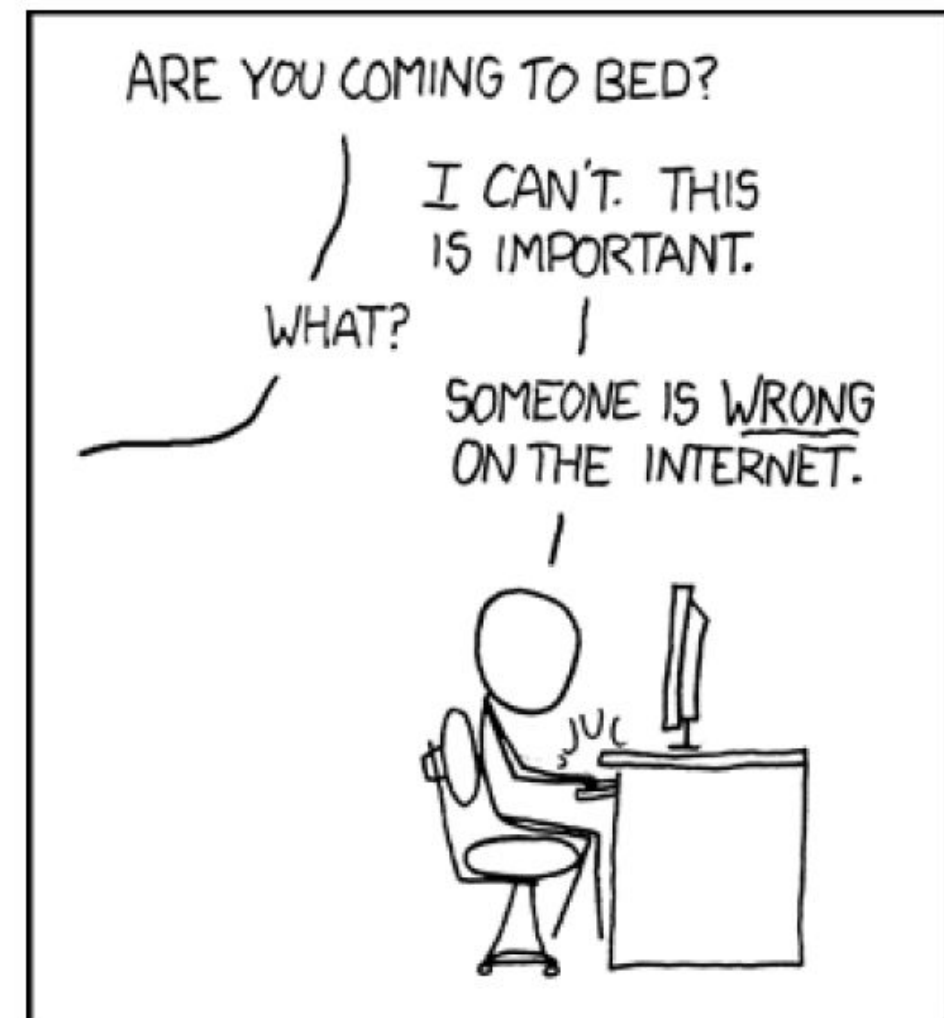


Read all 3 tweets on [threadreaderapp.com](https://threadreaderapp.com)



# JORIS MEYS DEBUNKS FAKE NEWS

- Statistic at Faculty of Bio-engineering
- Almost 7000 followers on **Twitter** (@JorisMeys)
- **Debunks fake news** in ‘threads’ and gives correct information on topics such as vaccination, climate change, ...



He who works with his door open gets all kinds of interruptions, but he can also occasionally get clues as to what the world outside is and what might be important.

– Richard Hamming (mathematician)

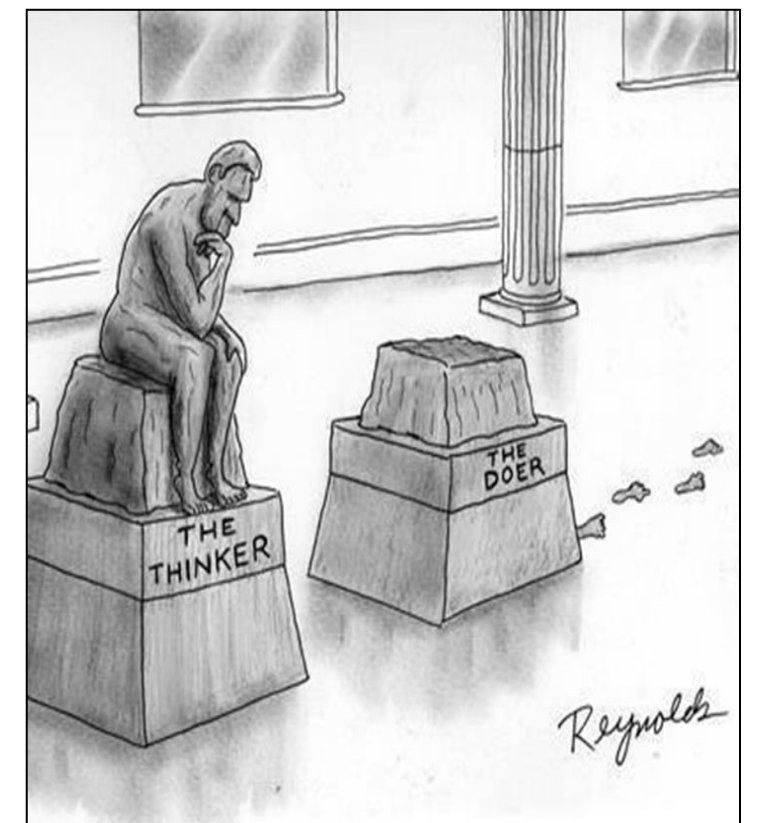


# RESEARCH TOOL

- Finding & sharing resources & information
- **Academic** community (connectedness, support)
- Networking – digital presence
- Beyond peers! ‘public’, stakeholders, employers, ...
- **Interacting with stakeholders**
- Societal valorisation > beyond dissemination
- ...

# DISCLAIMER

- @DavidDeWolf
- Communication & marketing department
- No own communication goals
  
- @UGent: a-typical account
  
- Influenced by @sterretje8 (@researchUGent)
- With a little help from Charlotte Raepsaet, Eline Lievens and Hannes Mareen



WHY TWITTER?

ON COMMS STRATEGY

# COMMUNICATION BASICS

- Why, who, what, where
  - Goal(s) (~change)
  - Target group(s)
  - Message (1)
  - Channel(s)
- Strategy
  - **Multiple** channels
  - Which sender?



# SOCIAL MEDIA

- **Push and pull communication**
  - Cutting the middle man > **direct** sending  
(**& interacting!**)
  - **Digital presence > personal branding**  
(regardless of employer)
- **Choose your channel(s) wisely**  
(goal, target group, personal style, time, ...)

# SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS

## Twitter

- Actuele, korte updates en nieuws heet van de naald.
- Haak in op wat nu leeft via hashtags (en vergeet #ugent niet).
- Veel journalisten volgen Twitter op de voet: je account is je eigen minipersbureau.



[10 tips voor impactvol tweeten](#)

## Instagram

- Visueel: vraagt om mooie beelden.
- Deel ervaringen via authentieke foto's of video.
- Veel jongeren gebruiken Instagram.



[Een Instagram-post zegt meer dan 1000 woorden](#)

## YouTube

- Duik meer in de diepte met video's over je onderwerp.
- Mensen kijken langer, maar beperk en structureer wat je wil tonen.
- Werkt goed voor een nichedomein of meer technische inhoud.



