A Twitter User Guide

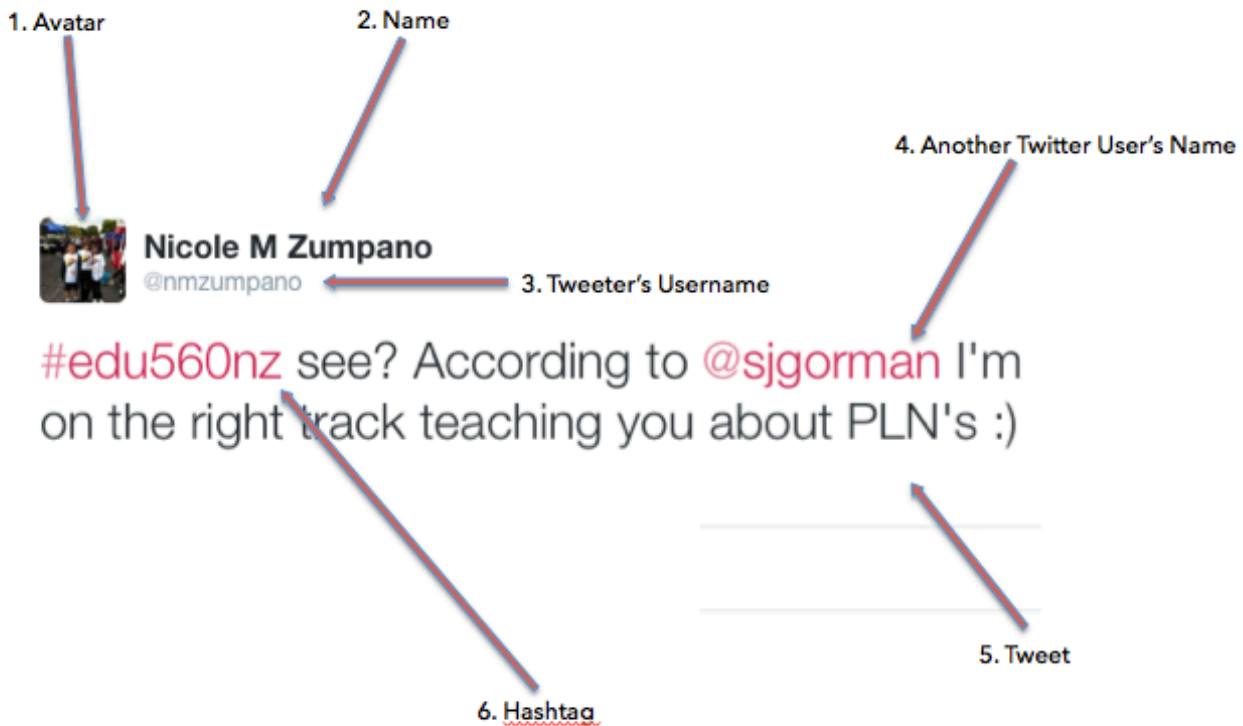By Nicole Zumpano

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Twitter 101: The Basics

What is Twitter?

Twitter is a micro-blogging social network. Users are able to send or read "tweets" (Twitter's name for short messages) to and from others. Anyone can follow you and you can follow anyone else. Tweets are limited to 140 characters (those characters include spaces and punctuation). Twitter is a great place for educators to connect!

Anatomy of a Tweet

1. Avatar   2. Name

4. Another Twitter User's Name

Nicole M Zumpano
@nmzumpano   3. Tweeter's Username

#edu560nz see? According to @sjgorman I'm
on the right track teaching you about PLN's :)

