



GEEKPRENEUR



**A GEEK'S
GUIDE TO
PROMOTING
YOURSELF AND
YOUR ONLINE
BUSINESS IN
140 CHARACTERS
OR LESS WITH
TWITTER BY**



GEEKPRENEUR

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A Geek's Guide To Promoting Yourself and Your Online Business in 140 Characters or Less with Twitter

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WHAT IS TWITTER?

Perhaps the question should really be—do you twitter? And if you don't you soon will do.

This guide is going to show you exactly what Twitter is all about, and how to make the most of it. You may well have heard of it before, but you may not have realized just how useful it can be when it comes to spreading the word about your business online.

Twitter is based around a very simple concept, and once you've grasped that concept you'll be well away. Some people reckon Twitter is too limited in its uses, but it's the very fact that you are limited in what you can do that makes it a very creative medium to work in.

Twitter is based on one question, pure and simple:

"What are you doing now?"

All you have to do is tell as many people as possible what the answer to that question is.

Becoming a Tweeter

This book will reveal all you need to know to use Twitter to boost your profile and your business. Every message—or ‘tweet’—that you send out has the potential to reach even more people. You’ll gain followers and an audience that is all your own.

And you’ll be in good company when you join and become a ‘tweeter’. Even Hillary Clinton tweets on a regular basis (or more probably gets an aide to tweet on her behalf).

The more you discover about Twitter, the more you will realize that it has been called micro-blogging for a reason. It combines all the best parts of blogging with the best bits of getting in touch with people. And when it is used properly it can become one of the best marketing tools in your online armory.

So what are we hanging around in the introduction for? It’s time we got down to business in Section One and found out why you absolutely must join Twitter.

1

Why You Need to Join Twitter Right Now

When you visit the Twitter website, you'll soon see that it's all about staying in touch. But this isn't the kind of website that gives you free rein to say whatever you want and spend as long as you like on every post you make.

Twitter is all about brevity. It's all about giving people the basics without bogging them down with the 'too much information' syndrome.

140 CHARACTERS OR LESS ...

That's it—that's all you've got to play with on Twitter each time you want to get in touch with your followers and tell people what's going on with your business and your life.

To put that into some kind of context, the title of an eBay auction can't be longer than 55 characters so you've got less than three times that amount to make an impression on people. You'll soon find yourself becoming very adept at using the English language to get in touch in the shortest way possible.

But don't panic. There's plenty of advice coming up on how to write the best tweets possible, so stay tuned.

So why do you need to join?

It seems like the whole world belongs to two groups—those who are thinking of joining Twitter, and those who already have. If you are in the first group you'll want to know what all the fuss is about, so here are some reasons.

Quick and easy

We're not just talking about how easy it is to actually join here; it's all about the updates. We know how long—or short—a tweet can be, and that's exactly what makes the site so accessible. If you have got your own blog you'll know what I mean.

Blogs are a great way to get in touch with people and build a following over the course of time, but if you don't write posts of a reasonable length you tend to feel like you're shortchanging your readers. You almost get to the stage where you'd be better off not posting at all than posting a short message.



Twitter home page

Twitter makes it easy to put yourself and your business in front of the kind of people you want to get in touch with.

Twitter takes all that worry away instantly. You are limited by their 140 characters or less rule, so it's super speedy to jump on and write a quick sentence to tell people what the latest development is in your business or on your website.

In fact, you'll probably have to restrain yourself to keep from posting too often!

Getting connected

Twitter makes it easy to put yourself and your business in front of the kind of people you want to get in touch with. Every time you send a fresh tweet it will appear in the public timeline, which is basically a scrolling record of every single tweet sent out by all the members of Twitter all over the world.

There are plenty of other ways to get people to notice your presence on Twitter too, and we'll cover that in just a moment. The good news is that the website gives you all the tools you need to draw attention to your profile.

But there are other ways to start using Twitter. You don't just have to tell people what you are doing; people are also using the site to ask questions, ask for advice and even network with other like minded people with the intention of forming a business relationship later on.

Are you starting to see that there is a hell of a lot of potential wrapped up in those 140 characters?

Staying in touch

Twitter isn't just about letting people know what you are about and what you're up to; it's also about finding other like minded people and following them too.

Staying in touch couldn't be easier as you can follow those Twitterers you are interested in and receive updates as and when they post a new update. Once you have found someone you like, all you need to do is hit the Follow button and wait for updates as and when they post them.

Of course, the more people you can get to follow you the better. This book will help you to write the best updates you can and reach out to exactly the kind of people who will be interested in you and your business.

Raising your profile

If you're looking for a quick and easy way to get your name out there and spread the word about what you're doing, Twitter certainly fills that need. You can pick any username you like—as long as someone else hasn't already taken in—so think about using your business name if you are mainly going to use the site to promote your business.

It all helps to raise your profile and means that more and more people will find out about you.

Instant updates

While a conventional blog is a great tool for attracting readers and potential customers, those blog posts can get pushed to the bottom of your list of things to do.

Twitter isn't like that. You only have to write 140 characters after all, and sometimes you won't even need that many to tell people what's going on right now.

You also stand a chance of getting more followers to a well maintained and thought out stream of tweets than you will to your regular blog—precisely because it's short and sweet. People don't always have the time to keep reading a blog (even a very good one) so you can give people the choice of whether they want to read more or just stick with your tweets for now.