[Breng het goed in beeld op YouTube](#)

## Facebook

- Meer uitgebreide verhalen kunnen, maar overdrijf niet. Link door als het kan. En foto/video is een must!
- Werkt goed om meningen en emoties te delen.
- Een iets ouder doelpubliek.



[Zo maak je geslaagde Facebookposts](#)

## LinkedIn

- Het netwerkplatform voor professionals.
- Ga in interactie met geïnteresseerden uit je domein.
- Zorg voor hoge kwaliteit; nuance en details zijn oké.



[Bouw en onderhoud je netwerk op LinkedIn](#)

## TikTok

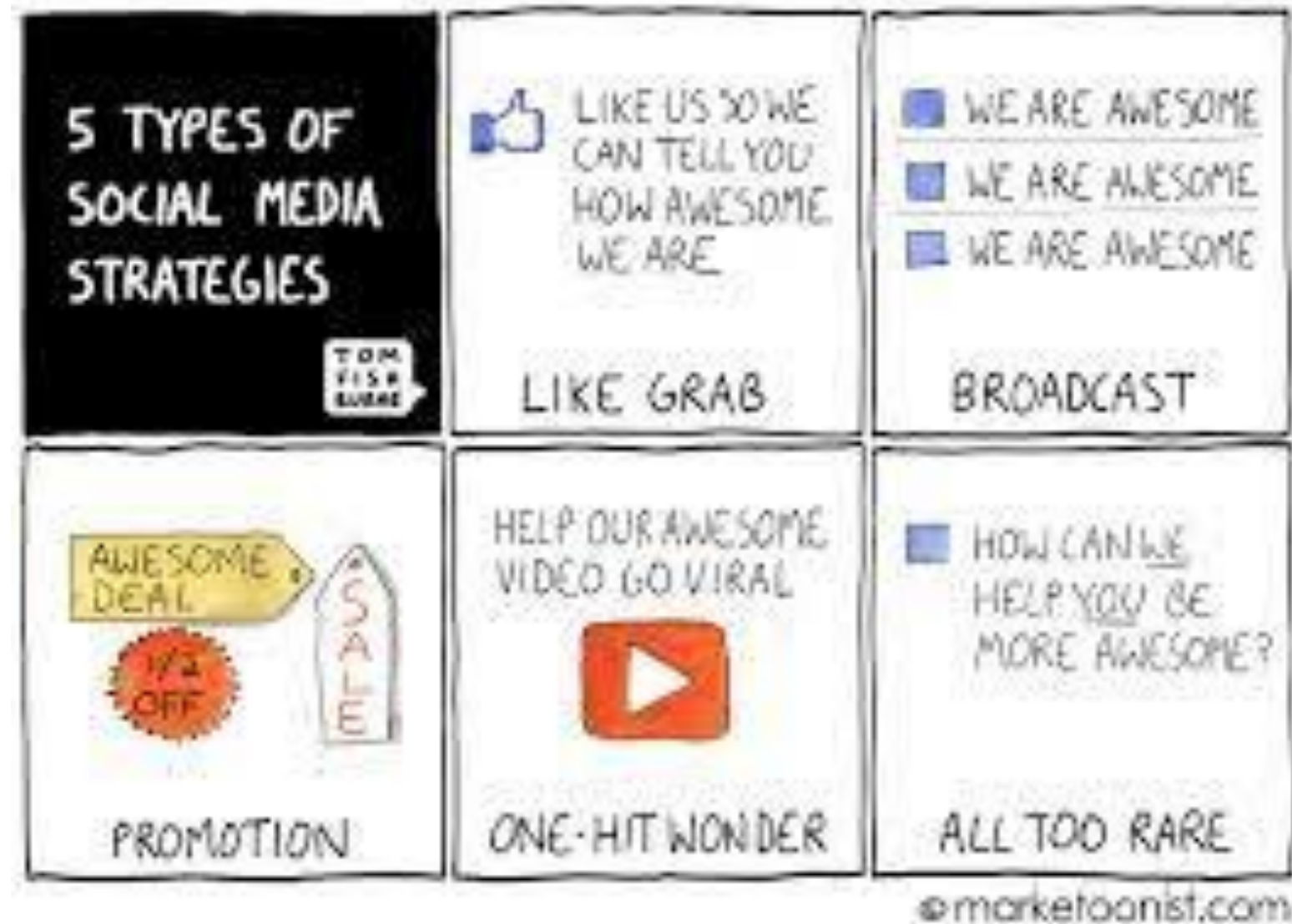
- Ooit gestart voor danspasjes, nu goed voor korte en luchtige video's.
- Een humoristische insteek is een must, ook voor serieuze topics.
- Veel jongeren zijn gek op TikTok.



[Kan TikTok iets voor jou zijn?](#)

# SOCIAL MEDIA

- **In your hands...** (owned media = **your** narrative)
- **Get attention**
- **Build an audience/community**
- **Provide value**
- ... **yet not entirely**
- **algorithms**



# SOCIAL MEDIA

**IMPACT =  
audience x attention x value**



WHY TWITTER?

AND NOT MASTODON?

# CAN WE STILL BE ON TWITTER?

## – **Contra**

- Less moderation > more extreme opinions, wrong facts
- Unpleasant experiences as a tweep

## – **Pro**

- Large audience
- Key figures don't yet want to miss out
- Quand les dégoutés s'en vont,  
il n'y reste que les degoutants

- **Alternatives:** mastodon a.o. (@jbaert)

# GETTING STARTED

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# A quick tour

- [www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com)
- user name = handle  $\neq$  name
- bio
- tweeting
- timeline + replying/liking/retweeting/sharing
- searching + trending
- twitter profiles

# Your twitter profile

- **user name** = twitter handle (@):  
unique, short, easy to write/remember
- **name**: your (full) name (and emoji's)
- **Bio**: affiliation(s) (@!) + what you do.
  - Consider mentioning what you like, scope of your account, hashtag(s).
  - You can use emoji's, linebreaks, ...
- **Pinned tweet**



# BUILD AN AUDIENCE

# Who's on twitter?

- Journalists
- Policy makers  
(e.g. politicians)
- Academics
- Companies,  
organisations,  
institutions
- People with opinions | influencers
- Lurkers






## Who to follow?

- Look for people/organizations you know
- Use them as lead to others (who do they retweet/mention/follow/list)
- Try and look for hashtags
- Ask your followers



# Getting noticed to get followers


Tweeps get a **notification** when you...

- **follow** them: 
- **retweet/quote** their tweet: 
- **like** their tweet: 
- **mention** them: @tweep

They might **respond by starting to follow you.**

Be prepared! > proper bio; some representative content

# Interact

- Tweeps also get a **notification** when you ...  
reply to their tweet: 
- It's called **\*social\*** media > “Join the conversation”
- Here's the truly valuable stuff: network, discuss, learn,  
refine your ideas, help, ... and have fun!
- Reactive and **proactive**: ask questions (or poll)

# Management of expectations

**What can people expect** from your account?

Why should they follow you?

What's in it for them?