5. Tweet

6. Hashtag

1. <u>Avatar</u>: this is a photograph or graphic that will appear on your account and each tweet you post. Picking an avatar is a personal preference; some people like a real photograph of themselves while others prefer to be more anonymous with a graphic. Twitter's default picture, if you choose not to put anything is an egg. Seriously.
2. <u>Name</u>: this is the name that is listed on your Twitter account.
3. <u>Tweeter's Username</u>: this is the username that represents you on Twitter. Some people like to use their actual name or a variation of it.   Others like to use descriptors.   While your username can be changed it is best to think of what is appropriate for your account when you first create your profile.
4. <u>Another person's Twitter username</u>: when you would like to mention another person on Twitter you use the @ symbol in front of their name. This directs Twitter to take your tweet and place it on that person's wall for them to see. You do not need to be following someone in order to tag them using @username (but you do need to be following them in order to send them a direct message).
5. <u>Tweet</u>: your message that is contained to 140 characters or less. Many times you will see "text speak" on Twitter in order to conserve characters. Twitter will almost always try to shorten your URL links in order to help you save characters.
6. <u>Hashtag</u>: a hashtag is a way to categorize topics on Twitter. Think of hashtags as a magnet- when you attach one to a tweet it takes your tweet and places it on a Twitter page that contains that same hashtag from other people.   They are sometimes used for fun phrases as well.   Learn more about hashtags here: http://primarytech.global2.vic.edu.au/2011/06/30/all-abouttwitter-hashtags/   and in the hashtag section of this guide.

Setting Up an Account

Go to Twitter.com and sign up for a FREE account. Your username can be changed later, but think about how you want people to be able to connect with you. My username is "NMZumpano" so that it is easier for people who know my name to find me. While you can choose any username you want, consider names that are appropriate for parents to see! Twitter will walk you through the rest! While suggestions for whom to follow will be given you can skip this step.

Make sure to complete your bio (remember you only get 140 characters for this too so be sure to be concise and to the point). Adding an avatar is not required, however if you don't Twitter's default picture is an egg. No one should have an egg as his or her picture!

Additional Resources

Twitter Introduction YouTube Video: http://youtu.be/C69aEmkQp9w

Twitter in the K-8 Classroom: http://www.scribd.com/doc/63331406/Twitter-in-K-8-Classroom-Globally-Connected-Learning

Twitter Cheat Sheet for Educators: http://www.learningunlimitedllc.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/Twitter-Cheat-Sheet-Tool-4-Learning-Unlimited-by-Kimberly-Tyson.pdf

Twitter Dictionary: http://www.mediabistro.com/alltwitter/the-essential-twitter-dictionary_b1205

Twitter Etiquette: http://heidicohen.com/twitter-etiquette/

Twitteraholic's Ultimate Guide to Twitter: http://www.theedublogger.com/2012/02/13/the-updated-twitteraholics-guide-to-tweets-hashtags-and-all-things-twitter/

Twitter 102: What to Use Twitter For

Many people new to Twitter think the service is only for following celebrities or talking about what they had for breakfast. In the field of education Twitter can be a powerful tool in your classroom and your professional practice. See ideas below for using Twitter with students and as part of your professional learning network (PLN).

Ideas to Use With Students

There are hundreds of ways to use Twitter in your classroom! Below is a bulleted list to get you started. Find more extensive lists in the "additional resources" section.

Lesson Ideas
- Have students tweet as if they were historical characters (http://historicaltweets.com has some great examples of this you could show but not all are appropriate for children so be sure to check samples from the site first)
- Summarize a book plot in 140 characters
- Creative writing "pass it on"- each student has 140 to start a story and pass it on to the next student to continue the story
- Contact authors or organizations if you are working with their materials
- Teach "bite-size" information- create a Twitter account to be used only to push out information on a specific topic.
- Have a classroom job where a student tweets a summary of the school day each day

Ideas with Parents
- Send kudos when the class does something awesome!
- Post reminders about school events
- Send prompts for parents to talk to kids about unit topics
- Post pictures of student work

Use Twitter as a PLN

Professional Learning Networks (PLN's) are powerful things. Educators can connect, share resources and learn from colleagues around the world! Twitter is one of the major PLNs in education today. New to Twitter? Lurk. Sign up for an account, follow various educators and simply watch the resources they post. Soon you'll be sharing your own!

Tip: Not sure who to follow? Below is a very small list of great educators and organizations to get you started. Be sure to check who *they* follow to gain even more like-minded resources.

Me! @nmzumpano
Illinois Computing Educators @ice_il
Shannon Miller @shannonmmiller
Jerry Bluemgarten @cybraryman1
Richard Byrne @rmbyrne
Steven Anderson @web20classroom
Edutopia @edutopia
Teachability @Teachability
Edudemic @Edudemic

Coonley Staff on Twitter!