Did we mention you can use URLs in your tweets if you want to? Now there's a thought . . .

A great marketing tool

This benefit should be obvious by now. It might take you a while to get the hang of how to put Twitter to good use for boosting your business, but this book will get you much closer than you would if you made the journey on your own.

Stay tuned for a whole chapter on what Twitter can do for your business—including information on how to boost traffic to each and every tweet you make.

An important point to note here is that you can customize your own personal Twitter page to include your own business colors and photo—so it's super easy to upload your business logo and create a background that instantly identifies you and your business and makes you stand out from the crowd.

PROMOTING YOUR TWITTER PROFILE

Here's the best bit. When you join Twitter you will get your own unique URL to promote anywhere and everywhere you like. It will consist of the main Twitter website address followed by a forward slash and then your username.

When people visit this web address they will see your profile and your latest tweets listed in the order that you posted them. You can put a short bio and the URL of your website on this page so make doubly sure you fill them in! Every single person that visits your profile page is a potential visitor for your website too, so make things easy for them.

Now obviously you can use this URL anywhere you like—if you are telling people about your presence on Twitter you can use a clickable link to embed your Twitter URL into the word 'Twitter'. All someone has to do then is click on the word and they'll be taken straight to your profile page.

But the website also provides you with an opportunity to create your very own badge for use on other sites, and this has the

You can customize your own personal Twitter page to include your own business colors and photo.

You can have a Flash style widget that either contains you and your friends tweets.

advantage of being more visually appealing. You'll find the appropriate page for getting your customized badges at <http://twitter.com/badges>.

Getting your own unique badge

This is easy and it's well worth doing because it really helps to draw attention to your Twitter profile. A badge is basically a widget, and you can choose one to blend in with your Blogger based blog, your MySpace account, your Facebook account or your TypePad blog.

Alternatively if you don't have any of those click on the 'Other' option and you'll get three other options to choose from. You can have a Flash style widget that either contains you and your friends tweets, or just yours—although either method allows people to click on your Twitter ID and join up so they can follow you (more on following and being followed in a moment!).

You can also choose an HTML or JavaScript option if you are able to do a bit of simple copying and pasting and you can put JavaScript wherever you want to put your widget. Again every single entry can be clicked on to allow people to find and follow you on Twitter itself. These widgets not only highlight your contributions to your Twitter page, they also make it easy for people to follow you—which is what leads to a bigger audience for everything you do and write, both on Twitter and elsewhere.

Promoting your Twitter profile is only one side of the story though. Not only do you want to promote it, you also want people to keep in touch with it. Now if you take a look at your profile page once you've joined the site, you'll notice that you have a little stats box on the right hand side. Among other things, this will show you how many updates (otherwise known as our tweets) you have posted, how many people you are following and more importantly, how many people are following you.

It is in your best interests to make that last number as big as possible, since the more people you have following your tweets the better the impact is likely to be on your business as a whole.

Getting people to follow you

This is a bit like leaving a trail of breadcrumbs for people to follow. First off, they won't follow you if they don't know you're there, so get those badges and widgets sorted out and get some clickable links announcing the fact that you're now on Twitter for everyone to find and post them on your blog and website.

Another cool tactic is to announce you're a Twitterer at the bottom of all the emails you send out to anyone—even your bank manager. Hey you never know; he might be a Twitterer too.

The more people who know about your tweets, the better the chances are of some of them deciding to follow you. Most

The more people who know about your tweets, the better the chances are of some of them deciding to follow you.

people won't just follow someone who tweets about anything and everything though, so make sure you bear in mind your reason for being on Twitter in the first place.

You want to promote yourself and your business, right? Okay, so although Twitter—in common with a lot of other sites like this—doesn't like you promoting your wares heavily through your tweets, it doesn't mind you sticking to the subject your business and interests are all about. For example let's say you have a website which sells pet accessories. You wouldn't promote items directly from your tweets; instead you could share a few bizarre facts and figures about animals through your tweets. It should be something interesting that will entice people to read more of your updates and maybe even sign on as a follower.