- Clear scope; linked to your goal(s)
- Explicit or implicit, in bio and tweeting behaviour  
(**topics, frequency, style, ...**)
- **Be authentic!** (You're in for a long run)

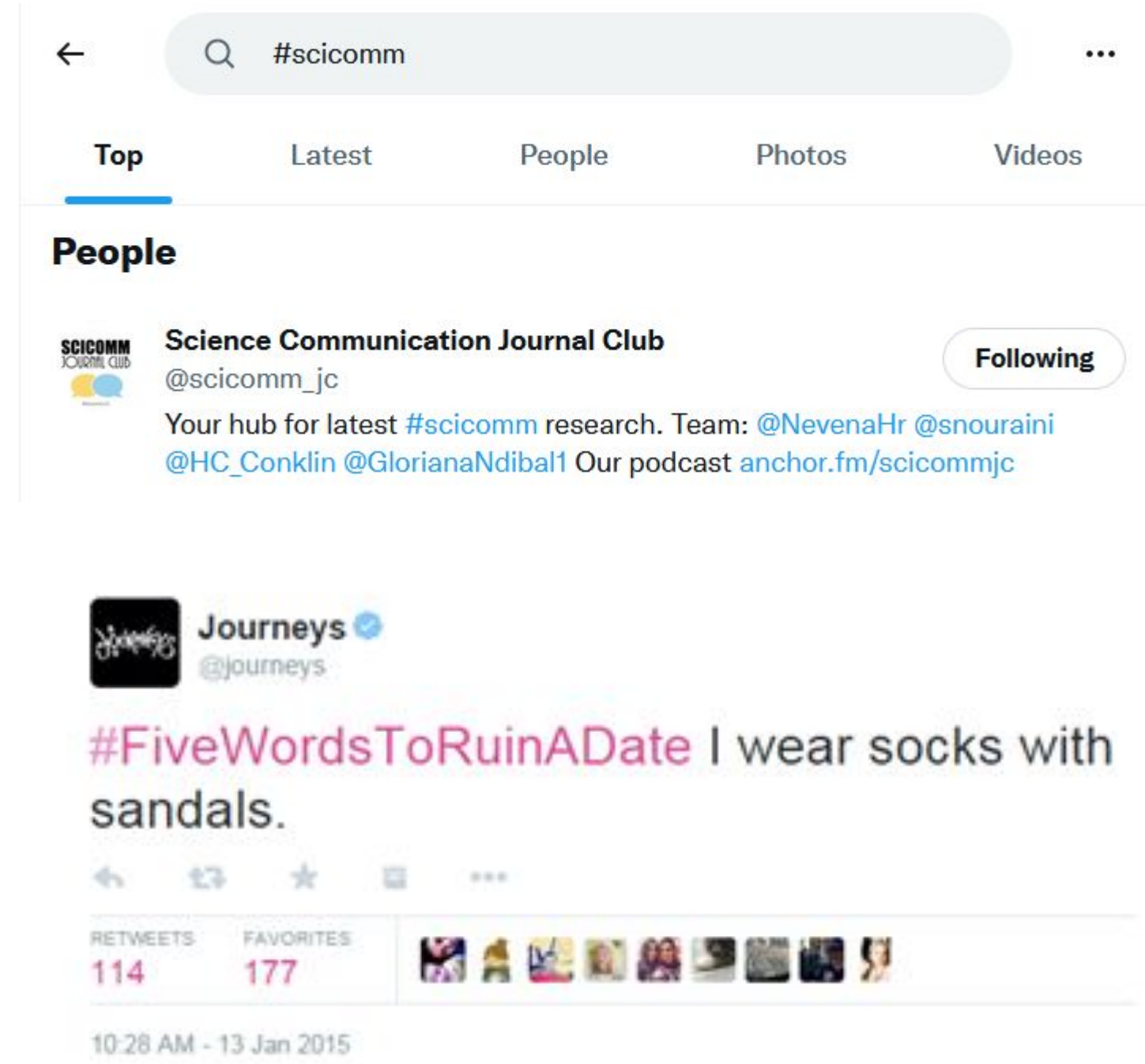
# #Hashtags

Search for **top** or most recent tweets with hashtag →

**Conference** hashtags  
(> second screen)

Hashtag **games** (CamelCase) →

Provide **context**  
(e.g. #durftevragen; #It)



# Most importantly

## **Tweet!**

Experiment: try, evaluate, adapt

Don't give up too soon



## Not to forget: promote your account

- in your email signature
- in bio's and profiles (on your website, on other platforms, as speaker/attendant)
- in your presentations (first/final slide), posters and publications
- on conference name badges
- on your business card
- ...

GET ATTENTION

# The war for attention

- Attention is a conditio sine qua non for impact
- **Get your followers hooked** with clear and attractive tweets that stand out and readers can connect with
- **KISS**: one message, short, to the point



# The war for attention



Hannes Mareen @hannesmar1 · Sep 29, 2021

In 2015, @GameofThrones episodes were leaked on #ThePirateBay before the release date. 🖥️

How could this happen? ☠️

How do we catch the pirate? 🧑‍🚫

I investigated this in my #PhD at @IDLabResearch @UGent @imec\_int, and explain it in this #ThesisThread. 🎓

ARRRRE you ready!?

1/20



3

7

49



# STAND OUT: Use 'fat' tweets

- **Visuals/video (horizontal)** make your tweet 'fatter' and attract/connect
  - says more than 280 characters
- **Mentions** notify specific users
- **Hashtags** provide context
- **Url's** (shortened) provide further reading
  
- Extreme case: threads

# STAND OUT: Use 'fat' tweets



Pieter Van den Berghe ▼ @SportSciSum · Oct 13

Hi! 🙌 I'm Pieter, a researcher in human movement who graduated from [@researchugent](#), and I would like to tell you about how music can help you run like you have never run before.

A [#ThesisThread](#) backed by animations of the Simpsons

[@VLIRnws](#)  
[#SciComm](#)  
[#PhDone](#)  
[@FWOVlaanderen](#)  
[/start](#)



