



SOCIAL MEDIA CAREER BUILDING™

# 20 GREAT CAREER-BUILDING ACTIVITIES USING TWITTER®



KATHY FURGANG



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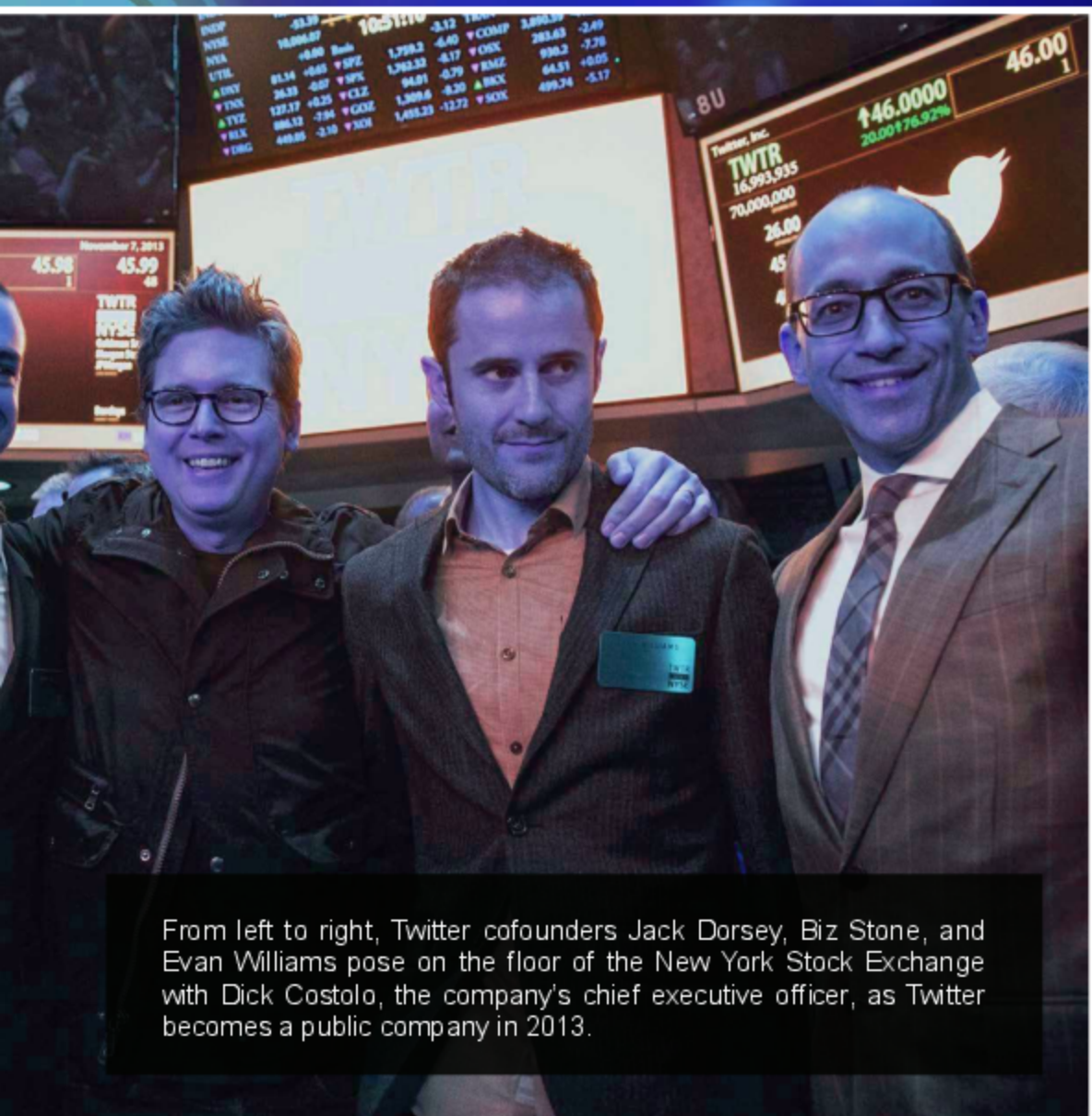


# INTRODUCTION

It's hard to imagine life before social media. Communication took on a completely different form before the digital age. Getting a message across to someone was a personal act—often a one-on-one experience. Today, everyone in the world with an Internet connection has the potential to reach thousands—or millions—of people with a single message. The full capability of social media services such as Twitter has not even been fully explored.

The most obvious use of Twitter is for users to update friends on their activities, thoughts, opinions, and experiences. Even the founders of the service, Jack Dorsey, Noah Glass, Biz Stone, and Evan Williams, may not have realized its full potential back in 2006. Today, it has become a way for everyone from celebrities to friends or classmates to communicate. The 140-character updates and posts, called tweets, allow people to reach as many followers as they can get—which in the case of some celebrities, reaches well into the millions. Pop singer Katy Perry has the most Twitter followers in the world, with well over 85 million followers.





From left to right, Twitter cofounders Jack Dorsey, Biz Stone, and Evan Williams pose on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange with Dick Costolo, the company's chief executive officer, as Twitter becomes a public company in 2013.

The act of tweeting is called microblogging because of the limited number of characters (letters, numbers, or symbols) allowed for a single tweet.

The popularity of the site grew at an astounding rate shortly after the free service was introduced in 2006. According to the Twitter website, about 5,000 tweets were sent every day in 2007. From there, it grew by leaps and bounds, and by 2013, the number of tweets reached its peak at 500 million tweets each day. That number has leveled off, but it still remains high today.

With 302 million active users on the site, a lot of data can be gathered about public opinion. During sports games, political debates, or important news events, certain subjects begin “trending,” with millions of tweets flying about the subject. People engage in conversations about the subject, with 140 characters or less at a time.

With such a popular tool for communication, it's easy to see how Twitter can be used as a marketing tool. Celebrities and politicians use it professionally. They use it to build a fan base, or following. Even business people use it as a way to network and keep up on news in their profession.

Students can also use Twitter to their advantage. The tool goes far beyond a way to socialize and talk about your favorite sports teams or rock stars. Students can use the social networking tool for creative expression to explore the possibility of an imaginative career in the arts. The tool can also be used for academics, from research to reporting to a college search. Twitter can even be used to drum up business for student entrepreneurs.

Throughout this resource, you'll find 20 activities that can help you use Twitter to build a portfolio for business, academics, or artistic expression. Increasing the number of your Twitter followers can help you build a digital footprint that can open doors professionally, academically, and creatively.

Before the digital age, career building and portfolio building were more cumbersome tasks. Today they can be done, in part, on your own personal computer or smartphone. The power of Twitter can be in the palm of your hand.



# Tweeting the Basics

**T**witter is a lot like the world around us: we can choose to stay in our narrow world and just stick to our newsfeed. Or we can expand our world and search every corner of the Internet to see what's popular.

The more you tweet and respond to other tweets, the more the world of Twitter will open to you. The experience is like getting deeper and deeper into a maze. The more twists and turns you make, the farther you will be from where you started out. There's a lot to explore on Twitter, and the more you use the service, the more followers you can obtain. That's the object of the game. You want to reach a lot of other users. Twitter offers an audience for your message.

You may have a Twitter account already, and perhaps you are just looking for new ways to utilize the tool. For people who are new to the experience, however, getting started is quite easy.

## GETTING STARTED

Signing up for a Twitter account on the website can be done with a few simple steps, including setting up a username and password. As long as you have permission from an adult, you can set up an account. Although Twitter does not request a user's age, it does specify that users be at least 13 years old or have parental permission if they are under the age of 13. The company can remove and delete an account for any user it discovers is younger than 13 and using the site without permission.

Once you set up your account, you can choose a photo to represent you, as well as a cover photo for your page. Then, just enter text into the field marked "What's happening?" and get started. Think in short bursts and single sentences, because you will not be able to type more than 140 characters in the field, which includes spaces between words. Then press the "Tweet" button, and you've made your first tweet. Videos posted directly to Twitter must be no longer than 140 seconds.

