

#Weather: An Exploration of Public Engagement and Understanding of Science through NOAA's Twitter

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Science communication most commonly occurs through newspapers, television, magazines, the Internet (Besley & Tanner, 2011), and recently social media. However, there is scant research about social media as an effective channel for science communication (Gastrow, 2015; Lee & VanDyke, 2015). Hence, there is a need for science communication scholars to examine science discourse via social media such as Twitter. The purpose of this research proposal is to explore whether Twitter can increase public engagement and understanding of science. Since *science* is a broad term that encompasses many different areas of study and disciplines, this study focused on tweets about severe weather posted by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) during the January 22-24 2016 blizzard. Preliminary analysis of a thematic analysis of tweets demonstrated that NOAA used Twitter to share information about severe weather, but minimally engaged the public in communication about science and preparedness for severe weather.