

A Beginners Guide to Twitter



What is Twitter?

Twitter is an information network. Millions of people, organisations, and businesses use it to discover and share new information.

On Twitter, anyone can read, write and share messages of up to 140 characters. These messages, or Tweets, are public and available to anyone interested in them. Twitter users subscribe to your messages by following your account. Followers receive every one of your messages in their timeline, a feed of all the accounts they have subscribed to.

What does Twitter do for Businesses?

As a business, you can use Twitter to quickly share information, gather market intelligence and insights, and build relationships with people who care about your company.

What can Twitter do for Charities?

Charities can use Twitter to gain support, share information and gather knowledge. It's the perfect place to build relationships, share success, ask questions and to drum up interest in events and fundraising activity. Tuesdays on Twitter are Charity Tuesday (#CT) which we think just goes to show how important Twitter can be for charity success!

How can Herdl help?

The team at Herdl have trained individuals and organisations on how to get the best from Twitter. The training is based on our own experience of managing Twitter accounts for a range of charities. We have learned first-hand what works and what doesn't and we're willing to pass this on! This guide is intended to be an Introduction to Twitter, we've tried to simplify what can seem very daunting. Once you're up and running there is a lot more you can do with Twitter and many ways in which you can engage and monitor support. If you'd like to know more then drop us a line. We are genuinely interested in how Social Media can help improve communication and the sharing of ideas and are always on the lookout for new and interesting developments. To keep up to date why not follow Herdl on Twitter: <http://twitter.com/herdl>

For more info on how Herdl can help manage your online presence contact Louisa@herdl.com

Setting up a Twitter Profile

- Go to <https://twitter.com/signup>
- Enter your name and email and set up a password.
- Select an available username. Think carefully about this – it's how you will be represented! The maximum number of characters is 15.
- Read the terms of service and click "Create my account."
- You will be invited to add friends but initially it's probably best to get familiar with the service so you can skip this (don't worried you can do this at any time).
- Now you are officially on Twitter have a look around, set up a profile you are happy with and also follow a few people to see the kind of conversations going on out there!
- You can customise the appearance of your profile, upload an icon, add your website and location info all by clicking on the settings tab. The amount of customization is up to you.

How To Post a Tweet

Twitter always asks the question "What's happening?" Each answer to that question is considered a Twitter update, or what people often call a "Tweet." Each update is 140 characters or less.

To Post Your Tweet via the Web:

1. Log in to your Twitter account
2. Type your Tweet into the "What's happening?" box at the top of your screen (see below).
3. Make sure your update is fewer than 140 characters. Remaining characters show up as a number below the box.
4. Click the Tweet button to post the Tweet to your profile.
5. You will immediately see your Tweet in the timeline on your homepage, as shown below.



What's happening?

Posting my first message. Tweets must be 140 characters or less. Below, I can see that I have 27 characters left.

in San Francisco, CA ▾ ×

27 Tweet



To Delete Your Tweet:

To delete a Tweet that you have posted, just hover over the tweet and you'll see the delete icon underneath. You can only delete Tweets which you posted yourself from your account.

Types of Tweets and Where They Appear

This article outlines where specific types of Tweets (messages) will appear on Twitter and in your or others' profiles. One of the most frequently asked questions is, "Where does my reply to someone's Tweet show up? I don't see it on their Twitter profile page." Hopefully this table gives a better outline of where messages go when you click the "Tweet" button.

Normal Tweets:



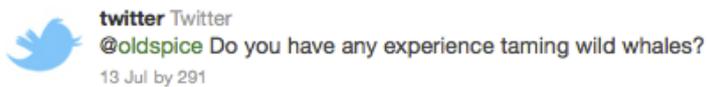
- **Definition:** Any message with fewer than 140 characters posted to Twitter. Also called a "Tweet." (Example above.)
- **Where it appears for the sender:** On the sender's Profile page.
- **Where it appears for the recipient:** In the home timeline view of anyone who is following the sender.
- **Places it will never appear:** In anyone else's Profile page, unless they retweeted the message.

@Mentions:



- **Definition:** A Tweet containing another user's Twitter username, preceded by the "@" symbol, like this: *Hello @NeonGolden! What's up?*
- **Where it appears for the sender:** On the sender's Profile page of public Tweets.
- **Where it appears for the recipient:** In the recipient's @Mentions tab, this is accessible only by them. Additionally, mentions will appear in the recipient's home timeline view (not Profile) if they are following the sender. Also note: anyone on all of Twitter who is following the sender *and* the recipient of a reply or mention will see the Tweet in their home view.
- **Places it will never appear:** On anyone's Profile page, unless they wrote the message.