2

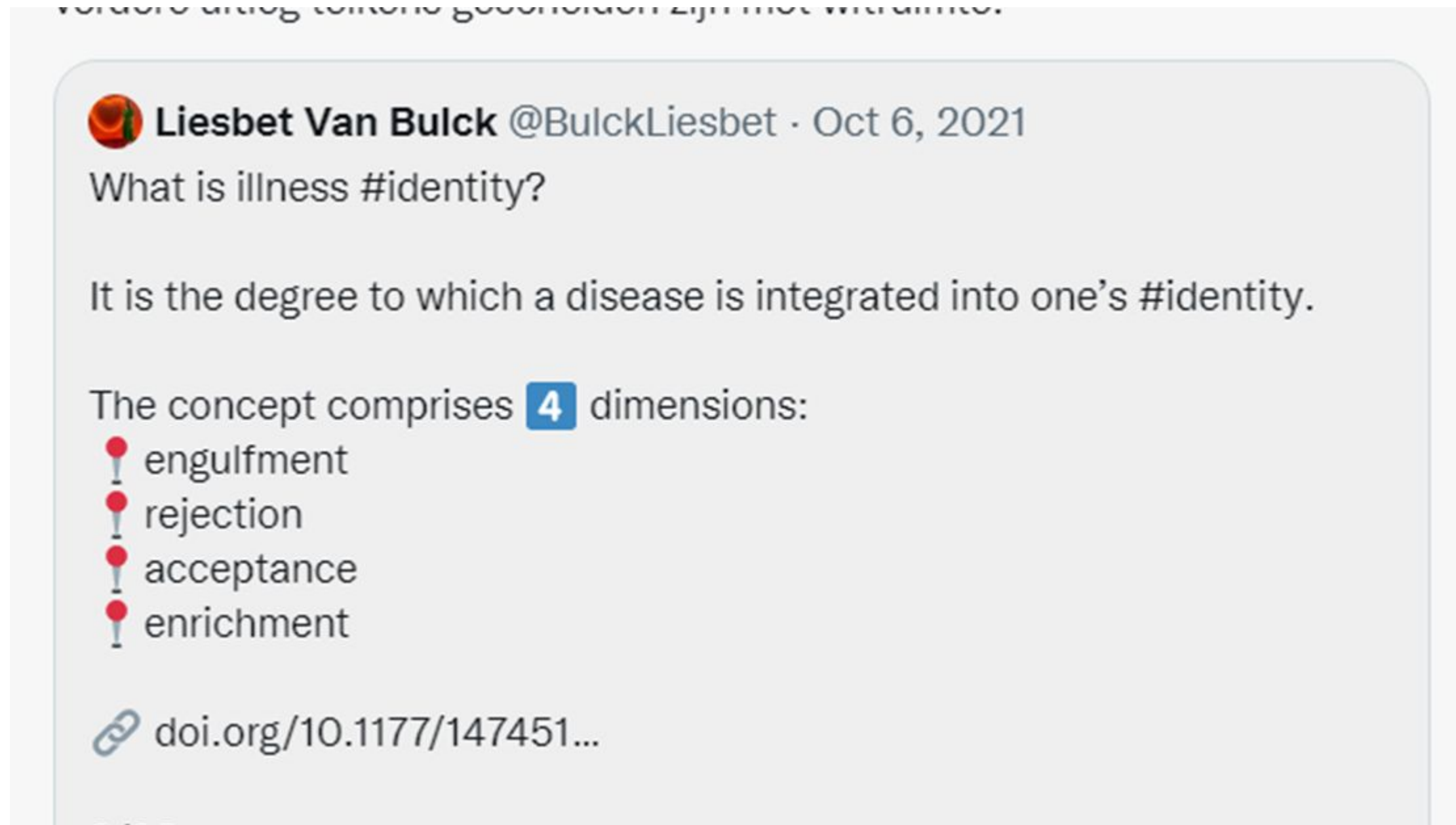
41

91



# CLEAR: Show structure

- Use linebreaks and white space (1 character)



# CLEAR: Show structure

## - Use bold/italics

<https://yaytext.com/bold-italic/>





Hannes Mareen

@hannesmar1



Because each watermarked video has unique small mistakes, I call them the "**secondary**" watermark.

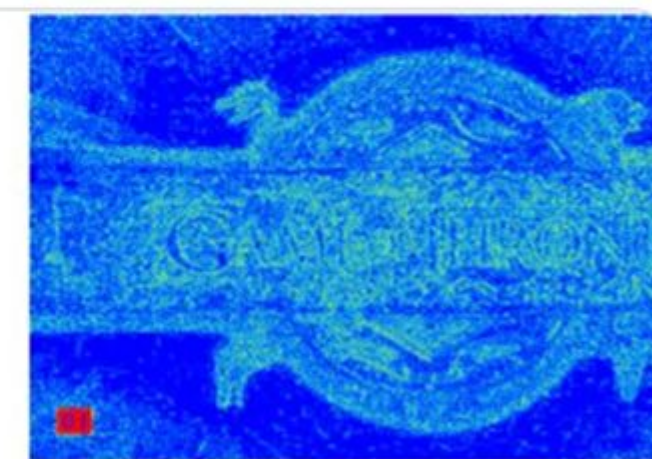
So, to wrap up, we have:

1. A **primary** watermark: the visible ID  in the corner
2. A **secondary** watermark: the small mistakes in the entire video 

17/20



Primary watermark



 Small mistakes  
Secondary watermark

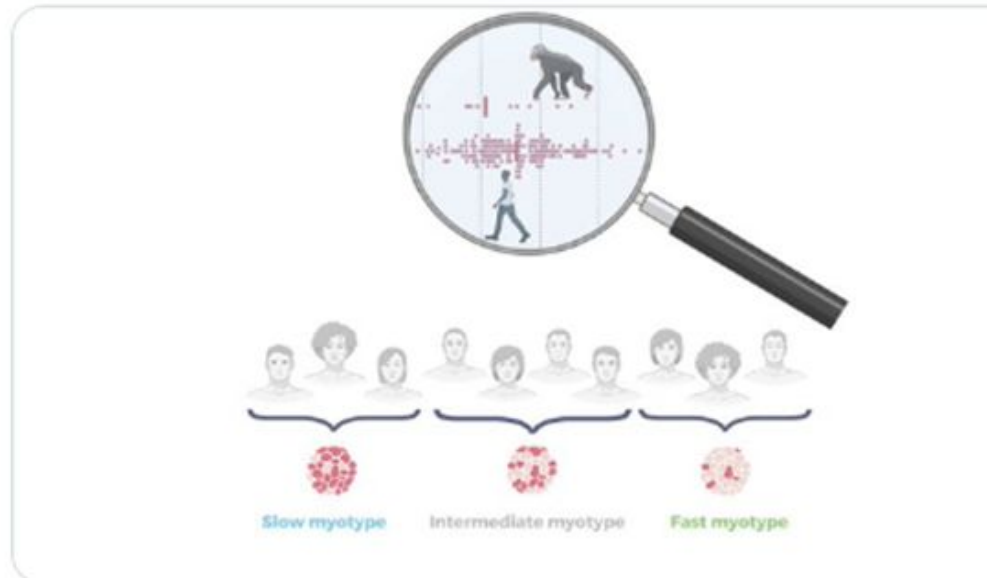
# CLEAR: Show structure

## - Use emoticons to create structure

**Eline Lievens @eline\_lievens** · Sep 28, 2021  
Humans show a big spread in their muscle fiber distribution from 20% to 90% slow-twitch fibers.

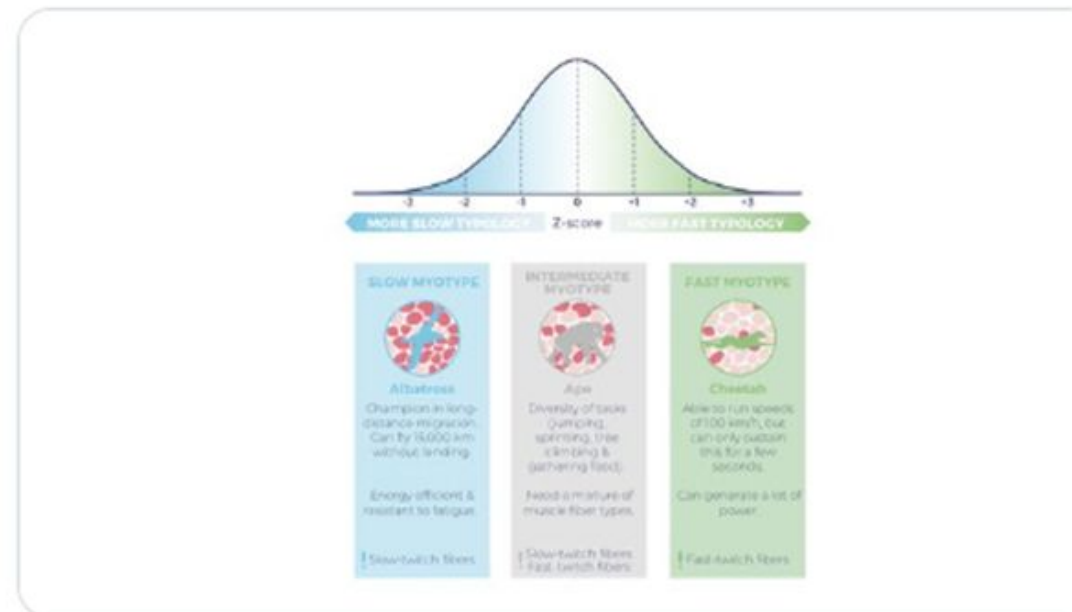
Therefore the muscle fiber distribution humans can be divided into three 'myotypes':

a slow ●, intermediate ● or fast myotype ●.



