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TWITTER GUIDELINES
Twitter for Researchers:
An introduction for beginners

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TWITTER FOR RESEARCHERS: AN INTRODUCTION FOR BEGINNERS

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Twitter for Researchers

An introduction for beginners

This is a short Twitter “how to” guide to help you navigate Twitter and maximise its benefits for you as a researcher establishing a strong brand for yourself and your research area.

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Safety first

Twitter is public and all your tweets are out in the open by default. Bear in mind that it is a “publishing platform” – so don’t put anything on Twitter that you would not put on any other platform – e.g. a newsletter, blog or article.

Be aware of how fast information can travel and spread on Twitter (and other social media channels). Although you can delete a tweet, once information is out there, it is very difficult to withdraw it.

Some basics

Twitter is a “micro-blogging” platform. A “tweet” can be thought of as one blog entry or web-post. Your tweets will be published in a “feed”. Think of your twitter feed as a series of “articles” which you have posted on your own website. People who “follow” you will be shown your new articles in their “news” feed. Your newsfeed will be populated with the tweets of people who you follow.

Tweets show up in the order they happen. The top of your Twitter feed will have new tweets. As new tweets appear they push the older ones further down the feed. The further down you scroll, the older the tweets become. The immediacy of Twitter is its biggest drawcard.

Tweets can contain links, videos, gifs and photos. If you are tweeting text, there is a limit of 140 characters. It may seem limiting at first but once you get used to it you will appreciate the brevity. Success in the Twitter space has a lot to do with how engaging your Twitter posts are. Use images, questions, polls and content which others can share to build your own profile.

You can republish other people’s articles on your Twitter feed. This is called “retweeting”. You can also “like” or reply to an article/tweet.

You can get immediate information about who has seen your posts, and you can analyse how successful you have been on the analytics section of your Twitter account. Keep an eye on new followers, as they may be potential partners.

Don’t follow too many people. Rather focus on following the right people or organisations.

Getting started

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Signing up with Twitter

To create an account on the web:

1. Go to <http://twitter.com> and find the sign-up box, or go directly to <https://twitter.com/signup>.
2. Enter your **full name**, **phone number**, and a **password**.
3. Click **Sign up for Twitter**.
4. In order to verify your phone number, Twitter will send you an SMS text message with a code. Enter the verification code in the box provided. Learn more about having a phone number associated with your account [here](#).
5. Once you've clicked **Sign up for Twitter**, you can select a **username** (usernames are unique identifiers on Twitter) — type your own or choose one we've suggested. We'll tell you if the username you want is available.
6. **Double-check** your name, phone number, password, and username.
7. Click **Create my account**. You may be asked to complete a “Captcha” to let us know that you're human.
8. You can also download the Twitter app for using on your phone or mobile device.

Setting up your bio

Once you have signed up for Twitter (Twitter.com) you should write a short “bio” to explain to other Twitter users who you are and what you are interested in.

Link to any websites of particular relevance and include keywords which will help relevant people find you.

On the next page are two examples of bios which are used within a professional context. Note how they state the interests of the Twitter account holders.