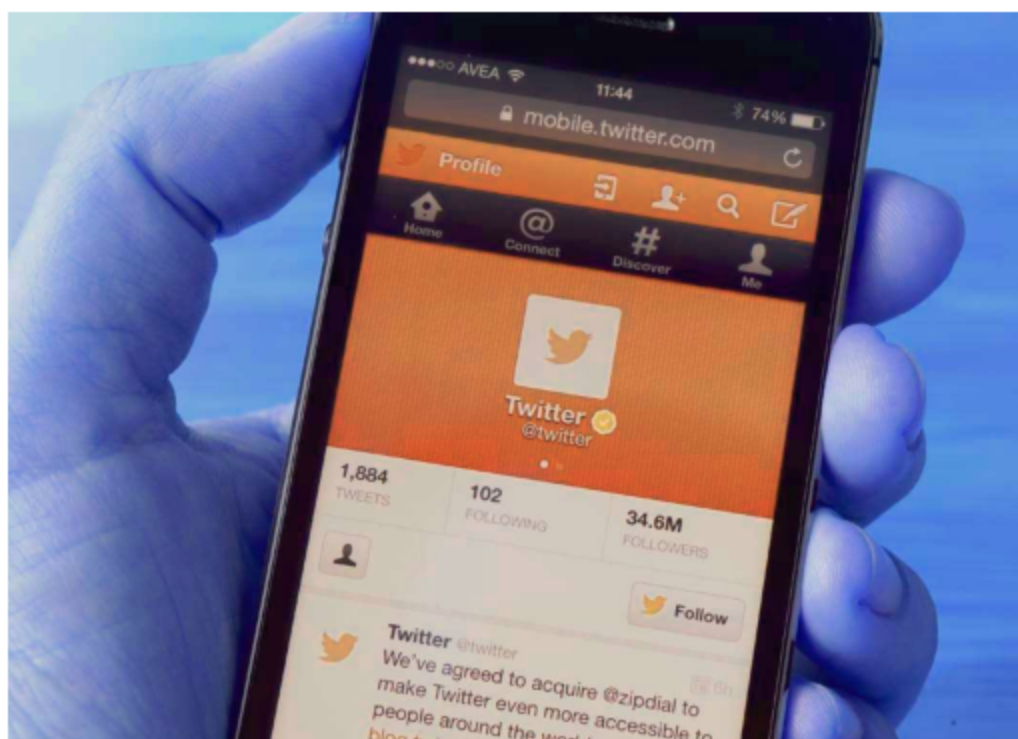
Check out the layout of your homepage. Your cover photo appears across the top, your profile picture is at the left with your username. Below that is the symbol @ (at), which appears before your username. Below your cover photo, you will find a tally of the number of tweets you have sent, the number of people you are following, the number of people following you, and the total number of "likes" your page has received.

To follow others, simply click the "Follow" button on the right side of their page. The "Follow" button will turn into a "Following" button as an indication that you will be

receiving tweets from that person or group in your feed. If you ever feel like you made a mistake in following a person or group, move your cursor so that it hovers over the “Following” button to make it turn into an “Unfollow” button and then click on it.

Sometimes you may want to direct a tweet to an individual to make sure that person or group is notified of your messages. Simply include the appropriate username in the tweet with an @ symbol before it. This step is the equivalent of “tagging” a post on other social media sites.

Going to the page of another Twitter user can provide great suggestions about new people to follow. Click on



Twitter is available in mobile formats so you can tweet wherever you go.

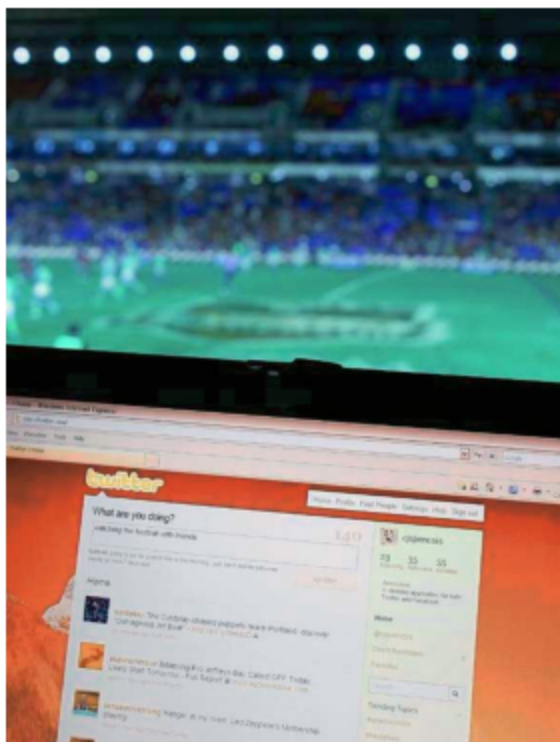
the “Follow” button of any users you want to follow.

## HASHTAGS

In 2007, Google designer Chris Messina made a suggestion to Twitter that changed social media. He proposed that the pound symbol (#) be used to organize groups on the site. The symbol, called a hashtag, can simply be placed before any word to make that word an organizational group on the site.

According to an article in *Business Insider*, Twitter didn't think people would like the idea. At first, they thought the hashtags would be complicated and that the idea would not catch on. It did, of course, and now the hashtag has become the standard way to search and organize content on Twitter and other social media sites.

If you want your post to be seen by people interested in the New York Knicks basketball team, for example,



Twitter is often used for updating friends and followers about what you are occupied with or busy doing.



place #NYKnicks in your tweet. The tweet will then be posted to the New York Knicks page. More than one million people follow the New York Knicks, so your message will certainly be seen quickly. You may get more followers by hashtagging a particular name or topic.

Hashtagging allows users with similar interests to find one another quickly. Sometimes events, such as presidential debates or awards ceremonies, will create a hashtag that followers can use if they want to discuss the event live, or in real time. The organizational tool can



## WATCH YOUR STEP IN THE DIGITAL WORLD

Your digital footprint is an increasingly important thing to think about in today's online world. The things people say online stay there indefinitely. That's why it's important to watch your step as you lay out your digital footprint. Use good sense when tweeting. That includes not using foul language or insulting others online. Responding to other people's tweets in an insulting way is also something to be avoided. Healthy debates are not a problem. Trolling other users not only makes the experience unpleasant for those involved, but also makes the users look unprofessional. Some employers have been known to look up the social media accounts of prospective employees to get a sense of their true personalities. Although a playful sense of humor is admirable, an angry or malicious tone online is not. It's fine to speak your mind on Twitter, but don't say anything you might regret later. Think before you click the "tweet" button.

provide a quick avenue for people to connect and communicate about a topic.

## RETWEETING

If you see something you particularly like, such as a tweet or photo from a friend or company you are following, just click the retweet button. It's the icon underneath the tweet that looks like two arrows forming a square. You'll be given an option to write your own message about the tweet. Then click the retweet button and it will be posted so all of your followers can see it.

Retweets give your followers a sense of what you like and the kinds of tweets you agree with. For example, if you are a musician who is following many bands, retweeting posts from your favorite band will let others know that you are following that band. Adding a hashtag to your retweet will take the retweet a step further. It will post to other locations where more users will see it. As you get more followers, you will see the benefit of tweeting and retweeting—it keeps the dialogue open between you and countless other Twitter followers.

## EXPLORING TWITTER

Sometimes the Twitter universe, or Twitterverse, as it is sometimes called, can seem overwhelming. How can someone expect to find everything on the site if everything is compartmentalized in such tiny topics and groups? The site can be used as a place to search larger topics and to see what's popular, or trending.



Even politicians and government leaders have Twitter accounts and update them regularly.

The “Moments” bar at the top of the screen organizes popular topics for the user to click on. Similar to the sections of a newspaper, there are news, sports, and entertainment sections. Other popular topics appear on the bar, depending on what is going on in the news. For example, elections, Super Bowl news, Olympics, or other events can have their own categories. Explore these categories to see some examples of tweets about popular news items.

Sometimes Twitter itself becomes news. Celebrities often use Twitter as a platform for making announcements, and their tweets become news. For example, during the 2016 presidential campaign,

news programs and cable news networks spent endless hours discussing the tweets of the presidential candidates. Sometimes the tweets were used to attack another candidate. Often, the insulted candidate would give a quick response tweet in an effort to defend his or her position. Fights between candidates played out on Twitter and the world watched.

## MANAGING YOUR ACCOUNT

Once you have found some people or organizations to follow and you've checked out some groups through the use of hashtags, you might want to organize your account. Features such as TweetDeck can help you manage your information. Through the tool, you can organize and build collections, track searches, and customize your page. You can track hashtags or events and filter results of your searches. The app Twitter Engage helps you easily post videos up to 140 seconds long and track how many people are watching them.

It's fine to have multiple Twitter accounts, and many people have them if they want to keep a personal account separate from a business, school, or creative account. A management tool such as TweetDeck can help you organize multiple accounts, add more accounts, or monitor other accounts you are interested in. You can sign up for alerts from other users or organizations you want to learn more about.



# Embracing Creative Expression

**E**ven though the character count allowed in Twitter posts can be very limiting, there is a huge potential for creative expression with the site. People who want to use Twitter as more than just a social media outlet can use it in many imaginative ways. And what better way to show a potential college or job recruiter what you can do creatively than to take on your own personal projects. Artistic people will find that Twitter is filled with opportunities to reach people in expressive ways. In addition to linking to videos and photos, there are many other ways to show your creativity on Twitter. Here are other ways to use Twitter as a tool for artistic expression.



