

A Handbook

How to use Twitter during emergencies.



About this handbook & COVID Sheroes

In May of 2021, the second wave of COVID-19 hit the world hard, but India especially so. As hospital beds began to fill up and oxygen tanks ran short, people congregated on Twitter to exchange information and reach out desperately for resources.

India is spiraling deeper into Covid-19 crisis. Here's what you need to know



By Jessie Young, CNN

Updated 0602 GMT (1402 HKT) May 11, 2021

Devastating 2nd wave, billion+ vaccinations: 12 charts show how India fought Covid in 2021

Armaan Bhatnagar / TIMESOFINDIA.COM / Updated: Jan 22, 2022, 16:05 IST

Coronavirus: How India descended into Covid-19 chaos

By Vikas Pandey
BBC News, Delhi

© 5 May 2021

At a time like this, there were women who came together, created networks of their own and began to coordinate relief efforts - all on Twitter. They are the CovidSheroes and it is with their experience and recommendations that we could present this handbook to you.



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And we're proud to introduce to you this handbook, created with their experience and recommendations!

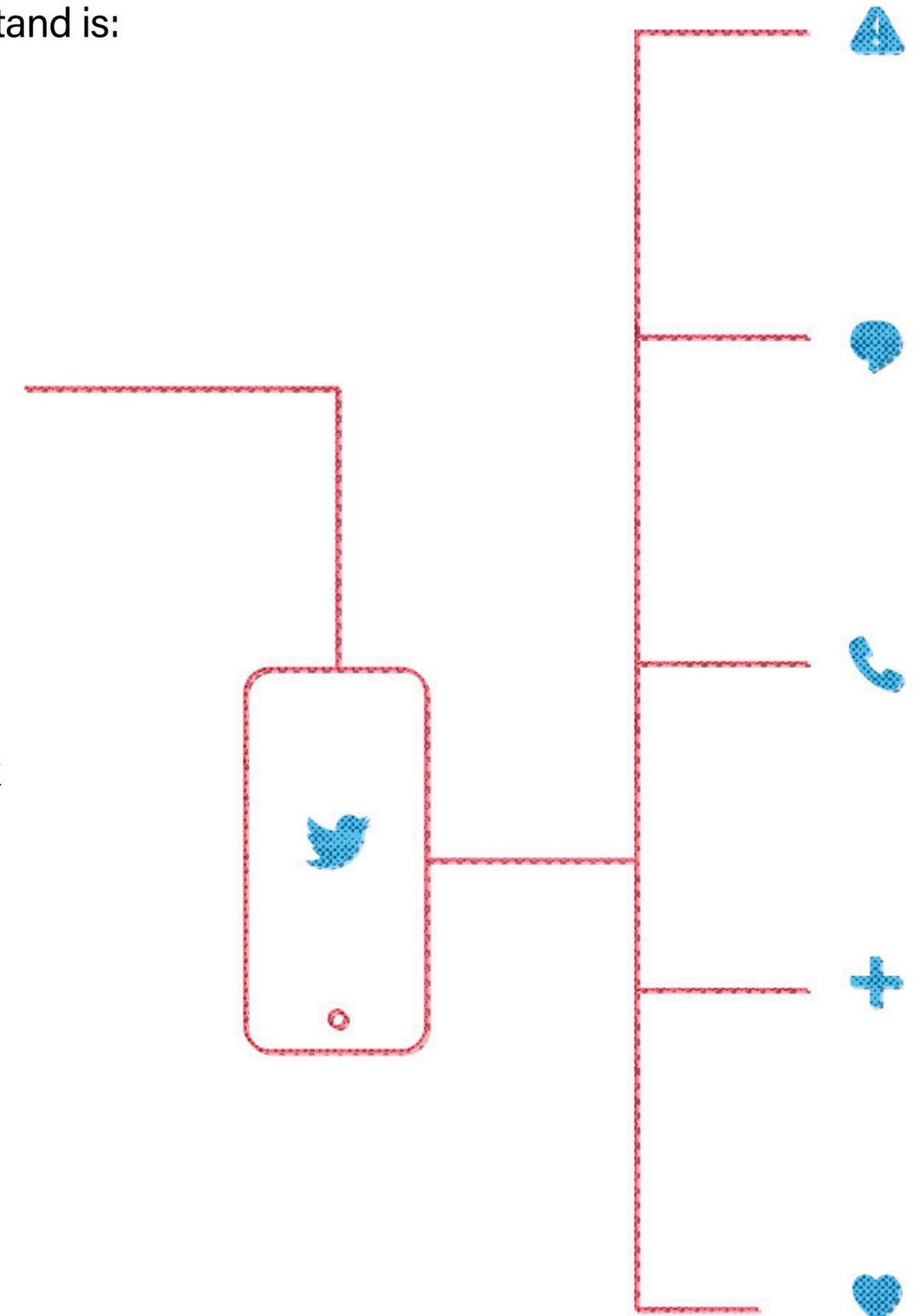
To understand what this handbook could do best for you, the first thing we need to understand is:

Why use Twitter for emergencies?

