

Twitter

Twitter Basics

Introduction

Twitter is a social networking community centered around the concept of micro-blogging. Twitter posts are confined to 140 characters, and are read on a public forum. Twitter is a great way to get up to the minute information on a broad range of subjects. In this document you will learn the basics of Twitter, including tweeting, following, and finding your target audience.

Process Summary

Introduction
Vocabulary
Logging In
Tweeting
Obtaining an Audience

Vocabulary

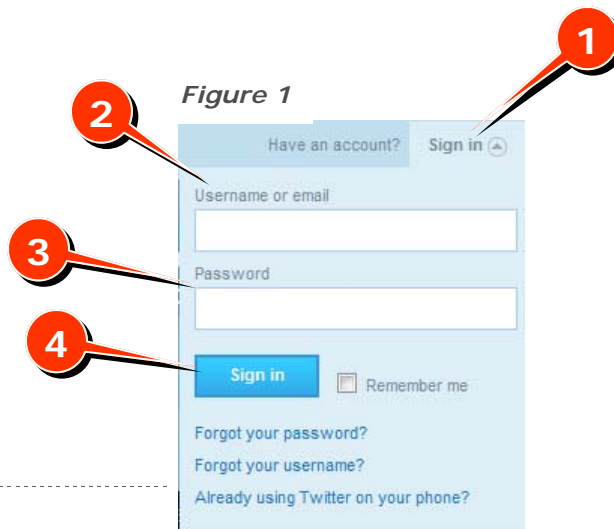
Before using Twitter, it is important for the new user to become familiar with some basic Twitter vocabulary. Listed below are some key terms that you should familiarize yourself with. If you find yourself confused with the terminology, refer back to this section.

- **Tweeting:** The act of posting a message on Twitter for the public to view. This is restricted to 140 characters or less per tweet.
- **Follower:** One who “follows” your Twitter account. This person can see your tweets on their homepage when they log in to Twitter.
- **Tweeter:** A person who posts a message on Twitter.
- **RT (Retweet):** Tweeting another users previous tweet because you find it interesting or relevant and would like to share it with your friends and followers. This is essentially like forwarding an email.
- **#Hashtag:** phrases or keywords that can be used to find tweets about a certain topic or issue. They can be one word (#Towson) or many words strung together without spaces (#TowsonComupterHelp).
- **Twitter Handle:** This is the name that designates an individual on Twitter. This is the same as a username on any other website.

Logging In

1. Go to www.twitter.com
2. In the top right corner, click the **Sign In** button to bring up the login dropdown menu. (Fig. 1, 1)
3. Type in either your **Username** or your **email address**. (Fig. 1, 2)
4. Type in your **Password**. (Fig. 1, 3)
5. Click **Sign in**. (Fig. 1, 4)

(Fig. 1 is on the next page)



Tweeting

Posting Tweets

1. There is a text box at the top of your twitter homepage like the one shown in Figure 2. This text box is the heart of twitter. This box is where your Tweets are published.
2. The number that is found towards the top right corner of the text box is your character limit. (Fig. 2, 1) This number will update while you type. The character limit is 140. The brevity of tweets is one of the cornerstones of this social networking site.
3. Once you have typed your tweet, click the **update** button. (Fig. 2, 2) Once you have done this, your tweets will be visible to your followers and will be searchable to other twitter users.

Figure 2



Deleting Tweets

Twitter is generally more casual than email, but despite this you may still find occasion to delete a tweet. Fortunately this is an easy process.

1. Place your cursor over the tweet that you wish to delete.
2. In the bottom right corner, there is a **Delete** button with a trash can icon next to it. (Fig. 3, 1)
3. Click **Delete**
4. The Windows Internet Explorer dialog box will appear. (Fig. 4) Click the **OK** button to delete the tweet. Use discretion, this tweet will be gone forever. (Fig. 4, 1)

(Fig. 3 and 4 are on the next page)

Figure 3

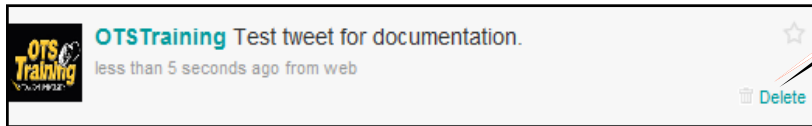
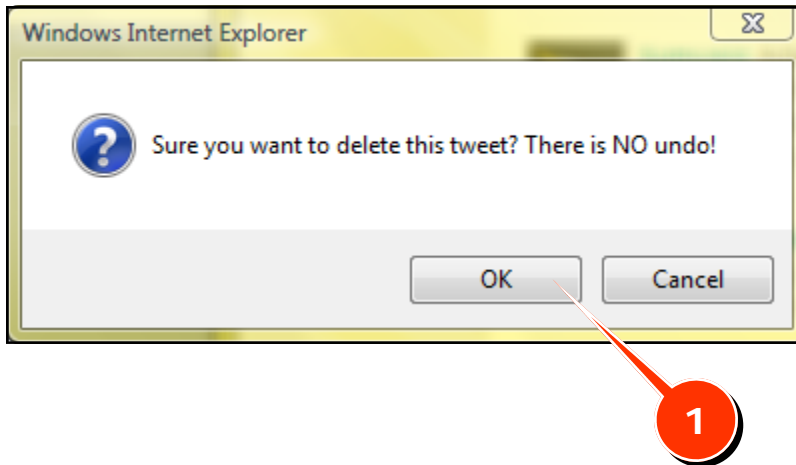


