

# A Basic Introduction and Guide to Twitter from

## URBAN HAZE

### What is Twitter?

The technical people will tell you that Twitter is a form of Social Networking limited to 140 characters - so, no wonder really then that it's not as popular as it should be!!



In much less technical terms, it's a way of communicating with friends, and also strangers (and occasionally celebrities!) online that's different from Facebook and E-mail

### Many people use Facebook already and they shy away from Twitter

A year ago I was one of these people, even though a couple of friends had suggested Twitter to me - I'd not been persuaded.



It really needs somebody to hold your hand to make the first step into Twitter, but if you're a Facebook user already, then it's probably easier to get into it, and the good news is that Facebook and Twitter are not mutually exclusive - the two work together very well, with no extra effort and double posting required!

As a Facebook user, the thing that got me started with Twitter was when I came across a handy little "App" within Facebook - that changed everything.

The App was [Twitter On Facebook](#) - and it simply publishes each of your "Tweets" onto Facebook as well as Twitter - so I had the ability to have the best of both worlds.

As I tweet, the posts are automatically added to Facebook at the same time - but this is a one-way thing as Twitter is limited to 140 characters, and Facebook posts may be much longer than that, so keep in mind that your Facebook posts won't appear back into Twitter.

### So Why Use Twitter at all?

Well, it's a bit like the National Lottery, in that you've got to be in it to win it!

Twitter will open up a whole new world of information and people that is as big, and in some cases even bigger than Facebook

You'll probably find much fewer of your friends on Twitter than on Facebook, but then again, you'll find a bunch of different people on Twitter that aren't on Facebook as well!

Probably the main difference is that each Tweet in Twitter is limited to 140 characters - that makes it much more manageable to read information from 100 Twitter friends than it would be to read from 100 Facebook friends. In fact, Twitter has very good ways of organising tweets to make them very easy to read if you've got 100, 1000 or even 10000 or more friends.



## Follow me my Friend!

Actually in Twitter it's called "Followers" rather than "Friends", and the relationship is slightly different from Facebook in that you can Follow somebody without them following you back, so you could follow a celebrity like Professor Brian Cox, who currently has about 170,000 followers) but the chances are that he's not going to follow you back, as he's only following about 70 people.

This kind of helps though, as you know those 70 people are likely to be interesting and tweeting about things that Professor Brian Cox likes, so you may like to follow them too.

What this means is that it's actually not that difficult to end up following quite a lot of different people

Many people will follow you back as soon as you follow them, so if you follow a lot of people, you may find that you build up a large number of followers yourself.

## But now the question - how to use Twitter?

Well, in some ways it's a LOT easier than Facebook

First, you have to go to [Twitter.com](https://twitter.com) and sign up for an account, and you have to pick a Twitter name - my advice here; don't rush that - try to find a short name, less than 10 characters that's available



Then simply start tweeting - think of a Tweet as a Status Post on your Facebook wall

There are four different types of tweets:

1. Tweets - the default kind of message on Twitter (similar to Facebook Status Updates)
2. Message - a Tweet includes "**@username**" to send the tweet to that person and display it in public (similar to posting on somebody's Facebook wall)
3. Direct Messages - a Tweet includes "**D @username**" to send a private direct message that only that person sees (similar to Facebook messages or instant chat)
4. Retweets - this is repeating somebody else's tweet (similar to liking a Facebook post)

## Profiles

Everyone on Twitter has a profile - you can edit yours in your account settings, like Facebook in includes a profile picture, and I'd definitely recommend that you at least add this because the default Twitter icons are a little bit dull.

