



“Watching from the outside, Twitter is like the dumbest thing you’ve heard of: “Why would anyone want to tell others what they are doing in 140 characters?”

And yet to dismiss Twitter is a mistake because it’s an incredibly powerful tool for your personal learning and connecting with others.”

(Sue Waters, <http://suewaters.wikispaces.com/twitter>, @suewaters)

What?



twitter

What is Twitter?

Twitter is a service for friends, family, and co-workers to communicate and stay connected through the exchange of quick, frequent messages. People write short updates, often called "tweets" of 140 characters or fewer. These messages are posted to your profile, sent to your followers, and are searchable on Twitter search.

What does it mean to follow someone on Twitter?

Following someone simply means receiving their Twitter updates. When you follow someone, every time they post a new message, it will appear in your Twitter home page. New messages are added to your home page as people post them, so you always get the updates in real time. When you log in, you can see what the latest updates are.

Twitter offers other ways to follow people too: you can get updates from certain people on your phone!

What do I need to use it?

All you need to use Twitter is an internet connection or a mobile phone. Once you're in, type your first update into the web box.

To sign up, you need a working email account and preferably one you can access from anywhere with an internet connection (eg web based email such as Gmail, Yahoo, Hotmail etc)

Why?



twitter

Imagine you just got your own **radio station**.

You can **broadcast** by sending a **tweet** (*noun*) whenever you like and on whatever you like.

Each **tweet** can only be up to 140 characters long - that's the exact number of characters in this sentence, including spaces and punctuation.

140

You can instantly **tweet** (*verb*) the latest interest and activity, inform, promote, ask for help, invite talkback, provide links, chat, post picture videos, chat and more.

Your **tweets** are permanent, public, they can be stored, copied, passed on and, if you choose so, heard around the world.

And so are the tweets of millions of other people with the same kind of radio station.

“Sounds like massive self-indulgence.” (yes, can be)

“Extreme narcissism.” (yes, can be)

“Who cares what I or other people do?” (hmm, may be true...)

“So everyone talks and no-one listens?” (hmm, you can choose...)

“OK, OK but how do I know who to listen to and follow? “

Let’s see who just might want to follow
YOUR ‘radio station’ (ie read your tweets)...

Who would follow your radio station?

Your family members wanting to know what you are up to.

Your friends who may be scattered around the place or sit next door.

Your colleagues who may benefit from your discoveries, tips, warnings, recommendations, advice.

People with a similar hobby or interest locally anywhere in the world.

Parents of your students wanting to know how their child is going in your class.

Your customers who may be looking for that special deal or update.

Authorities whom you might inform of a significant event (eg earthquake, fire, accident) as it happens before it hits the news.

The odd celebrity or media outlet wanting to attract, amuse or inform fans.

A secret fan (or your boss! True)

A spammer, pest or stalker (let’s not pretend, just be mindful of what you write + you CAN block).

And just whose 'radio station' might YOU want to follow (ie read their tweets)...

Who would you follow?
Your family members not living with you and you want to know what they are up to.
Your friends who may be scattered around the place or sit next door.
Your colleagues who may help you find and/or recommend resources, update you on the trends, filter information for you...
People with a similar hobby or interest locally anywhere in the world.
Parents of your students giving you important information about their child sitting in front of you.
You customers who may be looking for that special deal or update.
Authorities who might inform you of a significant event (eg earthquake, fire, accident) as it happens before it even hits the news.
The odd 'celebrity' or media outlet to see what they are up to and what is going on.
Someone you are a secret fan of (and/or your boss!)
Certainly not spammers, pests or stalkers - they can be quickly spotted, blocked and 'killed off' by you or the community.

See the pattern?

