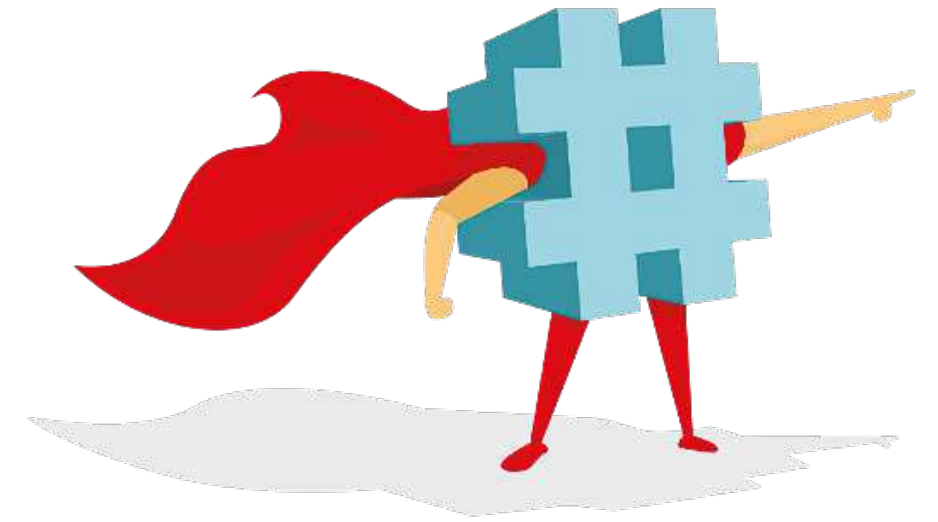


HASHTAGS

Hashtags are an integral part of our digital and social media experience. Whether it is to let everyone know a post is a blast from the past or to keep important posts under relevant tags, hashtags can make communication and the flow of information easier. Thus, the first-ever conference for hashtags is held to give them a chance to meet old friends and make new ones, mingle, betray, and network.



TASNIM ODRIKA & FATIMA JAHAN ENA

Our coverage of the conference begins with a conversation among some influential hashtags.

#blessed: What a beautiful event. Such a great initiative for us all to gather in this one place. I just feel so fortunate, and blessed, to be one of the invitees here and get the chance to know all of you personally. #ootd has been my #womancrushwednesday for as long as I can remember, once every week. Okay, maybe I should not use that particular hashtag since I heard she was not invited. What a shame. And #giveaway, you and your crazy travel stories have always been #goals.

#goals: Oh, I'm sorry. Were you saying something to me? I was just going over my awards acceptance speech. Yes, I know what you all are thinking. You might think it is highly unlikely that I will be the one receiving the honorary influential hashtag award, but a famous man once said, "With hard work and perseverance you can do anything." Just look at good old Bill Gates. He dropped out of college but did that stop him from achieving his goals?

#ootd: I could not care less about those awards, really. However, this is a great opportunity for me to show off the amazing outfit I conjured up for today only. Hope you all like it.

#giveaway: Mmm girl, I love your look. We should totally do a collab video. My followers would love your fashion tips.

#eidday660 jumps into the conversation out of nowhere.



#eidday660: I'm free for a collab too, by the way!

#ootd: Oh, honey. The big leagues here were having a conversation. Your table must be at the back.

#instagood: They really do let in just about anyone don't they? I must have a conversation with the event manager in regard to their invitation policy.

A few feet away another group of hashtags indulge in a different conversation

#anonymous: Are you guys listening to the conversation on that table? All they care about is themselves. I bet they don't even know about all the horrible things happening in the world right now. This is the current scenario of our hashtag industry and I, for one, am inclined to bring a change to it. I'm sure you all must be aware of the recent exposures I have been a part of?

#fail: I am so glad you are bringing this up, kind stranger. I had met #ootd at the entrance and all she had to talk about was the colour theme of her outfit and how she had intelligently ensured it matched with the venue decor. I mean, I see the merit in that, but I bet she doesn't even have an opinion on the current desolate state of the world. Does she even care about achieving world peace? Is she even on TikTok?

