

Twitter Tips and Thoughts

Conor Gilmer <conor.gilmer@gmail.com>

1 Introduction

Twitter the micro-blogging website which has, in recent years become very popular, as well as being used by people to communicate with each other, read and report news, read posts by celebrities, it can also be used by organisations and business to communicate with and engage with their clients and potential clients, develop and build organisation, company or brand awareness.

Here I am going to describe how to use twitter should be used some things to do, some things not to do, some twitter guidelines and etiquette, and some useful tools to help you with twitter.

2 Twitter

Well twitter while being similar in ways to other social networks, its openness, conciseness make it slightly different animal. It is a short statement(micro-blog) of 140 characters, which can contain links to websites or photos, references to other twitter users using @, and association with topics using *hashtags*, you can follow other twitter users and see what they are *tweeting*, and other users can follow you to see what your saying.

The object is to get people to follow you in twitter, read your tweets, and other people to re-tweet your tweets.

The low barrier of entry means it is open to anyone to follow you and see your tweets, non twitter users can see your tweets as well.[3]

2.1 Twitter Jargon

Tweet the short 140 character statement you post on twitter, can include links.

Hashtag a string of characters after the character which references a topic or subject which is being tweet-ed about.

Retweet when you re-post another persons tweet, it is very beneficial when others retweet your tweets.[4]

Direct Message when you send a private message to another twitter account, only they can see it.

Reply “@username” either by clicking on a tweet to reply, or you start a tweet with “@” followed by another user's name, it is Reply to a user, acknowledging them.

Mention “@username” is when within a tweet you put another user's name preceded by a @.

2.2 Benefits of Twitter

Here is a list of the benefits of using twitter and reasons why you should use it.

- Tweets are searched by google
- Tweets can drive traffic to your website
- Channel for dialog with clients
- Get real time feedback from outside world
- Promote Special Offers
- *Piggyback* on current events with hashtags
- if another twitter retweets a tweet of yours, they are marketing for you
- Twitter can reach parts of the market who may ignore traditional forms of marketing [1]
- verify your account if it is liable to avoid a squatter damaging your brand
- twitter can provide you with a channel to provide some customer support

2.3 Guidelines in using Twitter

The rules of other social media apply, with some additions.[2]

- don't preach or be too overtly marketing yourself.
- be casual but not too flippant.
- use Hash-tags - participate in conversations on a topic.
- don't tweet copyrighted material.
- don't tweet liable information.
- be as concise as possible in a tweet, you don't have to use all 140 characters.
- regularly tweet - try and have a policy to tweet regularly.
- re-tweet other people's stuff that is relevant to you and your potential followers, but don't over do it.

- answer direct messages - no one likes being ignored.
- refute negative comments, people like seeing answers to bad comments.
- counter-act rumours.
- it is good to have variety in your tweets, some linking to your site, some linking to other sites of interest, some linking to your other online accounts (youtube, flickr, etc.), retweets of others tweets etc.
- if you are overtly advertising say so with the *ad:* or *adv:* commands. But don't use these frequently!
- don't leave your account dormant - twitter deletes dormant accounts.

2.4 Tools and Applications for using Twitter

The benefit of Twitter's API being open is that many other services have been written to use integrate with it. There are some other online services which can help you using Twitter.

- If you're not on twitter all the time perhaps use an alert service, when there has been tweets relevant to you, like *Tweet Beep* - <http://tweetbeep.com/> there is a free and premium service on this.
- It is a good idea to schedule tweets so as you don't have to be online all the time to tweet one such service is *Twuffer* - <http://twuffer.com> another one although you need an invitation to use it is *Tweet Suite* - <http://www.tweetsuite.com>.
- *Tweet Deck* - <http://www.tweetdeck.com> is a tool which you can use to organise your tweeting and categorise your topics.
- *TwitPic* - <http://www.twitpic.com> was useful before you could post images in tweets, it is still used and has mobile app which can be useful.
- *TwitVid* - <http://www.twitvid.com> is like twitter for video, you can use your twitter login, and follow people who post videos on TwitVid.
- **Mobile Apps.** - along with twitter's mobile app for Android and iPhone, there are others some free some apps with additional features you can pay for. *Touiteur*, *Seismic*, *Tweetcaster*, *Twidroid*, etc.
- *TweetBurner* - <http://tweetburner.com> is a site where you can generate shortened Url's but more importantly than that is that you can then track them and see how others have navigated on them.
- Another addition to the twitter-shere is *Twibes* - <http://www.twibes.com>, a kind of Twitter Groups. Since I have been using Google Plus, Twibes seems to be like a Google Circle which you join by posting to it, so it's open.

3 Summary

In summary if your not using twitter, take a look at it, and see what it is? if you are using twitter try and use it more effectively to benefit your organisation, engage with other users and build up a possitive presence online. Try some of the tools to increase and enhance your twitter usage, and online presence in general. Engage it twitter, follow people you find interesting, post interesting things, be casual, be social, participate in conversations with hastags, retweet interesting tweets, use tools to help organise your twittering, use mobile apps to use twitter via your mobile phone enjoy it.

References

- [1] Annmarie Hanlon and Joanna Akins. *Quick Win Digital Marketing*. Oak Tree Press, Cork, 2009.
- [2] Twitter Inc. Twitter help center. <https://support.twitter.com/groups/31-twitter-basics>.
- [3] Hollis Thomases. *Twitter Marketing : An Hour a Day*. Sybex, London, 2010.
- [4] A Weckler. Social networking tools. Computers in Business Supplement, Sunday Business Post, September 2007.