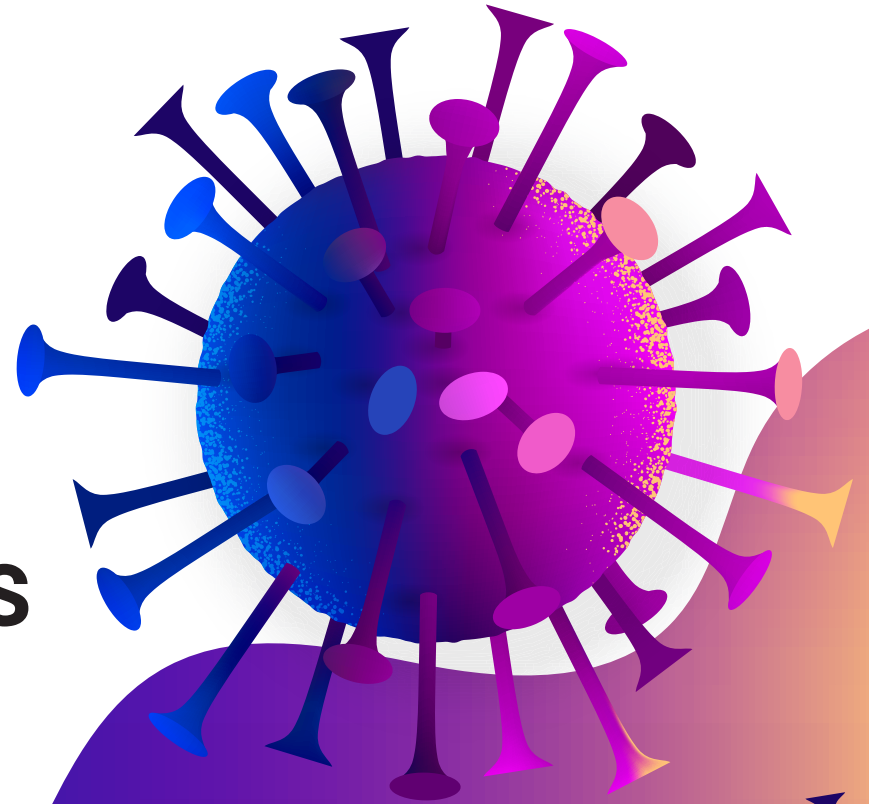
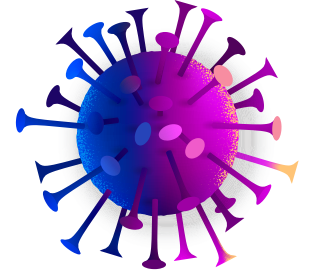


10 Social Media Tips for the Coronavirus Crisis



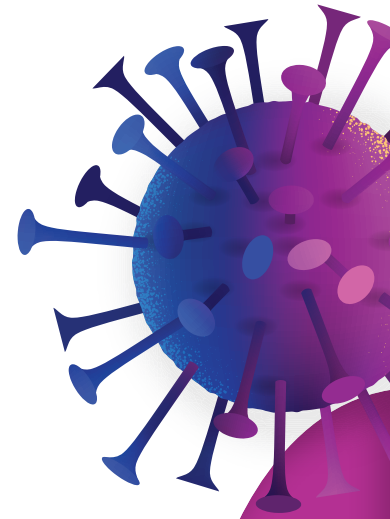
The Coronavirus pandemic is putting a lot of strain on businesses as they suddenly find themselves having to plan for an uncertain future. We don't know how bad the crisis will get, or how long it will last, with estimates varying from a few weeks to six months or more. The impact could be severe for a lot of businesses.

If you work in social media, or a wider PR and marketing role, you're probably wondering what you can do right now that's going to be genuinely useful to help your organization get through this difficult period. In this guide we offer some practical suggestions.

In a situation like this, there are two things social media can help you with:

- Gathering information about the crisis
- Communicating to your audiences

So we'll split this eBook into those two sections: how you can get useful information from social data to help your business, and how you can use social to communicate effectively with all of your stakeholders.



