

Getting Started With . . . Twitter in Your Course



Release 9.1 Service Pack 8

A Tweet is a message posted on [Twitter.com](https://twitter.com) that appears immediately to all Twitter users who have chosen to follow the person who posted the message. All Tweets are limited to 140 characters. These short messages allow you to disseminate information, communicate in real time with large groups, and archive conversations. The required brevity can spark creativity as well as reduce the information stream into digestible amounts. Many websites have a Twitter button for quickly sharing resources with your Twitter followers.

Ready for some dynamic content in your course? You can use a Twitter widget to integrate a feed of your own Tweets or the results of a Twitter search into your content. The feed is updated in real time, with new activity scrolling by as you watch. Even students without Twitter accounts can explore the feed content that interests them.

The screenshot shows a Blackboard course interface. On the left is a navigation menu with items like 'Introduction to Oceanography', 'Announcements', 'Twitter Feed' (highlighted with an orange box), 'Discussions', and 'Week 1' through 'Week 5'. The main content area is titled 'Twitter Feed' and contains an 'eLearning Search Widget'. The widget displays a list of tweets:

- TwitClass** 7 Habits Of Highly Ineffective Educators bit.ly/L3vCfK #edtech #elearning (24 seconds ago)
- godejord** Read The #elearning Daily ▶ today's top stories via @rozpursey @kevin_corbett @ShellTerrell @claudiatorres1 ▶ paper.li/tag/elearning (about 1 minute ago)
- SeanGallagherLA** Contemplating the Megaclass Future in #elearning bit.ly/JR7Wrq @melissa_venable (17 minutes ago)
- tycoonspain** "@pgsimoes: Gamification of Learning and Instruction Blog Book Tour Week One Recap dlvr.it/1Sp7bw #elearning #edtech" (18 minutes ago)
- eLearningMC** 10 Ways to Occupy #eLearning - via the eLearning coach - j.mp/IGXVAK #design #prototypes #ISD (19 minutes ago)

At the bottom of the widget is the Twitter logo and a 'Join the conversation' button.

- 1 Log in to Twitter and go to <https://twitter.com/about/resources/widgets>.
- 2 Select **My Website**.
- 3 Select **Profile Widget** to publish your own Tweets. Alternatively, select **Search, Faves, or List**.
- 4 Preview the widget, customize it if you want, and click **Finish and Grab Code**.
- 5 Copy the code.
- 6 In your Blackboard course, create a Blank Page on the Course Menu or in a Content Area.
- 7 In the Blank Page's Text Editor, select **HTML Source Mode (<>)**.
- 8 Paste the code into the text editor.
- 9 Click **Submit**.

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Why Use Twitter as an Academic?

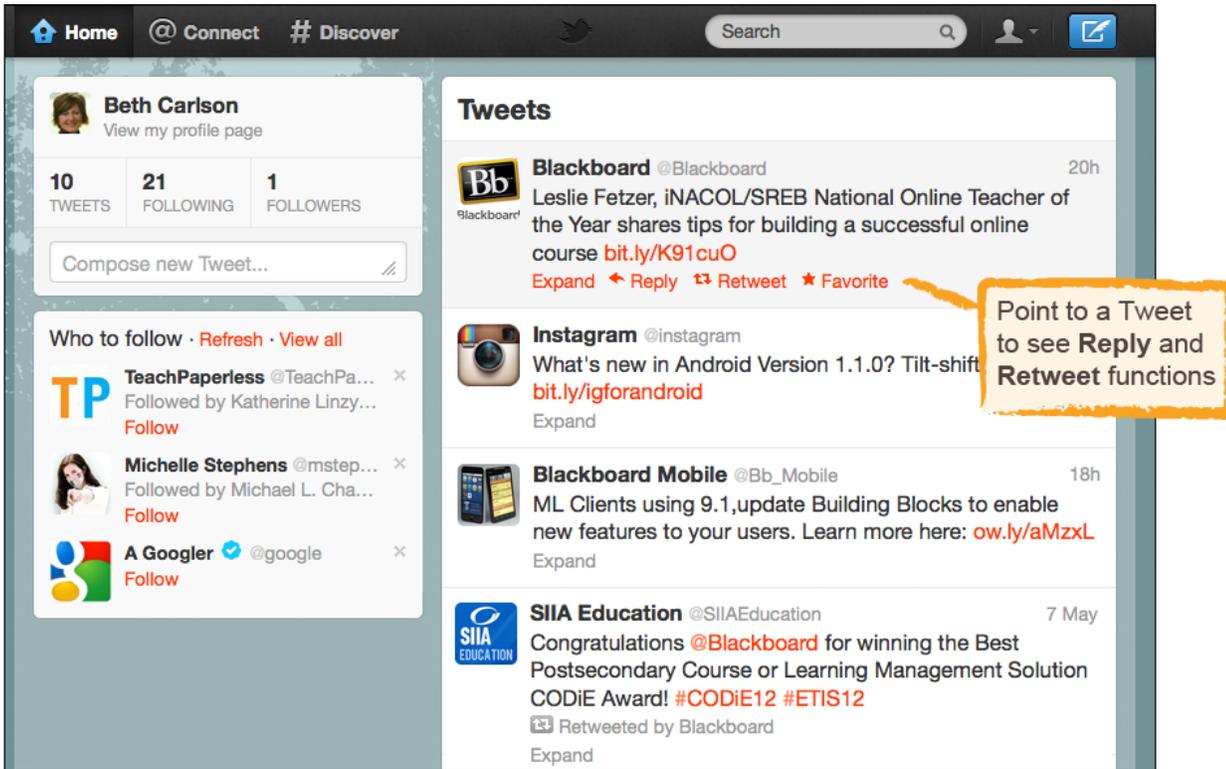
Global Faculty Lounge	Network with other education professionals and institutions across the world. Ask for advice, benefit from others' experience, and keep up with trends in your field.
Publicize Your Work	Promote your journal articles and other endeavors.
Backchannel Communication	Students engage in real-time discussion while they watch an event from different locations. For example, students watch a political debate while having a play-by-play discussion on Twitter. When students add an event hashtag to their Tweets, anyone can run a Twitter search to review all the backchannel Tweets related to that event.
Build Community	Extending discussion on Twitter can build community and encourage students to seek instant answers from their peers rather than contacting their instructor.
Tweets as a Study Guide	In-class tweeting with hashtags gives students the opportunity to refer back to what was said in class. After small group discussion, students tweet relevant points so they are available to the entire class.
Help Students Build a Professional Network	Students can start following and connecting with target companies before graduation.
Engage With a Public Figure	Try tweeting a public figure or industry expert – students are likely to get a response.
Increase Engagement	Large classes that use Twitter can broaden participation in lectures where there is simply not enough time for everyone to speak. Some students feel more comfortable tweeting than speaking out in class.
Pre-Class Discussion Prompts	Students tweet questions or comments on assigned readings before class and the Twitter stream for that hashtag is used to generate discussion in class.
Clarity of Expression	Though distilling a meaningful response into 140 characters is challenging, such a tight character limit can spark creativity.
Historical or Literary Character Impersonation	Use Twitter to get students into character as famous historical or literary figures by asking them to tweet as that person.