@Replies:



- **Definition:** A Tweet that begins with another user's username and is in reply to one of their Tweets, like this: *@NeonGolden I can't believe you thought that movie was cheesy--I loved it.*
- **Where it appears for the sender:** On the sender's profile page.
- **Where it appears for the recipient:** In the recipient's @Mentions tab. Like mentions, replies will also appear in the recipient's home timeline view if they are following the sender. Anyone following the sender and the recipient of a reply or mention will see it in their home view.
- **Places it will never appear:** On anyone's Profile page, unless they wrote the message.

Messages (formerly "Direct Messages"):

- **Definition:** A private message sent directly to someone who follows you.
- **Where it appears for the sender:** In the sender's "Sent" folder. Will disappear if recipient deletes it.
- **Where it appears for the recipient:** In the recipient's private "Direct Messages" folder. Will disappear if sender deletes it.
- **Places it will never appear:** In any public timeline or public search.

What Is Retweet? (RT)

Like a Tweet? *Retweet!* Sometimes you come across a Tweet that you just have to share. Twitter's retweet (otherwise known as "RT") feature helps you and others quickly share that Tweet with all of your followers.

How to Retweet:

1. Hover over a Tweet
2. Click the retweet link, highlighted below
3. The Tweet will then be forwarded to all of your followers



Where to Find Retweets:

Click the “Retweets” tab on your homepage to see what you’ve retweeted, what’s been retweeted by people you follow, and who retweeted your Tweets! The following items appear in a drop-down menu. Click one of them to see results.

- **Retweets by others:** read the retweets posted by people you follow under the first tab, 'Retweets by others.'
- **Retweets by you:** read your own retweets- it's like the sent items in your email account. If others have also retweeted, you'll see their profile icons listed.
- **Your Tweets, retweeted:** find out who retweets your tweets!

Note: Please note that retweets, like regular tweets, from people you've blocked will not show up.



How Can I see Who Retweeted my Tweets?

Easy, just click on 'Your Tweets, Retweeted' in the Retweets tab, then click on the Tweet! The details pane will load to the right of the Tweet, complete with a tiled list of users who recently Retweeted your Tweet and the total number of times the Tweet has been Retweeted.

Retweeted by lamps and 1 other



Disabling Retweets:

If a particular account that you follow retweets stuff that you don’t want to see in your home timeline, just visit their profile to turn off retweets from them. Here’s how:

1. Open a user’s mini-profile by clicking their username anywhere on Twitter, or go to their full profile at <http://www.twitter.com/username>
2. Next to the Following button, click the retweets icon as shown below. Grey = OFF, so anything that person retweets won’t show up in your timeline.
3. To turn their retweets back on, click the button to turn it green. Green = ON.



Keep in mind:

- If you see a new face in your timeline, it's because someone you follow retweeted something they thought you should see. In the message, you'll see the picture and username of the original user, who was retweeted by someone you follow. Turn off retweets for that person if you don't like what they share.
- Turning on or off retweets is NOT retroactive, meaning that retweets from someone you follow will be delivered to your home timeline while the retweet button for them is green; retweets will not be delivered while the button is grey.

Recognizing Retweets in Timelines and Profiles

- Retweets in all timelines and profiles are **distinguished by the retweet icon**  followed by the name of the retweeter in the upper right-hand corner of the message.
- To credit a Tweet's author, retweets show the profile picture, user name, and tweet of the original author, with "retweeted by" information appended at bottom.
- If you see a message from a stranger in your timeline, look for the retweet icon – the retweeter should be someone you follow.



Frequently Asked Questions

People often wonder:

1. **Can I turn off ALL retweets?** Nope! You can unfollow a user who retweets things you don't like, but you can't turn off retweets completely.
2. **When people visit my profile, can they view my retweets in a tab, like favorites?** Nope. People can view the retweets posted in your profile by scrolling through your tweets and looking for the ones with retweet icons. Only you can see your retweet archives.

For more info on how Herdl can help manage your online presence contact Louisa@herdl.com

3. **What if I retweet from apps like Tweetie, twirl, etc?** Retweets, like regular tweets, will appear differently in different applications. All retweets from third party apps (like Tweetie and twirl) will show up in your retweet tab **IF they're using Twitter's retweet API**. (Not sure? Try retweeting from your favourite app, and then check the "retweets by you" tab on the web.) Many apps have built in their own version of retweeting; retweets sent from apps that don't use the official feature will not appear in your retweet tab.
4. **Are there limits on retweets?** There's no limit to the number of times a tweet can be retweeted, but Twitter will only show the most recent 100 retweeters for any public tweet.