PART ONE

Gathering Information

1 Setting up Search Queries

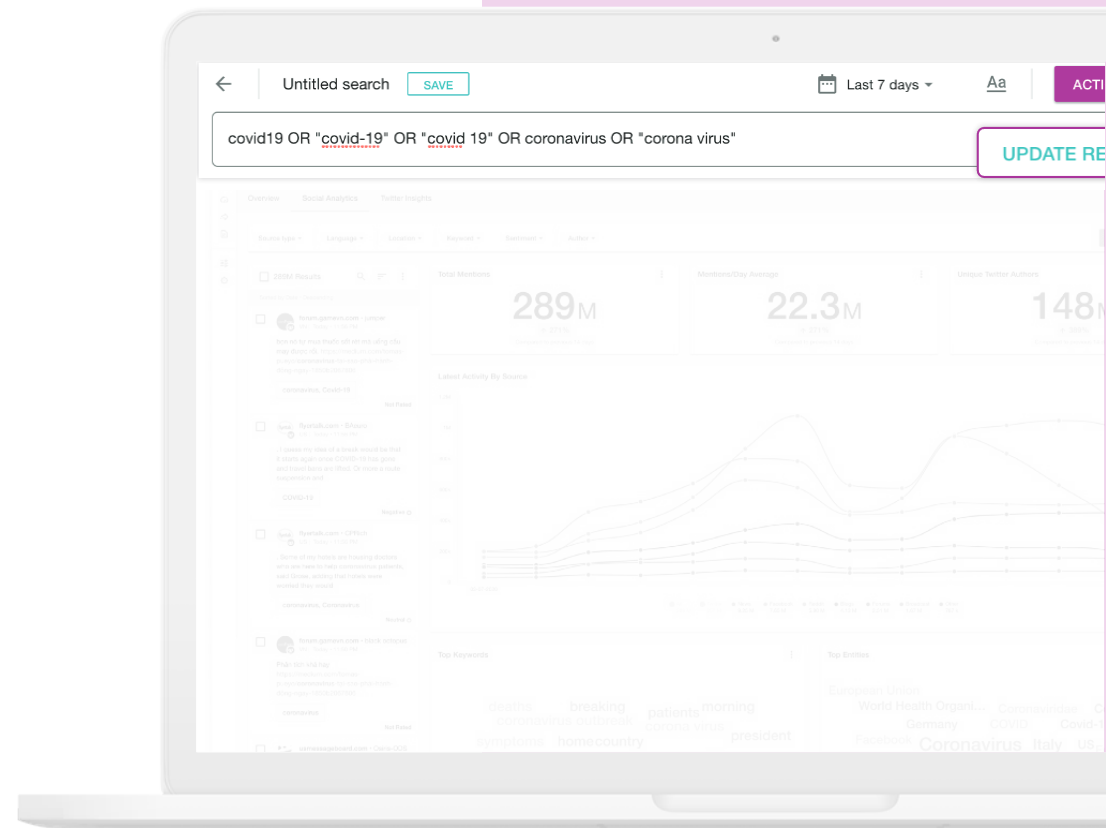
Social media is a great source of information in the middle of all this global chaos. But there's an ocean of social chatter surrounding this crisis, so you need to be able to filter out just the discussions that are most relevant to your organization. That's where social listening tools come in.

With a social listening platform you can set up a query to track all mentions of the pandemic, including any of the terms people might use to discuss it, along with spelling variations, for example: COVID19, COVID-19, Coronavirus, Corona-virus, pandemic, lockdown, etc.

This query alone would produce a lot of results, so it needs to be narrowed down. You might want to use the built-in geographic filters of your social listening tool to focus on countries, states or cities that are important to your business.

You should also use qualifying search terms to further narrow the data to mentions that are specifically relevant to you. These terms could include: your brand names, your competitors, any industry specific terms that relate to your business, and anything that will help increase the relevance of the search results.

Use Boolean logic to build queries that return only the most relevant results.