**Eline Lievens @eline\_lievens** · Sep 28, 2021  
What is your myotype: albatross, ape or cheetah?

The myotype follows a Gaussian distribution, indicating that most people are intermediate ● (like an ape 🐒), but some are dominantly slow ● (like an albatross 🐋) and others dominantly fast ● (like a cheetah 🐆).



**Eline Lievens @eline\_lievens** · Sep 28, 2021  
Can I discover talent based on the myotype?

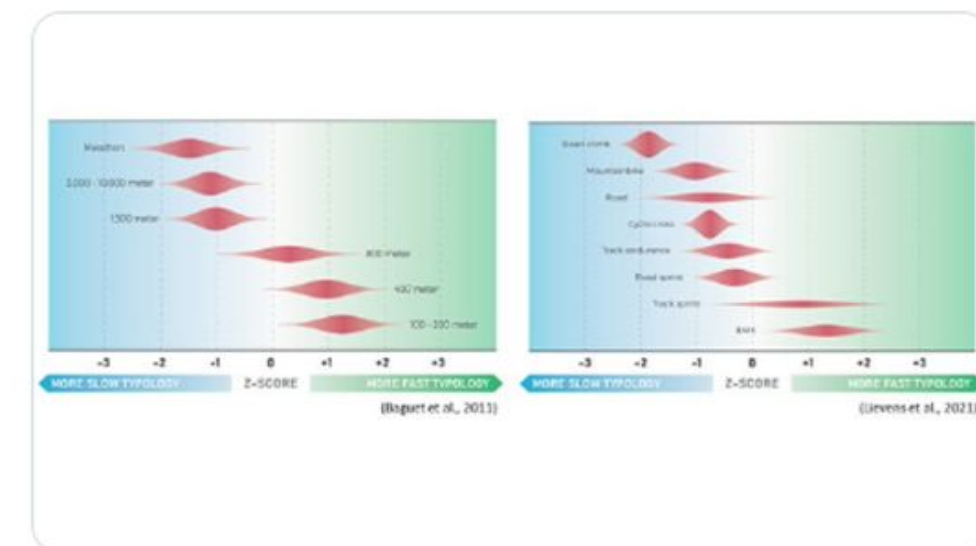
✅ Yes!

Data on 86 elite athletes 🏊, and 80 cyclists 🚴 show distinct profiles in between disciplines:

A slow myotype ● might be favorable for endurance disciplines

VS

A fast myotype ● might be needed for explosive disciplines



# CLEAR: Avoid noise/clutter

- Use an url shortener (bitly, owly, ...)
- Hide @-mentions behind a visual
- Don't exaggerate with hashtags, mentions, emoji's



# CONNECT a.o.: Don't refrain from emoji's

Vastgemaakte Tweet

 **UGent Geneeskunde & Gezondheidswetensch...** @ugent... · 26 okt. ...  
Kom op 27 november naar @dagvdwetenschap op Campus UZ Gent!  
Wij organiseren meer dan 40 activiteiten voor jong en oud, van rondleiding tot lezing, van workshop tot demo, van spel tot escape room 😄. Volledig programma op [dagvandewetenschap.be/gezond-en-wel](https://dagvandewetenschap.be/gezond-en-wel). @uzgent @ugent



**Gezond en wel met dank aan de wetenschap**  
Meer dan 40 gratis activiteiten voor jong en oud over baanbrekend onderzoek in de geneeskunde en gezondheidswetenschappen  
Campus UZ Gent  
27 november 2022  
9u-13u  
Informatie en inschrijvingen: [www.dagvandewetenschap.be/gezond-en-wel](https://www.dagvandewetenschap.be/gezond-en-wel)



**Eline Lievens** @eline\_lievens · Dec 9

My colleague @CasteeleFreek is investigating the predictive value of multiple non-invasive techniques to estimate the muscle fiber typology 😄

Are you also looking forward to the results?

Follow 🗨️ 🗨️

 **Freek Van de Castele** @CasteeleFreek · Dec 9

Cross sectioning finished ✅

For a study that's part of my PhD we took 160 VL and GM muscle biopsies. Then embedded 283 tissue samples for fiber typing purposes.

From each sample we cut ±8 sections, so that's about 2264 sections.

What else did we do? 🗨️

#myotwitter @TeamDerave

[Show this thread](#)





# CONNECT

- people aren't rational; emotions matter
- use recognizable situations
- look for *common ground*
- ask questions!
- tell a **story**
- **timing**: what is top of mind on a given time (save some for later)

