



## What is Twitter?



**Twitter** is a free social networking and micro-blogging service that allows users to send and read other users' updates (**tweets**) which are text-based posts of up to 140 characters in length. These **tweets** can be used to share ideas and get instant feedback within the classroom.

## Creating a Twitter Account

1. Go to [www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com) and click the **Sign Up** button.
2. Fill out the information and click the **Create My Account** button.
3. Go through the **Import Friends** wizard or press the **Skip import** button.

## Using Twitter

- To create a tweet, go to the **Home** page and type in the **What's happening?** box. Once you are done, click on the **Tweet** button.
- To edit your profile, click on the **Profile** button in the top row. Then click on **Edit your profile**.
- To add a friend, go to his/her Twitter page and press the **Follow** button. Once you "follow" them their tweets will appear on your **Home** page.

**Penn State Berks**  
 @PennStateBerks Reading, PA  
 Penn State college located in Berks County  
<http://www.berks.psu.edu>

+ Follow

## Interacting with Others on Twitter

- If one of your friends has an interesting tweet that you want to share with others you can repost it on your site, also known as a retweet, by hovering over the post and press the **Retweet** button.
- To reply to someone's tweet but have it viewable by the public click on the **Reply** button. This will appear as **@UserName** and have the associated tweet with it.

**PennStateBerks** Penn State Berks  
 We wish all our students, faculty, and staff a safe and relaxing spring break, and safe travels to the Alternative... <http://fb.me/VW18hMtKy>  
 4 Mar ☆ Favorite ↻ Retweet ↩ Reply

- When creating your own tweet you can tag other individuals, a.k.a. mention, using the **@UserName**. This acts as a message to the general public and associates that person.
  - You can send private messages to those who follow you. To send a private message, click on the **Messages** button in the top row and then click on the **New Message** button. In the **Message** pop-up window, type the **Twitter User ID** of person you want to send it to and then enter the message. Once you are done, press the **Send** button.
- Note:** Private messages are limited to 140 characters.
- You can use a **hashtag** by having the # sign before an item (e.g. #PSUBerks-Math21) to group and track tweets.

## Using in the Classroom

Twitter can be used differently depending on the size of a class. Below are examples for each category.

### For any size class:

**Direct Message** can be used to allow professors and students to contact each other directly in a private manner.

A **tweet** on your Twitter page can be used as another avenue to make an announcement about upcoming tests, projects, or any news that needs to be shared.

### For a small size class:

A **twitter group** can help facilitate professors and students getting to know each other.

Groups can be created using an application like **Tweetworks**.



**Tweetworks** makes it easy to find and participate in relevant conversations. It also allows you to join and create groups and share media.

### For a larger class:

Twitter is great for larger classrooms where not everyone can be called on. By using Twitter, everyone's opinion can be shared and viewed by those in the room. Students can tweet during class which allows for discussions to be displayed and continued while lecture is being carried out.

Instructors often display a screen during class specifically for the use of Twitter. This allows students to participate in discussion while lecture is occurring.

## Benefits of Using Twitter

- Connects students.
- Instructors can keep track of the conversations students carry out on a particular topic.
- The limit of 140 characters focuses the attention of students.
- Quieter students can get involved in classroom discussion.

## Precautions to Take When Using Twitter

- It is recommended that instructor's use separate accounts for classroom and personal use.
- Just like regular conversations, tweets can often go off topic. Be aware of that and make sure to have a way of dealing with it.
- Make sure you connect to all your students either by "following" their Twitter account, creating a hashtag for everyone to use, or creating a twitter group. If you do not do this there is a chance that all of the tweets will not be seen.
- Do not allow Twitter to become a distraction to students. Keep it as a way to communicate about class topics.