



## TEENS, SCIENCE AND SOCIAL NETWORKS

**Science 12-16**

*Children's Literacy Resource Guide*

### **Tweeting for Science**



Science teachers, take note. These days, even giant organizations like NASA are looking for new ways to grab the attention of young people.

That's why Veronica McGregor of NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) in Pasadena, California, decided to use the trendy microblogging website Twitter to drum up interest in the 2008 Mars Phoenix Mission.

Montreal-born McGregor, a journalist by trade, became 'the voice' of the Mars Lander on Twitter for the mission from touchdown in May to shut down in November 2008, eventually attracting as many as 40,000 faithful followers who kept up with the Mars Lander's 'feelings' and observations on their computers and mobile phones.

Some of McGregor's WALLEE style "Tweets" as they are called: "Wow. Just 20 minutes to touchdown!"... Later: "Are you ready to celebrate? Well, get ready. We have ICE on Mars. Woot! Best day ever!" and towards the end of the mission: Take care of that beautiful blue marble out in Space. I'll be keeping an eye from here."

McGregor's experiment giving a human voice to a space robot was so successful, that today, in 2009, there are two dozen NASA missions on Twitter, where students can follow a mission and even ask a question or two. [www.nasa.gov/collaborate](http://www.nasa.gov/collaborate).

Other scientists have discovered the power of blogging to get the word out about their work.

The website <http://scienceblogs.com> is a community of websites where scientist/writers and their followers explore a vast array of cutting edge topics.

The blogs have intriguing names: A Few Things Ill-Considered; Not Exactly Rocket Science; Blogging the Origin; Discovering Biology in a Digital World; The Scientific Indian; On Being a Domestic and Laboratory Goddess, etc.

So move over you great communicators of the modern scientific world: Dr. Suzuki, Carl Sagan and Stephen Jay Gould.

The age of the scientist/scribe may be upon us. And, the best part of all, students everywhere can share in the discussions.