



## Should your organization join the Twitterati?

With the advent of social networking sites, social media tools such as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter are creating tremendous buzz among communicators and marketers. Social media is an acknowledged phenomenon when it comes to socializing and networking. ***But can it also be a serious tool for involving the public in decision-making processes that are so important to public agencies?*** The short answer is maybe.

That is the question Katz & Associates set out to answer when it commissioned a research study recently with San Diego State University. As consultants to a number of public agencies across the nation, our staff members wanted to increase their understanding about how they and their clients may be able to use new or social media to involve the public in key issues.

## KEEPING UP WITH THE COMPETITION

In today's transforming media landscape, social media plays an increasing role and simply cannot be ignored. While traditional media may be dwindling, social media is expected to continue its amazing expansion in terms of both outlets and users.



If used correctly, social media can create important two-way communication and a greater sense of transparency for agencies. It can also serve as a platform to get key messages to publics without filtering them through gatekeepers like the media. However, organizations that jump into Twitter, Facebook or others just because they think it's the thing to do will be disappointed without good strategic pre-planning and direction.

Even with these new communication tools, we should never discount some fundamental communications basics. Who is your audience? What are your key messages? These questions must always be taken into consideration before deciding to use social media.

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