

# Being digital

## Making the most of Twitter

### 1: Introduction

"Almost considered doing something with my life, but then I sat down and logged into Twitter."

"Waking up in the morning and checking my Twitter like its the morning paper."

"Twitter is 1) An obsession. 2) A distraction. 3) A tracking device. 4) Where drama lives. 5) Everybody's diary."

(From: [Search quotes: Twitter Quotes and Sayings](#))

Twitter is a social networking tool which enables you to post short updates of 140 characters or less. Opinions about it can be quite divided. This activity highlights the benefits of Twitter and some of the ways it can help you in your study or work.

### Learning outcome

By the end of this activity you should know how to make the most of Twitter for your purposes.

## 2: What's in it for me?

Look at the list of statements below and select all those you think would be useful to you. Then read the feedback.

- Finding out about other useful websites, articles or blogs
- Networking with experts in your field
- Promoting your work
- Getting the latest breaking news
- Sharing ideas and information
- Extending your network

### Feedback

Twitter makes it quick and easy to post links to all sorts of information on the web.

You can use Twitter to keep up with key people in your area of interest.

You can easily let a large number of other people know what you are doing, and post links to blogs, articles or presentations.

Developments may be posted on Twitter before they are communicated via other more formal channels.

You can interact with others in real time, responding to events as they happen.

Twitter enables you to connect with a wide range of others who share your interests.

### **3: Which Twitter personality are you?**

People use Twitter for different purposes, so there is nothing to say that you have to be posting witty one-liners every five minutes.

A few years ago ReadWriteWeb identified three types of Twitter users: listeners, talkers and hubs ([5 ways to have fun with Twitter](#)).

Of course, the reality is more complex than that. However, just for fun, read through the three descriptions below to see if you identify with any of the three types.

#### **Listener**

Listeners follow a lot of people but do not tweet much themselves, and may not have many followers. Being a listener is a good use of Twitter, if it suits your purposes and provides you with useful information.

#### **Hub**

A 'hub' is a person who follows and is followed by an equal number of people. They could be likened to the person at a party who introduces people to each other. If you are a hub, you are helping others to connect, and thus extending everyone's network.

#### **Talker**

Talkers post frequent tweets and have a lot of followers, but do not follow many people themselves. Talkers may be communicating breaking news, the latest research, or their own writing (for example, blog posts). Being able to rely on someone to systematically disseminate information in your field can be very useful.

## 4: Getting started

If you are new to Twitter, and would like some advice to get you up and running, visit the [Twitter \(2016\) Getting started with Twitter](#) website, for more information.

Once you have set up a profile and posted your first tweet, identify a few interesting people to follow.

Use a hashtag # if you want to provide a topic or keyword so that your tweets show up when others search for them. For example, #FF stands for 'follow Friday', a weekly tradition where Twitter users recommend people that others should follow.

If you would like to get two individual views of how people use and benefit from Twitter, visit the websites below.

[Priestner, A \(2012\) Twitter for researchers](#)

[Weller, M \(2012\) A Twitter love song](#)

## 5: Summary and reflection

### Summary

**Invest time in building your network.** Find out who the key people are to follow. When people follow you, take a moment or two to decide whether you want to follow them back.

**Be focused.** Decide who and what you are interested in. Try not to get side-tracked by entertaining but irrelevant postings.

**Be selective.** Don't feel you have to read everything. If you don't have much time, decide when you are going to use Twitter and make it work for you. For example, it can be a good use of 'dead' time, such as waiting for a bus.

**Contribute.** You can learn a lot by just reading other people's posts, but to get the most from Twitter, we encourage you to take the plunge and do some tweeting yourself.

## **Next steps**

Think about how [Twitter](#) could work for you. What do you need to do to make it happen? For example, find out who is active in your area of interest and follow them, share something that would be of value to others in your field, or join in a Twitter conversation at an event.

## **References**

### **Being digital activity**

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