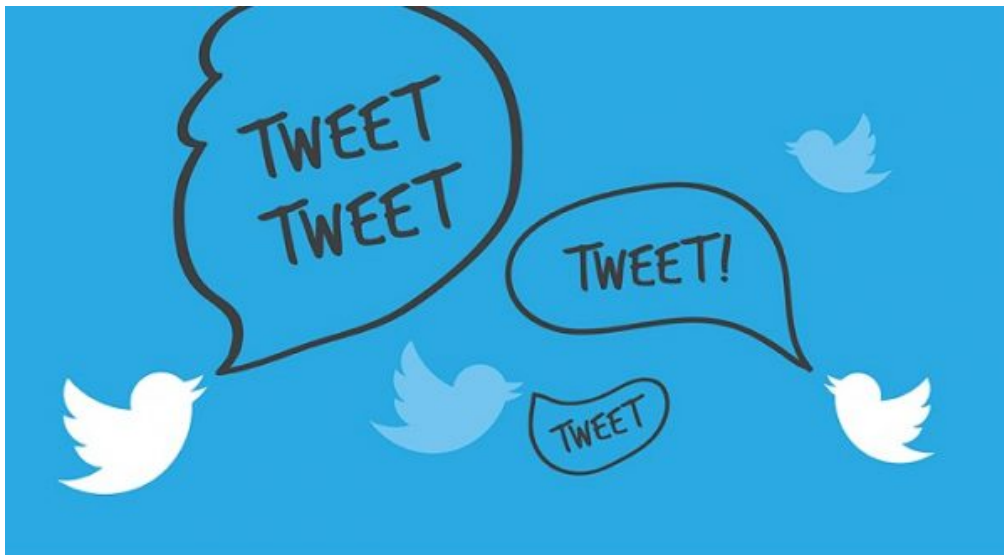


## Social media: a guide to Twitter





## **An introduction to Twitter**

This guide is designed to help you set up an account and use Twitter to engage with your communities, and beyond, by sharing information and opening up two-way conversations.

### **What is Twitter?**

At its simplest, Twitter is a series of short online announcements called ‘tweets’ that an individual or organisation can post to their followers and beyond.

Created in 2006, the micro-blogging site offers users 140-characters (including letters, numbers and spaces) to publicly share thoughts and activities, and comment on topical matters.

Twitter also has an email/message facility which enables you to swap messages with other users.

### **The benefits of tweeting**

- It’s free, accounts don’t cost anything to set up and run and it’s likely that you already have the equipment (i.e. a desktop computer, iPad or smart phone) you’ll need to run it
- It’s mobile, download the app to your phone or iPad and you can send tweets and respond to comments wherever and whenever you want to – perfect for live tweeting from events or Council meetings
- It’s immediate, so you can send out information to thousands of people in one go and receive a reaction within minutes
- You can raise your profile online, quickly and easily, by sharing details of local events you are involved in, policies that matter to you and any community work you do personally
- It’s a useful tool for keeping up to date with breaking news and opinions, both locally and globally
- You can upload pictures and videos to help demonstrate your role in local events, potential sites for development and places of interest
- And above all, if done right, it can be lots of fun too!



## Potential pitfalls of tweeting

- Engaging on Twitter is a commitment. As well as actively tweeting yourself, you will need to monitor your account for responses, direct tweets from constituents and direct messages
- Tweets can be misinterpreted, so choose your words carefully and proof read before you hit that big tweet button
- Not everyone will like your tweets so be prepared for criticism and negative responses - you can block users but remember it only stops them engaging directly with you
- It can open the gates to regular moans and groans and people expect answers...fast!
- As well as attracting local people and colleagues as followers, you are likely to also attract local media representatives, who will use it as a source of information for articles
- There is no edit button, once it has been posted the message is out there – unless you are super quick with the delete button!
- Following and retweeting individuals and organisations can be seen as endorsing them and their opinions, so be careful what you share and who you follow
- Unless you use the direct messaging facility, anyone can see your tweets, even those directed or responding to an individual user

## Using Twitter

### How to set up a Twitter account using a desktop computer

Setting up a Twitter account from your desktop computer is easy – just follow these eight simple steps:



- Once you've logged onto your PC, type [www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com) into your browser to visit the site
- Click the 'Sign up' button in the top right-hand corner
- Enter your full name, a valid email address and create a password
- Provide some basic info about yourself (i.e. town of residence, web address, telephone number)
- Choose your handle (username) – if using as part of your Cllr role, try to include this
- Add a bio including the area you cover and community roles you play
- Add a photo and cover photo
- Starting following people – use your address box or search names and handles

### How to set up a Twitter account using a smart phone app

Set up Twitter on your mobile phone using these eight easy-to-follow steps:

- Download the official Twitter app from your app store
- Open the app, type in your name, email address and create a password
- Choose your handle (username) and select your interests
- Synch your account to your contacts (you can skip this if you prefer) and choose from the suggestions, who you want to follow (more can be added at any time)
- Add a profile pic and cover photo
- Write a bio in 160 characters
- Get tweeting!



## Settings and privacy

The options available in settings and privacy will enable you to tailor your usage of the tool and restrict access to your profile, should you wish to.