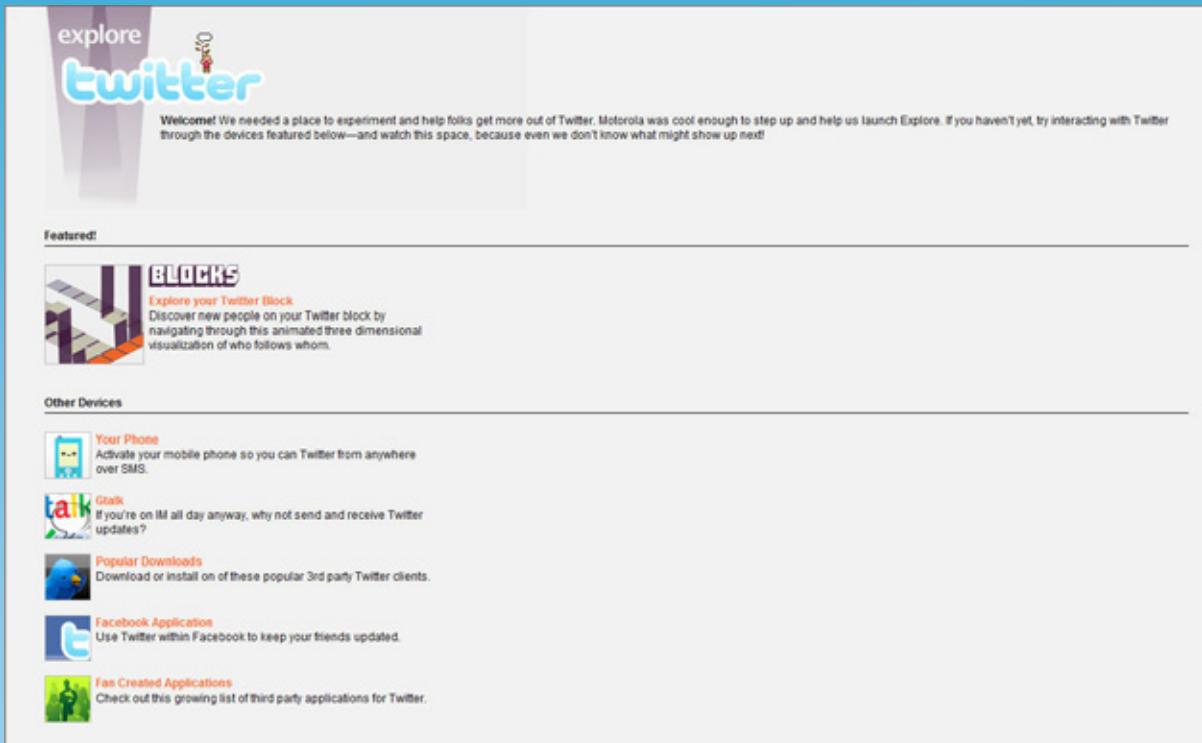
Don't forget that it's really not necessary to sell directly via your Twitter updates anyway, since your profile page will include your website address for everyone to click on and visit. Twitter is pretty easy to get the hang of, so even newcomers will see your website address and are very likely to click through for a look see if they read and enjoy your updates.

Follow other people

Another great way to get people to follow you is to start following them first!

The trick to doing this successfully though is to make sure you follow the right people. If your updates are concentrated





explore
twitter

Welcome! We needed a place to experiment and help folks get more out of Twitter. Motorola was cool enough to step up and help us launch Explore. If you haven't yet, try interacting with Twitter through the devices featured below—and watch this space, because even we don't know what might show up next!

Featured!

BLOCKS
Explore your Twitter Block
Discover new people on your Twitter block by navigating through this animated three dimensional visualization of who follows whom.

Other Devices

Your iPhone
Activate your mobile phone so you can Twitter from anywhere over SMS.

iTalk
If you're on IM all day anyway, why not send and receive Twitter updates?

Popular Downloads
Download or install on of these popular 3rd party Twitter clients.

Facebook Application
Use Twitter within Facebook to keep your friends updated.

Fan Created Applications
Check out this growing list of third party applications for Twitter.

exploring Twitter

around unusual and fascinating facts about animals to help attract people who will also be interested in your website, you should start following other people who have a similar interest in animals.

But how on earth do you find them?

Twitter Blocks

These are worth looking at purely for the amazing image you get—but they have a far more intriguing purpose as well.

Twitter Blocks give you a virtual map of who you are connected to on Twitter. So let's say for example you start following someone. If you go onto the Twitter Blocks part of the site at <http://explore.twitter.com/#> you'll see the option to look at your own Twitter block.

This will show a link from you to the person you are following . . . and then another link (or more) to their neighbors. While they won't all be interested in following you, you can certainly follow them and as soon as they realize they have a new follower they'll be sure to sit up and take notice of you. It's the Twitterer's way of standing up, waving and saying "Hi!"

Using the search feature

If there is one sure way to find like minded people on Twitter (without the joy of seeing all those hovering blocks . . .) it's via the search feature.

This trawls through the information people give on their profile page and returns any profiles featuring the word or words you have asked it to search for. Incidentally a search for the word 'animals' returned over a thousand results, so even if only a fraction of those are interested in you and your animal accessories business, you're off to a great start.

So there we go—we've made a great start. But there's plenty more to learn and take advantage of yet.

2

How to Use Twitter as a Mini Blog

A mini blog? Is it really worth it when you're only allowed a maximum of 140 characters for each 'post'?

Well actually yes, it is. The real secret to using Twitter effectively is to think of it as a miniature blog. Sure, some people will use it to tell the world what they had for dinner, but we've got an altogether different purpose for it. We want to generate traffic for our websites and promote our businesses, so we need to have some continuity in our tweets if we can.

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A BLOG AND 'TWITTERING'?

Two words—no waffle. In fact, starting to tweet on a regular basis will actually make everything you write for your blog tighter and more readable. If a blog is a novel, then a tweet is a short story.

So what differences are there in the way that you construct your tweets as opposed to how you write a blog post?

Well you certainly have a lot more freedom with your blog since you can pretty much write posts as long as you like. Some people have been known to write blog posts that could quite easily have been sold as e-books! There's certainly no way you could do that with your tweets.

Some people have asked what the point of Twitter really is. With updates that are so short is there anything you can say that is worthwhile? That is a valid point, but if you ever find yourself thinking that then you're missing the whole point of Twitter.