Who would follow your radio station?	And who would you follow?
Your family members not living with you and wanting to know what you are up to.	Your family members not living with you and wanting to know what you are up to.
Your friends who may be scattered around the place or sit next door.	Your friends who may be scattered around the place or sit next door.
Your colleagues who may benefit from your discoveries, tips, warnings, recommendations, advice.	Your colleagues who may help you find and/or recommend resources, update you on the trends, filter information for you,
People with a similar hobby or interest locally anywhere in the world.	People with a similar hobby or interest locally anywhere in the world.
Parents of your students wanting to know how their child is going in your class.	Parents of your students giving you important information about their child sitting in front of you.
Your customers who may be looking for that special deal or update.	You customers who may be looking for that special deal or update.
Authorities whom you might inform of a significant event (eg earthquake, fire, accident) as it happens before it hits the news.	Authorities who might inform you of a significant event (eg earthquake, fire, accident) as it happens before it even hits the news.
The odd celebrity or media outlet wanting to attract, amuse or inform fans.	The odd 'celebrity' or media outlet to see what they are up to and what is going on.
A secret fan (or your boss! True)	Someone you are a secret fan of (and/or your boss!)
A spammer, pest or stalker (let's not pretend, just be mindful of what you write + you CAN block).	Certainly not spammers, pests or stalkers - they can be quickly spotted, blocked and 'killed off' by you or the community.

The whole thing depends on one simple principle:

People want to follow who they may find useful to follow.

So if you think that:

- a person's **tweets** may be useful to YOU, or
- they may find what YOU **tweet** useful

Simply follow that person.

There is a good chance they will return the favour and start to follow you.

You stay in control of who you follow at all times!

If not useful or annoying...

'Glad not to wash my dishes now, life is good' (5 seconds ago)

'Made decision, put banana peel in waste' (15 seconds ago)

'Do I put banana peel in general waste?' (45 seconds ago)

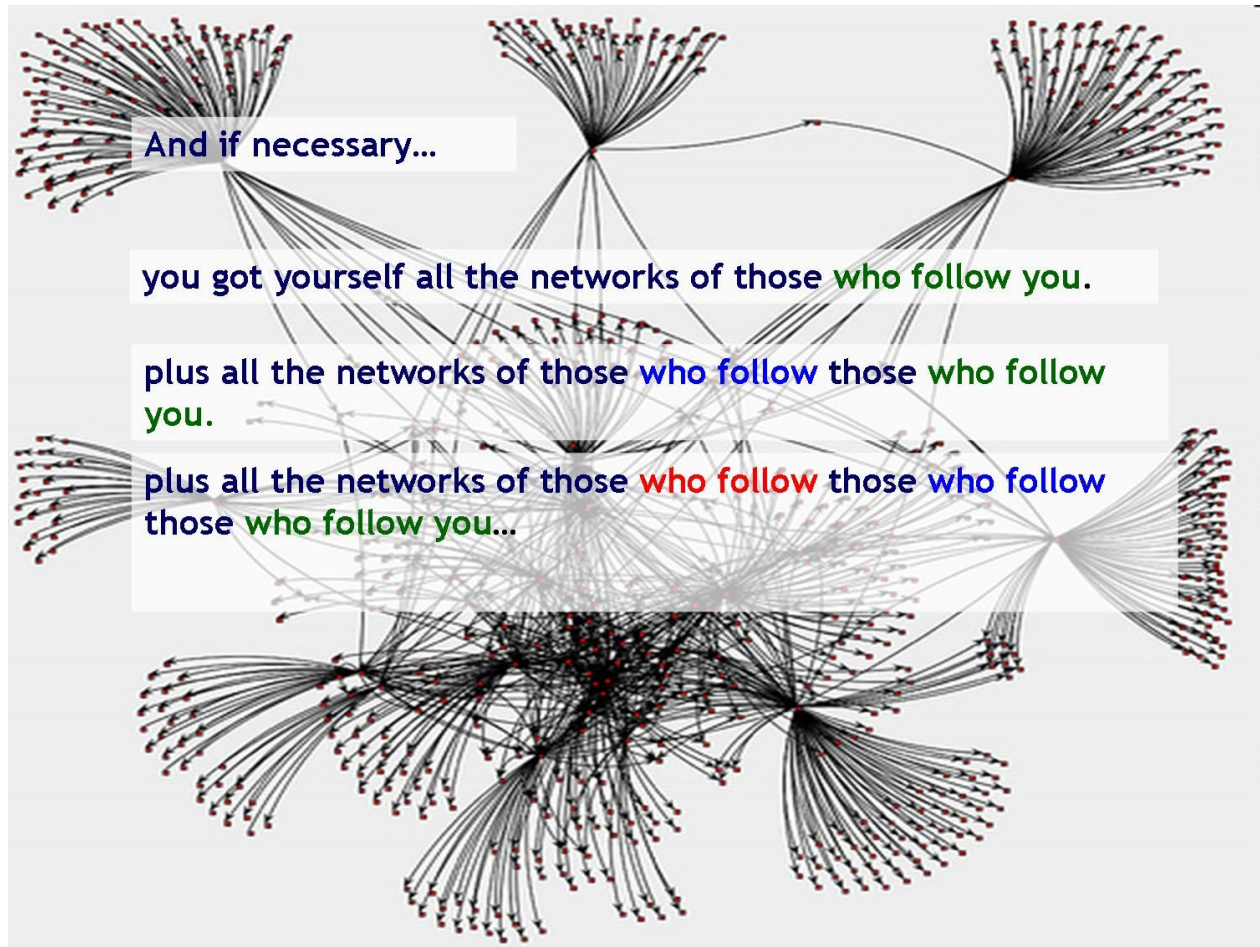
'I just had a banana...' (1 minute ago)