To edit the settings and privacy of your account, click on your profile photo and select the option from the menu.

Here you can:

- Update your account details
- Choose if you wish to receive notifications for any likes, retweets, responses and messages you receive
- Update preferences such as display, sound and data usage

You can also manage the privacy and safety of your profile. This includes:

- Opt to only share tweets with your followers
- Choose if you want to receive direct messages, or not
- Decide how you want people to be able to find you (email, phone or neither)



## Composing a tweet

Now you've set your Twitter account up, it's time to tweet!

To get started, click on the big blue 'Tweet' button or push the quill icon in the top right hand corner of your mobile app account to get the tweet box up on screen.

Type your message in using the 140 characters available and once you're confident you have your message right, hit TWEET!

If you need a bit of inspiration for your first tweet, here are a few tips and examples:

- Jump straight in. Try something conversational, something funny, or anecdotal



- Introduce yourself by copying and pasting your bio into a tweet, or rephrase it to be more conversational.



- Share a photo of yourself with an introduction so that people can see who they are communicating with.



- Promise something. What can people expect from you and how often?

Tis my first twitt-er. Or tweet? Twit? Or tweet? "Twit or tweet everybody." Is this anything?

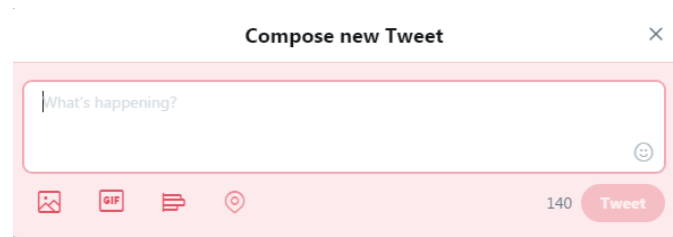
12:03 PM Mar 10th, 2009 via web





- A simple but classic #FirstTweet. If all else fails, this is an easy option to get the stress out of the way. If you've been deliberating for a week, just go for it.

## Adding photos and videos to tweets

Adding photos, videos and GIFs to a tweet not only gives more personality and information about what you are sharing, but they also help make your message stand out amongst the 500 million tweets that are sent every day.



Adding media to your tweet is really easy:

- Tap the Tweet icon 
- Below the Tweet compose box, you'll see quick selection options to add a new photo or video to your Tweet. If you are using Twitter on your phone, your most recent photos and videos from your device gallery will also appear in the bottom right corner, as thumbnail previews for easy access.
- Tap the **photo** icon  to take a photo or live video, or to choose a photo/video from your gallery.
- Once a photo or video is selected, the image will attach to your Tweet in full size. You can select up to 4 photos or one video to Tweet at once.
- Tap **Tweet** to post.



## Using and searching hashtags

Hashtags are used to help identify messages and comments that have been posted on particular topics. They can be used on single words, names or conversational phrases related to places, people, events and breaking news. They usually take the form of a #hashtag and a composite word rather than separate elements.

Hashtags can 'trend' when a large amount of people use the hashtag in their Twitter messages. Checking trending hashtags is a way to check what people are talking about each day. You can search the daily trends from your account as they are displayed on every page, on the left-hand side.



If you want to search a particular topic, person or location you can also make use of Twitter's search facility.

To search you can:

- Enter your search query into the search box at the top of the page
- Your results will show a combination of Tweets, photos and related accounts
- Filter your results using the options in the tool bar – i.e. Top, Latest, People, Photos, Videos, News, or Broadcasts

You can also filter your results down according to people, location and language using the search filter menus, which is located under the tool bar, to the left.



## Sharing, pinning and deleting tweets

As well as tweeting your own messages, you can start or join a conversation on Twitter by replying to tweets. You can do this by clicking on the speech bubble at the bottom of a tweet you are reading.

In addition, you can help spread the word or show your support to a message by sharing it onto your profile. You can do this by clicking on retweet icon and either just share the message or you can add your message as you share by writing in the add a 'quote' box.



Twitter moves fast, which can mean your messages move quickly down your page. To help draw attention to an upcoming event, campaign or news that you are supporting you can pin it to the top of your Twitter feed, so that it is the first message any visitors to your page see.

To pin a tweet click on the downward arrow menu icon at the top right hand corner of your tweet and select 'Pin to your profile'.

When you want to take the pinned post down, just select 'unpin from page'.

It's recommended that you thoroughly check your tweets before you send them as they can be picked up quickly by other users, including the media, who can quote the tweet or use it as a source of information.

However, if you do change your mind about a tweet or spot a typo after it's been sent, it is easy to delete. All you need to do is to visit your profile, identify the tweet you wish to delete, click on the downward arrow menu icon at the top right hand corner of your tweet and select delete tweet.





## Direct messaging

Direct messages are the private side of Twitter. You can use them to have private conversations with people about Tweets and other content.

You can start a private conversation or create a group conversation with anyone who follows you.

If you have opted to receive direct messages, any user, even those that don't follow you - some of your constituents will use this facility to message you about issues in their area.

Remember, although these are private they can easily be shared as a pic on Twitter or by inviting others to join your conversation.

