



## Twitter How-to

*Follow the OIA: [twitter.com/ua\\_oia](https://twitter.com/ua_oia)*

### What is Twitter?

“Twitter is a service for friends, family, and co-workers to communicate and stay connected through the exchange of quick, frequent answers to one simple question: What are you doing?” Posts in Twitter are called *tweets*. You can talk about what you’re spreading on your toast or what your cat is doing. Or, you can *tweet* about things that colleagues or students want to know.

Twitter is called *micro-blogging* because it is like a blog, you type what you are doing, reading, thinking, watching, hearing, studying, etc. But because you only get 140 characters in which to express yourself, your tweets are short bursts of information. You can include URLs in your tweets. Twitter automatically shortens URLs saving you more characters for your tweets.

Twitter uses RSS feeds, like blogs, podcasts, and news feeds. Because it emphasizes real-time broadcasts, it has rapidly become popular with mass media organizations like NPR, CNN, Fox, Huffington Post and ESPN. Also, there are downloadable applications for iPhones, Blackberries, and other mobile devices that enable you to subscribe to Twitter accounts and post to your own account.

### How do I get an account?

Go to <http://twitter.com/> and click on “**New to Twitter?** Join today!” to create an account.

### Now that I have an account, what do I do?

Your tweets can’t be longer than 140 characters. As you compose your tweet, Twitter tells you how many characters you have left.

### Find people, places and things on Twitter

Log in and in the upper navigation bar click on **Who To Follow**. Enter someone’s username, a firstname or a lastname, [e.g., Bruce, Colleen, Shaq, StephenColbert]

Follow the OIA! log in to your account, go to [http://twitter.com/ua\\_oia](http://twitter.com/ua_oia) and click “Follow”

Search for Twitter usernames that are **not** people, like the UA. Go to <http://search.twitter.com/> and enter University of Arizona.

### **Can I make links like I do on a webpage?**

Because Twitter is web-based, you can include hyperlinks by entering the full URL. Twitter automatically will abbreviate URLs. You may also want to see if *bitly* or *TinyURL* can realize even less characters. These two free services take long URLs and create alias URL. For example, this URL

<http://googlesystem.blogspot.com/2009/06/google-to-launch-microblogging-search.html> is 83 characters long. But after TinyURL shortens it, only 25. Visit <http://tinyurl.com/> <http://bitly.com/>

### **How can I include images and video?**

You can't embed images or upload videos to Twitter, but there are free services that enable you to upload an image or video and put a link in your tweet. Examples are TwitPic, yfrog.com, TweetPhoto, Pikchur, Twitgoo, and Picktor are popular ones for images. Twitvid, yfrog, Twiddeo, Twitc, and TwitLENS are popular ones for videos. Google any of these to learn more. If you are using a mobile device that captures images and/or video, look for apps in your respective app store: Apple's App Store or the Android Market.

### **Are there any instructional uses?**

- As a classroom response system - ask a question and have students respond using wireless Internet via laptops and mobile devices
- For students to ask questions of the professor
- Facilitate discussions among whole classes or groups in a class
- Collaboration - students can develop virtual study groups, share resources, and receive/provide support to each other
- Discussing course reading - students record their impressions and questions to allow their fellow classmates to give their input

More ideas:

- See the PDF of Phyllis Brodsky's Oct 2011 presentation to the "Learning and Teaching with Technology (LATTe) Group <http://bit.ly/pv2NWU>
- "Using Twitter in lectures, classes and workshops," C4LPT (Center for Learning & Performance Technologies), August 22, 2011. <http://bit.ly/p0hjaj> Lots of examples and ideas as well as links to articles and webpages on the topics.
- Twitter.edu: <http://twitteredu.blogspot.com/> "Resources for using a micro-blog application in an academic setting" is Elaine Edwards of Kansas State's blog devoted to using Twitter in higher ed. It's current and includes posts titled "Tech Tips for Educators," "Suggested K-State Twitter Guidelines," and "Examples of Twitter Usage from other Universities."