### WRITE STORIES THROUGH TWEETS

If you love creative writing, think about taking the ultimate challenge to fiction writers. Try tweeting a story. One way to approach this is to tweet a whole story in

140 characters. In 2012, *The Guardian's* news website challenged well-known writers to write "Twitter fiction." Scottish crime writer Ian Rankin took on the creative and humorous challenge. His story was simple, yet suspenseful: "I opened the door to our flat and you were standing there, cleaver raised. Somehow you'd found out about the photos. My jaw hit the floor."

British comedy writer Charlie Higson took another approach. He wrote, "Jack was sad in the orphanage til he befriended a talking rat who showed him a hoard of gold under the floor. Then the rat bit him & he died."

The project was well publicized, and everyone is welcome to continue to try their hand at writing Twitter fiction. The tweets can all still be found under the Twitter hashtag #140novel.

If you're interested in a more ambitious, long-term writing project, try writing a whole novel on Twitter. This option allows you to be as in-depth as you want to be about the story and characters. You might



Scottish writer Ian Rankin is one of the many writers who took on the challenge to write "Twitter fiction" in 2012.

make one tweet describe a character's personal appearance, thought, or reaction. You can post pictures of what the characters look like or create your own illustrations to go with the story. Just keep it flowing and give each post the same hashtag so the story will stay together.

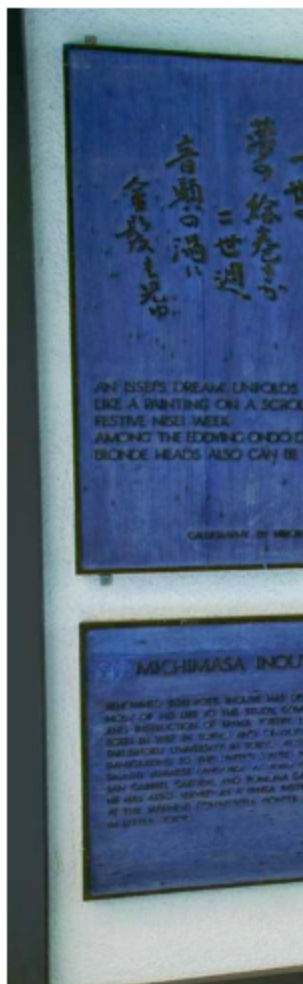
If you decide to put your writing out there in the Twitterverse, just remember that there's no compensation for your work. Authors of published books receive payment or royalties for their creations, but tweeting is a purely free service. Someone writing Twitter fiction must understand that it's for that his or her personal experience and exposure, not for the money.



## POETIC TWEETING

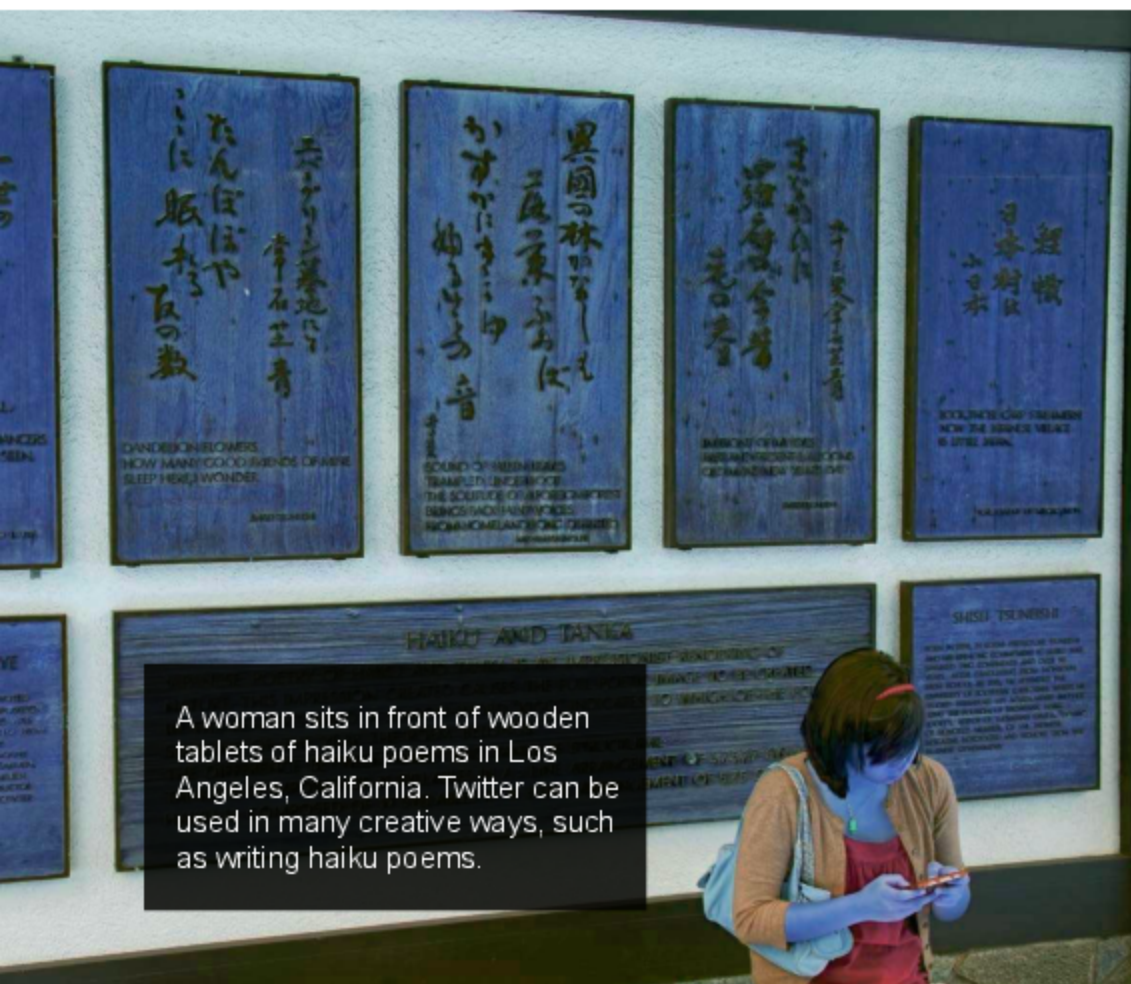
In a similar way that fiction writers can take to Twitter for exposure and creative expression, poets can also use the service to showcase their talents. Some poets have taken to Twitter to write a poem over time. They reveal the lines to followers, one line and one post at a time. A common hashtag will allow the tweets to eventually be organized into a complete poem when it is finished. This method can keep followers interested in your upcoming tweets and showcase your creativity.

Even though there is a limit to the number of characters that can be used in a single



tweet, users can take advantage of line breaks to create lines of poetry. It is even possible to indent lines to create the appearance that you want your poem to have.

Japanese poems called haikus are written in a certain pattern. The three-line poems have a first and last line with five syllables and a middle line with seven syllables. These are especially good examples





## PRESCHOOL GEMS

When preschool teacher Leslie McCollom started tweeting the amusing things she heard her Portland, Oregon, students saying in the classroom, she did it to help herself remember these “gems” they said every day. The short quotes naturally fit into a tweet format, such as “My whole body is saying something but I don’t know what it is;” “Icicles make me sad;” and “I love you more than alligators love eating dead things.” Her Twitter feed quickly took off because the nonsensical and hilarious tweets captured people’s attention and she now has nearly 200,000 followers. In 2012, she turned her idea into a book called *Preschool Gems: Love, Death, Magic, and Other Surprising Treasures from the Mouths of Babes*. The book is decorated with the children’s artwork, and each chapter focuses on a popular topic she overhears in class, such as family and home life, mythical creatures, animals, looking good, friendships, and dreams and nightmares. McCollom’s conception is an example of how Twitter can be used to be creative, have some fun, and even have business success based on your ideas.

of poetry to use for tweeting, and they can even be submitted to a teacher by adding a hashtag or adding an @ symbol. Being creative can be very rewarding, as well as challenging, on Twitter.





## FOLLOW FRIDAY

If you've been a Twitter user for a while, you may have noticed a phenomenon called #FollowFriday. It is a way to get to know new people, and you can use it to focus on getting people together who have similar creative interests. Each Friday, users can list the names of friends together in the same tweet in hopes of introducing them.

This tradition can be applied in a way that directs the social aspect in a more professional or creative way. Suppose you are interested in books. Find personal friends or followers whom you met through Twitter, and collect about four to six of them in hopes of starting a book club. Find people who seem like they might be interested in books as well, and explain the purpose of your Follow Friday collection. Save characters by simply writing #FF to indicate that the post is a Follow Friday collection.