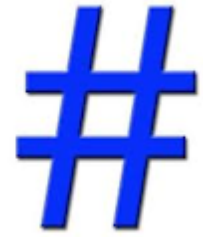
If you like, Urban Haze can create a Twitter Logo for you - [we've done this recently for Twestival Oldham](#)

You can also include a short Bio of yourself (in less than 160 Characters) and a link to your web site (if you've got one)

Location - you can also add your location if you want, so people can tell if you're local - this may help get more followers, as some people like to follow other local people

## Hashtags

You can also put "hashtags" in your tweets - this is simply putting the "#" character before any word or phrase in the tweet - this is a bit like adding a subject to an email message. If hashtags appear in lots of tweets worldwide or country-wide, then that may start a trend - as you look further into Twitter you can see what's trending to get an idea of what's a popular conversation and feel free to jump on board and start tweeting with friends or strangers!



If you're not sure how to use this at first, you'll pick it up very quickly as soon as you start following a few people.

It's quite common on Fridays to tweet with #FF and then list twitter accounts of other people you find interesting and like - this is sometimes called "Follow Friday" or "Friendly Friday" - and is a great way to meet new Tweeps (Twitter People)

## 140 Characters

Remember that your tweets are limited to 140 characters, but you can still add in links to web pages, pictures, videos and anywhere else - it's quite common to use link shorteners to turn something like <http://www.urbanhaze.com/urban-haze-blog/> into <http://bit.ly/iksK6u> - they end up at the same place, but the shortener saves valuable tweet characters.

Many pieces of Tweeting software will automatically shorten links for you, and make it very easy to upload pictures which are automatically given short links.

## Lists

As you follow more and more people, you'll reach a stage when you're getting new tweets every few seconds and you may fear that at some stage it's going to become unmanageable.

Don't worry! They've thought of that - Twitter has something called Lists - this allows you to add certain people that you're following to any list that you want. For example, you might make a list called "Local People" then add just people whose location is near you to that list, that way, you can open that list and you only get your local tweets. You can also use other people's lists, which is a great way to find other people to follow.

## Twitter Software

Twitter works on all kinds of devices - you can of course go to the web page from just about any device <http://twitter.com> and tweet from there

If you've got a PC or Mac you may prefer a piece of software like [Tweet Deck](#) which will do all kinds of cool extra things like make it easy to upload pictures and videos as well as shorten links - and manage multiple Twitter accounts including Facebook as well!

If you've got an iPad, iPhone or iPod Touch, then I'd recommend taking a look at the [App Twitterrific](#) there's a free version which works really well and lets you upload photos and videos from your phone, and there's also a premium version for £2.99 that removes advertisements, so you've got more space to see tweets, as well as allowing you to manage multiple accounts.

Most modern mobile phones (Smartphones) like BlackBerrys, Android or Windows 7 phones will all have Twitter clients, allowing you to tweet on-the-go and add pictures from your smart phone

## What to Be Wary of?

Like everything else on the Internet, Twitter can become prone to abuse, you'll probably find that some strangers will follow you and then start tweeting links at you - some of those people will simply be trying to send you junk messages (SPAM) - the good news is that not all of them are spammers, some are just trying to make new friends.

Fortunately, Twitter makes it quite easy to block people, and even report them as spammers if you want - as a general rule here I'd say to be slightly wary of any stranger that suddenly starts sending tweets with links to you - in that case, just take a look at their recent tweets and see if they've been sending similar stuff to others - if it's to lots of others, then you know they're likely to be a spammer.

## How to get Started?

Well thanks for taking the time to read this guide - now it's over to you!

Get yourself over to [Twitter](#) and get an account set up

Once you've done that send us a Tweet [@urbanhaze](#) to let us know you read this guide and made it there in once piece, then we'll tweet back to you and follow you

Other Interesting People you may want to follow to get you started:

- Saddleworth News [@saddleworthnews](#)
- Twestival Oldham [@TwestivalOldham](#)
- Stephen Fry [@stephenfry](#)
- Professor Brian Cox [@ProfBrianCox](#)
- Chris Evans [@achrisevans](#)
- Met Office North West [@metofficeNWeng](#)
- BBC Manchester [@BBCManchester](#)
- BBC Breaking News [@BBCBreaking](#)

There are countless sources of twitter people and organisations to follow - just keep an eye open for the Twitter logo on web pages



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