Twitter User Guide

What is Twitter?

Twitter is a social network in which you can share information and photos with friends, family, co-workers, celebrities, athletes and organizations in just 140 characters. When you log into Twitter, you will have a newsfeed that populates all of the tweets of those that you are following so you can tailor your news to what interests you.

How is it different than other networks such as Facebook? Twitter is about getting a quick snippet of information out right away. Whether it is your thoughts on dinner or a current event, it’s about news and thoughts right now, and having a conversation about it!

In essence, Twitter is another way in which you can engage—up to the minute—with the people and organizations that you care about.

Set up an account:

Go to twitter.com and fill in the ‘sign up’ information on the right-hand side where it says ‘New to Twitter?’ When you have an account, you will go to twitter.com and sign in in the box above.

Next, you’ll be taken to a confirmation screen where you can adjust information and add a username. Consider what you would like your username to be; you can be unique and creative—you have 20 characters.

Examples: Beloit College, Username: @Beloit_College
Edit your profile

Once you’ve signed up, you’ll have to verify your account via email. Then, it’s time to personalize your account. Upload a photo and type a few sentences about yourself that showcases your interests and the general tone of your tweets.

Compose a tweet

A tweet is just a small snip of information that you’d like to share publicly with your followers. Example: “I love stormy weather #rainingcatsanddogs” or “Thinking about Beloit today #beloitreunion #missmyfriends”

Note the hashtags (#). You do not have to use hashtags, but they are helpful in categorizing tweets/searching for what’s new and happening. On occasion, organizations will ask you to use a specific hashtag when you tweet at an event so they can keep track of everyone’s feedback, and so others in attendance can see what’s being said. Hashtags can be fun, but don’t get carried away! Hashtags DO count against your 140 character limit, so don’t go overboard.

Tweets are public. That means, if someone searches for something and your tweet is relevant, it will appear. The person does not need to be following you. And, although there is a delete function, do remember that this is the internet. Once it’s out there, it’s out there, so think about what you choose to post.
What is following?

The goal is to share information, receive information, and interact. You can choose to ‘follow’ a Twitter account—their tweets will appear in your news feed. And, vice versa. If someone is interested in your tweets, he/she will follow you.

If you start following a person or organization and later decide that you’d rather not, you can unfollow them, too, removing their tweets from your newsfeed. If you would like to approve each person that follows you, visit the Twitter help page for more information.

To find people to follow, either search (use the search box at the top of the page) for people you know, import friends from other networks, or follow Twitter suggestions.

Note: You are not obligated to follow every follower that follows you. Keep your Twitter feed tailored to what you’d like to hear about.

Messaging one person or organization

You can send a message to an individual or organization in a variety of ways.

1) Direct Message. A direct message is the same concept as email. It will appear in the envelope that is next to the search bar.

2) @username Sending a tweet to a user or responding to a tweet is as simple as typing their handle (i.e. the username with an @ before) and then your message. This is public, unlike a direct message, and will appear on their wall, but will not show to all of your followers. Example: @Beloit_College loving reunion #BCreunionrocks
Connect!

**Retweet.** Remember, Twitter is about sharing information and having a conversation. See something you like? Retweet it to your followers! There are a couple ways to retweet, and it’s important that you do it properly. Credit where credit is due! First, click the retweet button.

Or, if you’d like to add your own commentary, type RT before the username’s handle (RT@Beloit_College insert the original tweet here after your commentary).

If you would like your content retweeted, try to keep it well under the 140 characters. The user retweeting has to account for the additional characters when they retweet and they may want to include their own commentary.

**Favorite.** See something you like that you’d like to keep handy? Click the Favorite button and it will store on your favorites page, similar to a bookmark. You can access your favorites from your side menu referenced above.

**Share a photo**

Sometimes a picture says it all. Just as though you were going to create a new tweet, click on the “compose a tweet” button and look for the camera icon on the bottom left. Click on it and then select a photo from your computer. Click ‘open’ and you’ll be back to the tweet screen. Add your caption or tweet and click ‘Tweet.’

**From your phone**

Many of these options will follow a similar process, but it does depend upon your phone app. Because this information changes frequently, find the most up-to-date information on the Twitter help page for mobile: [https://support.twitter.com/groups/54-mobile-apps](https://support.twitter.com/groups/54-mobile-apps)

**For Beloit**

Want to help Beloit’s reach with alumni and friends? Tweet about it! Either retweet information that is shared by @Beloit_College, @BeloitBucs or any other official Beloit account. Or, come up with your own clever tweets. Event promotion is incredibly helpful—we’ll provide you with the hashtag to use and you just share your thoughts/photos/excitement. Or, consider tweeting after you’ve made a gift to Beloit to encourage others to join you.