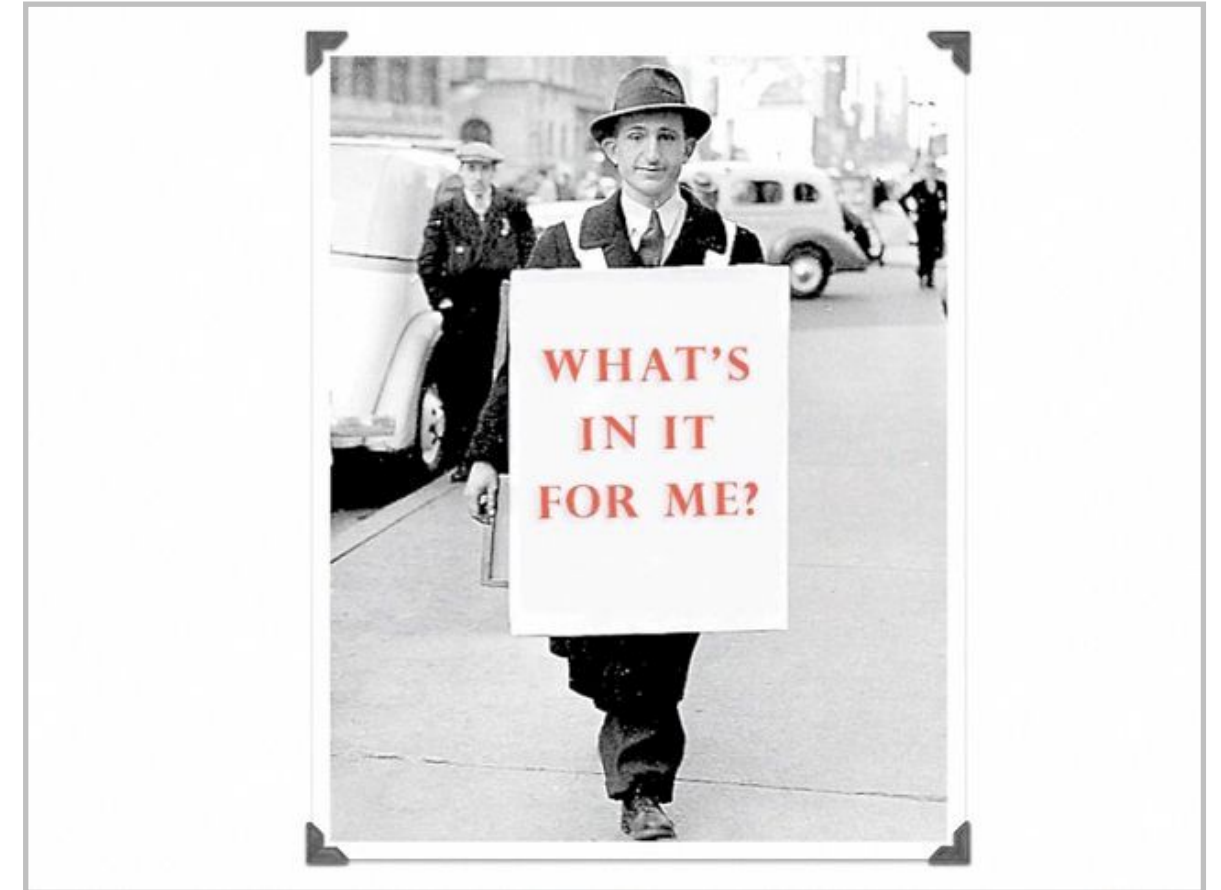
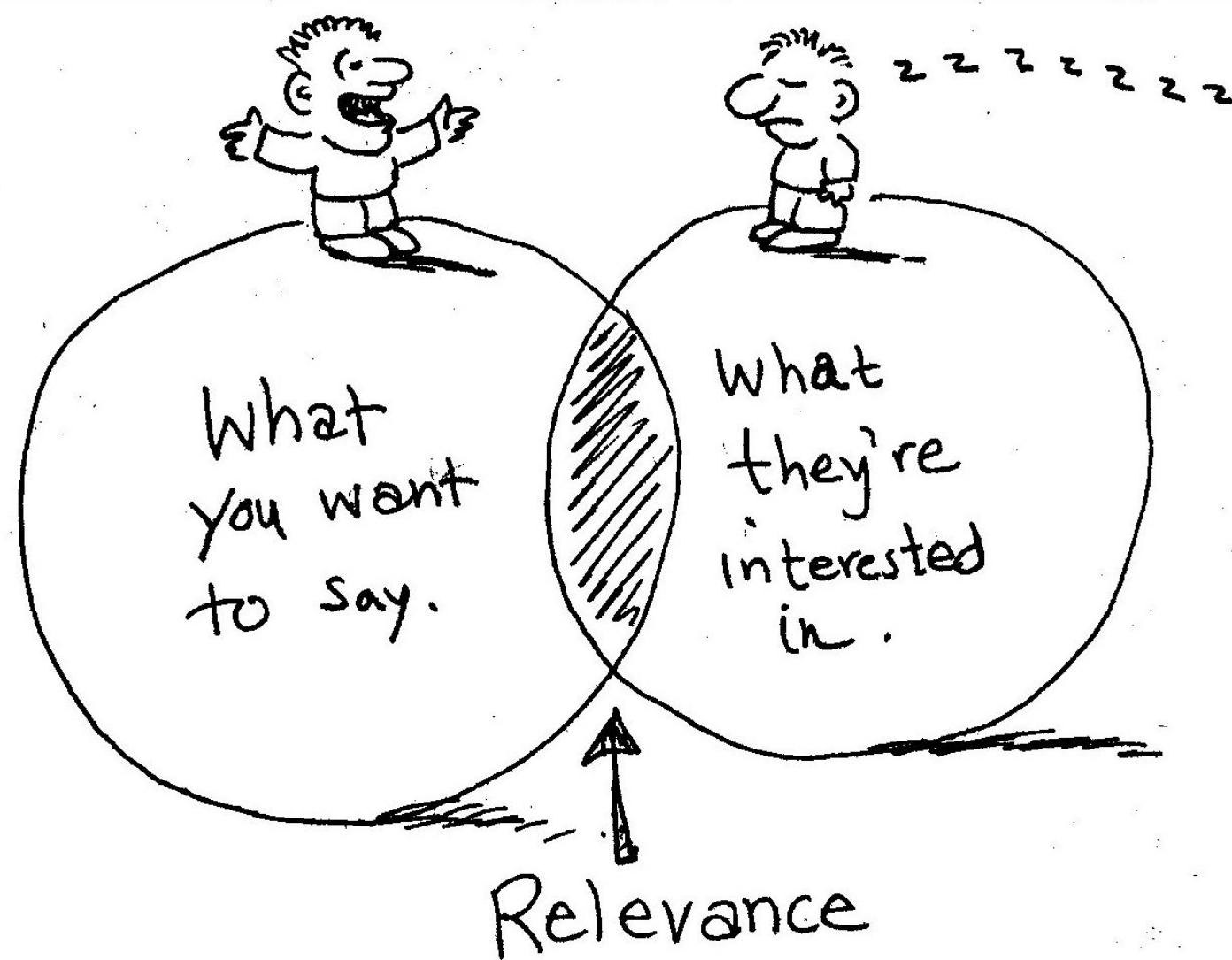
# PROVIDE VALUE

You get what you give

# Keep your goals and target group in mind

What do **you** want them to know (> goal)

What do **they** want to know? (Trojan horse)



# Select and amplify

- Filtering the best content in a niche = (2x) valuable
- In new posts or retweets / quote tweets



Eline Lievens @eline\_lievens · 1h

...

Het belang van spiervezels bij hardlopen? Lees het in dit boek van @marisvsprundel of in deze blog [ap.lc/6hdcz](https://ap.lc/6hdcz)



# Threads ('draadjes')

Have a longer message? Link to elsewhere or...  
write a thread (by replying to your own tweets).

- Announce your thread!
- First tweet: what to expect; get attention; key message!
- Numbering at the end of each tweet '(1/10)', '(2/10)' etc., or (1/n) etc. is optional. Don't forget 'the end'.
- Don't interrupt sentences.

# Threads ('draadjes')

Inspiration & examples:

- see twitter
- #Thesisthreads
- pirates and game of thrones
- muscle fiber technology

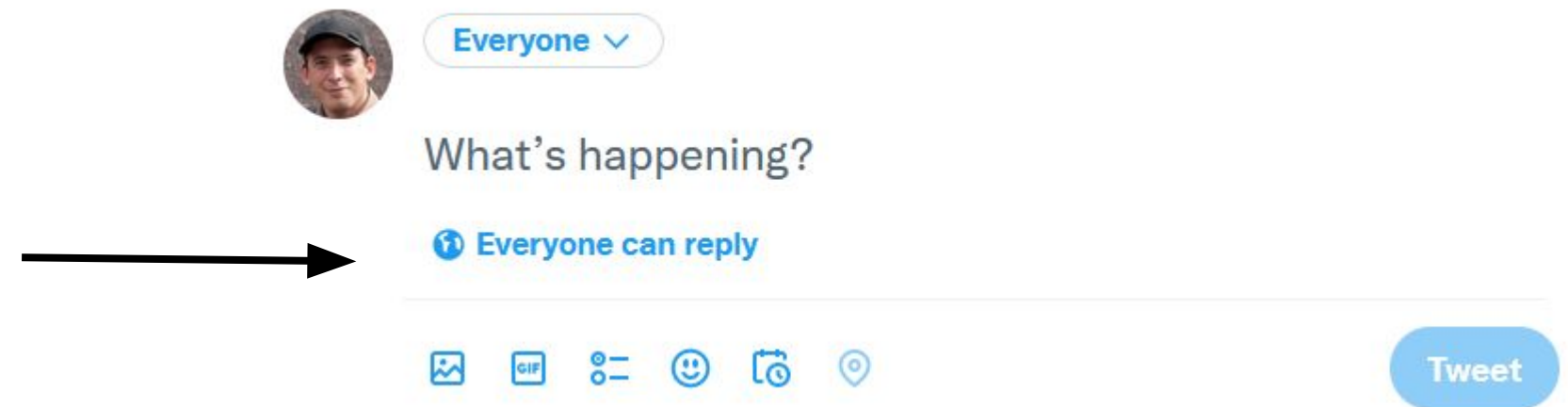
# Balance

- own content
- retweets
- interaction
  
- Quality > quantity
- Number of tweets is not important, a steady pace is



# Unwanted platforming

- Successful tweets (or hashtags) can be spammed - or used to your advantage :-)
- Deleting comments of others is not possible
  - Avoid being commented/used by trolls through blocking them
  - Report misbehaviour
  - Limit who can respond