Feel free to do the same with other interests or creative endeavors. You can follow the same invitation style format to start a fan club for a sports star or rock band. You can even get the group together to write movie review tweets. As long as the group members have some common ground among them, the possibilities for brainstorming or creative expression are limitless.



## MAKE CREATIVE PROFILES

In addition to your own personal Twitter account, consider creating a profile to focus exclusively on an activity you enjoy or a type of tweet you want

to emphasize. For example, Leslie McCollom, the preschool teacher mentioned in the sidebar, has a Twitter account called @PreschoolGems, in which she tweets funny, anonymous quotes from her students. In a similar way, someone can create an account of things overheard at the locker, on the lunch line, or at recess. Not only would the quotes be anonymous, but your identity would be anonymous as well. Creative profiles can be used to develop humor writing and to see what followers or audiences respond to the most. Creative profiles can also create an interesting, custom-made fan base that has a similar style, interest, and sense of humor as you do.

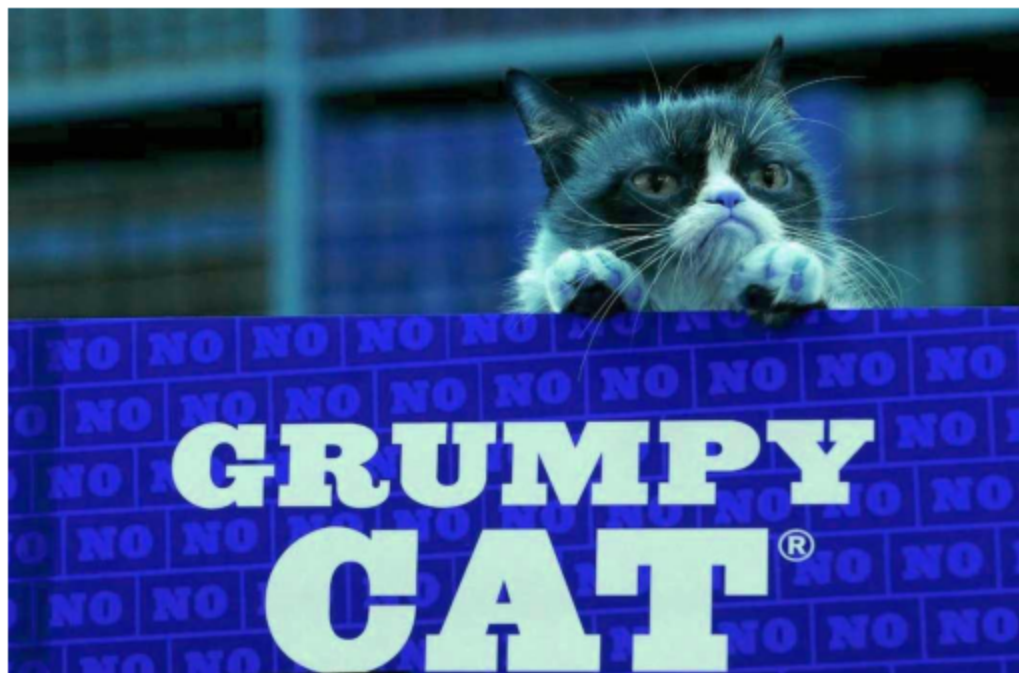
For example, some Twitter users have profiles for their dogs or for other animals, in which they post the thoughts they think the animal might be having. The user @common\_squirrel posts the actions of a squirrel, such as “jump jump jump” or “scratch dig dig” or “sniff sniff sniff sniff.”

Creative profiles can also be used in academic projects. You might create an account or profile in which you pretend to be a character in a book you are reading. You can tweet quotes from the book or ideas about what the character might like or do if he or she were a real person.



## TWEET ON AUTOMATIC

If you want to make an impression on people by tweeting a certain message at a certain time, you don't need to sit by your computer or phone waiting



The "world's grumpiest cat" has its own Twitter account. Twitter can be used for advertising, such as to promote a book *No-It-All: Everything You Need to No* for Grumpy Cat.

for the moment to come. You can set tweets ahead of time and arrange for them to be posted at a certain time. For example, one Twitter user has an account called @big\_ben\_clock and tweets the time each hour, on the hour, with a message with the appropriate number of bongs to indicate what time it is in London, England. For example, at 3:00, the tweet "BONG BONG BONG" will be sent out. An app such as Twittimer can help to arrange this undertaking with no upkeep needed on the part of the user. Through the free app, messages and images can be arranged so they post to Twitter,



Some of the settings on Twitter can help you express your ideas creatively, such as getting tweets to post automatically.

Facebook, or LinkedIn at scheduled dates and times. More than 35,000 people use the service in more than 150 countries. This service can help you post tweets to other parts of the world, especially when their peak hours differ from where you live. If you have followers

from Japan, for instance, consider setting your poems to tweet in the middle of the night so they can be received and viewed in the middle of the day in Japan.

There may be countless other ways to use Twitter in a creative way. A musician may think of ways to start projects or become known on Twitter differently from how an actor, artist, gamer, or comedian is recognized. For example, using Twitter's photo-editing tool #Stickers enables users to add fun icons and decorations to their photos. Making use of this tool is a great way to show your personality or to add a specific mood to your posts. Think about what part of yourself you would like to present in an innovative way. Then use some of the suggestions in this chapter to help that part of you shine.

# All Atwitter with School Use

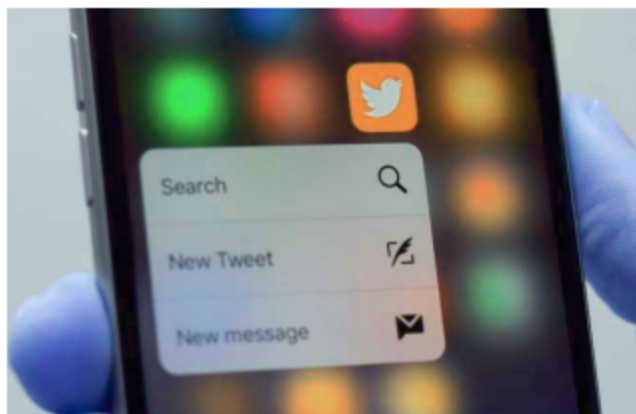
**T**witter is not often thought of as an academic tool, but there's no reason it can't be used in that way. The online tool reaches 305 million people each month, and many of those people are likely to be students, teachers, or other people who work in educational and research fields. Taking some time to think about how Twitter can benefit you as a student can go a long way toward developing a positive digital footprint for yourself. There are ways to introduce the service into both your academic and extracurricular life at school.



### USE IT AS A RESEARCH TOOL

Twitter can be much more than just a constant stream of silly posts, corporate updates, and attention-seeking celebrity tweets. It's a constantly changing picture of the world at any given time. It is a collection of the way the whole society thinks and reacts. By using the category menus at the top of the page, you can search





Users can search Twitter for topics such as news or other research topics.

different categories and use Twitter as a type of search engine or research tool.

According to CBS Money-Watch, a personal financial website that is part of CBS News, a study was done in 2014 about the activity of Twitter users.

The study found

that about 44 percent of all people who signed up for Twitter had not even sent a single tweet. Although these people might not be sending tweets every time they go online, they may still be checking their Twitter feeds or using the tool to see what others are saying. Inactive users also may be using the tool to search the site for trending news. This characteristic is what makes Twitter a valuable and underutilized research tool. The “Moments” menu at the top of the screen can bring you to a newspaper-like layout. If you’re looking for current events, try the “Today” tab. Stories on politics, world news, economics, and technology are featured there. A photo and short synopsis of the news moment can be found there, along with top tweets about the event.

A reputable news source about the event can be found if you search for it online, and the “moment” can be tweeted with an embedded link to a reputable

source. The benefit of searching Twitter for current events is that the events listed there are bound to be popular stories that many people are tweeting about. Looking through Internet news sites for the most popular stories does not guarantee that people are responding and reacting to them. Using Twitter as a research tool provides you with up-to-date, authentic information as well as reactions to the event from average people.

If you are writing a report, search for your topic with a hashtag. For instance, #AbrahamLincoln can bring you to users dedicated to posting about Abraham Lincoln. You might find inspiring quotes or the spark of an idea on which to write your paper. Be sure to check facts that you find through Twitter by using another reputable site.



## BE THE SCHOOL PAPER

Some of the most active users of Twitter are news outlets. CNN and the *New York Times* tweet breaking news many times each day. They use the updates not only to keep people informed, but also to try to drive traffic to their own sites by including a link to the complete story. You can do the same for your school. Whether your school has its own newspaper or not, you can play the part of the school paper by starting a school account and tweeting updates about school events and fund-raisers. News about state testing dates, upcoming dances, and faculty changes can be tweeted at any time. Follow friends or classmates who



Twitter can be used to promote articles in school newspapers or events related to the school or community.

you know to inform them that you are doing this, which also provides a chance to follow you back easily.

