

## Social Media Tips – Using Twitter

We live in a world dominated by social media. It's everywhere, all the time... and it comes in many forms. It's how people stay informed and connected; in fact some people completely rely on social media for news and information.

There used to be a time when media outlets would "hold" stories so their competition wouldn't hear about them. Now, the race is on to see who can get a "breaking news" story up on social media first. It is used as a complimentary tool to newspapers and television newscasts.

- For example, when the musician Prince passed away, many people around the world first heard about it on Twitter. The first media outlet to report the death was TMZ, who put it on Twitter even before putting the news on its website.

It is also a very useful tool in the professional world. While social media comes in the form of Facebook, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Snapchat, and new apps seemingly developed daily, we are going to focus this guide on Twitter.

Twitter has become the social media standard for news and information. The short, 140-character maximum blasts can instantly inform people of what's happening; or it can be used to as a promotional tool to drive people to web sites for information. The following is a guide, and only a guide, to some general "do's and don'ts" in the "Twitterverse"

If you want to start a Twitter account: <https://support.twitter.com/articles/215585>

Now that you're Tweeting...

--The first rule of thumb is, and always will be, anyone can see anything you put out on Twitter. When you tweet, it's not just your followers who can gain access. So don't tweet anything you don't want others to see.

--The second rule is, there are really no other rules. People use Twitter to promote themselves, their work, or others' work in a variety of different ways. Here is a recent example of the same story tweeted in two different ways:

- Member in the News: [@DavidJust1](#) A clever tweak to how apples are sold is making everyone eat more [ow.ly/msbW300zJcZ](http://ow.ly/msbW300zJcZ) [@washingtonpost](#)
- [.@AAEA\\_Economics](#) member in the news... literally comparing apples to apples! [twitter.com/DavidJust1/sta...](https://twitter.com/DavidJust1/sta...)

Neither is good or bad, just different. It depends on your style and your audience. The "play on words" style on the second tweet wouldn't work on something much more serious.

--What is a hashtag? <https://support.twitter.com/articles/49309>

--What is Tweetdeck? <https://support.twitter.com/articles/20169620>

--What is HootSuite? <https://hootsuite.com/>

--Here are some good observations on Twitter etiquette from AAEA Member Scott Irwin (@ScottIrwinUI):

- If you want to develop a twitter following you have to be active, try to tweet at least once per day
- You also have to be willing to engage on twitter in two-way conversations
- When someone asks a question or comments on a tweet, the expectation is that the response will be very quick, pretty much immediate
- I think of my tweets as a 140 character professional microblog
- A little humor and snark helps (but not too much)
- Don't mix professional and personal tweets (personal: my football team won over the weekend, my kid is so cute)
- Minimize tweets about professional achievements that are meaningful only to you (journal article acceptances, grant awards, etc.)
- Tweets are like broadcasting a radio newscast except over the Internet, so the same tweet can be resent multiple times per day

--As Scott mentions, Twitter can help you expand your brand. It is an amazing tool to help promote research, stories, products, etc. Consider your brand every time you click "tweet" if you are tweeting from a professional account.

--If you do have multiple accounts, for instance one personal and one professional, you can choose to keep them completely separate (example: not mentioning your brand, profession, business, etc. on your personal site/profile). That doesn't mean people can't connect the dots, so, again, be careful about what you post

--A good rule of thumb: if you wouldn't send it to your mother, spouse, boss, etc., don't put it on Twitter.

--Despite the warnings above, Twitter is and can be a wonderful thing. Twitter moves more information per minute than any other website outside of Google.