# At conferences

- Use the conference hashtag
- Discuss ideas
- Ask questions
- Follow interesting speakers
- Be noticed > network
  
- virtual participation

# WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

# MORE TWITTER FUNCTIONS

# Lists

Structuring tweeps

Following without following (> anonymous)

Make your own or follow other lists

E.g. [my lists](#)

# Poll



Elon Musk   
@elonmusk



Reinstate former President Trump



15,085,458 votes · Final results

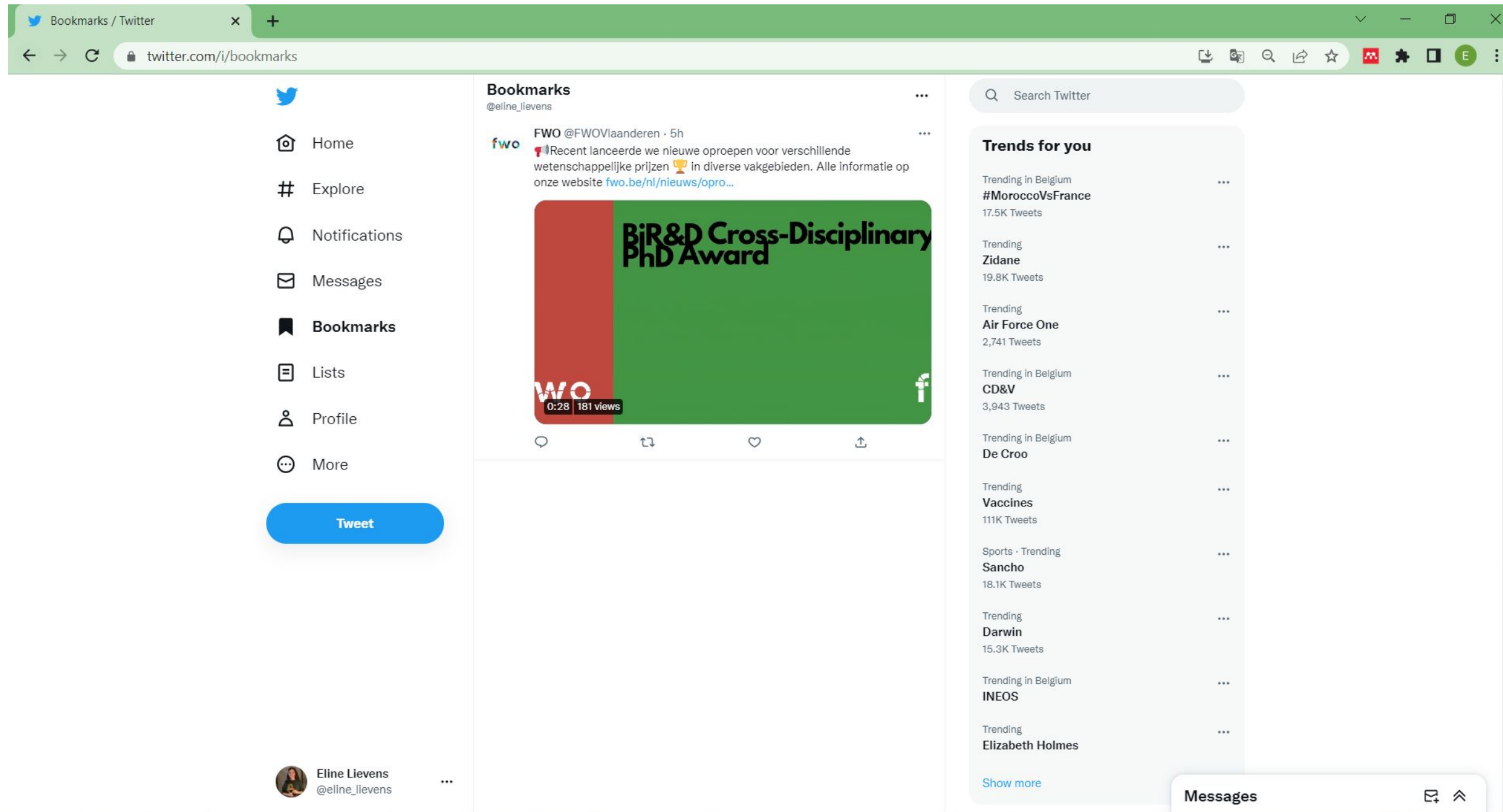
1:47 AM · Nov 19, 2022

229.8K Retweets   77.5K Quote Tweets   837.1K Likes



# Bookmarks

-To save interesting tweets for later



# Analytics

- more → creator studio
- analytics

**Account home**  
Eline Lievens @eline\_lievens  
Page updated daily

**28 day summary** with change over previous period

Tweets: 17 ↑ 142.9%	Tweet impressions: 23.9K ↓ 16.0%	Profile visits: 6,042 ↓ 26.8%	Mentions: 33 ↓ 5.7%	Followers: 1,408 ↑ 77
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Dec 2022 • 13 days so far...

**TWEET HIGHLIGHTS**

**Top Tweet** earned 3,958 impressions  
Our research made it to the cover of @eos\_wetenschap

**Top mention** earned 58 engagements  
ACREHAB - UGent @acrehab\_ugent · Dec 2  
Vanavond geen succes op het WK, maar wel een succesvolle REVA-Club! Met dank aan @eline\_lievens die een lezing gaf over haar innovatief onderzoek naar de relevantie van spiervezeltypering in sport, een topic waarover je in de toekomst zeker nog meer gaat horen.  
#levenslangleren  
pic.twitter.com/8CcdJELcm6

**Get your Tweets in front of more people**  
Promoted Tweets and content open up your reach on Twitter to more people.  
Get started

