

NASA Learns The Ways Of Social Networking

WASHINGTON, Nov. 20 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- NASA launched a social media experience at the Kennedy Space Center in Florida that quickly turned into an unprecedented world-wide event as more than 100 Twitter users got a unique look inside America's space program and front row seats to the Nov. 16 liftoff of the space shuttle Atlantis.

(Logo: <http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/20081007/38461LOGO> [1])

People from as far away as New Zealand participated in Kennedy's first Tweetup, an event where bloggers meet face-to-face and share their experiences in 140 character online bursts. During the two-day event Twitter users, or Tweeps, took behind-the-scenes tours of Kennedy, spoke at length with NASA astronauts, technicians, engineers and managers, and saw a launch from the vantage point usually reserved for more traditional media.

"We were very excited by the extraordinary number of people from all over the world who participated," said Lori Garver, NASA's deputy administrator. "NASA will continue to evolve with the social media environment and look for new ways to engage the public and spread the word about the tremendous things we do."

The Tweetup, identified by the search term #nasatweetup, was the third highest trending topic Nov. 15 on the social networking service. The micro-blogs, or tweets, are text-based Internet posts that are delivered to the author's subscribers. The more than 100 people in attendance had over 150,000 followers. As people share and forward the information, the potential online reach could be in the millions.

People from 21 states and the District of Columbia attended, as did guests who flew from Canada, England, Morocco and New Zealand. Participants ranged in age from 18 to more than 60, with most being under age 40. NASA Television also streamed video of Tweetup events online where more than 7,500 viewers watched the events prior to launch.

"The way people are communicating and receiving information is undergoing a global revolution," said Morrie Goodman, NASA's assistant administrator for Public Affairs. "NASA is a recognized leader in adopting social media and this is another exciting 'first' for the agency."

NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory held the first NASA Tweetup on Jan. 21. NASA Headquarters held its first Tweetup on July 21, followed by another from Headquarters Sept. 24 that featured the STS-127 space shuttle crew. On Oct. 21, NASA held a smaller Tweetup, allowing 35 Tweeps to talk with Nicole Stott and Jeff Williams aboard the International Space Station via a live downlink.

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In April, Mike Massimino ([@Astro_Mike](https://twitter.com/Astro_Mike) [2]) became NASA's first astronaut to tweet. Astro_Mike reached 1 million Twitter followers on Sept. 23. He sent his first tweet from space while flying on the STS-125 Hubble servicing mission in May. Since then, 12 other NASA astronauts have set up Twitter accounts. You can follow them individually or through the NASA Astronauts Twitter account at:

http://twitter.com/NASA_Astronauts [3]

To view the Nov. 15 portion of the Tweetup on YouTube, visit:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/NASATElevision#p/u/3/wl9zBgpmdjQ> [4]

To view photos from the STS-129 launch Tweetup, visit:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/nasahqphoto/sets/72157622806978124> [5]

For more information about NASA's Tweetup events, visit:

<http://www.nasa.gov/tweetup> [6]

To view all NASA's Twitter and other social media accounts at:

<http://www.nasa.gov/connect> [7]

For more information about space shuttle Atlantis' STS-129 mission, visit:

<http://www.nasa.gov/shuttle> [8]

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[1] <http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/20081007/38461LOGO>

[2] http://www.twitter.com/Astra_Mike

[3] http://twitter.com/NASA_Astronauts

[4] <http://www.youtube.com/user/NASATElevision>

[5] <http://www.flickr.com/photos/nasahqphoto/sets/72157622806978124>

[6] <http://www.nasa.gov/tweetup>

[7] <http://www.nasa.gov/connect>

[8] <http://www.nasa.gov/shuttle>