Who gives a ... ?

You can always stop following (or even block) the person.

With clever use, you soon got yourself not just a radio station...

you got yourself a network!



48/140

And all in 140 characters or less ! No essays :D

Making it go



Basics

Sign up and create a profile at [Twitter.com](https://twitter.com)

Include a photo or an 'avatar' and a quick description of yourself (you have 160 characters for that one). Would you follow a person you know absolutely nothing about?

An update is commonly called a tweet. You have up to 140 characters for each of them. You can make as many as you like.

Unless you specify otherwise, every tweet you write can be seen by the 'whole world'. Chances are no one but the people who follow you will care about it. If you miss a tweet - don't worry (it's NOT email).

To reply to a fellow Twitter user and/or mention them in your tweet, use @ sign. For example:

@meelup thanks for that link to literacy database, got lots out of it (reply)
Just seen @meelup using Twitter in her class. Innovative stuff! (mention)

You can send a Direct Message (DM) that only one intended recipient will see. By default, the person will get an email notification about DM to them. To send direct message, start your tweet with D:

D suewaters Colud you please forward me your email, don't want the whole world to see. Thanks
(note the space after letter D, capitalisation does not matter)

If you want to follow a person, click on their name, then click 'Follow'. If you don't want to receive any more updates from a person, simply un-follow. If they are a pain, you can even block them.

Links to websites in your tweets get automatically shortened. Long addresses like <http://collaboration.det.wa.edu.au/ocsclient/10.1.2.3.0/application/AppMain.jsp> will be automatically converted into something like: <http://bit.ly/jya5H> (saves many characters)

so your tweet may look like:

Very handy! Directory of teachers on Twitter <http://bit.ly/jya5H>

RT (re-tweet) - not an 'official' Twitter command but handy for passing on good or important tweets to your followers. For example:

RT @mslwalker 9 Reasons Why Teachers Should Use Twitter <http://bit.ly/jya5H>
(passing on a handy tweet and mentioning the source)

Hashtags (#) are used to tag things and make searching easier. See [Twitter.com](https://twitter.com) FAQ for details.

How do I find people & start following?



twitter

Lots of ways, start simple...

