

#WhatisAHashtag

Hashtag defined

A hashtag is a word or series of words all rammed together with this symbol - # - preceding it.

Why use a hashtag?

Hashtags make content more searchable. You can click on a hashtag on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and more and it will take you to other items using that same word or string of words.

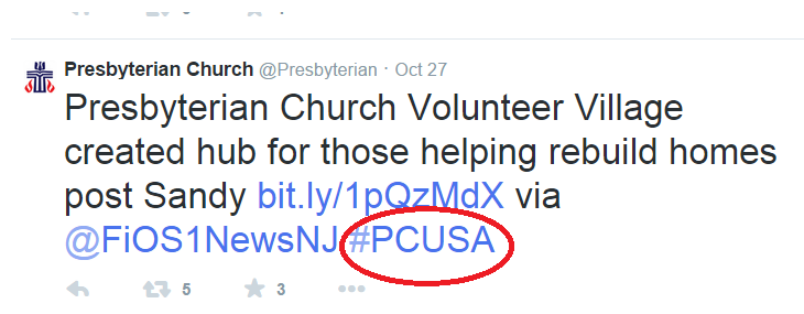
Hashtags are commonly used to add humor, snide comments or context to a tweet or Facebook post. From: <http://mashable.com/2013/10/08/what-is-hashtag/> - see below for examples (pulled directly from the article):

- Let the weekend begin! **#TGIF**
- Wearing socks with Crocs is so stylish **#kidding**
- Just dropped my second ice cream cone. **#fail**
- The movie **#Gravity** is beautiful, but so terrifying!**#nevergoingtospace**
- I'm loving 'The Sound of Things Falling' by Juan Gabriel Vasquez **#FridayReads**

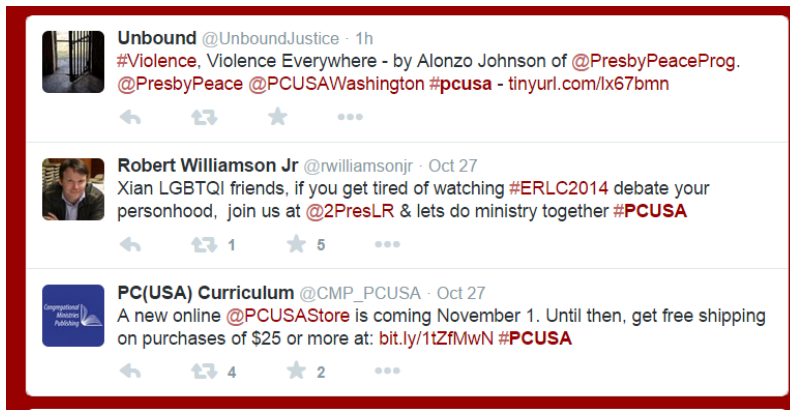
Hashtags that work

All of the tweets coming from the Presbyterian Mission Agency should get the #PCUSA hashtag. If it is used consistently, you can click on it and it will take you to all of the other tweets using that same hashtag. It allows us to see who else is using that hashtag and helps us find other people who are also tweeting about the Presbyterian church.

Example



Click on that hashtag, and you get these tweets also using the same hashtag.



Why do this? You can then follow these other accounts, engage with them and possibly get their help in spreading the message of who you are. It helps you find people who are a good fit for your organization.

As a church leader, here are hashtags you can follow:

<http://www.unseminary.com/12-hashtags-church-leaders-should-be-following-today/>

How to create and use a hashtag

1. Naturally, you can use #PCUSA on all of your activities (please do!).
2. The hashtag shouldn't be too cryptic or hard to remember.
3. Hashtags should be short. You only get 140 characters in a tweet, so if you take up too much room with a hashtag, few will be able to use it.
4. Create hashtags for events. Example: I attend an annual conference called Excellence in Journalism. Our hashtag remains the same each year except that we change the year. So it's #EIJ13, #EIJ14, #EIJ15... etc. Easy to remember and use.
5. Create hashtags for advocacy. Example:

<http://www.borgenmagazine.com/hashtag-advocacy-lead-lasting-change/>

"With enough buzz, this calls upon people in positions of power to use their outlets to catalyze change. Essentially, it gives people an active role as an agenda setter. This has proven effective time and time again. For example, only after #Kony2012 took over the Internet did Obama send troops to Uganda to aid in training Ugandan troops to locate Joseph Kony."

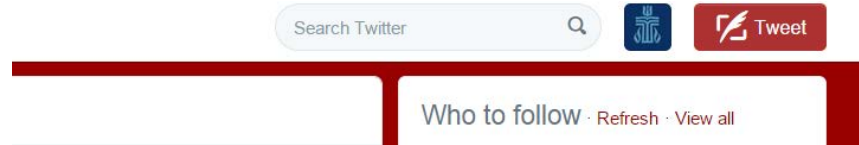
Others:

#BringBackOurGirls was another one used for advocacy.

6. Check hashtags for usage. Generic hashtags such as #news aren't really helpful in getting your tweets discovered and your account followed. Instead, aim for less generic hashtags. To know if you're content is too generic, or possibly associated with things

that have nothing to do with you, Google it and see what comes up. You can also use services to check your hashtags. Options include:

- Twubs.com – type in your hashtag and see what comes up. Try www.twubs.com/pcusa for an example.
- Search on Twitter. Use the search box in the upper right-hand corner.



7. Remember: no spaces or punctuation in hashtags. Numbers are OK, though, and capitalization is OK, especially for separating words. For example, #WorldMission is better than #worldmission because it is easier to read. Don't use all caps unless it stands for something that's being abbreviated. #GA220 is OK, but #WORLDMISSION is not.
8. Disseminate the hashtag. Use it in every post on Facebook, Twitter, etc. about the event and put it in any printed brochures, etc. that you have to let people know what the hashtag is. Those who want to use it, will.