The answer is simple: Twitter is where it's happening. When individuals or non-organisations are concerned, sometimes the fastest way to reach the maximum number of people is to put out a Tweet about it.

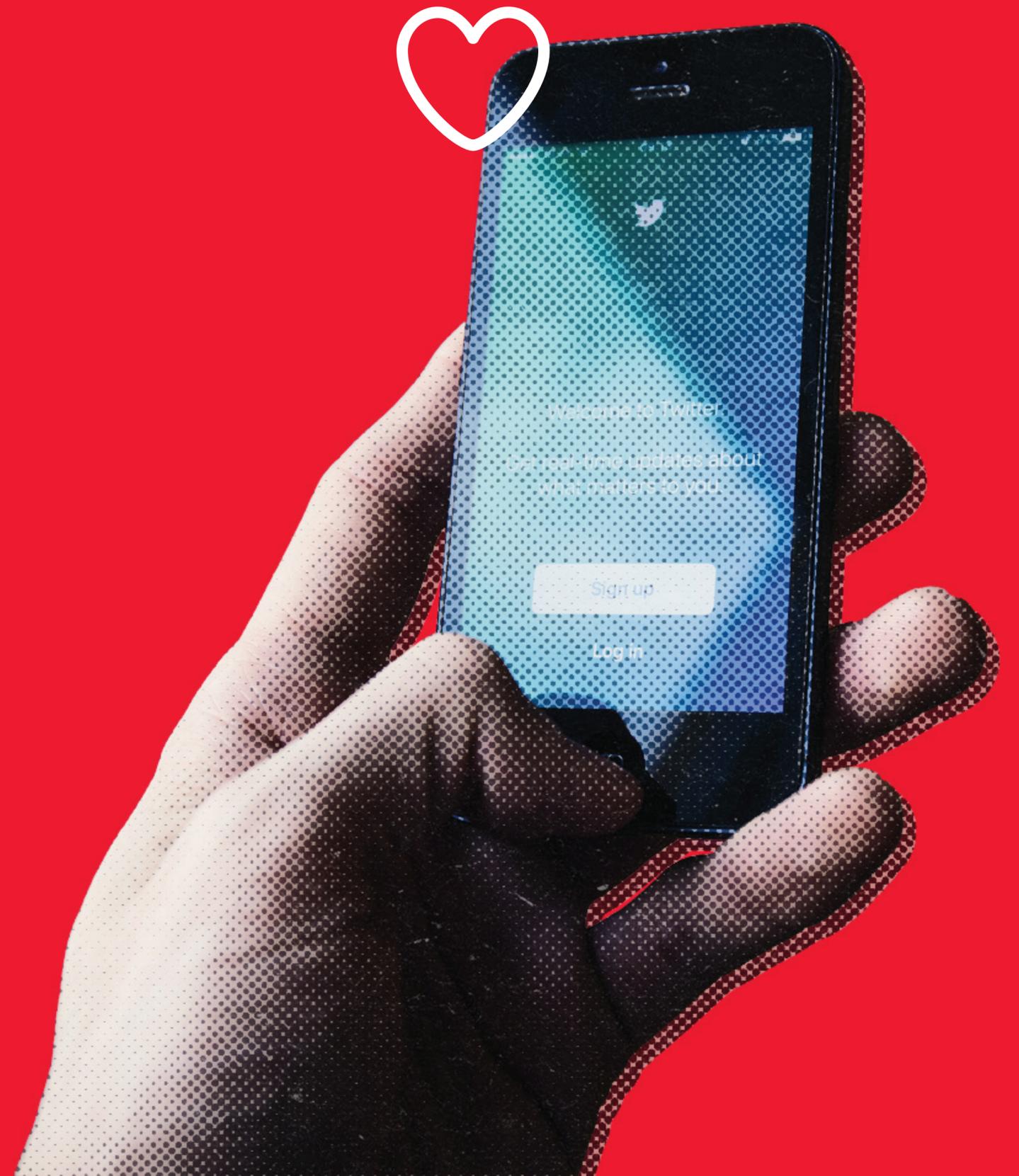
As a global public conversation platform, it is unique. While adhering to everyday communication, it shows you what's happening live and lets you talk about it with anyone around the world. From breaking news, crisis response, entertainment to sports, politics, and everyday interests - Twitter is where people connect in realtime and join the conversation.