If you know someone personally using Twitter (eg a work colleague, friend...) and they are OK - start with them.

Look who the people you follow quote or follow. If you like what they tweet - click their name and follow them yourself.

Search twitter using Twitter Search (search.twitter.com) and type in key words you are after.

Use directories. For example, a Twitter4Teachers <http://twitter4teachers.pbwiki.com/> is an international directory of teachers on Twitter, divided into many categories. See screenshot below

Welcome to The Twitter4Teachers Wiki!

This wiki was created to easily help educators find other educators on Twitter that have the same interests as them (that teach in the same content area). Check out the list of educators on the pages linked below and add your Twitter name to the appropriate list too.

If you feel a subject area is missing and you think a page needs to be added, feel free to tweet or e-mail your suggestions or comments to the author of this wiki: gina.hartman@rhdschools.org or [ghartman](#) on Twitter
Gina Hartman, Educational Technology Specialist
Francis Howell School District (St. Charles, MO)

Note! You do not have to be approved to edit this wiki! Just make sure you log into your pbwiki account first (or create a free account) then edit the appropriate page.

Click on the appropriate link/page below and add your Twitter name there.

[Art Teachers](#)
[Bible/Religion Teachers](#)
[Business Teachers](#)
[College and University](#)
[Computer Science Teachers](#)
[Counselors \(Guidance\)](#)
[Drama Teachers](#)
[e-Learning Teachers](#)
[Educational Organizations or Companies](#)
[Educational Interpreters for the Deaf](#)
[Elementary Teachers](#)
[Middle School Teachers](#)

Navigator
★ Starred Pages
📁 Unfiled Items

Search
.....ed

Twitter4Teachers - Home
[Art Teachers](#)
[Bible/Religion Teachers](#)
[Business Teachers](#)
[College and University](#)

Edit Tags: math, teaching, podcast, classr, mathematics, puzzles, twitter, education, Enll, admissions, guidance, Intended Consequences, lab, smartboard, cyberbullying, e-safety

Look for other directories of education professionals on Twitter and by all means add yourself.

See Resources section at the end for more goodies on this...

Rules? None Etiquette? Oh yes!



twitter

Source: <http://www.webdesignerdepot.com/2009/03/the-ultimate-guide-for-everything-twitter/>

Twitter Etiquette

Remember that Twitter is Public

The first rule of Twitter is that it is *more permanent than the internet*. When you post something, at least one person is going to read it and have a memory of that event. Unless you lock your profile, all of your tweets are public record and searchable, forever. While Twitter is all about **honesty and just being yourself**, you have to act like you are writing something that your parents will eventually read.

Avoid Banal Food Updates

Unless you narrowly avoided death by *eating a puffer fish*, nobody really wants to know about what you are eating today. If you ate at a cool restaurant and want to recommend it, that is fine. Dissecting what you had for lunch if you **just went to McDonalds** is not. Just ask yourself if this is interesting to your followers - if the answer is “yes”, then it’s OK to tweet.

Tweet Accomplishments Sparingly

If you went live with a new site or posted an article on a blog, that is exactly what Twitter is for. If you have over twenty new posts a day on your site, tweet only the more interesting ones.

Tweet Really Interesting Stuff Only

If you read an article that completely rocks your world, tweet it. If articles are rocking your world a number of times a day, pick only the few that rock your world the most.

Don’t Tweet Confidential Stuff

Tell someone that you’ll go “off-Twitter” if you need to talk about something that you *don’t want the world to know about*. Remember that your tweets are searchable unless you have locked your account. Even then, it isn’t a good idea as we all know **privacy is never guaranteed** online.

Snip Your URL’s

Use any one of the URL snipping services out there, like [TinyURL](#), to shorten your links to something manageable. Most Twitter users snip their URL’s regardless of their size just to keep them readable. You can also set up many of the Twitter clients available to **automatically snip** any URL that is entered.