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Task	What You Need to Know	Steps to Accomplish
Create a Twitter Account	You can create an account separate from your personal Twitter account that you use for a specific course.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Go to Twitter.com. 2. Sign up for a Twitter account. 3. Note your login information. 4. Type in the Compose new Tweet box to start tweeting.
View Your Tweets	When you log in, you land on the Home tab. All Tweets from people that you are following appear in your Home timeline. To view only the Tweets you have posted, go to your profile page.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Log in to Twitter.com. 2. Read the Tweets from the people you are following. 3. To see only your own Tweets, click View my profile page below your name. 4. Your profile page includes your Tweets and retweets.
Invent a Hashtag	You and your students can include a particular hashtag in class-related Tweets to easily keep track of the conversation.	No special setup is required. Simply invent a hashtag that is not already in use. Search for your potential hashtag in Twitter and see if results exist. For example, a NURS-262 class might use #nurs262 as their hashtag.
View Activity for Your Hashtag	To view all Tweets that contain a particular hashtag, either click on it when it appears in your Twitter stream or type it into the search box at the top of the screen.	<p>You and your students can click the button that looks like a cog and select Save Search to access the search again in the future.</p> <p>Once you save a search, you can access it again by clicking once in the search box. All your saved searches appear in a drop-down list and you can select the one you want.</p>
Add a Twitter Widget to Your Blackboard Course	Keep students engaged by bringing Twitter to them. Publish a feed of your Tweets or the results of a Twitter search to your Blackboard course. Your feed is updated in real time.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Log in to Twitter and go to https://twitter.com/about/resources/widgets. 2. Select My Website. 3. Select Profile Widget to publish your own Tweets. Alternatively, select Search, Faves, or List. 4. Preview the widget, customize it if you want, and click Finish and Grab Code. 5. Copy the code. 6. In your Blackboard course, create a Blank Page in the Course Menu or in a Content Area. 7. In the Blank Page's Text Editor, select HTML Source Mode (<>). 8. Paste the code into the text editor. 9. Click Submit.

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Your **Home** timeline appears when you log in and lists all of the Tweets and retweets from people you are following. To find people to follow, you can use Twitter's suggestions in the **Who to follow** area.

When you **compose new Tweets**, they appear on your Home timeline, on your profile page, and to anyone who is following you. After pointing to a message posted by another user, you can see options and **Retweet** it so that your followers see it. Retweets have a **Retweeted by** line under the message.

Hashtags are a way to label Tweets that belong to a particular subject area or trend. Any word, phrase, or abbreviation preceded by # is a hashtag. You can search by hashtags to find related Tweets.

Links to websites are usually shortened with free services such as bitly.com or tinyurl.com to keep message length within the 140 character limit. The first three Tweets in the image above contain shortened links.

Tweets posted by clicking **Reply** on a Tweet contain @username in the message. You can also include @username in a Tweet to **Mention** another user, as shown in the last Tweet in the image above. You can see who has replied to you or mentioned you on the **Connect** tab. Replies and mentions also show in your Home timeline if you are following the sender.

Explore the Twitter lexicon further at <https://support.twitter.com/articles/166337-the-twitter-glossary#resources>.

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