So what is this handbook about?



01

Making Your Emergency/SOS More Visible



- It is important to make your Tweet more relevant during a crisis.
- Tweeting out is a quick way to reach the maximum amount of people and relevant authorities with the least amount of effort.
- With a Tweet, one can tap into the **dominant language** of a region for the ease of access and relevance!
- It's the fastest way to disseminate the most critical information to the largest amount of people in the shortest amount of time.

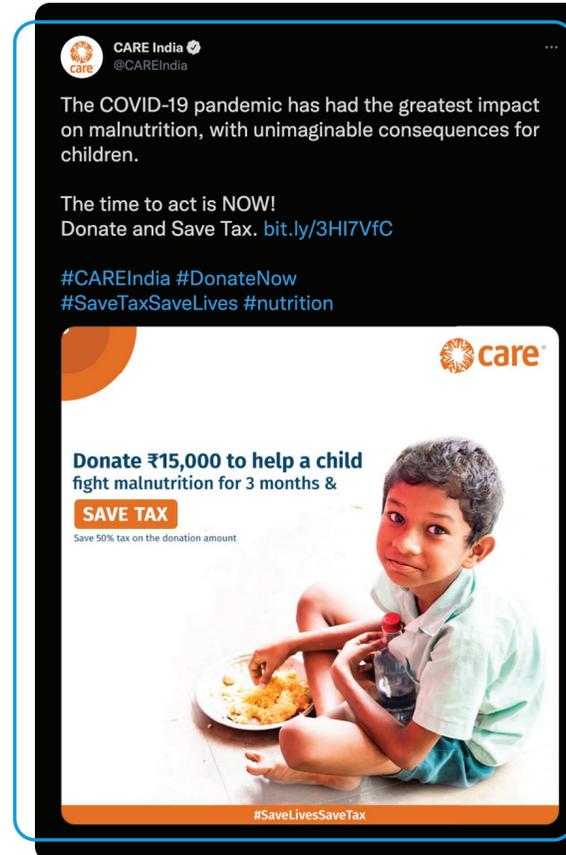
Nimal Raghavan
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வீட்டு தனிமையில் உள்ளவர்கள் ஆக்சிஜன் அளவு குறைந்தால் என்ன செய்யலாம்?
ரத்த ஆக்ஸிஜன் அளவை நிர்வகிக்க புரோனிங் செய்யலாம். ஆக்சிஜன் செறிவு 94 சதவீதத்திற்கும் குறைவாக இருந்தால், ஒருவர் 'புரோனிங்' (Proning) முயற்சி செய்ய வேண்டும்!

#COVID19 #CovidEmergency #CovidSos

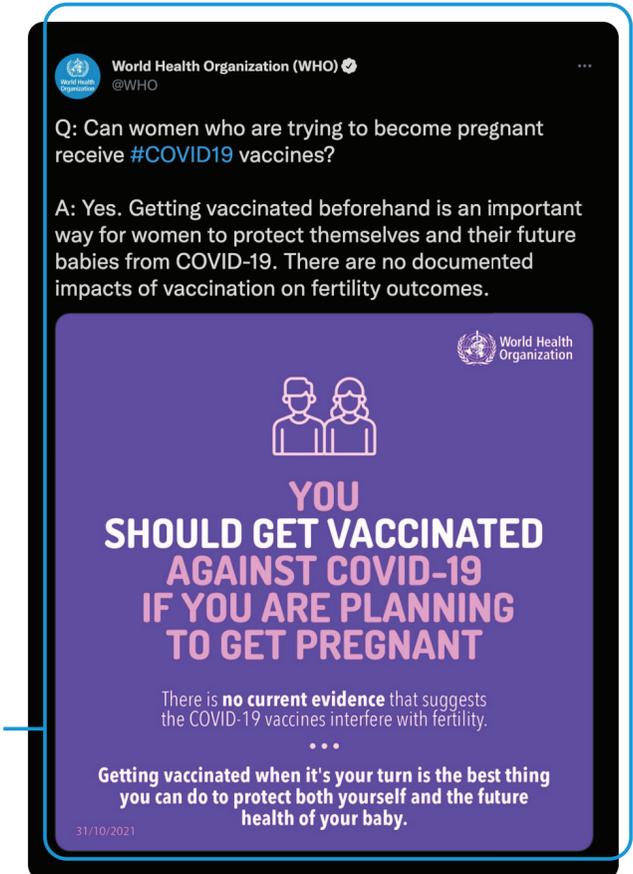
How do you do it?