It gives you a tool that allows you to get in touch with anyone else on the web. It also appeals to all those people who simply don't have the time to keep up with a blog—however well it might be written. The basic premise is this—write the best tweets you can come up with, give people the URL to your blog or website in your profile, and let them decide whether they want to read more or not.

As such it also provides an easy access point as far as many of your potential readers are concerned. If you've ever been browsing around the web and come across a blog on a subject you're interested in, how long do you give it before you get bored and move on to something else?

That's a great advantage of Twitter. Someone can come across your profile, take a quick glance at all your tweets and decide

Think of it as an opportunity to pre-sell your blog or website without actually selling anything.

then and there whether they want to follow you or not. Or maybe even jump over to your blog or website.

So don't think of Twitter as just a mini blog, or even a micro blog. Think of it as an opportunity to pre-sell your blog or website without actually selling anything.

Sounds confusing? Let's take a closer look at how to write great tweets to sell without, er, selling.

Writing great tweets

Think of each tweet you send out as a headline.

The first rule of great writing—whether it's a tweet or anything else, come to that—is to grab the attention of whoever is reading. If they're not intrigued, delighted, amazed or just plain wowed over what you're written then you're not going to win any fans or long term readers.

And if they're not interested in your tweets the chances are high that they won't be too bothered about visiting your website or your blog either. Shame.

So let's make sure that doesn't happen to you.

If you're on Twitter to promote your business, think of each tweet you send out as a headline. Don't forget the golden rule not to overly plug your business all the time. Instead, think about some ways that you can get people interested in you and what you're tweeting about.

Try keeping tabs on what's going on in your line of business, especially online. With any luck you will become known as someone who provides a regular insight into that area, and people will start to look forward to your updates.

Thinking about each update in terms of a headline is a great way to make sure you don't waffle and waste some of those precious 140 characters. But there is a fine balance between writing an attention grabbing headline and writing something that's impersonal. Take these two examples:

"Revolutionary new breakthrough in cat collars announced by world famous company" (that's only 79 characters—140 goes a lot further than you might think!)

"Revolutionary new breakthrough in cat collars was announced today. What on earth would Tiddles think?" (and that's 102 characters)

You see how the first example truly is a headline, while the second one is a little more one to one and actually sparks off a line of thinking in the reader's head? You could include a URL after this one to link to a longer post on your blog (perfectly legit technique) which goes into more detail . . . and maybe even mentions that you have a website which stocks cat collars too.

A neat trick with URLs

This isn't strictly a writing technique but we'll include it here since it does affect the number of characters you end up using

for your tweet. Rather than include a long blog post URL in your update, go to <http://tinyurl.com> and shrink your URL down to save on characters. It's quick and easy and you don't need to sign up for anything either. Oh, and it's free.

Keywords

This is an important tip to remember because it can get you some extra traffic. And it doesn't just apply to your updates; it applies to your profile as well. Remember what we discovered earlier about being able to find other like minded people by searching for words they may have included in their profiles? Well if you can search for other people . . . then they can search for you too.

So with that in mind, make sure you think about what keywords best describe your business or your interests—whatever is relevant to the kind of audience you want to attract. If you have a gadgets website, tell people you are a gadget freak. If you are a writer, tell people. If you like computers (and you just so happen to sell software for them) tell people what you do. Get the picture? Just remember those keywords and the right traffic will automatically come and find you.

One final tip about writing a tweet

If you are on Twitter with the intention of building up another stream of traffic and finding new readers for your blog, make sure you post a tweet to announce each new blog post, and give

readers something intriguing to chew over while they click your link to visit the blog itself. Asking a question that is answered on your blog can work well, but the best way to explore what people are doing to grab other people's attention is by getting to know different Twitterers and seeing how they do it.

Who catches your attention and why? Make a note of how they do it, start following them and see if you can emulate their techniques. You'll develop your own style over time, but there's no harm in learning from the people who are already being followed by dozens—if not hundreds—of other people. This is a sure sign that they are great Twitterers!

WILL TWITTER REPLACE BLOGS AS WE KNOW THEM?

I think we know the answer to that by now, but it's worth exploring it in a little more detail. You see, the two mediums are very different. Twitter is famous for its brevity, which some people see as a bad thing but others (those who have already plugged into the traffic it can generate) see as a huge benefit.

Twitter can act as a forerunner to your blog. It can be a flag waver to get people's attention before funneling them over to where you want them to go. It also establishes a link with people in a very non-threatening way. You're effectively saying, "Hey look, I wrote a new blog post today. See what you think . . ." and then handing the reins over to them.

Twitter can act as a forerunner to your blog.

So no—Twitter won't and shouldn't replace the standard blog. It should go hand in hand with it, and those who really understand that link will do well with both.

HOW TO USE TWITTER IN CONJUNCTION WITH YOUR BLOG

Okay so we know that Twitter can act as a kind of announcing tool that you can use whenever you make a new post on your blog. But it can be so much more than that if you know how to use it properly.

This is where some creative thinking can really pay dividends. Sometimes it's nice to just let people know you've written a new blog post, telling them roughly what it's about and where to find it. But Twitter is essentially a tool for getting in touch with people and letting them know what you're doing, so why not take advantage of that and get your readers and followers involved a bit more as well?