#nofilter: So true! I don't care if what I say may sound hurtful to some because I truly believe in being honest and straightforward. With that in mind, I will say this—I see no talent here today. Our group here seems to be the only one with mature critical thinking skills and knowledge and opinion on current affairs.

#like4like: THE LOVE OF YOUR LIFE IS JUST ONE CLICK AWAY!

#random: Wait, what? Is that true? Where do I click?

#follow4follow: SUBSCRIBE TO THIS LINK TO FIND

years of hashtags. Not global warming, I was the hottest thing on the planet. I had a purpose. I had ambition; most of us did. I educated people. Gave them knowledge. Forced them to gain awareness. Even without the knowledge, anyone could take a bucket and ice and be a part of my legacy. Can any of you say that?

#dontrushchallenge: No...?

#inmyfeelings: I asked them to never ever leave from beside me, but I guess they did.

#icebucketchallenge: Sure, some may argue that I wasn't as important as activism, but the awareness I raised wasn't insignificant at all, you know? It was like I had doused the entire world with a bucket of ice. I almost cured a disease. None of you will understand the impact though. That's the tragedy of it.

#like4like: HEY, WANNA KNOW HOW I AM SO POPULAR? CLICK HERE!

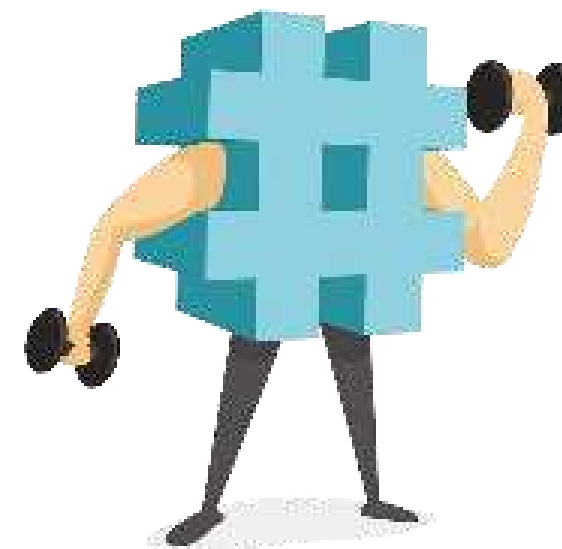
#dontrushchallenge: At least I'm fun. People need something fun in times like this and they flock to me. I could be the hashtag equivalent of Aphrodite, bringing beauty wherever I go.

#icebucketchallenge: You young people and your blind optimism... Still using the present tense... Come out of your cocoon of denial. Your reign began and ended in the blink of an eye. I practically renamed icy showers—

#dontrushchallenge: MY REIGN HASN'T ENDED SO—

#follow4follow: FOLLOW BACK.

#dontrushchallenge: SOMEONE POSTED A VIDEO



THE SECRET FORMULA FOR WINNING AT LIFE!

#random: OMG. I am just so spontaneous. I will do it. Give me your email.

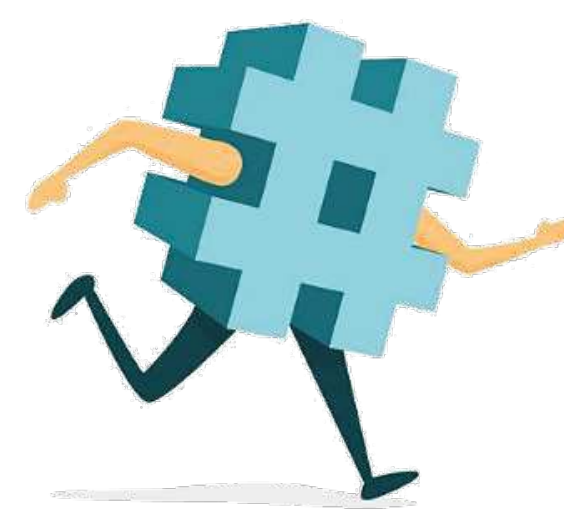
#nofilter: As I was saying, no talent at all...