Profanity

Just don't. If you absolutely have to swear in the context of what you are saying, use \$##% characters instead of the swear word.

Hear it from a teacher's mouth



Source: <http://betch.edublogs.org/2009/03/25/the-twouble-with-twitter/> (Chris Betcher, a teacher from Sydney - @betchaboy)

Twitter is Messy - February 6, 2009

Seems that [Twitter](#) is starting to gain some traction with new people lately... after an interesting couple of posts on the [OzTeachers](#) list, I thought I'd throw in some tips and suggestions that have become more obvious to me now I've been using it for a while...

I can understand the sceptics about Twitter... I was one for a long time. However, I've also been getting incredible personal and professional value out of Twitter for quite a while now... So here's a few thoughts that might help you get your head around it...

The first advice is this...

Don't even think about evaluating the worth of Twitter until you are "following" at least 40-50 people. Twitter works because it invites diversity and traffic. If you only follow a few people, you'll get neither and hence won't really be able to judge whether it has any value for you or not. So find someone you think is worth following, look at who they follow, add some people from their follow list and so on. Don't stop until you are following at least 40-50 people. Yes, this will generate traffic. Yes you will not be able to take it all in (well, maybe at 40 you still can, but not much beyond that) That's ok... you don't need to read every tweet. As you add people to your follow list, you gradually get to a point where the messages flow by you much faster than you can deal with. That's ok too... it's a smorgasbord, you don't need to eat everything! But seriously, if you try to "manage" Twitter by only following a few people you will never see the worth of it. Trust me on this.

Second bit of advice...

Choose who you follow carefully... take a look at their bio, see what they do. I tend to avoid the "web entrepreneurs", "marketing gurus", "social media analysts" and so on... they tend to waffle about things I'm not interested in. I usually look for people who are educators, although I do add the occasional non-educator in order to keep some degree of diversity in the feed. Too many people with all the same outlook on things tends to create an echo chamber where there is no diverse opinions or ideas. So it's good to have a few "ring ins", just to mix things up a bit. Once you find someone to

follow, look at the type and frequency of messages... you probably don't want to follow someone who constantly tell you what they just had for breakfast or that they are getting their hair done, and you probably don't want to follow someone who tweets every 3 minutes. However, again, a little bit of diversity can be a good thing, and you'd be surprised at how often these seemingly trivial messages can help you, and to help put a human side to these people you follow. You decide what works for you...

Third bit of advice...

Remember that your tweets go to everyone who follows you, and that they become part of the public record. I wouldn't, for example, tweet about my bad day and how much I hate my job. I wouldn't whine too much, swear too much, or do things that would generally have a negative impact on my "digital footprint". It also means that if you have followers from different parts of your life, they will all get the same tweets... so your family (if they follow you) will read your tweets about education, and your educator colleagues will get to read your tweets about that family bbq last weekend. This is not a problem, but you do need to think about how you structure your online social world.

Learn to use the @ reply system and to send direct messages to people. Take some time to work out the Twitter culture... like all online communities, it most certainly has one. And if you find a conversation starting to evolve in Twitter between yourself and someone else, and you are realising that it probably isn't of real interest to the general Twitter community, take it to another forum to keep it going... Skype is great for this.

Last bit of advice...

Get a Twitter client! If you need to go back to the Twitter homepage all the time to check what's happening, you will quickly lose interest. So pick a good client Twitter app that will run in the background. I used to like Twitterific, but [Twhirl](#) is my current favourite. [Tweetdeck](#) is pretty good too, though probably better once you get the hang of Twitter. There are plenty of Twitter tools for mobile devices too, like Twinkle, Tweetie and Twibble. Trying to take Twitter seriously without one of these tools is just making life hard for yourself. Get one.