If your school does have an online school newspaper or website, provide a link to the paper or article you are tweeting about so that you can encourage Twitter users to go to the school website.



## START A TWITTER CLUB

If you go to a large school, it can be especially difficult to promote school events and get people organized for clubs or other reasons. Starting a Twitter club at your

school between student and faculty leaders can be an easy and effective way to promote and organize extracurricular activities. Network with other student leaders who run clubs or have leadership roles. The members can report what they want to put on the Twitter page, and one person can be in charge of the posts. Make certain that you list your club on your résumé and applications, which will look good when you apply to colleges.

Even though the club's intent is to make online posts, meeting in person can help make the club a legitimate entity in the school. Your meetings can consist of brainstorming ways to cross-promote fund-raisers through the work of different clubs that support one another. Not only



Twitter can be used to promote organizations and school clubs such as this environmental club that gives away energy-efficient lightbulbs to the community.

will the tweets help to update and inform the school, but the tool will be a good source of communication and networking. The baseball team, for example, can find ways to promote the game, and the marching band can arrange to be there to sell candy bars for an upcoming school trip. A study by the Pew Research Center states that 92 percent of teens go online every day. Twenty-four percent of them admit they go online “almost constantly.” What better way to reach teens than online?

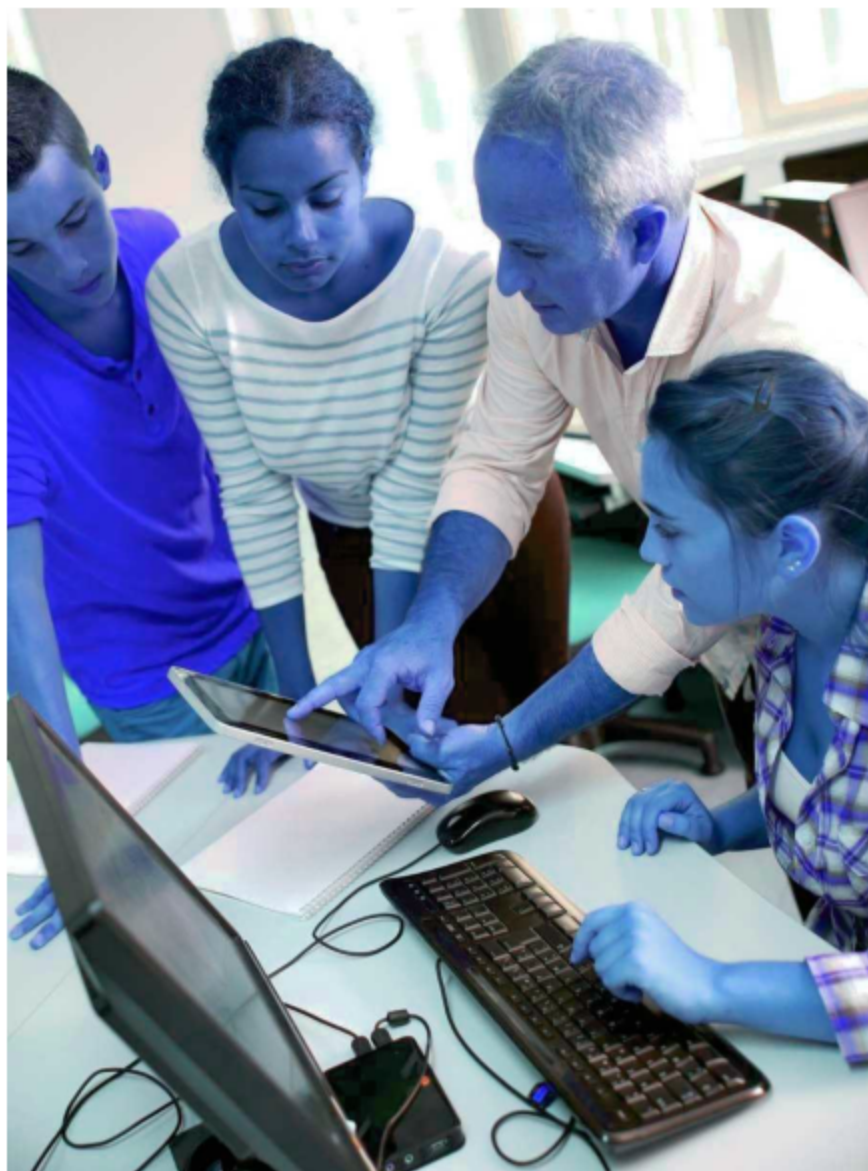


## CREATE A CLASSROOM COMMUNITY

If you enjoy being a leader, you can be one in your classroom. With your teacher’s help or permission, have all class members follow a Twitter classroom account. Volunteer to be the person in charge of this account and the one willing to update it regularly. Encourage students to use it as a place to share questions about homework, ideas about reports, even mini reviews of chapters students are reading in class.

Students are online anyway, and placing school events in the arena of Twitter can help students become more engaged in their work. If the teacher is willing, he or she can answer any questions that students may have. When a teacher becomes involved in a more social situation with students, some of the fear of learning and questioning can be relieved. The option of asking questions through a social media service online may provide more reluctant students with the confidence to reach out with questions.





If all students in a classroom work together, they can keep up-to-date on assignments and projects through Twitter.

If you are thinking of becoming a teacher or working in some other nurturing or leadership capacity, this kind of activity can look very good on a résumé or college application. College recruiters look favorably on students who can be self-starters and incorporate communication and technology in a way that helps other students.



## BECOME A FICTIONAL CHARACTER

What would it be like if Holden Caulfield, the main character in *Catcher in the Rye*, lived in the digital age? What would his tweets be like? What would Lady Macbeth tweet if she had an account? Starting an account for a fictionalized character can be a fun exercise in studying character traits. You can do this project in many ways. You can start a new profile for the character you are studying and tweet from that character's point of view. You could also tweet as yourself and have followers guess which character you are impersonating.

Impersonating famous characters is an idea that even corporations use. For example, the toy company Mattel has created a Twitter account for one of its classic toys, Barbie. Fans of the beloved doll can follow her and get updates about what she's up to—from taking a jog to spending the day with friends. An imaginary world can be created to help keep your followers interested.

You might also create a Twitter avatar to post throughout an entire school year. Use the opportunity



## NEVER STOP LEARNING

Besides being a source of current events and research for school projects, Twitter can take you through your college career and adult life. Twitter has become such a part of the news and current events that it's hard to watch the news or read a news article without some mention of a celebrity tweet. As social media changes, the avenue for delivering instant news to the public may change yet again. Keeping up on technology and social media can help you stay informed throughout your adult life. Learning how to use Twitter as an educational tool is a great place to start, but keep your eyes and ears open about new communication platforms. Over the past decade, social media has changed the world and the way people look at news, pop culture, and personal communication. It will likely continue to do that over the next decade as well.

to tweet or report on what you are learning while studying the Great Depression, the Cold War, the Space Race, and other historic events you may learn about throughout the school year. Your history avatar can play a part in keeping you and your friends interested in the topics you are learning about. And tweeting your class content is a very helpful way to remember what you need to know for a test.