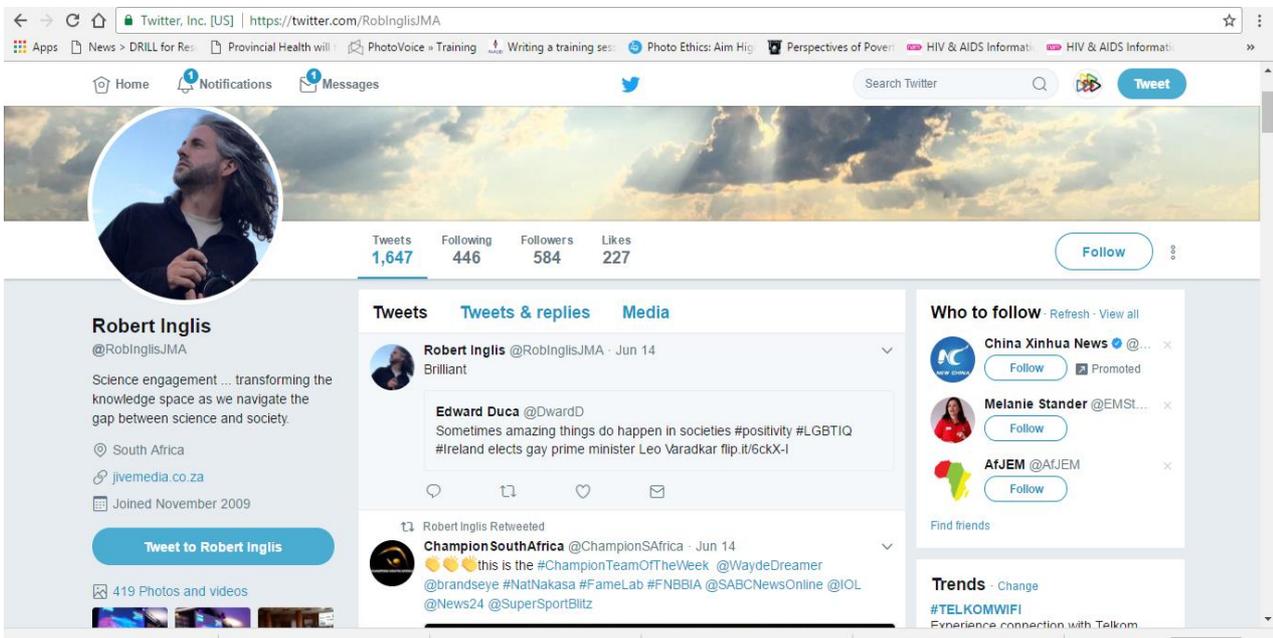
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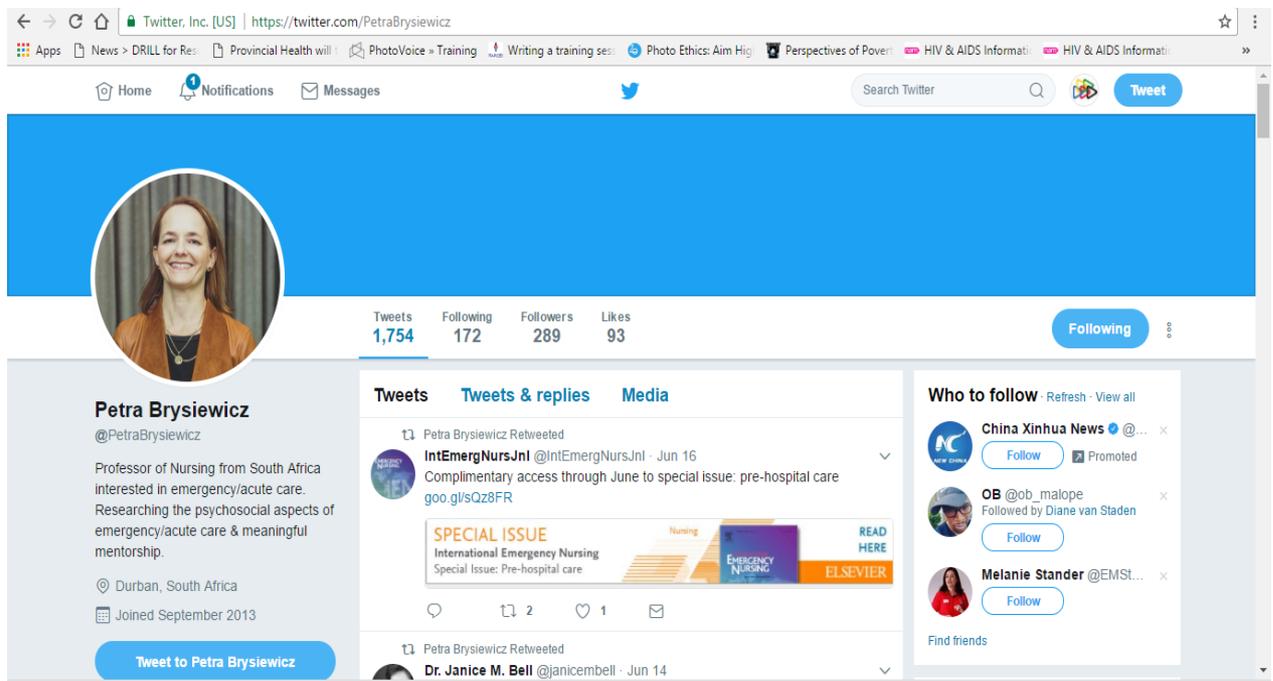
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Robert Inglis (Jive Media Africa)



Professor Petra Brysiewicz (DRILL)

Privacy settings

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Twitter is a public platform. If you would rather only interact with selected people, you can set your account to “private”. If you turn on the privacy setting this means you will have to manually give permission to everyone who wants to follow you. The disadvantage of a private account is that only the people to whom you have given permission will see your tweets.

With a public account you are able to block, mute and report undesirable behaviour.

How to tweet

All tweets are a maximum of 140 characters. This means that you might have to tweet multiple times to make a complex point. If you want to add a photo, a video, a poll, or a gif, you can do so in the lower bar of the “Compose new tweet” box.

Sharing a link in your tweet will decrease your character count by 23 characters.

Engagement with tweets is increased by adding interesting or provocative content, questions, images or ideas.

Using hashtags

Hashtags are best used for keeping up with or adding your thoughts to a larger conversation, or starting a new conversation. For example: If you are tweeting to add commentary on the Fees Must Fall movement, you use the hashtag #FeesMustFall. Another popular South African hashtag was #SayNotoXenophobia.

