

# Introduction to Twitter

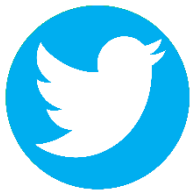
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*This guide was made thanks to the information provided on [Twitter's official website](#).*

## What is Twitter



Twitter is a real-time social network that allows you to send and receive short posts called Tweets.

Twitter users follow other users. If you follow someone, you can see their Tweets in your twitter 'timeline'. You can choose to follow people and organisations with similar academic and personal interests to you.

You can create your own Tweets or you can retweet information that has been tweeted by others. Retweeting means that information can be shared quickly and efficiently with a large number of people.

Profiles are (usually) public — anyone in the world can see what you write, unless you elect to make your profile private, but this defeats the purpose of Twitter being used to share information with a wide audience.

## Why use Twitter

Twitter has become increasingly popular with academics as well as students, policymakers, politicians and the general public. Many users struggled to understand what Twitter is and how they could use it, but it has now become the social media platform of choice for many.

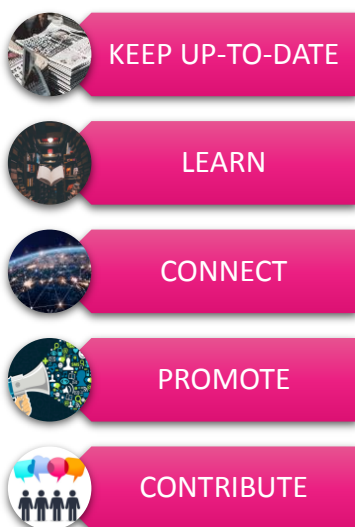


The snappy nature of Tweets means that Twitter is widely used by smartphone users who don't want to read long content items on-screen.

You may already have a personal Twitter account, personal accounts are commonly used to follow celebrities, news outlets and organisations you have a personal interest in.

It is a good idea to create a new Twitter account for professional use so content can be focused.

### Twitter allows you to:



- Network and build connections in your field
- Expose your work/ projects/ organisation to a wider audience than could be achieved in person or by other communication methods.
- Raise awareness of your work/ project/ organisation and promote it by providing links
- Follow the work of other experts in your field
- Keep up-to-date with the latest news and developments, and share it with others instantly
- Reach new audiences or people who you unable to contact in real
- Seek feedback about your work and give feedback to others
- Follow and contribute to discussions on events, for example conferences that you can't attend in person

## Setting up your account



Sign up using an active email address / phone number and create a username and password.

Add a professional profile picture and write your Twitter Bio. This can be up to 160 characters and includes a link to any relevant external websites, your location, when you joined Twitter and your birthday (optional)

### Username

A username or Twitter handle is how you are identified on Twitter, and is *always preceded immediately by an @ symbol*. For example, The QNI username is [@TheQNI](#). Please note, there can't be any spaces or symbols (except the underscore) in the username.



For professional use, we recommend using your first and last name so it is easy to find you. For example, the QNI's Chief Executive Dr Crystal Oldman is registered on Twitter as [@CrystalOldman](#). If the username you would like to use is already taken, try a different variation, such as swapping first and last name, adding an underscore or a number. For example, the QNI's Director of Nursing Programmes Sue Boran's username is [@BoranSue](#) and Project Manager for General Practice Nursing Angie Hack's username is [@AngieHack10](#).

To change your username, go to 'Settings and privacy' and then choose 'Account'.

[Learn more about Twitter username.](#)

### Bio

Your bio is a short (up to 160 characters) personal description that appears in your profile that serves to describe your persona and interests on Twitter.

It is also possible to add the location and a link to your website/fundraising page etc.

We recommend to add a close up portrait and a short bio if you plan to tweet in a professional capacity.

#### Dr Crystal Oldman RN RHV CBE

@CrystalOldman Follows you

Chief Executive of the Queen's Nursing Institute. Passionate about high quality nursing in community & primary care for individuals, families & carers.

📍 London

🌐 [qni.org.uk](#)

#### Sue Boran RN, DN, QN

@BoranSue Follows you

Director of Nursing Programmes Queen's Nursing Institute. Proud to call myself a RN, District Nurse, Queen's Nurse. Country lover. All views are my own.

📍 London

🌐 [qni.org.uk](#)

#### Angie Hack RN DN QN RNT

@AngieHack10 Follows you

District nurse, Queen's Nurse, Senior Lecturer @LSBU, Project Manager for General Practice Nursing @TheQNI. Passionate about community and primary care nursing.

