

# A Brief Guide to Twitter Terminology

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**Twitter** is an online social networking service and micro blogging service that enables its users to send and read text-based posts of up to 140 characters, known as "tweets". This service has rapidly gained worldwide popularity, with over 300 million users as of 2011, generating over 300 million tweets and handling over 1.6 billion search queries per day. It has been described as "the SMS of the Internet."

## How to create an account:

1. Go to <http://twitter.com>, enter your **full name**, **email address**, create a **password** and click the yellow **Sign up for Twitter button**, or simply navigate to <https://twitter.com/signup>.
2. On the next page, select a **username** from one of the usernames we've suggested or create your own. We will automatically suggest available usernames based on the real name and email address you've entered. Try to pick something that describes you - whether it's a nickname, an interest, or a hobby.
3. Double check your name, email address, password, and username to make sure all fields are correct.
4. You may be asked to complete a Captcha. Fill in the words that are shown to let us know that you're human!
5. Success! You now have a Twitter account. Follow the directions given to you by "**The Twitter Teacher**" to follow accounts that interest you and find people you know.

Here are some quick definitions of crucial Twitter jargon:

**Tweet**: A message sent on Twitter, with a maximum of 140 characters (including links, symbols, etc).

**Follow**: Twitter's equivalent of "friending" on Facebook. If you follow someone on Twitter, that means that you will see every Tweet he or she sends out.

**@**: The all important icon that comes before your Twitter username (or "handle") when it is used in a Tweet. Clicking on a handle when it has the @ sign before it—aka, @cooldude—will call up every tweet containing that username.

**Retweet (RT)**: If you like a Tweet, press the retweet button to send it out to all of your followers, unaltered. A retweet is also a tweet, for those keeping track.

**Hashtag (#)**: A phrase that begins with the number sign from your telephone--#--and *no spaces*. A vital Twitter tool because if a group of people agree to put the same hashtag in every tweet they send, then clicking on that tag will call up a stream of every Tweet that has used it. Particularly useful for conferences, like #nsfmessenger.

**#FF**: One famous hashtag is #followfriday, or #ff. Every Friday, Twitter users employ this tag to recommend new people they're following to others. They simply send out a Tweet containing the hashtag and the Twitter handles of their new buds (using @ and no space, of course).

**Direct message (DM)**: Twitter's version of email. Send one person, privately, messages with a 140 word limit. Only works for people who are following you.