

What Twitter Can Do for You

Developing a profile on Twitter is essential to advocacy work for several reasons:

- 1) **Government leaders are on Twitter**, including President Barack Obama, your home state senators and Sen. Majority Leader Harry Reid – all very crucial individuals when it comes to judicial nominations. You can tweet them!
- 2) **Reporters, bloggers and editorial boards are on Twitter.**
 - Follow them and read what they are tweeting about. Engage them in conversation on Twitter. Once you get to know them more, suggest stories via Twitter, and that includes op-ed editors. You can suggest an editorial board opine on an important issue via a tweet – no lengthy editorial board memos required!
 - If you use the correct hashtags and build a reputable profile –reporters will COME TO YOU as an expert for their next story. Reporters use twitter for research.
- 3) **Twitter helps spread your message to the public directly.** Tweeting is a good way to highlight your expertise to the world and including a bio explaining your knowledge of a particular subject will generate more followers, and therefore more people with whom you can share your message.

Getting Started

First, visit www.twitter.com and sign up. Create a profile and put up a picture and a professional bio. You can also receive help from the Twitter Help Center by visiting: <http://support.twitter.com/groups/31-twitter-basics/topics/104-welcome-to-twitter-support/articles/215585-twitter-101-how-should-i-get-started-using-twitter#>

Next, you must learn who to follow and how to get followers. Your goal is to get influencers in your policy area, as well as general influencers to follow you. This is generally accomplished by creating a relationship with those you want to follow you that is reciprocal.

Finding People to Follow

To start with, find relevant reporters and bloggers, allied and opposing advocacy groups and staffers and government leaders. To find these individuals, you must do research, both inside and outside of Twitter.

- Twitter has a Find People search tool that works when you are logged in: http://twitter.com/invitations/find_on_twitter
- Google search is usually the easiest. Search for name of person and the word “Twitter” (e.g. Jake Tapper Twitter)

- Finding lists of people with common interests on Twitter: Listorious.com is a search tool for Twitter Lists or Google search for “issue/topic Twitter” (sometimes including words like directory or list in search helps)
- If you already have a list of people in your issue area you follow, look through the lists of who they follow and who follows them for people to follow. Follow these people, too.

Getting People to Follow You

This is about reciprocal value. Just like you follow people who are interesting to you or provide some other value to you, people follow you for the same reasons. You must provide value to your audience by including:

- **High quality content.** The more useful, interesting, entertaining, etc. your tweets, the more people will want to follow you.
- **Sharing your audience.** The more you share what other people are tweeting with your audience, the more those people will want to follow you. This means when you see a tweet from someone that is interesting, consider retweeting (RT) it.

Also, use #FollowFriday. In The Twittersphere, every Friday, from your account, suggest people to follow and use the hashtag #FollowFriday. When they see you are promoting them, they will follow you and do the same.

What to Tweet About and How to Tweet Effectively

You can tweet anything you’d like – links to news articles, press releases, or just your opinions – but remember you are confined to 140 characters per tweet. The more you understand how to use hashtags, and the more you know who to target with the tweet, the more effective you will be. Here is an example of a tweet designed to promote to a senator one of Center of American Progress’s policy briefs:

Tweet Text: Hey @ChuckGrassley read our report on repealing #DADT (<http://bit.ly/dadt>) & vote FOR Defense Auth Bill. FYI @desmoinesdem @OneIowa #IA #p2

What is in this Tweet: It publicly targets a member of Congress by including his/her Twitter name with the @: @ChuckGrassley. This ensures that the tweet shows up in the Senator’s @Reply Public Inbox on his Twitter homepage.

- Pushed to hashtag audiences
 - Issue specific (#DADT)
 - State specific (#IA)
 - Ideological group (#p2)
 - Ephemeral discourse communities, e.g. active conferences (#cpnc, #NN10)
- Alerts watchdogs
 - State blogger (@desmoinesdem)
 - State issue group (@OneIowa)

Twitter Lingo

Follow: To follow someone on Twitter is to subscribe to their tweets or updates on the site.

Follower: A follower is another Twitter user who has followed you.

Following: Your following number reflects the quantity of other Twitter users you have chosen to follow on the site.

Handle: A user's "Twitter handle" is the username they have selected and the accompanying URL, like so: <http://twitter.com/username>.

Hashtag: The # symbol is used to mark keywords or topics in a tweet. It was created organically by Twitter users. Hashtags are used to aggregate conversations and create groups on Twitter. Some hashtags refer to issues (#unions, #DADT, #energy, #climate, #CIR, #HCR, etc.). Others refer to ideological or other communities (#P2, #NPR, #TCOT, #TLOT, #SGP, #FEM2). Others request actions (#DIGG, #ACTION, #FF, #FollowFriday, #Women2Follow). You can look up the meaning of a hashtag at TagDef.com.

@: The @ sign is used to call out usernames in tweets, like this: Hello @Twitter! When a username is preceded by the @ sign, it becomes a link to a Twitter profile. See also Replies and Mentions.

Mention: Mentioning another user in your tweet by including the @ sign followed directly by their username is called a "mention". Also refers to tweets in which your username was included.

Reply: A tweet posted in reply to another user's message, usually posted by clicking the "reply" button next to their tweet in your timeline. Always begins with @username. Typing an @ before a person's Twitter name in a tweet creates a link to that person's Twitter profile page. It also makes that tweet appear in the named person's @Reply Public Inbox.

Retweet (noun): A tweet by another user, forwarded to you by someone you follow. Often used to spread news or share valuable findings on Twitter.

Retweet (verb): To retweet, retweeting, retweeted. The act of forwarding another user's tweet to all of your followers.

RT: Abbreviated version of "retweet." Placed before the retweeted text when users manually retweet a message. See also Retweet.

Tweet (verb): Tweet, tweeting, tweeted. The act of posting a message, often called a "tweet", on Twitter.

Tweet (noun): A message posted via Twitter containing 140 characters or fewer.

Twitter List: Twitter Lists is a tool in Twitter to create lists of people by category. Many people create lists of people on Twitter who tweet about specific topics.

For a full list of Twitter terms, visit the Twitter Glossary at <http://support.twitter.com/articles/166337-the-twitter-glossary#>