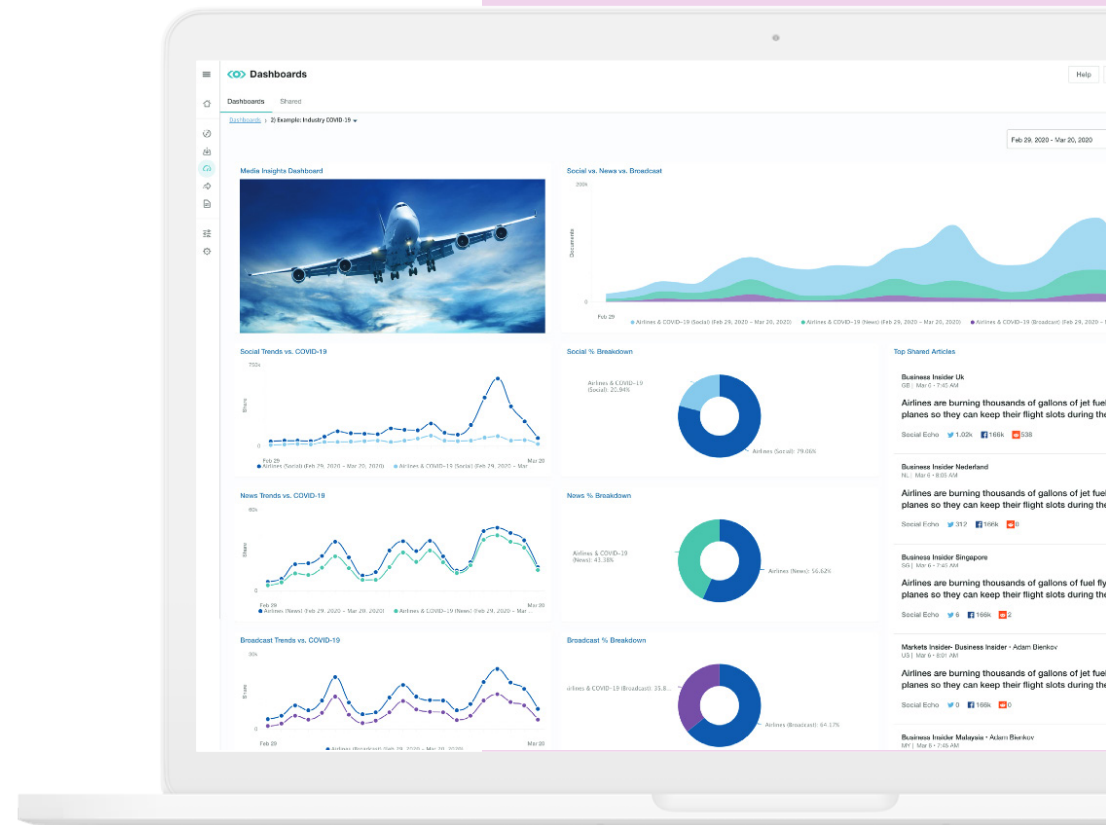


2 Build Dashboards

Once you have the queries set up, you'll want to build dashboards to display the results in an easy to digest format. You might need separate dashboards for different topics. For example, you could have one dashboard that shows results for any mentions of the pandemic alongside your brands, another for competitor and broader industry mentions, and another that's focused specifically on discussions happening in the locations of your offices and other facilities.

These dashboards will give you an instant overview of the latest discussions around Coronavirus as they relate to your organization, whether they're coming from customers, employees, or other stakeholders. You'll be able to quickly identify trends and sub-topics that might be worth further investigation.

Dashboards will help you quickly spot trends and insights in data.



3 Use Notifications to Stay Informed

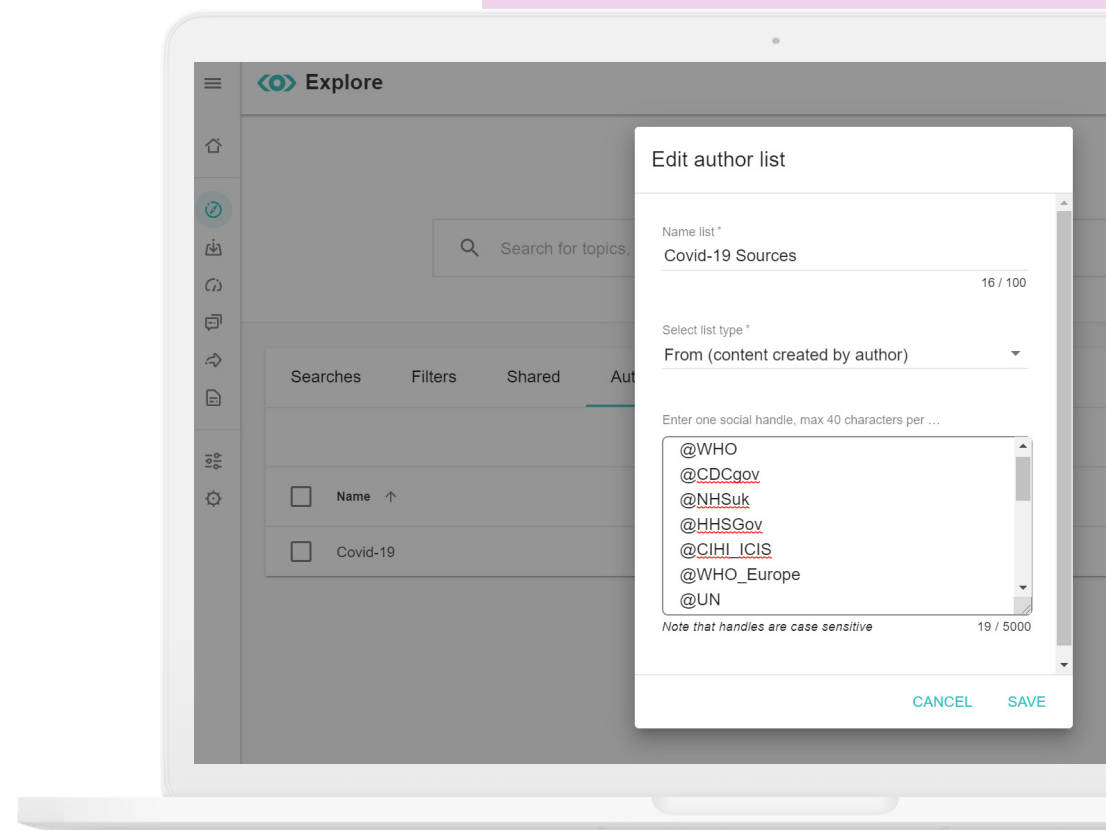
The situation is evolving rapidly, with significant new developments happening all the time. You need to make sure that you're aware of anything that could impact your organization as soon as possible, and that's where notifications can help.