Figure 4



Responding to Tweets

Sometimes your followers will send you a tweet asking a question or making a comment. They will do this by putting @"your username". These tweets will be visible via your homepage. This portion of the document will explain the process.

1. On your twitter homepage there is a navigation bar on the right hand side. Click the option that reads @"username". (Fig. 5, 1)
2. From this page you will be able to see all tweets that are directed to your account by means of the @"username" convention. The tweets will appear as the sample tweet displayed in Figure 6.
3. To respond to a tweet directed to you in this fashion, go to your homepage and in the text box (see Figure 2) type @ followed by the username of the person who you wish to tweet. (Fig. 7, 1) Press the **Reply** button to submit your response.

Figure 5

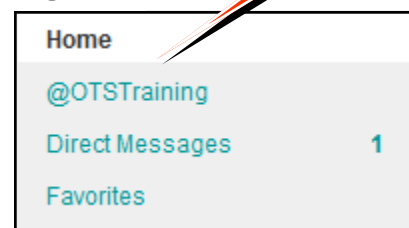
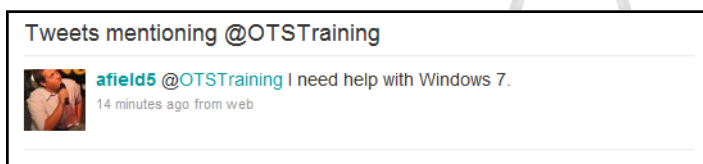


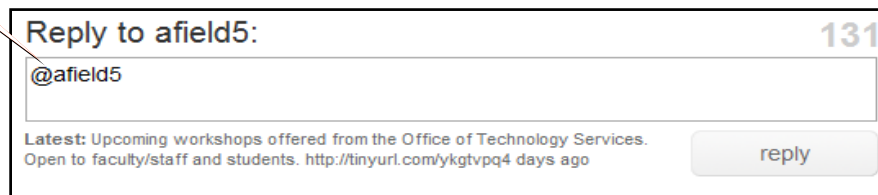
Figure 6



(Fig. 7 is on the next page)

1

Figure 7



Reply to afield5: 131

@afield5

Latest: Upcoming workshops offered from the Office of Technology Services. Open to faculty/staff and students. <http://tinyurl.com/ykgtvpq4> days ago

reply

Multimedia Tweets

There will be times when 140 characters of plain text will not be enough to convey your information. There are ways to post links, videos, and pictures; all within your 140 character limit.

Posting Links

Posting links within a tweet can be somewhat of a challenge. Lengthy web addresses can take up a lot of space in a restricted length message such as a tweet. Fortunately, there is an easy way to get around this problem.

1. Go to <http://www.tiny.cc/>
2. Enter a long URL that you want to make tiny.
3. Click the “**Tiny It!**” button.
4. Your new link will appear in below the text box. If you are using Flash 9, the new link will automatically be copied to your clipboard.

Posting Pictures and Videos

The issue of size constraint comes up again when one tries to post images or videos to a twitter page. The bottom line is that tweets are restricted to plain text only. There is no way to embed an actual picture or video into your tweet. The solution to this problem is similar to that of the aforementioned problem of posting links.

1. Go to <http://www.tweetube.com/>
2. To add images click on the **Photos & Pictures** section. To add a video from YouTube, click on the **YouTube** section.
3. Fill out the form in the section that you chose. They are basically the same for YouTube and image posts.
4. You will be required to enter your Twitter **username and password**. This is so that TweeTube can directly post the image or video link to your Twitter site.
5. The image or video will be displayed as a small link within your tweet.

Obtaining Your Audience

Once you know how to post your tweets, the next logical step is finding people to read them. Without a strong follower base, it will be hard to get your message out to your audience. This section will discuss a few strategies that will help accomplish this goal.

Find Them:

The most direct way to gain an audience is to actively seek them out. To help you in this task, twitter has a powerful **Advanced Search** option which can be found [here](#). Once you have found a user that you believe is in your target audience, *follow* that user. This will send them a notification that you are following them, and in turn give them an option to follow you.

It should be noted that this is not an automatic task. That is to say that the user has to choose to follow you. By following them you are simply bringing your profile to their attention. In the event that the user does in fact follow your account, your profile will be visible in their profile which is visible to their friends, who may also choose to add you. This serves a function similar to that of a direct mail campaign in the marketing industry.

