

The Social Media “How to” Series©: **Twitter (140 Characters)**

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USING **Twitter FOR CLIENT BUILDING**

What is **Twitter?**

The ability for a lot of people (200 million+ users) to send and receive short messages (“tweets”) –140 characters or less – for free!

What equipment do you need?

An Internet connection or a smart phone.

For the full experience you need the Internet.

Several smart phone apps are competing to provide a fully mobile version. To further explore the technological options, go to <http://tinyurl.com/ycm9pv6>.

Where to start:

Go to www.twitter.com, fill out the basic information and click “Sign Up”.

You do not have to provide any personal information and need only a valid e-mail address to get started.

Choose a username: it can be your name, a nickname, your company name or something anonymous.

Your username will then appear with the “@” symbol before it.

You can personalize your profile if you wish, add your picture or your company logo and write a short (160-character) summary of who you are.

To Tweet

Log in at www.twitter.com

Click in the “What’s Happening” box

Type your tweet (watch the countdown, you only have 140 characters)

Click “Tweet”

The message will be published on your page and your followers will get a copy.

To Follow

Of course, none of us has the time to read the tweets of 200 million+ people, so choose who you want to “follow”

Go to www.twitter.com and use the search box to find who you want to follow

Click Follow when you find someone you want to follow

When you “follow” someone, his or her “tweets” appear in chronological order on your Twitter Home page and can be sent to your mobile phone (see “Get Twitter on your phone” on Twitter’s home page). You have a live feed of their thoughts and actions as they unfold. If you get bored, stop following them. If you are fascinated, post a reply.

Follow Michael Fugler, @capitalwarrior

Go to www.twitter.com and search for @capitalwarrior

Under People results for @capitalwarrior on the right,

Click Follow (after CapitalWarrior Michael Fugler)

Tweet your own news!

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Why Twitter?

Twitter is like running your own news website. You can send out interesting and informative updates and observations, people follow them and circulate them to fellow members and prospects.

Twitter v. Facebook-No obligation

On Facebook and other social networks you form virtual “friendships” and share photographs, hobbies and all sorts of personal information. Relationships on Twitter do not have to be two-way and there is no obligation to interact with anyone. There is no obligation to write anything. While some people add new tweets and updates several times a day, others write nothing at all and simply sign up to follow people interesting to them, i.e., Michael Fugler, @capitalwarrior.

Hashtags -

If there is a running topic, it will have a hashtag.

Examples are #royalwedding and #OBL (death of Osama bin Laden).

Adding a hashtag – putting a “#” symbol in front of the theme in question – helps sort tweets by subject and creates a special link: clicking a hashtag in someone’s update lets you see all the tweets that are being written about that particular subject.

Who follows you?

You can use the ‘Block’ feature to protect your posts; otherwise anybody who has a Twitter account can choose to ‘Follow’ you and be part of your social network.

Encouraging people to take an interest in what you have to say is all part of the fun. Why bother? You may think it is pointless (research shows that 40 percent of it is) but it is also a place where world news is broken.

It is possible to amass thousands of followers overnight. IT consultant, Sohaib Athar (@ReallyVirtual) tweeted, “Helicopter hovering above Abbottabad at 1AM (is a rare event)”, accidentally breaking the news of the US assault on Osama bin Laden’s compound.

Otherwise it can be a slow process. You can tweet into cyberspace, hope someone happens across your tweet, likes what you say and passes it to their friends, or “retweets” it.

Make your 140 characters count. The more interesting you are, the more people will “follow” your tweets and the larger your audience will become.

Why 140 characters?

Messages are limited to 140 keystrokes, because the creators of Twitter did so after setting themselves the challenge of providing a free Internet service that emulated the short messaging system (SMS) used by mobile phones.

Legal

Can you get into trouble with the law? Only if you break it. When a tweeter joked with a friend on Twitter that he would blow an airport “sky high” if they delayed his flight due to snow, he was convicted of sending a menacing electronic communication. Despite his original tweet being rebroadcast around the world by supporters, he was still fined.