How to Follow others:

Click "follow" under any profile picture on Twitter.



Helpful hints:

- Protected users will have to approve your follow request before you'll receive their Tweets.
- Import your contacts from your address book to find friends already using Twitter, or invite friends who aren't on Twitter yet.

How to Use Twitter's Suggestions for Who to Follow

The *Suggestions For You* feature can help you by directly recommending new users to follow. Here are some places you may see these personalized suggestions on Twitter:

- **On your homepage** (suggests people similar to those you already follow)
- **Beside another user's profile page** (suggests others like that person)
- **On your own profile page** (suggests users like you)

How to find and use Suggestions For You:

Suggestions will appear in the right side details pane of your homepage and profile pages on Twitter, as shown at the bottom of this page. Following is an explanation of which types of suggestions show up where.

1. Suggestions on Your Homepage:

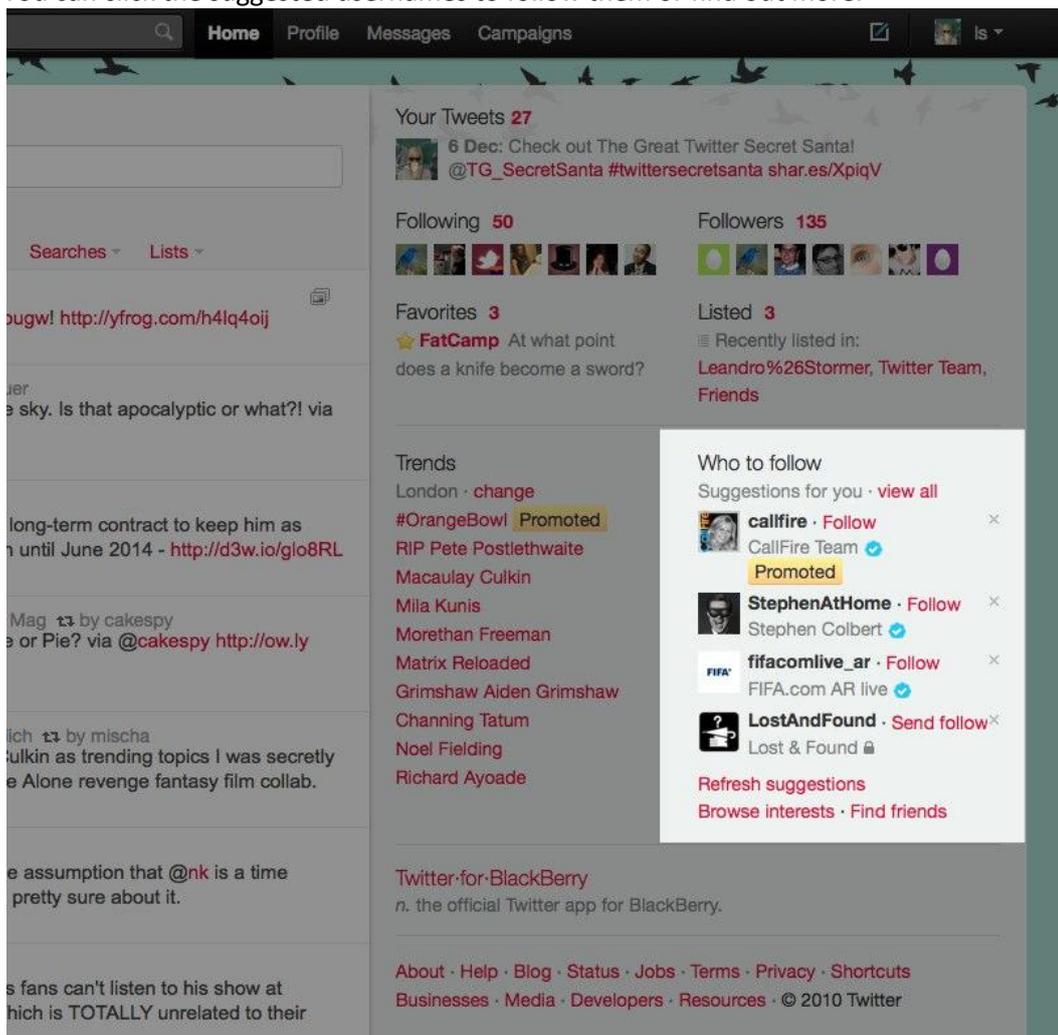
- On your homepage, you should see a few recommendations of **accounts Twitter think you might find interesting**. These are based on the types of accounts you're already following and who those people follow.
- **Click "follow"** if you like the recommendation and would like to start receiving the user's Tweets.
- **Click the X** if you would not like to follow them at this time, and our system will record that it should not recommend that person to you again.

