

# 5 Minute Guide...

## Twitter

### What is Twitter?

How often have you had phone conversations where the first thing you ask is "What are you doing?" Twitter is a "social networking" and "micro-blogging" service that allows you to instantly tell the world what you're up to – as long as you use 140 characters or less. It lets you update your friends and followers on your current activities, thoughts, or future plans and lets you keep up with theirs. Twitter allows you to follow anyone with an account, so if you want to know what's happening in someone else's life, and they use Twitter, you can easily find out!

### How does Twitter work?

First, sign up for an account; it's free and easy to do. Once you've done that you can provide updates called "tweets." On Twitter there are those you follow and those whom follow you. By using the "Find People" tab you can locate friends or entities that you are interested in. Remember though, you don't actually have to know those you choose to follow and your followers may not know you! You can access Twitter through a variety of methods: Twitter.com, by text messaging (SMS) or mobile web browser on your cell phone, or from third party sites that connect to Twitter (like Facebook).

### Who uses Twitter?

Twitter has become very popular with celebrities, politicians, athletes and many others. Corporations and not-for-profit organizations are using Twitter to make announcements and build relationships with their clients. News services even tweet the news in real time!

### Does Twitter have drawbacks?

Twitter limits you to 140 characters - including spaces - so your tweets have to be short ...the length of this sentence! Since your followers don't have to know you to read your tweets, you may open your life up to people you don't expect. As with anything that goes onto the net, you need to be careful in your comments: once you press "enter" there's no going back. Just like many social networking sites, it is possible to become addicted to Twitter to the detriment of real life.

### Why is Twitter useful?

Twitter can be used for various purposes. It allows users to share the everyday activities that are deemed too unimportant for a full blog entry, but in which friends and family might be interested. It is also being hailed as a very useful marketing and public relations tool for companies that need to connect with their users. Twitterers use it at conferences to have conversations with other delegates while a session runs live to compare thoughts, have discussions or make plans - it also provides a way to keep up with professional contacts after the conference has ended. Lately, Twitter has also been used to send out updates from places where governments or situations prevent the regular flow of information.

### How can libraries use Twitter?

Libraries can use Twitter to promote events, news, services and to provide links to their websites. Some libraries use twitter to highlight their collections, to which they also provide links.

**did you know?**  
Twitter is sometimes described as text messaging for the Internet!





## Explore More

Twitter

[www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com)

Howcast: How to use Twitter (video)

[www.howcast.com/videos/149055-How-To-Use-Twitter](http://www.howcast.com/videos/149055-How-To-Use-Twitter)

Commoncraft: Twitter (video)

[www.commoncraft.com/Twitter](http://www.commoncraft.com/Twitter)

Info Today: Twitter for Libraries (and Librarians)

[www.infotoday.com/cilmag/may09/Milstein.shtml](http://www.infotoday.com/cilmag/may09/Milstein.shtml)



## Do More

A nice interface that automatically refreshes

<http://itweet.net/web>

Get Twitter to remind you of the thing you need to do

[www.mychores.co.uk](http://www.mychores.co.uk)

Tweetdeck – gathers your social networking sites to one page

<http://tweetdeck.com/beta>