- Steve Wheeler's "Teaching with Twitter" on his *Learning with 'e's* blog <http://bit.ly/nuhXsE>. Wheeler identified ten uses of Twitter for education.
- David Parry, a professor at the University of Texas at Dallas, outlined many "Ways to use Twitter in Academia" on the blog *AcademHack*. <http://tinyurl.com/25u2cx>.
- "Teaching with Twitter - an open source teaching resource - part 1" appears in the Australian blog *gatewatching: researching citizen journalism*, March 8th, 2009 <http://tinyurl.com/ycedmpp>

### **Should my department or program Tweet?**

Absolutely! You can attract a following among current and prospective students, alumni and community members with Twitter. A rule-of-thumb is three tweets a day. You can promote student successes, faculty accomplishments, and news and events. It's easy and takes only seconds. Once you do this, be sure to include your Twitter site in print documents, webpages, and email messages.

### **Are there professional uses?**

Of course, but you already knew that. Find someone tweeting who has similar interests. Use Twitter's **Who To Follow** page to search by name. When you find someone to follow, look to see who they are following and who is following them. If you attend a webinar, tweet points that the speaker is making. Follow people who are tweeting at a conference or during a webinar by using the hashtag. (see the next section)

### **What are these symbols for that I see in people's tweets?**

The hashtag # is a good one. It is used to bring all the tweets that have been posted on a topic in one place. If you read a post that includes #tsunami, click it. (try searching #tsunami in Twitter now) You will go to a Twitter page with everyone's tweet where #tsunami is included. See this page in the Twitter help resources for more information. <http://tinyurl.com/mkx227>

Another symbol that you see a lot is @replies. On Twitter's support page you read: "People say lots of things on Twitter, and sometimes you want to say something back. ... You can start a tweet with @username and it will appear in the person's replies tab."

### **Can I Tweet on my iPad/iPhone/Android/...?**

Visit Twitter's "Take Twitter with you. Get the app." <http://twitter.com/downloads> is the place to find it.

### **Are there third party software apps?**

There are many free applications to use with Twitter. Tweetdeck and twirl are among the most popular. There are browser plug-ins, like Twitterfox for the Firefox browser that let you customize your tweets and better organize the way *you* use Twitter. If you have a

Facebook account you know there is a status box. You can have Twitter update your Facebook status through a Facebook app, and TwitterGadget works with iGoogle and Gmail.

### **Who at the UA is using Twitter?**

Lots and lots of faculty, students, and departments are tweeting. Here is a short list. paste the italicized username behind <http://twitter.com/> to visit it.

#### **UA - Institutional**

- U of Arizona *UofA*
- Alumni Office *UAAA*
- Arizona Cancer Center *AZCancerCenter*
- Athletics Department *AZATHLETICS*
- College of Education *UACOE*
- College of Pharmacy *UAPharmacy*
- Office of Technology Transfer *ArizonaOTT*
- Parking & Transportation Services *UAPTS*
- Police Department *UofAZPolice*
- UA Press *azpress*
- School of Media Art *UA\_MediaArts*

#### **UA-Organizational**

- Arizona Daily Wildcat *WildcatOpinions*
- Arizona Volleyball *ArizonaVBall*
- Gallagher Theater *UAGallagher*
- Wilbur T. Wildcat *wilbur\_wildcat*

#### **Professional**

- Matt Stoner, Instructional Designer Integrative Medicine *gmstoner*
- Melody Buckner *Melody236*
- Michael Griffith, director, application development group *mgriffith*

### **Where can I find a directory of colleges and universities tweeting?**

"Twitter Fan Wiki" has a directory of higher ed Twitter sites <http://twitter.pbworks.com/Universities>.

### **Can you show any examples of it being used well?**

- *twitter.com/skrug*: author of one of the best books on web design
- *twitter.com/National\_Ag\_Lib*: notice how the tweets include URLs to full information
- *twitter.com/stealingsand*: is a web designer who tweets about good and bad designs, new websites that she finds that provide free resources for web design, and a lot of personal things. (she has lots of friends and fans who want to know all about her)