The best way to achieve this is to use your updates to ask questions rather than post statements all the time. It's good to simply say something once in a while, but by asking a question you encourage your followers to tweet back at you and pull them a little further into your world.

There's another benefit of asking questions as well. If you've got a blog that you've been working on for a while, you'll probably have run across times when you run a bit short on ideas. Ever felt like that? It would certainly be good if you could get some fresh input into your blog without giving over control to anyone else, wouldn't it?


Welcome to Twitter!

There is no better place or method for getting some fresh input than this website. Lots of bloggers have caught onto this method of refreshing their blog and that's because it works. Ask your readers what they'd like to see on your blog that isn't already there. Try asking what they thought of your last blog post. Have you ever thought about putting a poll on your blog and asking people to vote through a tweet?

There are plenty of ways to generate extra traffic to your blog and get people more involved in it by using your Twitter account to get involved with them. All you need to do is think of the best questions to ask in your case.

Getting ideas

If people start to tweet back at you, pay close attention to what they say. Some of them may unwittingly highlight certain areas of your topic that you hadn't even thought about.



*It may take you
a while to find your
own voice and
that's fine.*

One chance comment through Twitter and you could be off and writing your next blog post within minutes. Stay alert and watch out for the nuggets of information other Twitterers will send you.

Be prepared to experiment

All the great bloggers have their own distinctive voice. It's the same on Twitter. You wouldn't think that people would have much room to express their own character in 140 characters but it is certainly possible, as you'll see once you start exploring what other people have to say.

It may take you a while to find your own voice and that's fine. Experiment with different styles for a while or just do what feels natural to you. You might make the decision for every tweet to be in the form of a question. Alternatively you might make each one a statement.

The point is, everyone finds a different way of using Twitter to enhance and promote their blog. Your Twitter style will probably be very similar to your blogging style, and indeed they shouldn't be too different otherwise you might find you lose readers. You want to be as recognizable as possible.

Enough said? Good. Now let's get down to business.

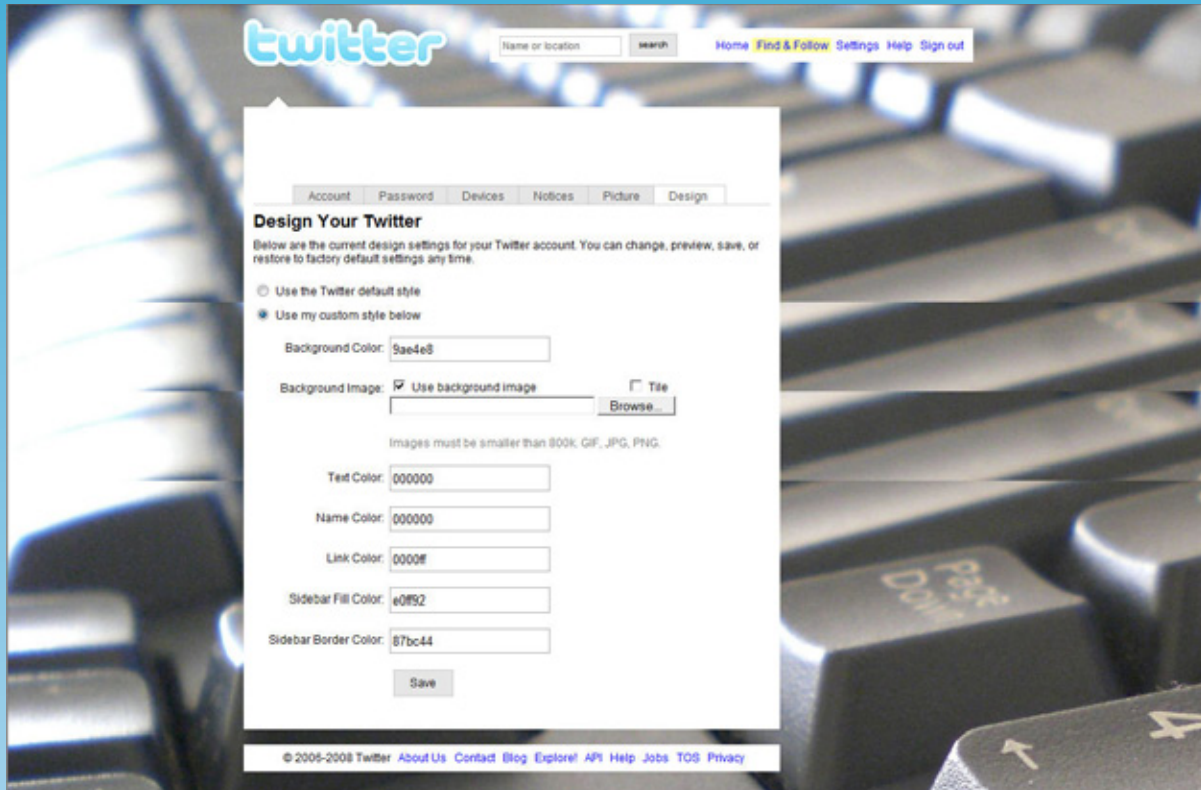
3

Using Twitter to Enhance Your Online Business

Once you've been on Twitter for a while and you've come across a few other Twitterers, you'll notice that they tend to fall into two broad groups. The first group likes to tell everyone what they've had for dinner, what they're watching on television and so on. The second group likes to use the site as a business tool.