Tweets must be clear, simple, and actionable.



Tweets with a clear **Call-to-Action** are more effective. Clearly stating how people can help by Retweeting, and donating, for instance, are powerful.

Use easy to read **infographics** to share information quicker



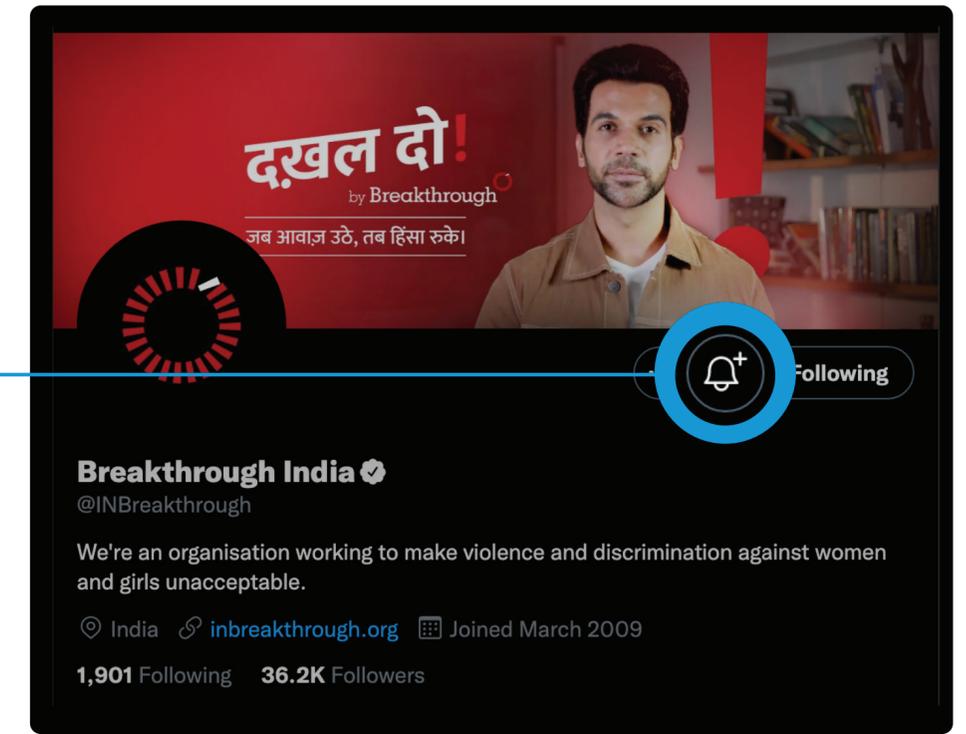
- Always add keywords and your emergency hashtags to your Tweet copy to optimize its search.
- Make most of the information immediately available in the Tweet, avoiding directing users to other sites for critical information.

- Advise your followers to turn on **push notifications** for your account during a crisis to ensure they don't miss your Tweets. During times when your users may have notifications on, remember to Tweet responsibly and put out only critical information.
- Make sure you plan your hashtags carefully, setting different hashtags for different purposes. Remember to socialise the purpose of each hashtag with your partners and followers.
- Tag relevant handles of influencers and organisations to ensure it has the highest possible reach
- Use the relevant language of your target audience. You can also make your language multilingual.
- Remind your followers to:

Turn OFF 'Quality Filter' and 'See the best Tweets First' to get raw, unfiltered, real time tweets

Turn ON push notifications for your account

Attach their email or broadcast that "DMs are open"



"Tweeting with raw pictures from the field, direct information and tagging handles was quicker and easier. Geo tagging helped to build up lot of credibility."

Karon, COVIDShero



02

How Can We Verify The Information We Receive?



During a crisis, there is a lot of information that goes around on Twitter. **It is an individuals' responsibility to check and verify the information received and shared.** Unverified messages received on social media handles or private group chat can create a lot of confusion and waste time.