Ms. Wiltse @nswiltse   Coonley Library @CoonleyLibrary
Ms. Clifford @MrsClifford7
Mr. Carpenter: @CarpenterCougar
Mr. Lair: @ChuckLair
Ms. Crews @crewsinthird
Ms. Lewin: @carcharhinid
Ms. Vega @room206rocks
Ms. Meegan @mrsmeegan
Ms. Bertucci @lbertucci3
Ms. Barret @sabarrett31

Tip: You will find some great resources and websites that you may not need right at the moment. Consider creating a Google Doc or a wiki to use as a storage area. To see an example of one, visit my wiki nicolezumpano.wikispaces.com

Additional Resources

http://www.edudemic.com/100-ways-to-use-twitter-in-education-by-degree-of-difficulty/

One Hundred Ways to Teach with Twitter: http://www.emergingedtech.com/2010/02/100-ways-to-teach-with-twitter/

9 Reasons to Twitter in Schools: http://www.techlearning.com/curriculum/0035/nine-reasons-to-twitter-in-schools/45908

CNN- Twitter has a Place in the Classroom: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2w9CnaeaiAE

Twitter 103: Chats, Hashtags, Lists, etc.

Twitter Chats

Twitter Chats are conversations that take place live on Twitter at specific times using specific hashtags (#). These conversations usually have a theme and are moderated by someone asking questions that participants can then answer. You do not need a Twitter account to view a Twitter chat but you do need an account to participate in one. Most Twitter chats occur weekly.

To participate in a Twitter Chat first log in to Twitter. Then search for the name of the chat using it's hashtag. Follow the conversation. Most times a moderator will ask a question and place a Q1 (indicating 'question 1') in front of the question so when people respond they use A1 (indicating 'answer 1') to keep the feed somewhat organized.

Many times chats can best be followed using a third-party service that allows you to slow down the feed. One example is Twubs. It is discussed in section 104.

Hashtags

Hashtags make it easier for people to follow or search different topics. When someone places a hash (#) in front of a word or phrase it essentially takes that term and gives it its own Twitter page. I like to think of hashtags as magnets: everyone who uses the same hashtag as me (even if they do not know me or follow me on Twitter) has their tweet with that hashtag posted on the same page. This is another way people can connect on Twitter without knowing each other. Hashtags are used at conferences to allow attendees (or anyone who couldn't attend) a place to comment on the events, resources and vibe of the conference. Many times people will meet members of their PLN in person at conferences.

Lists

Twitter allows you to organize friends in groups called "Lists". This comes in handy if you have multiple followers that fall in to different categories. For example, I could have a list of all of my Twitter followers that are University students of mine. I could have another list of my followers that are my ed-tech colleagues. Lists are meant for reading tweets only; you cannot send a tweet to just the members of a specific list. You can create your own lists or subscribe to lists that belong to someone else. Twitter lists can be public or private. You do not need to follow someone to add them to a list.

Additional Resources

A list of Twitter chats and times: bit.ly/officialchatlist

Quick Start Guide to Participate in Twitter Chats: https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B5iaJJyGn1_nMlJVNjl5UFpMVTQ/edit?pli=1

How to Participate in a Twitter Chat: http://www.twitip.com/tweeting-with-your-twitter-community-how-to-participate-in-a-twitter-chat/

What is a Twitter Chat? http://plnaugle.blogspot.com/2011/04/what-is-twitter-chat.html

The Power of Twitter Chats: https://www.youtube.com/tv?vq=medium -/watch?v=brI8sHmg89w&mode=transport

Hashtags in 60 seconds: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cD0dT81ChIU

Some Educational Hashtags: http://www.cybraryman.com/edhashtags.html

# Twitter 104: Miscellaneous Twitter

Clients

Twitter clients are third-party service that work with Twitter to enhance your experience.

Here is a quick look at three of the most common Twitter clients:

1. Tweetdeck https://about.twitter.com/products/tweetdeck

Tweetdeck is a desktop application that allows you to view multiple windows at the same time. As you can see in the screenshot below I can follow my regular feed, view mentions, view direct messages and more. Tweetdeck allows you to schedule future tweets to go out at specific times. The stream is in real-time so you don't need to keep hitting refresh.