Needless to say, it's the activities of this second group that we're interested in. If you use the site properly you can build up another stream of traffic to your website or blog, not to mention developing a brand for yourself as well.

And it doesn't matter whether you are a new business or you've been around for a while either. The great benefit of Twitter is that it attracts all kinds of people from all walks of life, who all have different reasons and motivations for using the website. You'll soon find you start to link up with and follow people who are interested in the same subjects you are, and then they'll start following you too.



USING TWITTER AS A BUSINESS TOOL

Twitter profile page

Remember what we said in the last section about asking questions to generate some ideas for your blog? It works just as well for any other business too.

By asking questions in this context you can get a much better idea of who your customers are and what appeals to them. For example, you might be thinking about stocking a certain product but you're unsure as to how well it might be received. Why not post an update asking for some feedback on it and see what you get in return?

You can always post a teaser and then link to your blog where you can give some more information.

BRANDING YOUR BUSINESS ON TWITTER

Branding can be a subtle process that occurs over time. As a Twitterer you can ensure you become known for tweeting on a specific subject which is related to your business. In this way you will automatically start to get involved with other people on the site who think the same way you do.

Let's say you own a website which sells quality accessories for various makes of car. If you start tweeting about subjects such as the importance of personalizing your car, why quality accessories last longer, why cheap isn't actually cheap at all and so on, you will gradually start to develop your brand as something that is of good quality and is reliable. That is the impression people will get and so they'll automatically have that image in mind when they cross over to your website for a quick look.

You can also brand yourself by personalizing your profile page on Twitter. You can't do anything too profound to it but what you can do is enough to really make you stand out.

First off there is your profile picture. If you are on Twitter for the express purpose of promoting your business, the best picture to use is one of your logo. It should be a clear one though as the actual picture will be quite small on your screen. Photos don't work as well.

The best thing you can do is to change the background. You can upload a background image as a JPEG, GIF or PNG file, and it will appear behind your profile column and your latest list of tweets. Get your thinking cap on and make it a good one! A bricklayer could use a photo of a wall, a writer could use a picture of a typewriter, a website selling jigsaws could use a load of random jigsaw pieces as a background . . . you get the picture (no pun intended). Just don't forget—your background can be your brand too.

GENERATING TRAFFIC

Now we know we can shrink long URLs by feeding them through Tiny URL before posting them to Twitter, so an update can include a link to another website or blog, providing a direct link to it in the process.

There are two basic rules to remember when it comes to generating traffic via your Twitter account:

- Put the website address of the site you want to drive traffic to in your profile column—everyone will be able to see this whenever they visit your page
- Concentrate on building up a large number of followers. The more people who know about you and what you're about, the more people you will get clicking through to your website

The next section will also show you how to use some of the huge number of Twitter tools available to make the process of generating traffic that bit easier.

The best results for traffic building on Twitter will be seen over the long term. It's vital to understand that you can't just sign up, start tweeting and expect traffic for your website to go through the roof as a result. It needs a little effort from you first.

But like a lot of other things, once you have laid the groundwork you can simply post an update every day to let your followers know what's going on in your world. A well written tweet will always attract their attention if you continue to be a regular face on the site.

We've already covered some techniques for attracting a large number of followers, but if you want to keep them interested in your business it's important to remember that you need to keep them interested in reading your tweets too. A lot of people fall into the trap of thinking that so long as they post an update every day or so, that will be enough to keep people following them.

STOP PRESS! It's not enough to simply be active on Twitter. People won't follow you just for the hell of it. If you come across someone else on Twitter who doesn't have anything interesting to say, do you decide to follow them anyway? Of course not.

The same goes for you. Think about what you want to achieve on the website and stick with it. If you want to attract the kind of people who could well become customers, you need to make sure every single tweet you post will be of interest to them in some way. Even if they don't always click through to read your blog post or read that new article you've got on your website, the overall effect will be cumulative.

Over time they will come to trust you and look forward to your tweets—your little nuggets of inspiration. A lot of people don't get Twitter—they can't see how such a short post can make any difference to anyone at all.

But we know better, right?

Build your followers over time and you'll find your traffic builds over time too. So long as you concentrate on making sure all your tweets are of excellent quality and relevant to your area of business, you will find that the traffic tends to take care of itself.

*You will find
that the traffic
tends to take care
of itself.*

USING TWITTER AS A LINKING TOOL

It should be pretty obvious that if you want to offer real value and worthwhile content to your readers and followers on Twitter, you shouldn't be linking to your website or blog on every single update you write. Not only would it stand a chance of annoying the powers that be at Twitter, it would probably annoy your followers too, since that kind of action tends to come across as overly promotional and very pushy.

By all means let people know when you've posted a new entry to your blog, but don't make that the subject of every single tweet you write. You should always aim to write a few tweets that don't link anywhere—instead they simply reveal some useful piece of information that can really help out someone who is interested in information about your type of business.

It might seem like a crazy suggestion but you can also link up to a website that isn't connected with you at all. There might on occasion be a breaking news story that is related to your area of interest that would be worth sharing with your followers. In that case tell them about it.