"We even check the GST numbers of the organisation we worked with."



Arpita, COVIDShero



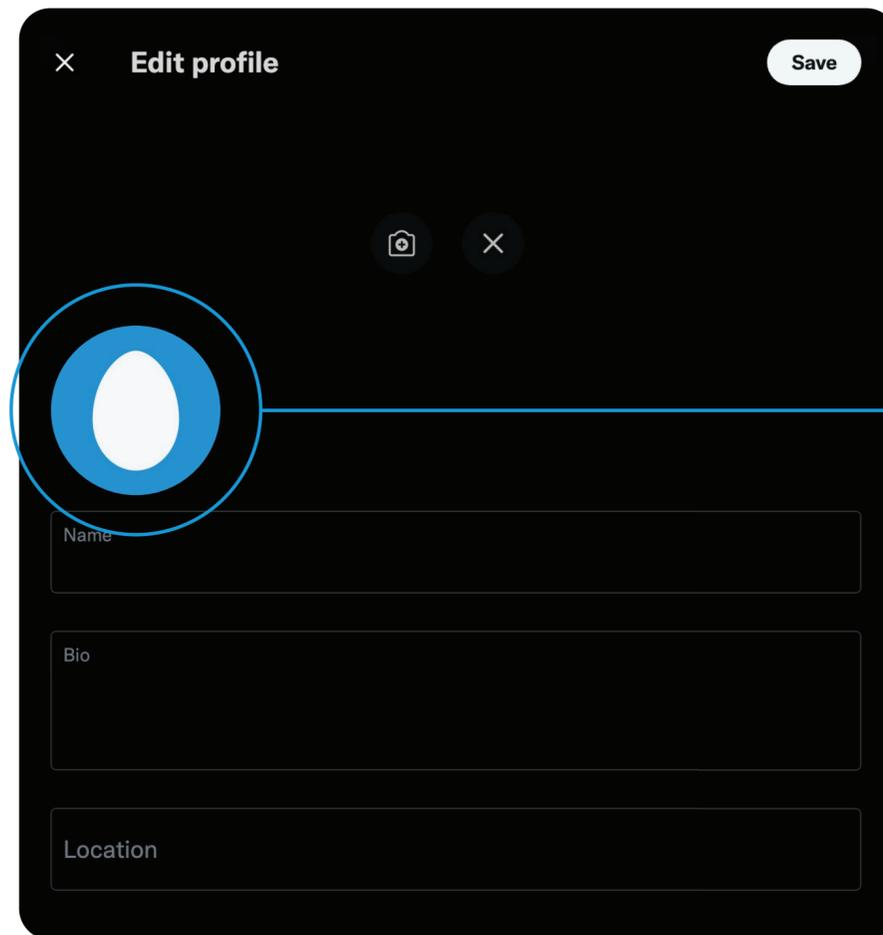
- Create and **share a List** of relevant emergency response agencies, organisations, and individuals. This allows people to know that the information they are receiving is legit and from high quality sources.
- It is a good practice to Include local community organisers, city and state services, and first responders in the list.
- **Interact!** Develop a strategy for your agency on how and who to respond to and respond as it is practical. That interaction will build trust in your agency and help dispel any rumours and false information as all of your replies are broadcasted as Tweets.
- Advise your followers to Tweet with their **precise location** to help you and others get an update of the conditions on the ground, or to be able to aid them if needed.
- Continue to **monitor the conversation** and interact with people to answer their questions and dismiss any rumours and false information.
- After a rescue or relief Tweet has been addressed, it's generally a good practice to **Retweet your own Tweet with an update** saying a particular rescue has been conducted and thank the people who did it. This is because the rescue may be complete but people may still Retweet your old Tweets, not realising it has been resolved.
- **Identify** location needs; resource raising; and collaborators and partners on the ground.

03

How Do We Maintain Our Privacy While Sharing Our Information?



While Twitter is a great place to share information, **it is also important to maintain your privacy and safety** while doing so. Think of Twitter as any kind of public space, where you want to be helpful but also safe.



Here are some tips:

- Make sure your **Display Picture** (DP) is generic or doesn't give away private details. If you are using a personal account, make sure to change it.
- Don't give out **personal details** as much as can be helped.
- **Follow trusted people and build a network** of reliable sources who you can trust to share your information with and whose information and resources can be relied upon.