2. Hootsuite https://hootsuite.com
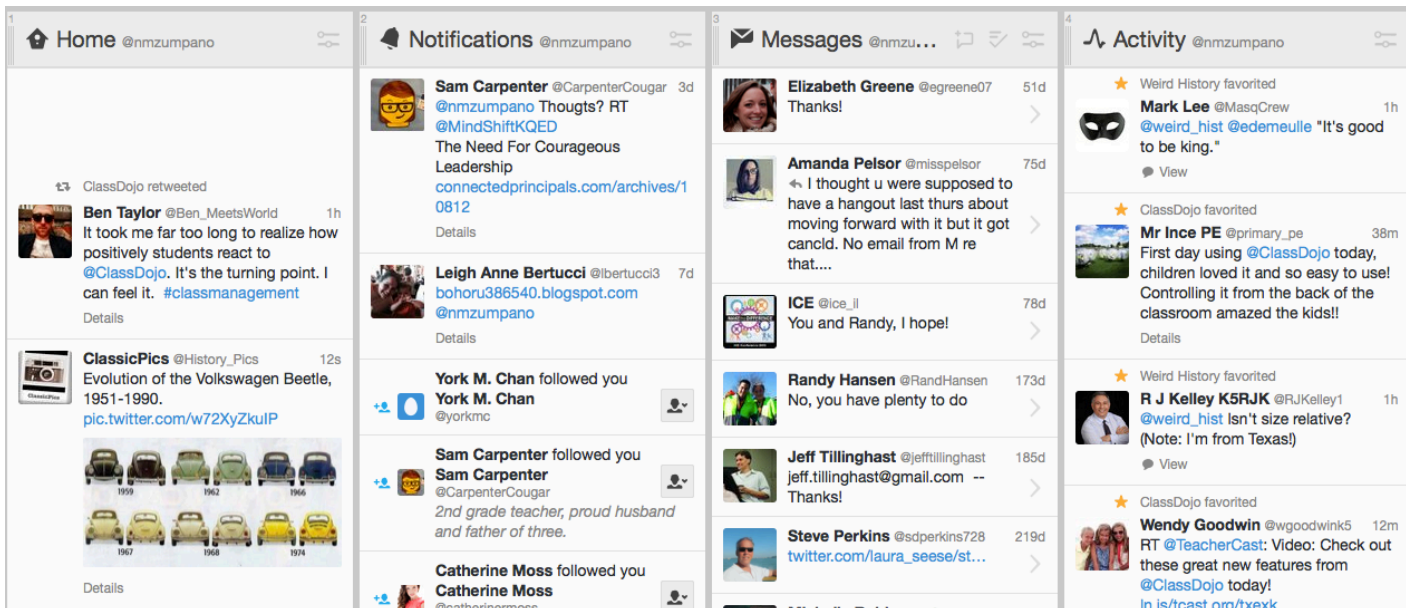
Hootsuite has a similar interface to Tweetdeck but Hootsuite allows you to add additional social networks to view at the same time. Like Tweetdeck Hootsuite allows you to schedule chats to be sent later. Hootsuite is a web-based application so it can be accessed anywhere.