Your social listening platform should enable you to set up notifications for various events, such as the volume of mentions passing a specific threshold, or a sudden increase in negative sentiment. These notifications will ensure that you're able to react more quickly to a changing situation, by being alerted instantly instead of having to wait until the next time you check the dashboards to find out about big developments.



4 Curate Lists of Important Commentators

At times like this it's vital that we listen to the people who we trust the most; experts, leaders, people who can give us an honest, authoritative assessment of what's happening. Use your social listening tool to create lists of these people's social feeds, organized into appropriate categories (e.g. political leaders, medical experts, industry spokespeople) so it's easier for you to find out what they're saying as the crisis unfolds.



5 Get Information to the Right People

All this information and insight isn't going to be much use unless you can get it into the right hands. Set up daily automated reports, and make sure they're distributed to all key stakeholders – your social listening platform should enable you to do this on autopilot, so you can be sure your team has the most up to date information without you having to manually send it to them every day.

In a crisis everybody wants to feel like they're being useful and contributing to the team effort. By gathering and sharing actionable insight for your organization, you'll be playing a critical part.

PART TWO

Communicating With Your Audiences

This crisis has created a lot of uncertainty for people, and clear communications can help ease their anxiety. Your employees, customers, partners and other stakeholders will all have their own concerns about the situation and, in many cases, will be looking for guidance from your organization.

Employees will be concerned about their jobs, partners need to understand how their business relationship with you will be affected, customers might want to know whether you're still able to supply them with the goods or services they need. In times of crisis, clear and consistent communications matter.

6 Define Your Messaging

All this information and insight isn't going to be much use unless you can get it into the right hands. Set up daily automated reports, and make sure they're distributed to all key stakeholders – your social listening platform should enable you to do this on autopilot, so you can be sure your team has the most up to date information without you having to manually send it to them every day.

In a crisis everybody wants to feel like they're being useful and contributing to the team effort. By gathering and sharing actionable insight for your organization, you'll be playing a critical part.

7 Set a Single Source of Truth

However you choose to respond, consistency is important. You should have a 'single source of truth' for your organization's response, where people will always be able to find the most up to date and accurate messaging from you. This could be the press center on your website, or a landing page specifically set up for this situation, or even just your corporate blog.

Just make the decision and ensure everybody in your team understands that this is where all updates about the crisis will be published. By necessity, the messages you post on social media will need to be short, but they should always direct audiences to the full content on your website.

Depending on how much of an impact the crisis has on your organization, and how many people are affected, you may be in a situation where you are expected to give regular updates rather than just a single announcement. If this is the case for you, then let people know how often you plan to share updates, and when the updates will be published – then make sure you stick to that schedule, even if you sometimes only have to tell people that there's nothing new to report.



8 Approvals Processes Are Critical

Organize a crisis response team, with clear roles and responsibilities, and a well defined approval chain. No communication should be published until it has been through the approval process, with written sign-off from the final approver. It's a good idea to create a checklist for each item of content, to help ensure the approvals process has been correctly followed every time. This could be a physical, printed checklist if everybody is working in the same location, or a digital one otherwise.

If your social media publishing platform has workflow tools that enable a strict approvals process, now would be a good time to start using them.



9 Engage More Carefully

When pushing content out through social channels be aware that they will be visible to the general public, so be as clear as possible about who each message is for. Maybe you want to thank your employees, reassure your customers, or you feel you have some useful information for the wider public. In any case, be clear about who each message is directed at in order to avoid any confusion or miscommunication.

If you are communicating through social channels at this time, it's likely that you will get questions and comments from people on those channels. Under normal circumstances quick responses are welcome, but in a crisis it's more important to ensure you're responding appropriately, so before you respond to anybody you should take the time to sense check what you plan to say. If you start getting a lot of similar questions, it will be a good idea to craft a stock response that you can direct people to.



10 Don't Panic!

Remember that it's OK to not have all the answers. These are difficult times, and nobody can be expected to know everything. Where appropriate, it might be for the best to direct people to the official information channels of government and medical authorities.

We know being on the front-lines of social media can take its toll mentally, especially if you're dealing with a lot of pressure both from your audiences online and within your organization. Remember that this is all temporary, and sometime soon life will return to normal, so try to take care of yourself!

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