📍 London, England

[Learn more about customising your profile.](#)


## Twitter basics

### Tweet

A Tweet is any message posted to Twitter. Tweets can be maximum 280 symbols long and may contain photos, videos, links, GIFs and text.



#### **How to Tweet:**

1. Type your Tweet into the compose box at the top of your Home timeline, or click the Tweet button in the top navigation bar. Alternatively, tap on the Tweet compose icon .
2. You can include  to 4 photos, a GIF, or a video in your Tweet.
3. Click the Tweet button to post the Tweet to your profile.

You can't edit your tweet after you have posted it, but you can delete it. Note that you can only delete your own Tweets. Read about how to [delete a Tweet](#).

An example of a Tweet:



[Learn more about tweeting.](#)

### Like

Liking a Tweet indicates that you appreciate it. Click or tap the like icon and it will turn red, confirming that you've liked the Tweet. The author of the tweet will be notified. You can undo a like by clicking or tapping the heart icon again.



### Retweet

A Tweet that you forward to your followers is known as a Retweet. Often used to pass along news or other valuable discoveries on Twitter, Retweets always retain original attribution. When you Retweet another user you can also add your own commentary.





## Hashtag

A hashtag — a keyword or a phrase written with a # symbol—is used to index keywords or topics on Twitter. This function allows people to easily follow topics

You cannot add spaces or punctuation in a hashtag, or it will not work properly. So if you want to make a hashtag out of the phrase 'Queen's Nurse', write it as [#QueensNurse](#). (if you have done it correctly, the font colour of the hashtag will become blue).

The QNI often uses such hashtags as [#Nursing](#), [#CommunityNursing](#) and [#DistrictNursing](#).

It is also possible to create unique hashtags that will allow you to find tweets related to a particular project or an event. For example, the QNI uses a unique hashtag for all Tweets about Fund for Innovation Projects - [#QNIprojects](#).



Hashtags can be included anywhere in a Tweet.

[Learn more about hashtags.](#)

## Follow

Subscribing to a Twitter account is called "following." When you start following an account, you will see their Tweets as soon as they post something new. Anyone on Twitter can follow or unfollow anyone else at any time.



## Follower

A follower is another Twitter account that has followed you to receive your Tweets in their homepage timeline updates.

[Learn more about following and unfollowing.](#)

## Mention

You can mention/tag other accounts in your Tweet which means that they will be notified about it. To mention someone in your Tweet, you need to type their @username. For example, if you want to tag the QNI in your tweet, you need to add our username, which is @TheQNI. Please make sure that you check that you add the correct username, or you might accidentally tag a wrong account (quite often people put @qni instead of @TheQNI which is a completely different account).

Tweets in which your @username was included mean you have been mentioned as part of the conversation.

Tagging someone in your Tweet will help to increase the visibility of your Tweet and will result in more people liking and retweeting your post.

## Reply

A reply is a response to another person's Tweet. You can reply by clicking or tapping the reply icon from a Tweet.



[Learn more about replies.](#)

## Timeline

A timeline is a real-time stream of Tweets. Your Home timeline is where you see all the Tweets shared by your friends and other people you follow.

[Learn more about your timeline.](#)

## Trend

A Trend is a topic or hashtag determined algorithmically to be one of the most popular on Twitter at that moment. You can choose to tailor Trends based on your location and who you follow.

[Learn more about Twitter trends.](#)

## Direct Messages

Direct Messages are private messages sent from one Twitter account to another account(s). You can use Direct Messages for one-on-one private conversations, or between groups.



Direct messages won't show up on anyone's Twitter home page or public feed. They'll only show up in the recipient's Direct Messages list – and only if they follow you. You can't send direct messages to people who aren't following you. Some accounts, particularly businesses on Twitter, have enabled a setting to receive Direct Messages from anyone. You can send a Direct Message to these accounts even if they don't follow you.

To send a direct message, go to the person/organisation's profile and click the envelope icon. 

[Learn more about Direct Messages.](#)

## Useful Links

- [Twitter Help Centre](#).
- [Social media guidance](#) by NMC.
- [Twitteriversity](#) - useful guides on tweeting for Healthcare Professionals on WeCommunities website.
- [Best practice guide for Twitter](#) by Lightful.