3. Twubs http://twubs.com
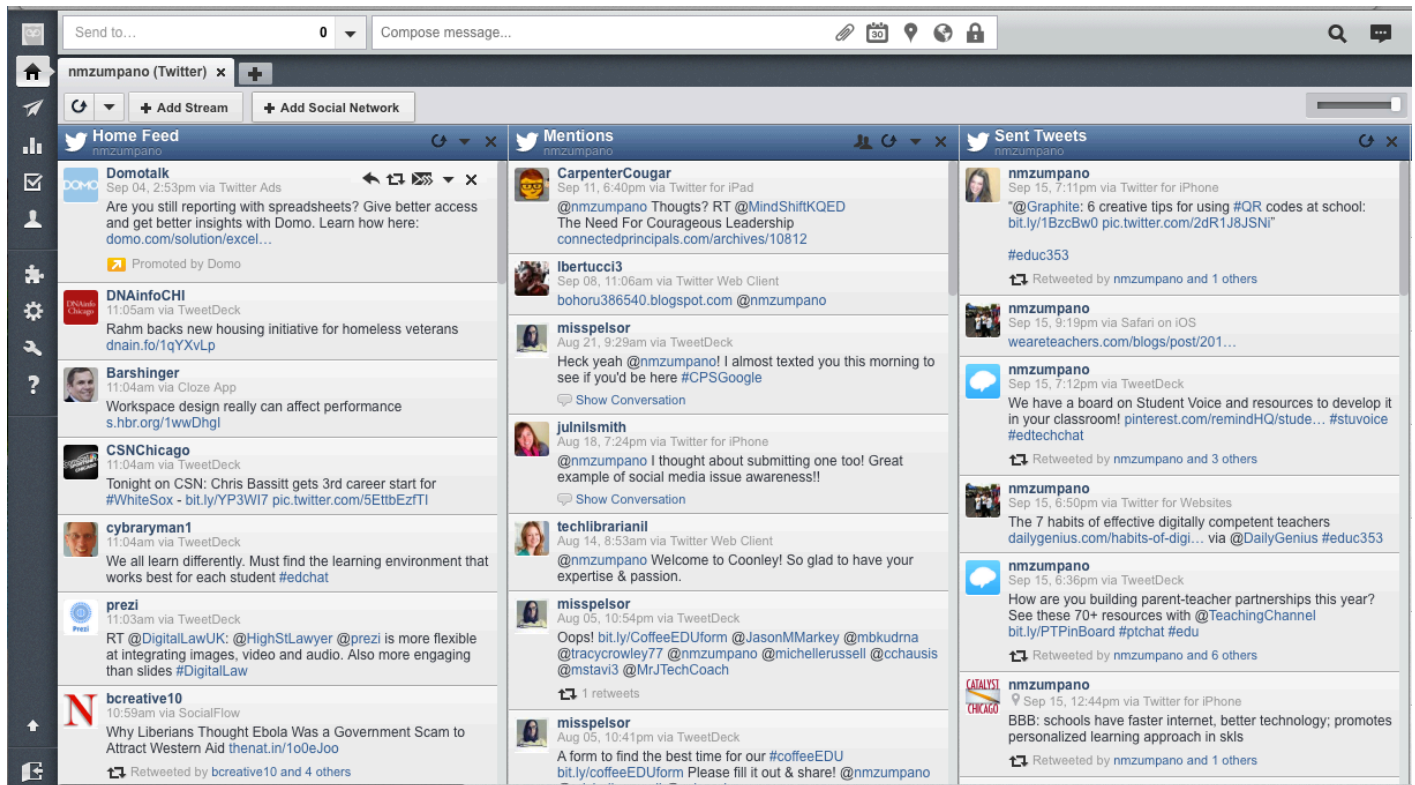
Twubs is a third party service that makes participating in Twitter chats much easier! Twubs allows users to speed up or slow down the pace of Twitter chats. It also automatically places your Twitter username and the hashtag of the chat in your reply so you don't have to type it in each time you reply (you log in to Twubs with your Twitter account to do this).

Embedding Twitter Feeds

Do you have a class blog or website? If you have an active classroom Twitter feed consider running a widget (a small computer program) that allows your Twitter feed to be embedded on to your blog or website. Create a widget by clicking on settings (the little gear by your name) and then the "widget" tab. State what type of widget you would like and create it. An embed code will appear allowing you to copy the code and embed your Twitter feed.

Additional Resources

A great list of Twitter tools! http://twittertoolsbook.com/the-definitive-list-of-twitter-tools/

See what is happening on Twitter around the world in real-time! http://tweetping.net

Lots of Twitter analyzers http://rethinkschoolcomm.wordpress.com/twitter-101/

If This Then That https://ifttt.com (If This Then That allows you to create "triggers" between social media services. There are thousands of "recipes". For example, you can set a recipe that follows the command "If someone tags me on Instagram automatically upload that photo to Dropbox". See "recipes" on their website for more).

Storify https://storify.com
Storify allows you to collect media from across the web to tell a story. An example would be to take tweets from the same conference event and place them together to give others a "story" of the event. With Storify you can use different types of media across the web: Twitter, YouTube, Flickr, Instagram and more to get content. You can also write a narrative and insert this text anywhere in your story.

Need more? Check out my Twitter Resource page!
http://nicolezumpano.wikispaces.com/Twitter