'How To' Tips for Twitter

Follow these tips, and you'll be tweeting in no time!

If you are interested in learning a new way to help shape policy matters, staying up-to-date with the news, following the bigwigs, and interacting with ASPET, Twitter is a great way to accomplish all of that. With Twitter, you can actually have a dialogue with newsmakers and newscasters. Below, you will find a step-by-step "how to" guide on Twitter. So, follow along and engage us in the Twitter-verse. Happy tweeting!

The Basics of Twitter:

How to sign up for a Twitter account and create your Twitter handle

To sign up for Twitter, visit www.twitter.com on the Web. Type in your name, email address and a password on the screen that greets you and click the "sign up" button. Create your password, and follow the prompts on the next screen, "Join Twitter today," to create your Twitter handle (a.k.a. account name) and click the yellow button. You will have to confirm your new Twitter account from an automatic email that Twitter will send to you. Twitter then asks you to pick five people/organizations to follow. You can do this or you can skip this step, but we'd love it if you typed "ASPET" in the search box, found our Twitter account "@ASPET," and then clicked on our "Follow" button.

You are basically ready to tweet now. You can spruce up your profile if you so desire, adding a short 160-character biography, your location, your website, and a picture. You can even cross the "great divide" and elect to share your tweets on Facebook. If you are hoping to get better feedback from others on Twitter, it is best to have a filled out bio and profile picture posted. Now, that you're all set up and ready to tweet (to post messages on Twitter), here's the most basic rule: You are only allotted 140 characters per tweet, so in order to get the most out of Twitter, you have to learn the abbreviated lingo.

To create and send a tweet, click on the blue box with the white ink quill in the upper right-hand corner of any Twitter page. Then, you can tweet something simple to engage people. For example, in March 2013, ASPET could release a tweet saying, "#EB2013 is one month away. See you at @expbio www.experimentalbiology.org" Twitter is a great tool for promoting newsworthy items for your organization and engaging others to talk about these happenings, and the ability to link to websites lets you give the reader more information.

The following will help you stay within your 140 characters:
1. A URL is another name for a Web address.
3. Go to one of these websites, type in the full URL, and click the button that says "shorten" or "shrink it."
4. Click the aforementioned tweet-composing button, and copy and paste the shortened URL into your tweet along with a message that fits within the 140 character limit.

The hashtag allows your tweet topic to be searched. A hashtag is any Twitter text that follows a "." The first character must be a letter, but after that, numbers are allowed. Apostrophes, hyphens, and all other symbols cannot be used in hashtags though. Typing "#ASPET" into the search feature atop the page, allows you to see recent comments about ASPET in which the tweeter used that hashtag. You can start topics by creating your own hashtag or add to topics that already exist by using the hashtag for that topic.
How to reference other Twitter users: @ (@TwitterHandle)

When you want to reference, reply to, or retweet the Twitter handle of another person or group, type the "@" followed by someone else's Twitter handle. If you want to reply to a tweet, move your mouse to the tweet you wish to reply to, and you will see the arrow on the screen become a hand. To type your reply, click the link at the bottom of that tweet that says "reply" and type your message. In your reply, "@ (@TwitterHandleYouAreReplyingTo)" will show up at the beginning of your tweet.

When you type "@" plus a Twitter handle into the site's search feature, you can track recent tweets in which that particular Twitter handle is mentioned. Similarly, when you type "#" plus a topic name that starts with a letter and doesn't have spaces or symbols, you can track recent tweets in which a certain hashtag is mentioned.

Using the search function on Twitter

Retweets with the retweet button: Original tweet on top, retweet below.

Retweets with "RT": Original tweet on top, retweet below.

Modified tweets: Original tweet on top, modified tweet below.

When you retweet a message, you are sharing another's tweet with your list of followers on Twitter. There are three common ways to retweet a message. You can find a tweet that you would like to spread to your followers, and even if you are not following that particular Twitter handle or they aren't following you, you can hover your mouse over that particular tweet and hit the retweet button. The post then shows up in your tweets as a retweet with the original tweeter’s Twitter handle above it and their profile picture beside it. You can also retweet a message by typing "RT @ (@TwitterHandle)" plus the content of the message.

If you want to send a retweet but are modifying the text of the original tweet, you should, out of common courtesy, write “MT @ (@TwitterHandle)" plus the content of the modified message to signal that you are posting a modification of someone else’s tweet. MT signifies the posting of a modified tweet.