On the other side of the room, the trends are having their own conversation.

#icebucketchallenge: Young man, do you ever think about our legacy? What makes us stand out from the rest of the attendees?

#dontrushchallenge: What do you mean?

#icebucketchallenge: Newbies these days can't understand what things were like back in the day. The golden



FOR ME JUST LAST WEEK. Perhaps it was a month ago. I don't really remember...

#inmyfeelings: Kiki never did answer if she loves me or not, you know. Her silence is deafening.

At another table, not too far away, some hashtags overheard the trends' conversation and began their own discussion.

#throwback: All this juvenile talk of legacy is making my stomach hurt, just like it did when I was in Bali in 2009.

#foodbaby: Tell me about it.

#repost: You can say that again. Maybe two more

times?

#eidday7484: Oh hey! I actually celebrated Eid in Bali on—

#throwback: They cannot even fathom what a powerful legacy means. I'll admit, #icebucketchallenge did do some good work, but all this talk about the "golden days" and impact is just childish. If anything, I'm the one who should be celebrated here. Not even one of them. People pay tribute to me every day of the week, not just Thursdays. Every week, people share their memories with me. I am the time machine nobody will ever have. Everyone else gets a glimpse into people's history because of me, just like that one episode of Black Mirror that I watched when I was visiting my family.

#repost: I totes agree. Finally, someone said it!

#throwback: We deserve recognition. It's been too long.

#follow4follow: DERMATOLOGISTS HATE ME! FOLLOW TO FIND OUT WHY—

#eidday35484: You know this one time, I had a really bad breakout on the eighth day of Eid. Thankfully, it cleared up by the eleventh day of Eid and I could—

#throwback: And then there's these juvenile delinquents ruining the sanctity of the hashtag. Pathetic.

#foodbaby: This is all a bit hard to digest.

#repost: Absolutely on point! Could not have said it better myself!

Sometime later, a few of the less popular hashtags gather in a corner. Defeated.

#follow4follow: I ACTUALLY HAVE THE SECRET FOR SUCCESS but it's like no one even hears us at all.

#like4like: I understand. I haven't received any likes yet. So I can't like either. It's almost as if THEY DON'T WANT TO KNOW THE ULTIMATE REASON WHY THEIR CRUSH WON'T LIKE THEM BACK. Hey, is that #eidday9999 I see? Come over and join us TO FIND OUT THE TOP 10 REASONS YOU MIGHT SEEM UNATTRACTIVE TO PEOPLE!

#eidday9999: Oh, you're actually inviting me over to you guys? That's a bit of a surprise.

#like4like: We understand how you feel. Everyone tends to block us out even though we have valuable information. No one really wants to hear about FOOD ITEMS YOU SHOULD NEVER EAT AFTER YOU HIT PUBERTY; NUMBER 40 WILL SHOCK YOU or even talk to us.

#follow4follow: FOLLOW AND TALK ABOUT WHAT-EVER YOU WANT WITH BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE like us!

#eidday9999: Well, um, I was just trying to show the outfit I had put together for this convention. This was my last chance to do something before #eidday10000 steals my spotlight, again. Everyone knows the 9999th day of Eid is the hardest.

#follow4follow: FASHION DESIGNERS WILL TRULY BE JEALOUS OF YOUR OUTFIT COMBINATION—

#like4like: SUBSCRIBE TO OUR CONVERSATION FOR THE BEST EID DAY OUTFIT!

With these words, a sense of belonging swept through #eidday9999 for the very first time and slowly a smile was seen to gather along the edges of the hashtag. The conference had been a success.

Tasnim Odrika likes pineapple on pizza and is willing to fight anyone who opposes her on this. Reach her at odrika_02@yahoo.com; Fatima Jahan Ena likes complaining about capitalism and her forehead. Find her at mail2ena@gmail.com



THE DEFINITIVE **YOUTH** MAGAZINE
SHOUT