Finally, remember that Twitter is about "small pieces loosely joined", which is really how the world works in real life. In real life, it is the tiny, seemingly insignificant social connections that so often direct our lives in some surprisingly major ways. Some of you have jobs that you work in because your mother's friend's daughter knew a guy who's dentist sent her son to a school that was thinking about employing an extra teacher, and because of these loosely joined social connection, you ended up with a job. Perhaps you met your husband because you went for a drink with a friend one night and bumped into a person who knew someone you went to school with and his best mate had a brother that you were introduced to and eventually married. Isn't this really how life works? You know it is! Think about your life, and identify all the little serendipitous things that happened to you because you just happened to be in the right place at the right time, talking to the right person. The more connections you make, the more likelihood you have of these "small pieces loosely joined" actually leading you into things that you never knew you wanted and that you never, ever could have predicted. That's what Twitter does.

Still a sceptic? Trust me and just try it. Not by following three people and never looking at it again, but by REALLY trying it, adding lots of people to your network, and for at least 6 months. Then meet me back here in 6 months and tell me some of the amazing stories that happened to you because of Twitter.

AND ANOTHER GOODIE, THIS ONE FROM UK...

A must read...

Source: <http://mrslwalker.com/?p=79620905> (Laura Walker, teacher UK - @mslwalker)

[Nine great reasons why teachers should use Twitter](#)

March 29, 2009

What's the point of Twitter? Why should educators get involved? What difference does using Twitter make? Here are some answers that you might like to share.

1. Together we're better

Teaching can be a lonely business. In a school where lessons are long and lunchtimes are short, not enough conversations between teachers I work with are about learning. We simply don't have time. Twitter can be like a virtual staffroom for me, which I can step into when it suits me: in the queue at the supermarket or waiting for the kettle to boil. I know that within seconds I can access a stream of links, ideas, opinion and resources from a hand-picked selection of global professionals.

2. Global or local: you choose

Whilst some Twitter users will not tolerate many overtly egotistical self-publicisers (some celebrities have come under fire for using the service just to broadcast banalities to their flocks of fans), there is no doubt that Twitter users have the potential to reach very large international audiences. In educational terms this is a real eye-opener: before using Twitter I had only limited understanding of educational systems and practices in countries like Australia and the US. It's now possible for me to actively compare what's happening in schools in my county with others on different continents. GPS-enabled devices like iPhones and [the advanced web search facility](#) allow searches which tell you what people are tweeting within a certain distance of a location, so if the other side of the world isn't your bag, you can stick with your own patch.

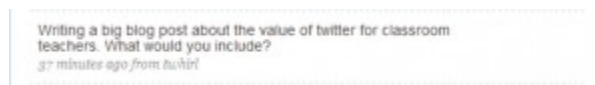
3. Self-awareness and reflective practice

Excellent teachers reflect on what they are doing in their schools and look at what is going well in order to maintain and develop it, and what needs improvement in order to make it better. Teachers on Twitter share these reflections and both support and challenge each other. Reading about other educators' experiences has made me question my own practice on a number of occasions, and whilst the resulting changes may only be incremental they are nonetheless important steps in the journey to improvement.

4. Ideas workshop and sounding board

Twitter is a great medium for sharing ideas and getting instant feedback. Its speed and instantaneity means you can gather a range of opinions and constructive criticism within minutes; which can help enormously whether you are planning a learning experience, writing a policy or putting a job application together. Just this week, Doug Belshaw (@dajbelshaw) shared the experience of preparing for a job interview and used Twitter during interview to demonstrate the intellectual and professional clout of his impressive network.

As a further example, I tweeted whilst writing this post:



Within minutes various kind followers had responded with suggestions, including:



Whilst Twitter users do not have to use it synchronously like instant messaging software, the tool does lend itself well to quick responses.

5. Newsroom and innovation showcase

Sitting down with a newspaper is not a luxury I have the time to enjoy every day. Twitter helps me stay up to date on news and current affairs, as well as on the latest developments in my areas of interest: school leadership, technology and languages. By following leading individuals and organisations, Twitter users can stay right at the bleeding edge of innovation and creativity, and literally be among the first to know when a new product is launched, article is published or opinion is voiced.