**DEC 2022 SUMMARY**

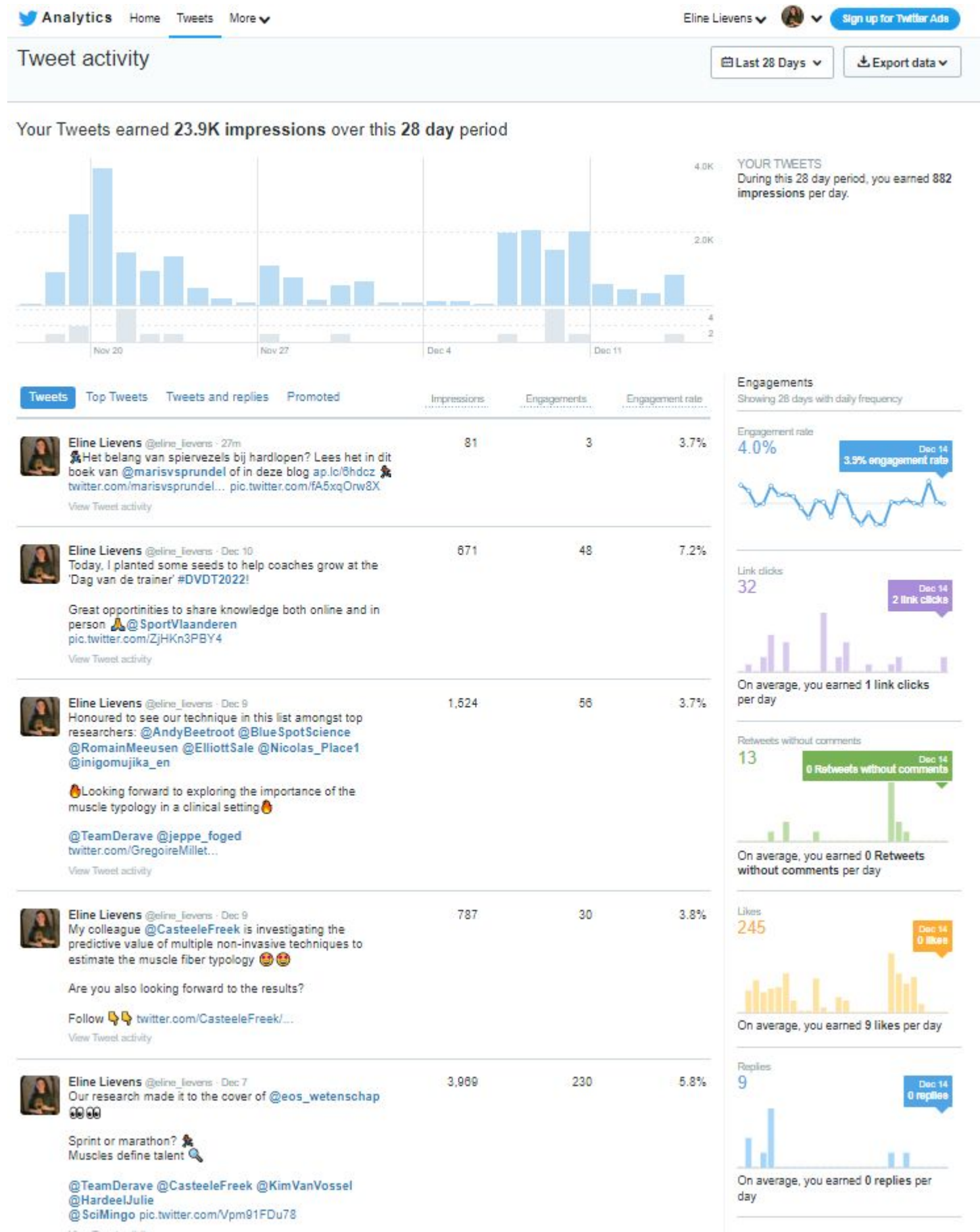
Tweets: 6	Tweet impressions: 9,856
Profile visits: 1,923	Mentions: 9
New followers: 15	

**Top Follower** followed by 28.2K people  
Andrew Jones @AndyBeetroot · FOLLOWS YOU  
Professor of Applied Physiology, University of Exeter. Exercise physiology, sports science, nutrition, training, Gary Numan.  
View profile

**Top media Tweet** earned 664 impressions  
Today, I planted some seeds to help coaches grow at the 'Dag van de trainer' #DVDT2022!  
Great opportunities to share knowledge both online and in person @SportVlaanderen  
pic.twitter.com/ZjHKn3PBY4



# Analytics



# ETIQUETTE & PRACTICAL TIPS

# Don't do subtweeting (> be polite / ethical)

When talking about other tweeps,  
make sure they get notified:

- @-mention them
- quote them
- reply to them

## Don't feed the trolls

- Evaluate comments: genuine questions or trolling?
  - anonymous? history of account?
- Don't discuss with trolls; address the topic yourself
- Do not quote when criticizing, but use screenshots

# Think twice (but not more)

- No edit-button!
- Dealing with mistakes/regret
  - Post a correction (another tweet, reply, quote, ...)
  - Delete tweet (early! beware of screenshots)
  - Never mind

# Preparing tweets

- Word
- Tools like typeshare

The screenshot shows the typeshare.co editor interface. At the top, there's a browser address bar with the URL 'typeshare.co/editor/-NJH5h09bs5oMr\_7uSHM'. Below the address bar, there are navigation buttons for 'Twitter', 'Medium', and 'LinkedIn', along with a 'Review & Publish' button. The main editing area contains a text input field with the following text: 'If you want to make a thread', 'Typeshare is an easy tool', 'as you can type everything you want on the left', and 'But you can see it appear as a thread of different tweets on the right.' A '35 Words' counter is visible at the bottom left of the editor. On the right side, there's a preview of the resulting thread, showing four tweets by 'Eline Lievens @eline\_lievens' with their respective character counts (28/280, 25/280, 47/280, and 71/280).

# Planning

The image shows a screenshot of a Twitter web interface in a browser window. The address bar shows 'twitter.com/compose/tweet'. The main content area is a 'Home' feed. A white modal window is open for composing a tweet. The modal has a close button (X) in the top left, a dropdown menu set to 'Everyone', and a text input field containing 'What's happening?'. Below the text field is a poll creation section with a blue header 'Everyone can reply to this poll' and two options: 'Yes' and 'Nope'. A black arrow points to the poll options. At the bottom of the modal are icons for adding photos, GIFs, videos, emojis, tags, and location, followed by a blue 'Tweet' button. The background shows a tweet by 'Craig Sale' replying to '@GregLehman' with the text 'Much more nuanced than that!'. Below it is a tweet by 'Dirk Cambier' mentioning 'UGent Geneeskunde & Gezondheidswetenschappen' and 'Alliantie-onderzoeksgroep @ugent @VUBrusseel REBI (Rehabilitation technology for people with a Brain Injury)'. A 'Messages' notification is visible in the bottom right corner.

# Planning

The screenshot shows the Twitter web interface at the URL `twitter.com/compose/tweet/schedule`. A 'Schedule' dialog box is open, displaying the following information:

- Confirm** button
- Will send on **Mon, Dec 19, 2022 at 8:32 PM**
- Date** section with dropdowns for **Month** (December), **Day** (19), and **Year** (2022).
- Time** section with dropdowns for **Hour** (20) and **Minute** (32).
- Time zone** set to **Central European Standard Time**.
- Scheduled Tweets** link.

The background shows the Twitter home feed with a tweet from **Craig Sale** (@Sale\_ExNut) replying to **@GregLehman** with the text "Much more nuanced than that!". The left sidebar contains navigation options: Home, Explore, Notifications, Messages, Bookmarks, Lists, Profile, and More. The right sidebar shows trending topics in Belgium, including **Frankrijk**, **CD&V**, **STOP LYING**, **Saïss**, **Open VLD**, and **#ElonIsDestroyingTwitter**.



## Some final tips

- Ask your colleagues for feedback about your tweet(s)
- Look for inspiration in your timeline
- Don't focus on the algorithm:  
it's difficult to figure out,  
and it changes constantly
- Don't let the 'rules' paralyze you!  
There's more than one way.



KEEP  
CALM  
AND  
TWEET  
ON

# FURTHER READING

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# ON COMMUNICATION & TWITTER

- <https://www.ugent.be/intranet/nl/op-het-werk/communicatie/zelf-aan-de-slag>
- <https://www.ugent.be/intranet/nl/op-het-werk/communicatie/zelf-aan-de-slag/sociale-media/twitter.htm>
- <https://twitter.com/hannesmar1/status/1596102203068104706>

# A RESEARCHER USES TWITTER

# QUESTIONS?

# David De Wolf

Science communication

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