Using Twitter for Higher Education

Faculty Summer Institute 2010

Tip: Step-by-step instructions for all demonstrated tasks in Help menu of your Twitter account.

What is Twitter?

Service for people to communicate through exchange of frequent, short (140 characters or less) messages; share with “followers;” stay connected with or learn from those you follow; search

Getting Started with a Twitter Account

1. Go to http://twitter.com
2. Click Join Today in the New to Twitter? box in upper right.
3. Select a username (usually YOUR name) and password. Type an email address...can only use once!
4. Skip sections inviting you to choose interests (education not listed), as desired
5. If desired, click Settings to change the logo/image that appears on your Twitter Profile page. You can also change the background design by clicking Design in the Settings area.
6. URL for the public stream of your Twitter account is: http://twitter.com/yourusername
7. URL for the your own Twitter stream, which includes all of the tweets of the people you follow as well as the ones you send out: http://twitter.com/home (login)

Finding People or Organizations to Follow

1. Go to Web sites of people or organizations you wish to follow to find their Twitter invitations/usernames. OR
2. Click Find People in top menu inside your Twitter account.
3. Search by name or username
4. Locate your desired person/organization in the list and click the “follow” button (icon=person with a plus sign)
5. To stop following a person/organization, click your “following” link in right sidebar and click “delete” button to the right of the person/org you no longer want to follow.
6. To make sure others can find you to “follow,” be sure the “Let others find me” is checked in the Settings. If you don’t want to be available, don’t check this box.

Tweeting

1. To send a message, called a “tweet,” be sure you are in the Home area of your account.
2. Click your cursor in the What’s happening? text box.
3. Type your message while watching the number of characters still available drop. Limit: 140 characters.
   a. To send to a particular person, type the “@” followed by their username BEFORE your message.
   b. To send the message to a topic category (many people can tweet to that same category), type the “#” (called a hashtag) followed by the category name anywhere in your message.
   c. To “mention” a person or a category, insert the “@username” or “#topic” in the body of the text.
      i. Hint: See the list of Trending Topics in the right sidebar. If you’d like to contribute to those topics, insert the hashtag and topic name in the body of your message.
   d. To link to a URL, use tinyurl.com or other URL-shortening tool to create a shorter URL.
   e. To reference a photo in your tweet, upload the photo to twitpic.com and then link to it there in your tweet.
   f. All @, #, or URLs appear as links in your tweets.
   g. If you change your mind and want to delete a tweet you have already sent, hover over the tweet and click Delete in the Profile area of your account. This will remove the tweet from all of your followers’ streams.

Retweeting and Other Actions

1. To retweet or perform other actions as a response to tweets you receive, be sure you are in the Home area of your account.
2. Read the messages that continually are being added to your stream. If you see an icon that looks like a box with two arrows going different directions, the message has already been retweeted from someone else to you. Might be valuable!
3. To reply to a message so that your reply goes to the sender of the original tweet only, hover over the message and click the Reply icon. This inserts the @theirusername at the beginning of your What’s Happening? message box.
4. If you see a message that would be of interest to YOUR followers, hover over the message and click on the Retweet icon (Hover and click Retweet again to “undo.”)
5. See Retweets in your sidebar (3 tabs) to see 1) all of the retweets you have received from others, 2) retweets that you have sent to your followers, and 3) your tweets that have been retweeted by your followers to others.
6. See a tweet that you want to find again later? Hover over the message and click on the star icon to make it a Favorite. Find your Favorites in the Favorites section, linked from the right sidebar.

7. To review all replies you have sent, see the @yourusername link in the sidebar.

8. To review who has mentioned your username in their tweets (with an @ or hashtag), see the @yourusername link in the sidebar.

9. To organize your followers into subgroups/lists, click Lists in the right toolbar. See the Help menu for instructions.

Other

RSS in Outlook and IE

If you would prefer receiving your tweets as an RSS feed in Outlook:

1. Go to either of your Twitter streams and click on the orange RSS Feed icon in the right sidebar. Login to your Twitter account as prompted.
2. To receive the feed in Outlook 2007, copy the URL in the location bar at the top of the feed above. In Outlook, right click on the orange RSS Feeds icon (left sidebar). Choose “Add a New RSS Feed” in the pop-up menu and paste the URL, as prompted.
3. To receive the feed in IE 7+, go to the Twitter stream. Click the RSS feed link in the right toolbar. Click the Subscribe to this Feed link near the top.

Twitter buttons for Web site

If you’d like to put a Twitter button on your Web site, click Goodies at the bottom of any of your Twitter account pages or go to http://twitter.com/goodies/buttons

Add Profile or “search query” widget to Web site

To add a widget to your TLC home page that contains your Twitter stream (Profile) or a “search query” stream, see the Help menu for instructions.

Using your smart phone

You can post to your Twitter account using the SMS text messaging functionality in your phone (send to 404040) or download a Twitter app for your phone which can be setup to go to your Twitter stream to send tweets using the familiar interface.
Embedding your Tweets in Your Web Page

This allows those who do not have a smart phone to keep up with your tweets. The Twitter posting appears on the web Page as shown below. To embed the tweet in your web page, simply log into Twitter and follow the instructions below. The whole process should take approximately ten minutes.

Access the Blackbird Pie tool using another browser window at:
http://media.twitter.com/blackbird-pie/

Paste the url from you previewed tweet into the text box provided and left click on the Bake it button.
The Blackbird pie site will generate the code you will need to paste into your web page.

Access your web page using Frontpage or Microsoft Expressions, and select the Insert Pull down menu.

From the Insert pull down menu, select Web Component

From the insert pull down menu choose Advanced Controls. From the Advanced Controls options select HTML.
Copy and paste the code you created in the Blackbird pie application into the HTML Markup dialogue box, and click OK.

The resulting page will not display the tweet in the design mode, but will when in preview mode.

Preview the page to confirm the Tweet is displayed, before exiting your web authoring software.