Whilst very innovative folk, teachers equally spend far too much time reinventing the wheel. Twitter helps me to be smarter about my work by sharing resources, ideas, training materials and policies with other schools. Just this week I am putting together a policy recommendation for staff at my school about ensuring their personal details on Facebook are secure. Several colleagues (including Alex Blagona @blagona and Sacha Van Straten @svanstraten) have been kind enough to share work they had already done in this area. I no longer have to start from scratch and will share my finished policy with any educators who would like it. It's a bit like the principle of 'paying it forward' on a big scale.

6. Professional development and critical friends

One of the best things about training days is the break out time between sessions, when teachers can get together to talk about what they are working on or struggling with. Twitter enables me to have that kind of powerful networking capacity with me *all the time*. It's just a matter of finding the right people to follow. As @melaniemcbride said:

“Following smart people on Twitter is like a mental shot of espresso”

Since cash for cover is not always readily available, days out on expensive courses can't be a regular thing for most teachers. I love to have access to learning on tap through Twitter as it doesn't require large chunks of my day, or any financial outlay in order to have an impact. Twitter is also a source of healthy debate, and I have learned that if I am going to make a point I can't be halfhearted about it; as there will be people who disagree! I have grown in confidence when it comes to my own convictions, and now take that back with me into school.

7. Quality-assured searching

I trust the people I follow. I hone and develop the list of people whose insights I value. Drew Buddie (@digitalmaverick) has mentioned several times that he believes his network to be more powerful than Google, and I am beginning to see why. Once your Twitter network grows past a critical mass, you can ask them detailed questions and get higher quality information back than a bog-standard Google search would generally provide, with the inbuilt assurance that it is a respected member of your network providing the information. On a broader scale, Twitter searching provides information about time-linked trending topics that Google cannot.

8. Communicate, communicate, communicate

Expressing yourself in 140 characters is a great discipline. I have become better at saying what needs to be said in my professional communications with less waffle and padding, and I refuse as far as possible to use txtspk. I previously read somewhere that every professional email could in theory be written in just five sentences. That seems luxuriously long!

9. Getting with the times has never been so easy!

There is no good reason why teachers shouldn't stick with the times, engage with the technology and keep up with the kids. We need to be able to speak the same language and inhabit the same communities (both real and virtual) as our students in order to motivate them and relate to them. Twitter is anything but complicated! You simply visit [Twitter.com](https://twitter.com) and create your account. A little light searching using key words for your areas of interest will soon yield a list of interesting people to follow. There are plenty of websites offering [advice on getting started](#) and how to avoid a few common beginners' faux-pas.

Remember, your experience on Twitter is only as high quality as the people who you follow and the information you share.

Your biggest challenge is likely to be getting the twitter.com unblocked on your school network if your main usage will be at school. Personally I find that having Twitter on my iPhone is enough most of the time. I then forward interesting links to my email inbox to look at in detail from my desk.

I hope this piece helps get more teachers involved in using Twitter. Do send it to your teams at school and all those people who don't quite understand what it's all about yet. I'm increasingly passionate about it: Twitter is a very simple tool that allows me to connect with an amazingly clever, resourceful and innovative bunch of people who never fail to inspire and motivate me. Thanks guys!

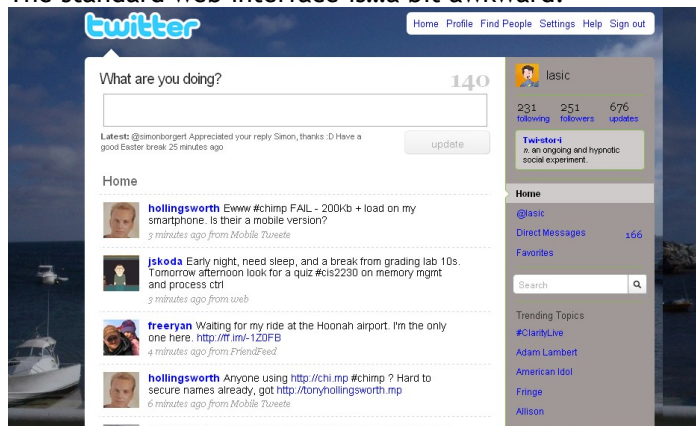
Make your life easier...



