

How to Get Started with Twitter

What is Twitter?

Twitter is a free tool that lets you share short updates. Twitter is sort of like instant text messaging, but opens up conversations to a wider audience. It is also like blogging, except your posts, or “tweets,” are limited to 140 characters. Twitter allows you to “follow” or subscribe to anyone’s tweets, and anyone can follow yours.

What can Twitter be used for?

- Announcing events, projects, initiatives, etc.
- Promoting or press releases
- Building online communities and relationships with current and new supporters
- Keeping up with breaking news
- Learning by asking questions of your followers (e.g. advice, recommendations, opinions, brainstorming)
- Sharing resources and information
- Listening to others and learning about people, trends, and markets
- Getting real-time reports and updates from events you were unable to attend. (For example, people who participated in the VirtualVins 2010 event “tweeted” about what was happening, and those who could not attend could still follow their tweets and know what was going on.)
- Twitter does not thread conversations. Conversations on Twitter happen in real-time, which tend to limit their depth and longevity. To “tag” tweets or identify them so that they can be grouped together, use a number sign in front of a word (this is called a “hashtag”) as part of your tweet. For example if everyone at your event uses the hashtag #vins123 in their tweets then you will be able to do a twitter search for #vins123 and gather all the twitter messages into one list.

How to Start

Follow these steps:

1. Go to the [Twitter homepage](#).
2. Click the “Sign Up” button.
3. Choose a username that makes sense for you or your organization, and choose a password, enter your e-mail address, and follow the rest of the instructions. Now click the “I accept. Create my account.” button.
4. To see what your profile looks like to others, click the “Profile” link at the top of the page. To change your account settings or update your profile, click the “Settings” link at the top of the page. Here you can add a short bio about yourself or charity, tell Twitter how you prefer to be notified about things, add a small profile picture, or change the design of your page.