



Using Twitter

Compiled by Jo-Anne Gibson

Use Twitter to:

- Keep in touch
- Share information or knowledge
- Ask questions and learn something new
- Get advice from an expert
- Find a new product
- Find out what's happening in the world in real time

❖ For an **overview** on Twitter, watch: <http://commoncraft.com/twitter>

❖ For a detailed Twitter **user guide**, go to: <http://twitteroid.com/blog/wp-content/files/MasteringTwitter.2009-c.pdf> or <http://mashable.com/guidebook/twitter/>

❖ For a **screencast** on how to get started using Twitter, go to: <http://lizbdavis.blip.tv/file/614017/>

1. To set up an **Account**: Go to <http://twitter.com> and click the "**Get Started-Join**" button. Fill in the required information. Be sure to use a real email address since: 1) you might forget your password; 2) direct messages from friends will be sent there; 3) requests to follow you will be sent there.

2. Go to **Settings**: Change your name to your correct name - first then last - so others can search for you easier (by default, your name is the username you chose for your account). Check your settings to ensure that you are comfortable with who can find and follow you. If you only want to tweet in private, check the box "protect my tweets." This way you will not be on the public timeline. Consider, however, that if you are trying to set up a PLN, the best way to make connections with people who share your interests is by being on the public timeline and using your real name. Adding a few words in the **Bio** section will tell others who you are and what you are interested in. This is important information when others decide to follow you or not.

3. Set your notification preferences under **Notices**. If you want to know when someone new is following you and when you get a direct message, check these off.

4. Upload your profile **Picture** under **Settings-Picture**. If you're not comfortable with your real picture, consider uploading a cartoon picture, image or an altered picture of yourself. This will help others to remember you online.

5. Customize the look of your homepage under **Design**.

6. To start **following** others, go to: **Find People** and enter their name into the search box. You can also find people through your yahoo, gmail and AOL accounts to see if they're already using Twitter or invite them by email. Once you have found someone to follow, click "follow." A great way to find people to follow is to search through the people your friends are following. You can do this by clicking on your friend's picture and then clicking on any of the pictures on your friend's list and click "follow." Depending on the person's settings you choose to follow, they may or may not get an email indicating that you are now following them. If they do get an email, this is his/her chance to "follow" you back.

7. To see who you are following, go to: **Following**. If a grey lock appears beside someone's name that you would like to follow, this means that this person has protected their updates and you have to request to be manually approved to follow and view their updates. To stop following someone, click on the "remove" button and they will be removed from your "Following" list and their updates will not be displayed on your homepage.

8. If you're looking for a particular group to follow, use <http://search.twitter.com> and search for people who have posted tweets in areas of your interests such as "teacher-librarians" or "school librarians."

9. Send out some **Tweets**. Tell people what you're doing or reading, or ask a question. Your messages on Twitter are restricted to 140 characters. So if you want to post a message with a URL that you find, you can lose a lot of these characters if the URL is long. There are many services available such as **BudURL, tinyurl, zi.ma** that will change a long URL into a short one.

10. If you find interesting articles posted by people who you follow, **Retweet** them. The syntax is RT@USERNAME and their tweet – where USERNAME is the name of the person whose tweet you are retweeting. If someone asks a question via their tweet (for example, I am having problems with gmail – anyone having the same?) and you want to reply to this person, the syntax would be @USERNAME – No my gmail works fine – where USERNAME is the name of the person whose tweet you are replying to.

11. To send a **direct or private message (DE)** to someone you are following and they are following you, either: 1) click on the direct "reply" icon after they have sent a message to you; or 2) use the @USERNAME (followed by a space) and then type your message in the "What are you doing" space. (Note: You can only send a DE to someone you are following and they are following you as well).

12. A note about **Hashtags**: Hashtags are a way of tracking trends, topic or events on Twitter. Adding a word with a hashtag (the # symbol) in front of it - for instance, #SchoolLibraries - adds that tweet to a list of tweets with the same hashtags. That way they can be tracked and used for statistics about a trendy topic or event.

13. To keep track of your tweets in real time across several different formats including Twitter and Facebook, you can download an application called **Tweetdeck** which can be accessed from your desktop: <http://www.tweetdeck.com>

14. Try using **Twitterfeed** to send a Delicious RSS feed to your Twitter account so anything you bookmark will be tweeted.

- ❖ To understand how Twitter might be used by a teacher-librarian as a **Personal Learning Network (PLN)**, go to: <http://heyjude.wordpress.com/2009/12/16/making-twitter-work-for-me/>
- ❖ Using **Twitter in the classroom**, go to: <http://janeknight.typepad.com/socialmedia/2009/08/twitter-in-the-classroom-10-useful-resources.html>
- ❖ Using **Twitter in the library**, go to: <http://www.bachelorsdegreeonline.com/blog/2009/100-tips-tools-and-resources-for-librarians-on-twitter/>
- ❖ For a list of **School Librarians using Twitter** and to join this group, go to: <http://twittgroups.com/group/schoollibrarians>

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