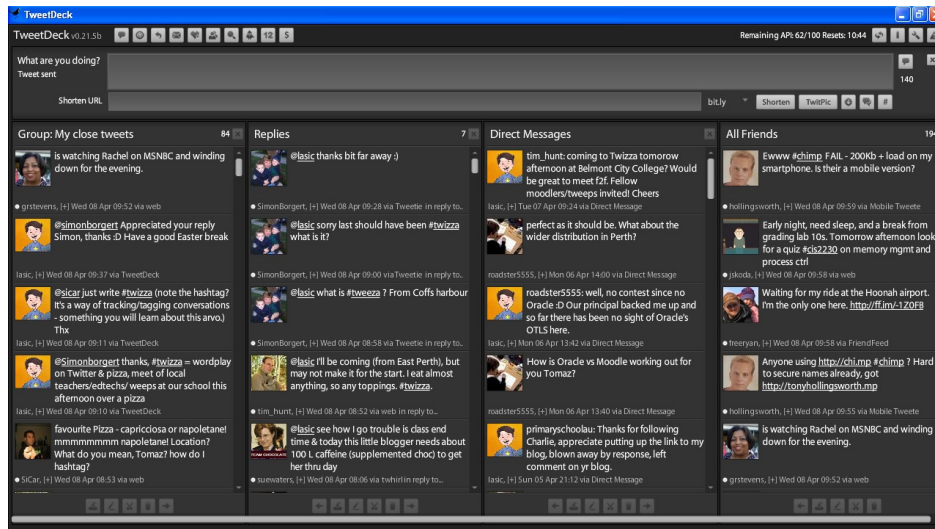
Get yourself a Twitter client.

That's just jargon for a piece of software that will make your tweeting, following and responding much easier.

The standard web interface is...a bit awkward.



Something like TweetDeck is much easier to manage and follow - trust me on this one!



You can easily see your 'stream', manage it, split into groups of favourite people to follow etc.

Resources...



twitter

Hey, this is Internet - there is tons out there. Here is a pick of a couple really useful ones

Top 100 Tools for the Twittering Teacher -

<http://www.bestcollegesonline.com/blog/2009/04/02/top-100-tools-for-the-twittering-teacher/>

Guide to Twitter - The Ultimate Guide for Everything Twitter

<http://www.webdesignerdepot.com/2009/03/the-ultimate-guide-for-everything-twitter/>

Sue Waters' Wikispace on Twitter and building your professional learning network

<http://suewaters.wikispaces.com/twitter>

These sources cover far more too - for example, posting pictures, phone setup, directories etc...

And for use in education, you can't go past these excellent examples:

Carol-Cooper Taylor - 50 ideas on using Twitter in education

<http://cooper-taylor.com/blog/2008/08/50-ideas-on-using-twitter-for-education/>

Tom Barrett - Twitter - a teaching and learning tool

<http://tbarrett.edublogs.org/2008/03/29/twitter-a-teaching-and-learning-tool/>

Tom Barrett - 21 Interesting Ways to Use Twitter in The Classroom

http://docs.google.com/Present?docid=dhn2vcv5_118cfb8msf8

About this document...

This resource has been created for the inaugural Twizza (Twitter & pizza) gathering of educators at Belmont City College, Perth, Western Australia on 8 April 2009.

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Feel free to follow and connect ! Happy tweeting...

A list of educators who attended Twizza #1 available on request ☺



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