"...we were a little concerned about our privacy and safety but then we figured out that small things like hiding our DP and not giving out a lot of personal details during conversations is a good way."



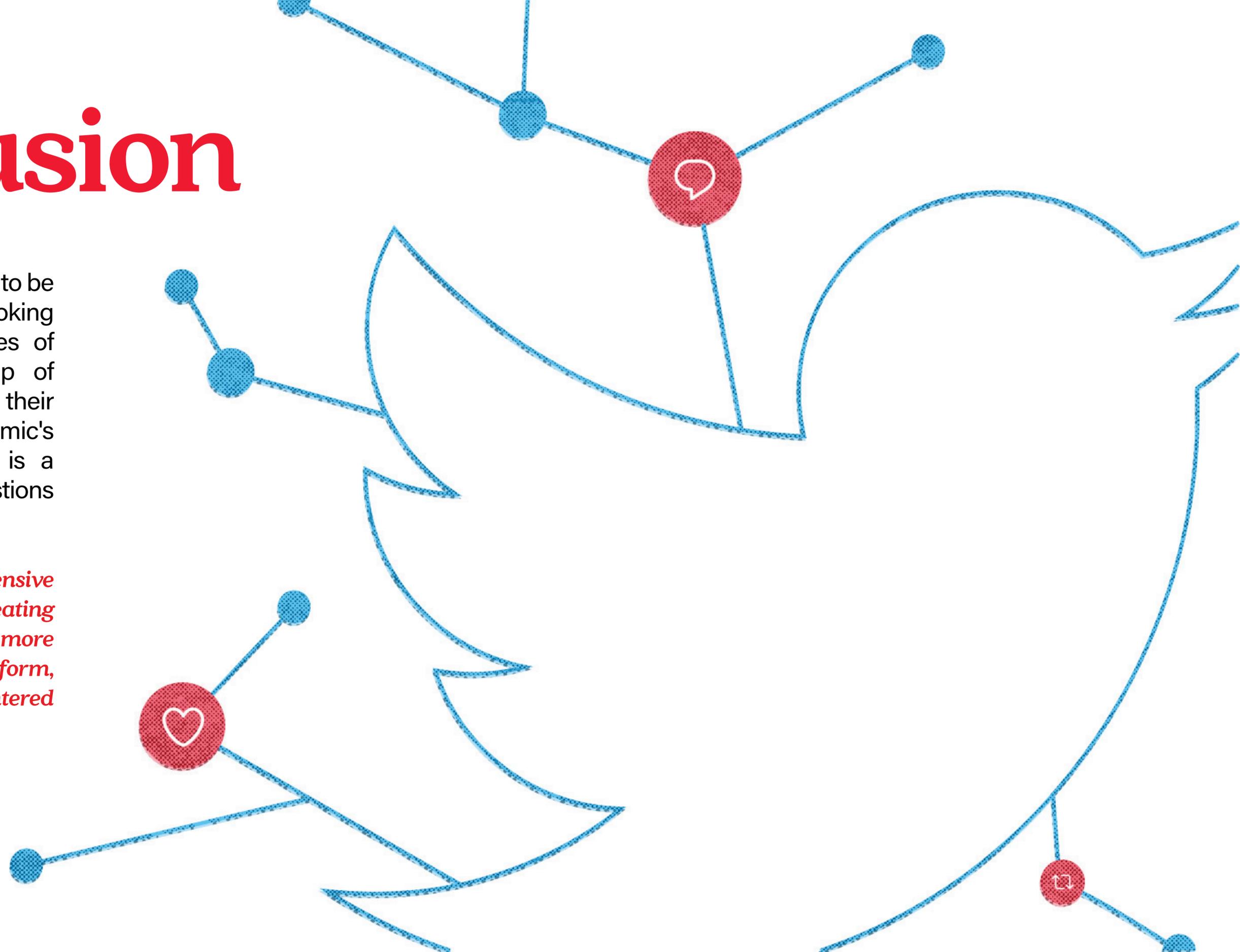
Arpita, COVIDShero



Conclusion

To conclude, Twitter has proven to be effective in connecting users looking for relevant leads during times of emergencies. With this group of Covid Sheroes bringing in their experiences during the pandemic's second wave, the handbook is a result of learnings and suggestions from their experiences.

We hope this comprehensive handbook helps you in creating effective strategies, find more possibilities with the Twitter platform, and build communities centered around volunteerism.



2022

Compiled by Breakthrough India and Twitter India,
in collaboration with the Covid Sheroes