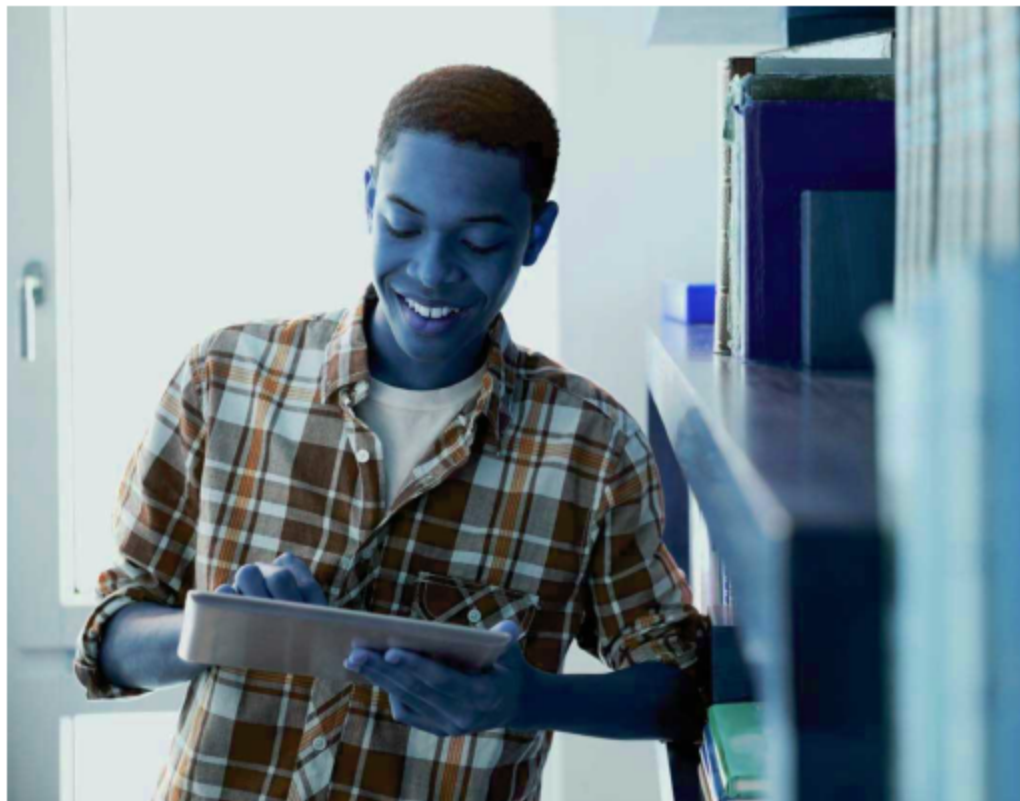
# Tweeting Through the College Search

**T**he college search can be difficult, from researching to applying to choosing the right school. You would probably rather be on social media and talking with your friends. There's no reason you can't combine the social media aspect of your life with your college search. Twitter can play a role in making your college search a little easier, or at least a little more enjoyable. These activities can help you incorporate Twitter into your college search.



### FOLLOW SCHOOLS

You can learn a lot about people or companies by watching their Twitter feeds. The same goes for a college you might be interested in applying to. Follow the schools that you are considering on Twitter. Don't worry about how many you follow. Just follow them for a while to get a good collection in your feed. This process can help you start to think about which schools appeal



Following a prospective college or university on Twitter can keep you informed about the types of activities that the school sponsors.

to you most. Think about the types of campus activities they promote to students. Check out the comments that others leave about the activities. You can get a glimpse into a different world by following the schools online.

Remember that apps such as TweetDeck can help you organize information. You can keep a separate “college search” account and then use the app to switch between accounts.



When you find that you prefer some schools over others, consider narrowing down your list. Although you should never choose a school based solely on its Twitter feed, you can certainly take part in an endeavor like this as a way to gather information about school activities and see how receptive current students are to these pursuits.



## TARGET YOUR SEARCHES

After narrowing down your college search to the most promising choices, follow more specific groups or indi-



Clemson football team members take a selfie for Clemson University's Twitter page. Paying close attention to a college's Twitter feed can help you find the activities you are most interested in, such as sports.

viduals at those colleges. For example, if you might be joining the swim team in college, check Twitter for the teams of schools you are interested in. Look for a group or hashtag of a school's swim team. You might be able to obtain information on Twitter about the team's record, members, or upcoming events.

Reaching out to these specialized clubs or even to professors can help you discover what you need to know to get ahead. It can even give you a chance to find a mentor if you choose to go to the school and look up that professor in person. Activity or sports searches can help you zero in on one aspect you might be interested in at a school.



## SEARCH FOR SCHOLARSHIPS AND AID

College is a big business, and it can end up costing a student a lot of money in loans. The idea of graduate school can make the concept of funding college even more daunting. Fortunately, scholarships are available to help students lessen their burdens. According to [scholarships.com](http://scholarships.com), there are more than 2.7 million scholarships and grant opportunities available for students who apply for them. That represents more than \$19 billion in college money waiting to be claimed. Searching for scholarships is another activity that can be done with the help of the online tool Twitter.

Searching for related groups on Twitter can be done by entering “college scholarships” or “scholarship tips.” These groups or hashtags can lead you to searching



These students are filling out student financial aid forms. Twitter can be a good source for finding scholarships and financial aid for colleges.

for college scholarships that have merit and are worth applying for. But before applying to anything, be sure to check out the scholarship opportunity from another reputable source. In addition, have a parent or guidance counselor check the source. Be sure, too, not to give any personal information to an individual or source until it can be verified as a legitimate organization.

Financial aid can also be researched on Twitter. The Federal Student Aid Office of the US Department of Education has an active Twitter account. This office regularly posts helpful information about applying for financial aid. Following @FAFSA can be of use to

students who want to learn more about the financial aid process.



## TWEET A VIRTUAL COLLEGE APPLICATION

Once you have connected with a school, tweet ideas that showcase your interests and qualifications under one hashtag. Do it over a period of a few days just



## INTERNET SAFETY

Having a lot of Twitter followers is not like knowing that many people in real life. There's a safe distance that people can maintain when they know one another only online. However, there are definite dangers to social media and to communicating with strangers online. Be careful with information you share with people online, and do not share personal details about your life or your future plans. Internet safety rules are best learned early on and then carried through the college years and beyond. If you are going to be researching colleges and interacting with students at the school, special precaution should be taken. According to *Time* magazine, a 2014 report by the US Department of Education showed that there was a 50 percent increase in sex crimes on college campuses from 2001 to 2011. This rise in the number of sex crimes has happened even as the total number of campus crimes has decreased. It's very important to use internet safety as you meet people online, especially when it comes to living in a college environment.



## COLLEGE STUDENTS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Students who are in college today have probably spent many years using social media already. They are no strangers to the world of online services such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. According to a 2013 study published online by *Study Breaks* magazine, 80 percent of college students use Twitter. The study showed that 75 percent of college students use their smartphones to access their social media accounts, and 63 percent check Twitter at least once every day. These percentages show what a powerful tool Twitter and social media in general have become. Twitter has gotten young people's attention and they are taking advantage of its usefulness as a communication, marketing, and informational tool.

before you are applying to the school, then refer to the hashtag when you apply so that the school can see that you were earnestly pursuing the school.

When you are seriously preparing for your college application process, think of Twitter as a testing ground for listing your accomplishments and showcasing your interests. Choose a hashtag to help you organize information for a virtual college application. Showcase your interests and extracurricular activities. Post a photo or video of yourself playing soccer to show that you are on the varsity soccer team. Do the same with other activities you are involved in at school, such as the yearbook or drama club. Then continue with posts to highlight your



leadership skills, after-school jobs, and other pursuits that you feel make you a strong candidate for acceptance at the colleges of your choice.

As long as your posts have the same hashtag, someone can be directed to find them in one place. This strategy brings your application procedure to life and can make you stand out when you apply for colleges. Include the hashtag in an application letter so admissions officers can learn more about you as they sort through stacks of applications.



## COLLEGE SEARCH DIARY

As your search for the right college progresses, you could end up visiting a few campuses and talking to



Using Twitter to record your thoughts about your college search can help you keep track of which colleges you prefer. Here, students line up for orientation at Dartmouth College in New Hampshire.



many people along the way. Use Twitter as a diary to record the details of your search. Post photos, videos, and tweets of the experience, along with a hashtag with the college's name. Post your impressions of the experience so you can go back later and revisit each college diary.

If you go on a second visit to a college, you could use a new hashtag to keep the memories separate. Keeping a diary of your college search is a great way to remember the experience and to help you make a decision about which school you should attend. Even if you don't decide on any of the schools you made a Twitter diary about, it's still fun to keep the diary as a memory of your college search.

## The Twitterverse of Business

**O**ne of the most beneficial uses of Twitter outside of the realm of being social with friends is to use it for business purposes. According to Small Business Sense's website, [Small-bizsense.com](http://Small-bizsense.com), 70 percent of small businesses are on Twitter. Making a connection with people online seems to pay off, too. The site quotes a study that states that 85 percent of Twitter followers feel more connected to a small business after following them on Twitter.

Twitter is also a beneficial place to promote goods and services. The site indicates that 67 percent of Twitter users are more likely to buy products of brands that they follow on Twitter over other brands. About 42 percent of people learn about products and services by checking their Twitter feeds.

The service has proven to be such a powerful tool that most large corporations have social media accounts, including Twitter accounts, with employees dedicated to updating the feeds and making new posts several times each day.



Twitter can be used to promote small business ventures, such as a dog walking business.

Just as Twitter benefits existing businesses, it can be advantageous to you if you are considering starting a business of your own. In addition to the activities below, people interested in using Twitter for business should dedicate a certain amount of time each day to tweeting, retweeting, and commenting on tweets related to your business interest. For example, if you are interested in becoming a landscaper, follow other landscapers and learn as much as you can about the business by reading links and articles that others have tweeted about it.

