

Working Knowledge®

Why Use Twitter?

If You're a Writer

- To promote your writing (be it a blog, book, freelance services, etc.)
- To get clients
- To get story ideas
- To get interview subjects
- To practice writing concisely yet meaningfully
- To overcome writer's block
- To find a literary agent, editor or publisher
- To interact with other writers
- To pose a question and get answers which you will then write about (like a mini-poll)

If You're an Editor or Publisher

- To find writers
- To get a pulse of topics & mood – what people are talking about, what they want to know
- To run a contest or give-away

Anyone

- To get new clients or build deeper relationships with existing clients
- To get recognition for what you know
- To get feedback
- To hear about a job posting or a project
- As a “water cooler” break if you work at home alone
- To get answers to a question (technology-related ones like help using WordPress are especially popular, but you can pose any question)

5 Ways to Find People to Follow on Twitter

1. By the person's name
2. By topic: a keyword that people are talking about right now, like “publishing” (<http://search.twitter.com/advanced>)
3. By profile (the words people use in their profile, such as “writer”): (www.Twellow.com)
4. By list: Pick from a List, such as Bloggers, Writers, Copywriters, etc. (WeFollow.com)
5. By Recommendation to you (www.twittergrader.com ranks people by reach/influence & quality of tweets, shows top people by city, state, country, and recommends people to you based on your profile)

Advantages of Twitter

- You don't need someone's permission to follow them. That lets you “approach” a new contact much more easily than via a cold call or email.

- You learn what your client is talking about and is interested in – this gives you a basis to talk to them about something that you know is of interest to them.
- You can reply to anyone about something they've said. This lets you establish contact easily.
- You choose whom to follow and interact with -- for example, you don't have to interact with negative or mean-spirited people.
- Twitter is not just a broadcast tool – you can establish real relationships with potential clients. The brevity of 140 characters makes it easy

How to Avoid Getting Overwhelmed

- Choose whom you follow selectively
- You don't have to read everything – it's not like you're in-box; it's not directed just to you
- Even if it's an "at" reply, it's not like email; you don't have to respond to everything
- You choose when to get onto Twitter – you don't have to be on every day
- You *can* just use Twitter as a broadcast tool

Helpful URLs

Search by Topic (to find people or ideas), <http://search.twitter.com/advanced>

Search by Profile Words, <http://www.twellow.com>

Find People via a List, <http://www.wefollow.com>

Tools

Shortening the URL you'd like to paste

<http://tinyurl.com/> - 25 characters; <http://snurl.com/> - 23 characters

Useful articles

1. From ScienceWriters: One writer's use of Twitter

www.nasw.org—from-sciencewriters-one-writer.htm <http://www.nasw.org/mt-archives/2009/03/from-sciencewriters-one-writer.htm#more>

2. How to Get Things Done with Twitter

<http://zenhabits.net/2009/01/how-to-get-things-done-with-twitter/>

3. Courtesy of Rosemary Carstens:

Agents tweet back and forth making comments about why they're rejecting specific writers' queries:

<http://editorialanonymous.blogspot.com/2009/03/all-ways-you-cant-make-people-behave.html>

<http://ejourn.net/cwg/2009/03/09/raw-queryfail-capture/>