2. Suggestions on Another User's Profile Page:

- If you're interested in the user whose profile you're viewing, check out suggestions of **others like that user**.
- Click the 'Follow' link to follow them.
- If you're not interested, you can **refresh** the page for more suggestions.

3. Suggestions on your own profile page:

- Their recommendations for **users similar to you** will appear just below the tiled list of people you follow.
- You can click the suggested usernames to follow them or find out more.



Note: How do I get Twitter to suggest me to other users?

Twitter's staff does not editorialise which users show up in Suggestions for you or similar accounts. Twitter search uses an algorithm that determines highly personalized suggestions based on the accounts you currently follow, the accounts followed by the users you have chosen to follow, and how other users express interest in Tweets made from these accounts. This should help you find the information you want to know (and some information that may surprise you) faster.

How to Unfollow Others

Hover over the Follow button and it turns to 'Unfollow' simply click and you'll no longer receive tweets from this user

A couple of useful tips!

#Hashtags

Users often prepend # to words in their Tweets to categorize them for others eg: "We'd like to say a big hello to everyone running for us in the marathon today #marathon" Think of hashtags as the theme of your Tweet. Users can then click on a hashtag to see other similarly-themed tweets and find yours in search.

The hashtag is a favourite tool of conferences and event organizers, but it's also a way for Twitter users to organize themselves: if everyone agrees to append a certain hashtag to tweets about a topic, it becomes easier to find that topic in search, and more likely the topic will appear in Twitter's Trending Topics.

#CT

Tweeters show their support for Charities on Charity Tuesday. The Hashtag #CT is the way these tweets can be found in a search and also adds a context to the tweet.

#FF

#FF is the Hashtag for Follow Friday, it's a great way of highlighting the Twitter accounts of others and should be used to say thanks to people who have interacted with you, who share your tweets and whose business, cause or ideas you support. Spread the love and the love will come back!

URL Shortener

As you have to fit your whole message into 140 characters (less if you are hoping people will retweet and show the whole message) you'll need to use a URL shortener like Bit.ly, Ow.ly or Su.pr. URL shorteners are useful because they can preserve a link to a specific web page even if the URL to that page changes in the future. Some URL shorteners allow you to track the number of clicks your shortened link gets allowing you to analyze the type of traffic you're generating to your website, blog, etc. from your links on Twitter, Facebook, and so on. This allows you to understand in greater detail where your promotional efforts are having the biggest impact.

Best Practices

Build your following, reputation, and customer's trust with these simple practices:

Share. Share photos and behind the scenes info about your business. Even better, give a glimpse of developing projects and events. Users come to Twitter to get and share the latest, so give it to them!

Listen. Regularly monitor the comments about your company, brand, and products.

Ask. Ask questions of your followers to glean valuable insights and show that you are listening.

Respond. Respond to compliments and feedback in real time

Reward. Tweet updates about special offers, discounts and time-sensitive deals.

Demonstrate wider leadership and know-how. Reference articles and links about the bigger picture as it relates to your business.

Champion your stakeholders. Retweet and reply publicly to great tweets posted by your followers and customers.

Establish the right voice. Twitter users tend to prefer a direct, genuine, and of course, a likable tone from your business, but think about your voice as you Tweet. How do you want your business to appear to the Twitter community?

Follow the right people. If you want to be recognised as the experts in what you do then you need to be following the right people. Anyone can view who you follow so just be aware of this and make sure your list looks good. (of course, this not only looks good but means you will be getting news relevant to your profession)

Don't appear too desperate! Try and keep the number of people you are following at least a little short of the number of people who follow you – don't go on a 'following rampage' build followers slowly.

Glossary of Twitter Terms

#

See "Hashtags"

@

The @ sign is used to call out usernames in Tweets, like this: Hello @Twitter! When a username is preceded by the @ sign, it becomes a link to a Twitter profile. See also Replies and Mentions

Avatar

The personal image uploaded to your Twitter profile in the Settings tab of your account.

Bio

A short personal description used to define who you are on Twitter.

Blocking

To block someone on Twitter means they will be unable to follow you or add you to their lists, and Twitter will not deliver their mentions to your mentions tab.

CT

#CT stands for "Charity Tuesday". Twitter users show their support by mentioning charities and add this hashtag

Direct Message

Also called a DM and most recently called simply a "message," these Tweets are private between only the sender and recipient. Tweets become DMs when they begin with "d username" to specify who the message is for.

DM

See Direct Message.

Email Notifications

Preferences set by Twitter users to regulate notifications via email about events on your account, such as new followers and new direct messages.