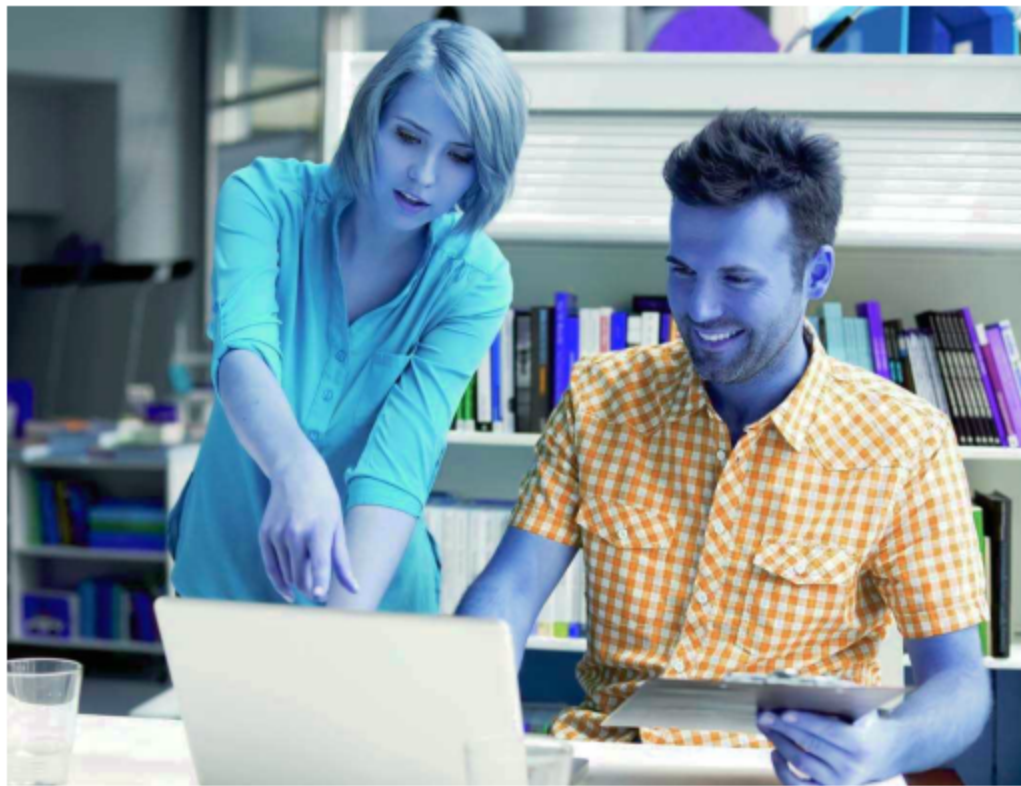
Create a separate account for business endeavors to keep your personal details separate and less of a distraction. Your business followers should see only the business side of you, so keep it professional.



## TWEET FOR YOUR BOSS

If you have a part-time job, either after school or during the summer, you may have an opportunity to help your boss get online and manage social media for his or her small business. Some small business owners have trouble launching their business into the online world. If they are not part of a corporation that already has a Twitter account, the job may be something they don't have time for or don't quite understand how to tap into. You can volunteer your services to get your boss up and running with a Twitter account to promote the business and update it as regularly as possible.

This kind of gesture may not only give you practice using Twitter as a promotional business tool, but it will



Some people manage Twitter accounts for their boss or for the company they work for.

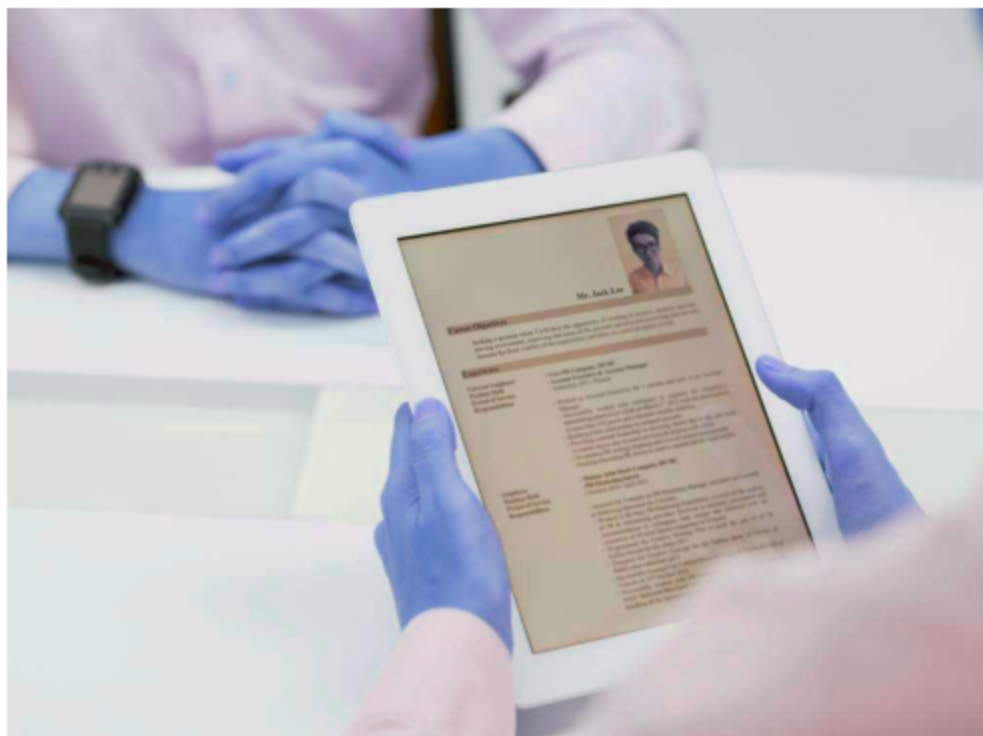
also help you look like a dedicated employee. Consider giving your boss or someone else at the job a lesson on how to maintain the account if you ever leave the job to go to college. Young people who have grown up with the Internet have a much better understanding about how it works than people who did not. Young people have also been shown to have less fear in learning about new things on the Internet than older people.

Use your youthful position to your advantage and help a small business get started on Twitter.



## TWEET YOUR RÉSUMÉ

There's a lot you've done to make yourself an employee worth hiring. You may even want to be your own boss someday. That's why it's a good idea to have a separate business account from a personal account. Use the business account to tweet your résumé. Make each



Your résumé may sound appealing to a prospective boss or client if you list some of your skills on Twitter.





## SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGERS

If you enjoy managing your Twitter account and creating a social media presence, keep in mind that this can also be a career. People manage social media sites for a living, tweeting for a company and keeping followers up to date on the company and its activities. Depending on the size of the company, a social media manager may be in charge of updating and overseeing social media on one or more services. If you are considering applying for a job in this field, hashtag samples of your work to use as examples when you are putting in an application.

point on the résumé one tweet at a time, using the same hashtag for each.

Include photos or videos up to 140 seconds long wherever you can. For instance, show a picture of each job you worked at as you tweet the information about where you worked. You can even get someone to tweet you a recommendation. Just instruct the person to use your hashtag to make sure the information is sorted into the right place.

Tweeting your résumé can help demonstrate to an employer or prospective business partner that you are technologically literate. This skill can help whether you are applying for a job at a company or looking to drum

up clients for your own business. A virtual résumé can also be kept up in real time. Simply delete any aspects of the résumé that you no longer want to showcase and add new posts as you gain more experience to add to the résumé.



## DRIVE TRAFFIC TO A BUSINESS USING TWITTER

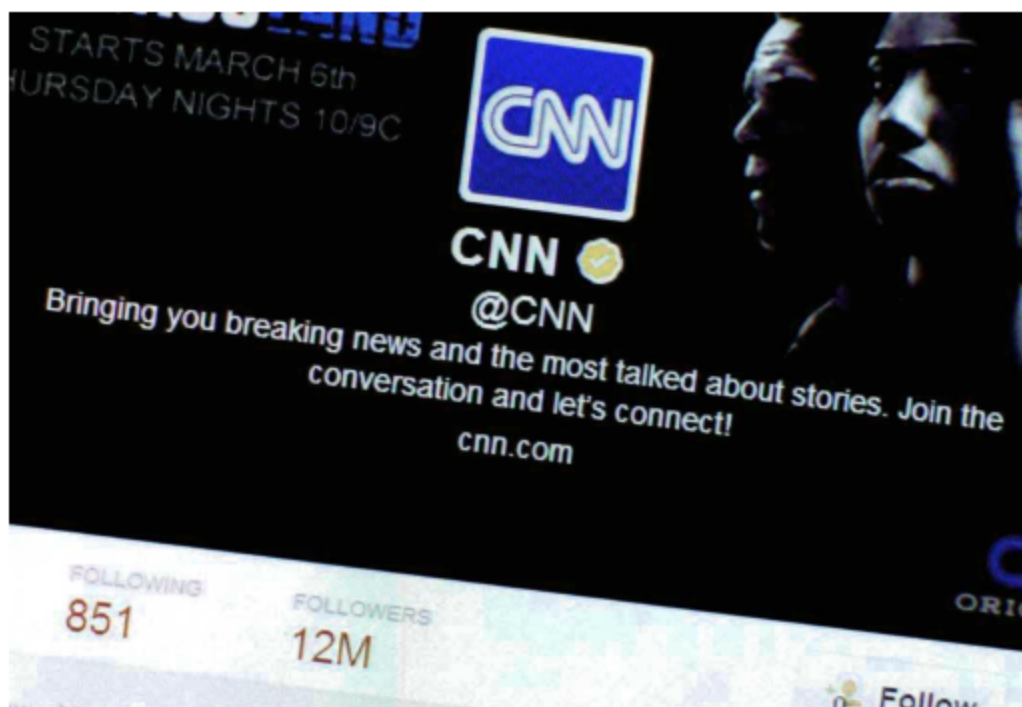
Some of the biggest corporations use Twitter to drive traffic to their own websites. You can undertake this strategy, too. What better way to get new or prospective clients to locate details about your business online than to tweet the information they need to find the site. Although Twitter posts can be only 140 characters, Twitter can be used as a launching pad that can send people in the right direction. Once they link to your website through Twitter, they can be given as much information as can fit on your website, including contact information, payment details, and information about how your business works. For example, if you are starting a pet service business, your website can list the types of services you offer, the prices for the different services, and the geographic areas that you serve. A simple Twitter link can bring people to it and attract the right audience.