Tip: Try to find relevant twitter accounts that have a large follower base. Their profiles will have high traffic and thus your profile will get more exposure. An example of this would be the OTS Training account following the Cook Library account. Cook Library's followers are likely to be interested in computer training and in turn may see your profile via Cook Library and choose to follow the OTS Training account.

Help Them to Find You:

Another strategy for building a follower-base involves making yourself visible to other users on twitter. If searching for individual twitter users is like a direct mail campaign, think of the following strategies as a sort of "billboard" for your twitter page. The goal main objective of these strategies is exposure.

#Hashtags (pronounced Hash tags)

The hashtag is a great way to get your tweets (and thus your profile) out to the public and a potential audience. The hashtag allows other twitter users to search for tweets by the keyword that you specify. Without a hashtag, a search for "Windows 7" would yield thousands of results, a majority of which could be irrelevant. A hashtag allows users to find posts that are specifically concerned with the topic, it serves to filter out mentions of the keyword in casual or irrelevant posts. Follow these simple steps to use this function.

1. Enter your message like you would with any other tweet. (Fig. 8, 1)
2. At the end type the "#" immediately followed by the keyword that you want to associate with your tweet. It should be noted that the keyword needs to be one word. **No spaces.** If you wish to tag "Towson University DMC" it needs to be typed as "#TowsonUniversityDMC". (Fig. 8, 2)
3. Click the **Update** button (Fig. 8, 3) and your tag will appear in the public search results.

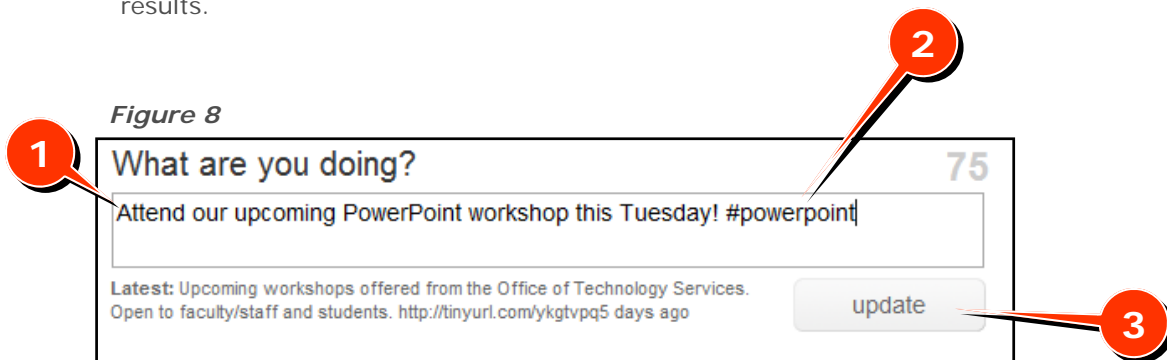
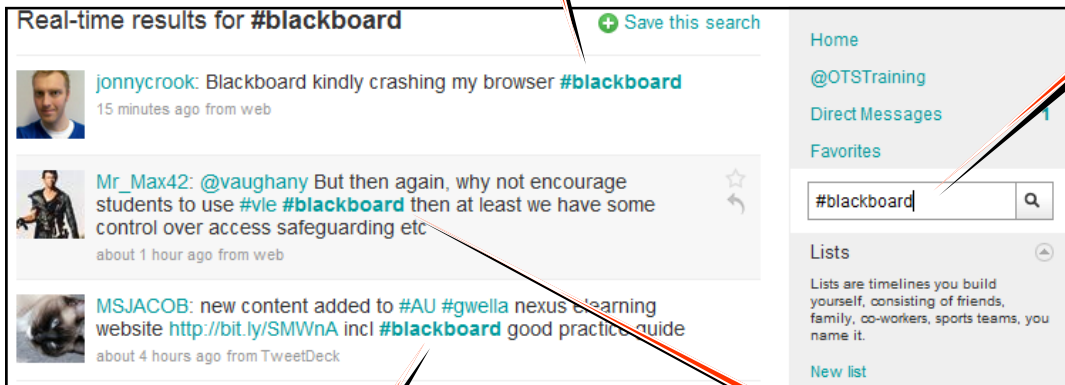


Figure 9 is portrayed on the next page. It illustrates how the hashtag function looks in a public search. Figure 9, 1 shows the search query. The **H flags** show the hashtag as it appears in the user's tweet.

Figure 9



Actively Use Twitter

Twitter is more than a 1-way form of communication. Communicating with other twitter users can get your account a great reputation and a strong follower base. Search for computer help keywords. If you see a question, answer it! People will be appreciative and in the future they will come to you for assistance. Word spreads quickly in twitter circles. If you are helpful it will not go unnoticed and your page will gain a strong follower base.