Favorite

To favorite a Tweet means to mark it as one of your favorites by clicking the yellow star next to the message.

FF

#FF stands for "Follow Friday." Twitter users often suggest who others should follow on Fridays by tweeting with the hashtag #FF.

Find People

The Find People tab (to find people) is Twitter's search feature used to locate friends on the site.

Follow

To follow someone on Twitter means to subscribe to their Tweets or updates on the site.

Follow Count

The numbers that reflect how many people you follow, and how many people follow you. Found on your Twitter Profile.

Follower

A follower is another Twitter user who has followed you.

Following

Your following number reflects the quantity of other Twitter users you have chosen to follow on the site.

GFF (Get Followers Fast)

Sites that promise to get you more followers if you provide your username and password. After signing up, these sites send spam from your account. Don't use them.

Handle

A user's "Twitter handle" is the username they have selected and the accompanying URL, like so: <http://twitter.com/herdl>.

Hashtag

The # symbol is used to mark keywords or topics in a Tweet. Was created organically by Twitter users.

Home Timeline

A real-time list of Tweets from those you follow. Appears on your Twitter home page.

Hovercards

Floating messages about other Twitter users. They appear when hovering over a username on Twitter, or on other sites on the web.

Listed

To be included in another Twitter user's list. Listed numbers and details appear in the statistics at the top of your profile.

Lists

Curated groups of other Twitter users. Used to tie specific individuals into a group on your Twitter account. Displayed on the right side menu of your homepage.

Mention

Mentioning another user in your Tweet by including the @ sign followed directly by their username is called a "mention". Also refers to Tweets in which your username was included.

Mobile Web

Twitter's website tailored to fit your mobile device. Visit it at mobile.twitter.com.

OH

"OH" most often means "Overheard" in Tweets. Used as a way to quote funny things people overhear.

Over Capacity Page

Users sometimes refer to this page as the "Fail Whale" page. The "Twitter is over capacity" message and a whale image shows up when the site is having trouble keeping up with traffic.

Profile

A Twitter page displaying information about a user, as well as all the Tweets they have posted from their account.

Promoted Tweets

Tweets that selected businesses have paid to promote at the top of search results on Twitter.

Protected/Private Accounts

Twitter accounts are public by default. Choosing to protect your account means that your Tweets will only be seen by approved followers and will not appear in search.

Reply

A Tweet posted in reply to another user's message, usually posted by clicking the "reply" button next to their Tweet in your timeline. Always begins with @username.

Retweet (noun)

A Tweet by another user, forwarded to you by someone you follow. Often used to spread news or share valuable findings on Twitter.

Retweet (verb)

To retweet, retweeting, retweeted. The act of forwarding another user's Tweet to all of your followers.

RT

Abbreviated version of "retweet." Placed before the retweeted text when users manually retweet a message. See also Retweet.

Search (Integrated Search)

A box on your Twitter homepage that allows you to search all public Tweets for keywords, usernames, hashtags, or subject. Searches can also be performed at search.twitter.com.

Spam

Unwanted messaging or following on Twitter.

Timeline

A real-time list of Tweets on Twitter. See also Home Timeline.

Timestamp

A note displaying when a Tweet was posted to Twitter. Can be found in grey text directly below any Tweet. Is also a link to that Tweet's own URL.

Top Tweets

Tweets determined by a Twitter algorithm to be the most popular or resonant on Twitter at any given time.

Trending Topic

A subject algorithmically determined to be one of the most popular on Twitter at the moment.

Tweet (verb)

Tweet, Tweeting, Tweeted. The act of posting a message, often called a "Tweet", on Twitter.

Tweet (noun)

A message posted via Twitter containing 140 characters or fewer.

Tweet Button (noun)

A button anyone can add to their website. Clicking this button allows Twitter users to post a Tweet with a link to that site.

Tweeter

An account holder on Twitter who posts and reads Tweets. Also known as Twitterers.

Twitterer

An account holder on Twitter who posts and reads Tweets. Also known as Tweeters.

Unfollow

To cease following another Twitter user. Their Tweets no longer show up in your home timeline.

URL Shortener

URL shorteners are used to turn long URLs into shorter URLs. Shortening services can be found online.

Username

Also known as a Twitter handle. Must be unique and contain fewer than 15 characters. Is used to identify you on Twitter for replies and mentions.

References:

Much of the info in the guide (including examples) was taken directly from the Twitter guide itself which is very helpful. For a short video on setting up a Twitter account Ehow is well worth a look too!

<http://business.twitter.com>

<http://mashable.com>

<http://www.ehow.com>

Got a question or want to give feedback?

Email: Louisa@herdl.com