Twitter followers can also be driven to other social media sites, such as Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook. Tweets can be very effective in being that first spark of information that can send a person off on a search through your business offerings.



## SHOW OFF YOUR TALENTS

Just as a website can have testimonials from happy customers, a simple tweet can link to videos that tout your business skills. Suppose you want to get business clients who are looking for computer technical support. Show off what you can do with a short video and tweet it. Show yourself opening a hard drive, rebooting a computer network, or reconnecting a client to the Internet. Try to make the videos as authentic looking as possible. Showing a satisfied or relieved customer reacting to your help can also be a boost for your



Live-tweeting news or sports events can show that you want to start a career in news reporting or sports broadcasting.



## PROMOTIONAL CAMPAIGNS

In the past, corporate promotions used to cost a lot of time and money. Today, corporations know that they can reach the public easily and inexpensively through social media. According to *Adweek* magazine, many companies have adopted creative advertising campaigns on Twitter. For example, Pizza Hut in the United Kingdom started a campaign called Knock Down the Price of Pizza. On March 5, 2012, the company ran a promotion in which followers could send them a tweet with the hashtag #letsdolunch. For each tweet, the company would lower the price of its pizza by £0.01. The company ran the promotion for two hours and received enough tweets to cut the price of the pizza nearly in half. This ad campaign gave Pizza Hut an opportunity to get new followers and interact with customers while running a sale. In the world of e-commerce, promotional campaigns like this that are done through social media are called flash sales. They drum up quick support and excitement about a specific product.

business. Simple interviews with satisfied clients can also help to show off your talents to prospective clients.

A wide variety of skills and talents can be showcased on Twitter by ambitious business startups. For example, if you want to be a journalist, simply live-tweet a sports game or news event with updates. Provide some written tweets, and do others in

video format. This approach can show that you are able to adapt quickly and be ready to deliver in a variety of media. Reporting about local community or school events can display your talents as a reporter as well as your attention to local or global issues. With the right hashtag, these clips can be provided to a prospective client or business partner.



## DO A MESSAGING CAMPAIGN

Digital promotion techniques have become a popular—and free—way to get businesses seen. Small businesses may no longer need to hire an advertising agency to become noticed. Companies around the world can use social media to promote their businesses in countless ways. Small businesses or even individuals who work hard to promote themselves online can now do anything that a corporation could once do on a large scale.

Twitter enables the use of both private messaging and automated messaging. Messaging can be a very useful way for businesses to promote themselves. You can target certain followers and let them know about promotions or giveaways and accept private messages if you are having a contest. For example, your new painting service might offer a discount to users who private message the correct answer to a trivia question. Contests are a great way to interact with your followers and promote your goods or services.

Messaging campaigns can help you interact with followers as you promote your product. Your painting

service can advertise a discount for paint touch-ups after a hurricane, then follow up with private or automated messages to remind people of the promotion after the storm. The message has a different, more personal feel the second time around, and may result in grabbing more people's attention.

You can also set up an automated message that describes your service so that it goes to each new follower. The message might link to your website, giving new followers instant information so that they don't have to search around on their own.

If you are interested in starting a business, or if you want to help a business that you work for expand into the world of social media, it will help to make as much use of Twitter as possible. The social networking service has had the capability to help everyone from a high school student to a huge multinational corporation.



# GLOSSARY

- app** Abbreviation for “application,” a program or software that can be downloaded for use on a mobile device.
- avatar** A figure or icon that represents a person in a video game or on the Internet.
- digital footprint** The trail of data a person leaves while using the Internet.
- e-commerce** Online commercial transactions involving products and services.
- flash sale** A limited-time offer to buy something, usually in an online capacity.
- follower** A person or entity that tracks another user’s activity on social media websites.
- hashtag** A word or phrase preceded by a # sign, used to organize tweets or indicate a specific topic on a social media site so that other users can follow posts.
- microblogging** Blogging, or writing on a web page on a regular basis, with a limited number of characters per post (called a micropost).
- newsfeed** The location of electronically transmitted news and social media posts.
- real time** The actual time that something is happening through a media outlet; having no delays.
- retweet** To tweet again; the process of tweeting something someone else tweeted first.
- search engine** A computer program that searches for data corresponding to keyword searches and that returns a list of data where the keywords were found.
- social media** Websites or apps that allow users to create or share content with other users online.

- social media manager** A professional who manages the online social media accounts of a company, organization, or celebrity.
- testimonials** Formal statements to testify to someone's qualifications or character.
- trending** Becoming very popular on a social media website.
- trolling** Posting offensive statements on social media sites to trigger angry responses.
- tweet** The name used for posts on the social media site Twitter.
- TweetDeck** Computer application software for managing multiple Twitter accounts.
- Twitterverse** Also known as Twittersphere, the area or combined number of Twitter users of the online social media network.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Canadian Digital Media Network  
151 Charles Street West, Suite 100  
Kitchener, ON N2G 1H6  
Canada

(519) 888-9944

Website: <https://cdmn.ca>

This network is a group of organizations that support  
Canada's digital entrepreneurs through education and  
research opportunities.

Entrepreneurs' Organization  
500 Montgomery Street, Suite 700  
Alexandria, VA 22314  
(703) 519-6700

Website: <https://www.eonetwork.org>

This global organization is dedicated to networking with  
and helping other businesspeople through education  
and leadership development programs.

International Academy of Digital Arts and Sciences  
22 West 21st Street, 7th Floor  
New York, NY 10010  
(212) 675-4890

Website: <http://www.iadas.net>

The academy supports creative, technical, and profes-  
sional advances of interactive media on the Internet.

MediaSmarts: Canada's Centre for Digital and Media  
Literacy

950 Gladstone Avenue, Suite 120  
Ottawa, ON K1Y 3E6  
Canada

(613) 224-7721

Website: <http://mediasmarts.ca>

MediaSmarts is dedicated to digital and media literacy for teens, including making wise decisions online.

National Association for Media Literacy Education  
(NAMLE)

10 Laurel Hill Drive

Cherry Hill, NJ 08003

(888) 775-2652

Website: <http://namle.net>

NAMLE is an organization that seeks to expand and improve media literacy in the United States.

Twitter

1355 Market Street, Suite 900

San Francisco, CA 94103

Website: <https://twitter.com>

Twitter is a free social networking service that provides users with real-time updates on all kinds of subjects and broadcasts registered members' posts by allowing them to be searched and followed using hashtags.

## WEBSITES

Because of the changing nature of Internet links, Rosen Publishing has developed an online list of websites related to the subject of this book. This site is updated regularly. Please use this link to access the list:

<http://www.rosenlinks.com/SMCB/twit>

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kathy Furgang has written dozens of books for young readers, including books for teens about obtaining a job in sports law, getting internships, and choosing a vo-tech track for success in business. She graduated from Fordham University and now writes full-time in the education market. She lives in upstate New York with her husband and two sons.

## PHOTO CREDITS

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Photo Researcher: Karen Huang

## Book Index



20 Great Career-Building Activities Using Twitter

**20 Great Career-Building Activities Using Twitter** *Kathy Furgang.*  
*Solutions for Modern Learning New York, NY: Rosen Publishing, 2017.*  
*64 pp.*

This book shows students how to use Twitter to their advantage, for creative expression, academics, research, reporting, college searches, or promoting a business. Twenty activities help readers create a portfolio and build a digital footprint that can open doors professionally, academically, and creatively.

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