Linking to another site doesn't harm you or your business in any way. In fact it can have the opposite effect—people will come to look on you as an expert who knows where to go for the best information and shares it with their followers when they find it.

Now I would certainly follow someone like that, wouldn't you?

Think about the whole situation; don't just concentrate on traffic and sales all the time. Profile and reputation is just as important—if not more so in the long run, since you will gain more followers when they read the tweets you have posted in the past. Your current followers will also stay interested and be eagerly awaiting your next tweet.

PLAY THE LONG GAME

If you spend any length of time searching for other users on Twitter, you'll see a whole host of people who joined, posted one tweet about eight or nine months ago, and haven't been seen since.

These are mostly part of that huge group of people who haven't yet figured out how to use the site to its best advantage. You are not in that group, since you've come this far already.

Once you've joined, make sure you sort your profile out straightaway, post your first tweet, and then start browsing round for like minded people. Once you start following some other people and getting a few followers yourself, you've started playing the long game.

This is the one that gets the best results. If you put a little effort in every day, you'll no doubt have hundreds of followers in a few months time. So don't give up. Explore, learn and enjoy.

And just wait for the results.

4

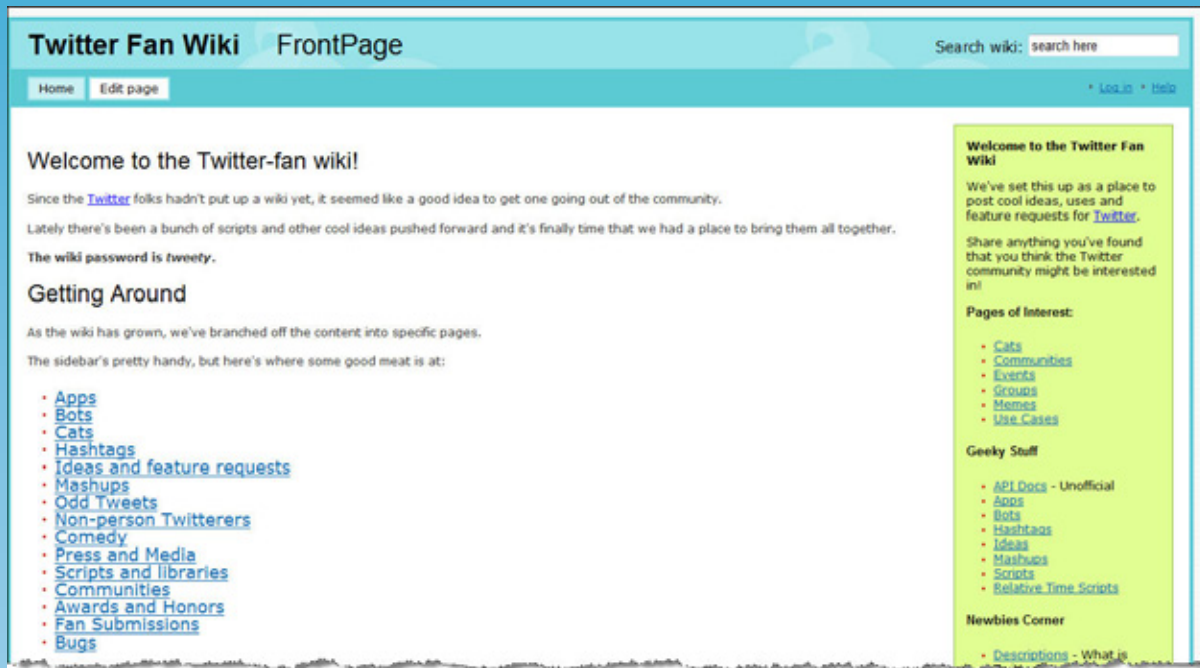
Twitter Tools

WHAT ARE TWITTER TOOLS?

Put simply they are tools which have been created to make using Twitter easier and more interactive. And for those of us who want to use our Twitter accounts for the benefit of our business it is well worth digging around to see how many of these Twitter tools would help us in our quest for more traffic.

So that's what we're going to do in this section—we're going to take a look at some of the more useful tools that can really help you save time, reach more people and generally get more out of your Twittering than you would otherwise.

It's worth giving each of the following services a try since we all have our own preferences and what one person may swear by as a way to make Twittering easier may not sit well with someone else. It is certainly true to say though that using the tools that work for you will enhance your Twitter experience—so don't go it alone!



There is also a link to the Twitter Fan Wiki in the Explore section of Twitter itself, which gives you access to a wide range of possible tools to try.

Twitter tools

LoudTwitter.com

This is a pretty basic site, but the idea it is based on is a good one so it's definitely worth mentioning.

Basically all you need to do is enter your blog address on the home page and you'll end up getting all the tweets you make every day sent to your blog in one easy to read post. This is a

All you need to do is remember to tweet!

real time saver and it ensures you don't forget to update it at any point. All you need to do is remember to tweet!

TwitterFeed.com

This is a little like LoudTwitter, but in reverse. This one gets all the information it needs from you to be able to send your blog posts over to your Twitter account without your input.

Again, this is another little time saving device that will have you tweeting without actually going onto Twitter to do it. It should be noted though that this doesn't excuse you from tweeting on other aspects of your subject. Your goal is to get people interested in what you have to say and what your particular interest is. Don't just use Twitter remotely as a blog post announcer.

