celebrating 25 years

Everyone is talking about Twitter these days as it has quickly become one of the most popular social media websites on the Internet. This fact sheet is designed for anyone looking to get to grips with the basics of Twitter from setting up your account to sending out your first tweets.

Step 1: Getting Started

Getting set up on Twitter is simple. Go to www.twitter.com and click on the 'Sign Up Now' button. Enter your name, email address and choose a suitable user name and password. The user name is limited to 15 characters so we recommend that you choose something sensible such as your name or business name to make it easy for people to find you. Now just fill in the Captcha field and click on the continue button.

Step 2: Following People

At the start of the set up process Twitter will provide you with 3 stages to help you begin following people.

1. 'Suggestions' provides you with a list of broad categories where you will be able to find Twitter accounts for organisations and celebrities you might be interested in.
2. 'Friends' allows you to give Twitter temporary access to your email account by entering your email address and the password for your account. Twitter will then search through your contacts and tell you if they are already on Twitter. You can then begin following them quickly and easily. You will also be encouraged to invite those that aren't on Twitter.
3. 'Anyone' is where you can search for people and businesses by name.

Step 3: Setting Up Your Profile

When you've finished finding people to follow, you will be taken to your Twitter profile. At the moment it will look pretty empty apart from the recent tweets that the people you chosen to follow have posted. On the right hand side you'll find your Twitter control panel which tracks who you're following, your direct messages and popular Twitter topics. Click on your avatar (small square with add photo in it) and you can upload a photo of either yourself or your businesses logo from your computer.

Step 4: Adding More Details

Click on the 'Account' link and enter the address of your website. You need to add a brief bio about yourself or business. I'd suggest entering a bit about what you do and mention the area you are based in so that you are more likely to be found by people who have similar interests.

Step 5: Privacy

Twitter gives you the option to make your tweets private. If you do this then only your approved followers will be able to see your tweets. If you want everyone to hear what you have to say then simply leave it blank and press save.

Step 6: Background

Clicking on 'design' will allow you to select one of the standard Twitter background designs. However, if you want to make your page stand out from the rest then you can upload a background of your own.

Step 7: What's @ All About?

Now that you have your Twitter account set up you should be ready to begin tweeting. You only have 140 characters for your tweet so keep it short and sweet. There are a number of different types of tweet that you can send.

1. **Public Messages** – If you are simply tweeting to the world then you just type into the box at the top of your screen and let them know what you're thinking.
2. **Replying To A Tweet** – You can enter into a public conversation with anyone who has Tweeted. If you want to comment on someone's tweet simply hover over their message and click reply. Your message will then be prefixed with an @ followed by their user name to show that your tweet is aimed at one person in particular, rather than all of your followers.
3. **Direct Messages** – These are Tweets that you send directly to one person and they can't be viewed by anyone else. To do this simply go to the persons page and click on message below the Actions tab on the right hand side.
4. **Retweets** – When you find a tweet that is so good you want to share it with your followers this is called a retweet. To retweet all you have to do is hover over a tweet and click the retweet link and you're done. A retweet is prefixed by an RT to show that it is a retweet.

You will find that there are many other features available to make tweeting more simple from Apps to Widgets but these steps should be enough to get you started and you should now be ready to begin using Twitter.

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