Squidoo.com

This isn't actually a Twitter tool in itself, but it's worth a mention because it has a Twitter tool within it!

Joining Squidoo is free and you can build web pages (lenses) on all kinds of topics. The subject of your business, perhaps? Now there's an idea . . .

Anyway, when you are building your first lens make sure you take a look in the wide array of modules and add a Twitter Follow module to your lens. All you need to do is add a title and the name of your Twitter account and boom—your tweets will automatically be updated to your lens as and when you make them.

This is a great way to get more people following you since the search engines love Squidoo lenses and you'll start getting traffic to yours in no time.

[TweetScan.com](#)

If you've ever found it tricky to use the search feature on Twitter (or you just fancy using something different), give TweetScan a try. This has the advantage that it doesn't search for your specified word in people's profiles; instead it searches for it in the actual tweets.

This is basically a search engine for Twitter updates and as such it's a great way to locate the kind of people who are going to be interested in your line of business. Take the time to come up with a list of relevant keywords for your website or blog, or whatever you are selling, and type each one into the TweetScan search box.

You'll turn up plenty of people that you can start following, and the law of averages will mean that some of those people will also start following you, since you have the same interests in common. It's a useful tool which can be used for research purposes. Make the most of it.

[Sociagami.com](#)

Social networking sites are wonderful for generating traffic to your website. But if you are a member of more than one social

networking site you will no doubt have hit the wall by now when it comes to remembering your passwords, usernames, which blog post you told your friends about where . . . and on and on it goes.

Social networking as a way to enhance traffic is all very well, but it can certainly get confusing. That's why sociagami.com has come along to fill a need that was very clearly there for a while before anyone thought to fill it.

If you are a member of MySpace and Facebook, this application will let you manage both your accounts from one place. It works with Windows and needless to say you'll find it a lot easier to integrate your tweets into both sites without wasting too much time in the process.

TwitterTools

This comes hotfoot from AlexKing.com who created it. It's another type of plug in that it turns each tweet into a blog post and enters it on your WordPress blog.

A lot of people use this and it is certainly another time saver. The downside is that it does only work on WordPress though.

Rareedge.com/twitteroo

Otherwise known simply as Twitteroo, you won't need to muck about logging into your Twitter account any more once you have installed this nifty little Windows friendly plug in into your desktop.

Why go into Twitter to post an update when you can just type it straight into your desktop? If you're a bit slack at posting regularly you'll certainly find this a good way to remind you to do it more often.

You can also shorten your URL quickly and easily and there are plenty of customizable little tweaks you can do to make things even more user friendly. This one is unmissable.

Iconfactory.com/software/twitterific

Included for the Mac users among you, Twitterific serves the same basic purpose as Twitteroo.

There are plenty of features to this with only one real downside, and that is the fact that it's not free. However at the time of writing it will only take fifteen dollars to get it installed in your browser.

Twitthis.com

This isn't so much for using with your Twitter account; it's aimed at getting other people to tweet about your blog or website, enabling you to get some more free publicity as a result.

You'll get a neat free 'Tweet This!' button to put wherever you like on your site or blog, which will hopefully encourage people to do exactly that and tweet about you (hopefully politely!).

So get your button and stick it wherever you can. The more places you can put it (but only once on each page of your site at most) the more chances you have of getting other people to start tweeting about you (or maybe even following you as a result).

MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR TWITTER TOOLS

Twitter tools tend to be rather addictive and it's not surprising considering how many of them are about.

Bookmark the ones you like and try them out one by one, then get rid of the ones that don't really serve your needs. We're all different so we all have our own personal favourites.

One of the best ones in our opinion is TweetScan, since it leads you to all kinds of people on Twitter who are tweeting about the exact same things you are interested in. You just need to make sure you don't start following people who have just made one random post about your subject and don't actually have any real interest in it at all.

Whenever you come across a new Twitter tool think about how it could benefit your business and then give it a go. Sometimes it's not just the tool itself that is useful—it's how you actually use it that really matters.

Twitter tools tend to be rather addictive and it's not surprising considering how many of them are about.



Get Twittering!

So what are you waiting for? You've seen just how effective Twitter can be in enhancing your business, building a brand, attracting the attention of the right kind of people you want to get in touch with and bringing you fresh ideas and insight into developing your business still further.

This is where you need to stop reading and actually get out there and start tweeting for yourself. Your ideal audience is there—all you need to do is get yourself a Twitter account, design your profile page, fill it in with the appropriate information and get started.

It takes time to build up a following on Twitter, and it also takes time to build up a back catalogue of comments and tweets for people to look at when they find you. But the time you spend in doing that is small compared to the benefits you can get in return.

HOW WILL YOU USE TWITTER?

Keep this question foremost in your mind as you start to explore the site and what it has to offer. By setting a target for yourself—perhaps you want to get a dozen dedicated followers in your first month on the site—it helps you to stay focused and you are far more likely to achieve what you want to achieve.

Your goals can change along the way but overall your business should always remain at the root of what you are doing.

If you keep that simple fact in mind and follow what you have learned in this book you won't go far wrong.

You can also visit our blog at www.geekpreneur.com to get more tips and advice on how to promote yourself online, and plenty more besides.

But before that, it's time you started tweeting.

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