Anyone who searches for a particular hashtag will see all the content on Twitter that has been tagged with that hashtag. This is a powerful way of finding and connecting with others in your research area.

Who to follow

To get a better sense of how your community is using Twitter, you might want to follow a number of people. Here are some suggestions.

The number of people you are following is not as important as following the right people. To get you started, here are some suggested people and organisations to follow:

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| No. | Name | Username |
|-----|---|--------------------------------|
| 1. | Prof Petra Brysiewicz | @PetraBrysiewicz |
| 2. | Prof Frank Tanser | @ftanser |
| 3. | Prof Deenan Pillay | @DeenanDpillay |
| 4. | Prof Moses Chimbari | @mjchimbari @ChimbariMoses |
| 5. | Prof Colleen Aldous | @Aldousc |
| 6. | Prof Yunus Moosa | @UnnieMoo |
| 7. | Prof Sabiha Essack | @EssackSabiha |
| 8. | Prof Jill Hanass-Hancock | @JillHanass |
| 9. | Dr Koleka Mlisana | @zolkol |
| 10. | Dr Thabisile Mpfana | @ThabikaKhuzwayo |
| 11. | Dr Diane van Staden | @DianeVanStaden |
| 12. | Dr Bongani Nkambule | @Nkambuleb |
| 13. | Dr Varsha Bangalee | @BangaleeVarsha |
| 14. | Dr Saul Cobbing | @saulcobbing |
| 15. | Dr Lihle Qulu | @rebeleeque |
| 16. | Dr Mbali Mhlongo | @mhlongo_EM |
| 17. | UKZN College of Health Sciences | @UKZNCHS |
| 18. | DRILL | @DrillUKZN |
| 19. | The Conversation The Conversation Africa | @ConversationEDU @TC_Africa |
| 20. | NIH Funding | @NIHFunding |
| 21. | World Health Organization | @WHO |
| 22. | PHASA | @PublicHealthSA |
| 23. | AHRI | @AHRI_News |
| 24. | CAPRISA | @CAPRISAOfficial |
| 25. | NRF South Africa | @NRF_News |

Glossary

There's a whole lot more you can learn, and you will pick some of it up over time. This glossary includes terminology and vocabulary used to talk about aspects of Twitter.

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Meme: An image, video, piece of text, etc., typically humorous in nature, that is copied and spread rapidly by Internet users, often with slight variations.

GIF: Graphics Interchange Format. GIFs are image files that are compressed to reduce transfer time. The proper pronunciation of the "g" in the acronym is like the sound of the "g" in "girl".

@: The @ sign is used to call out usernames in tweets: "Hello @twitter!" People will use your @username to mention you in tweets, send you a message or link to your profile.

@username A username is how you're identified on Twitter, and is always preceded immediately by the @ symbol. For instance, Twitter Support is @Support.

See "Hashtag."

Alerts: Twitter Alerts enable public safety agencies to inform people during emergencies by highlighting critical time-sensitive content with notifications and a unique look.

Bio: Your bio is a short (up to 160 characters) personal description that appears in your profile that serves to characterise your persona on Twitter.

Block: If you block a Twitter account, that account will be unable to follow you or add you to their Twitter lists, and you will not receive a notification if they mention you in a tweet.

Connect tab: A personalised experience providing a fast and easy way to connect you to accounts you may be interested in, or to reconnect you with old friends on Twitter through your device's address book.

Deactivation: If you deactivate your account, it goes into a queue for permanent deletion from Twitter in 30 days. You may reactivate your account within the 30-day grace period.

Direct Messages: Direct Messages (DM) are private messages sent from one Twitter account to another account(s). You can use Direct Messages for one-on-one private conversations, or between groups.

Follow: Subscribing to a Twitter account is called "following." To start following someone, click or tap the "Follow" icon next to the account name on their profile to see their tweets as soon as they post something new. Anyone on Twitter can follow or

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unfollow anyone else at any time, with the exception of blocked accounts. See "Block."

Follow(s): A follow is the result of someone following your Twitter account. You can see how many follows (or followers) you have from your Twitter profile.

Follow count: This count reflects how many people you follow and how many follow you; these numbers are found on your Twitter profile.

Follower: A follower is another Twitter account that has followed you to receive your tweets in their Home timeline.

Geolocation, geotagging: Adding a location to your tweet (a geolocation or geotag) tells those who see your tweet where you were when you posted that tweet.

Hacking: Gaining unauthorised access to an account via phishing, password guessing, or session stealing. Usually this is followed by unauthorised posts from the account. Hacked accounts are sometimes referred to as "compromised." Click [here](#) if you've been hacked. Read more about how to keep your account safe.

Hashtag: A hashtag is any word or phrase immediately preceded by the # symbol. When you click or tap on a hashtag, you'll see other tweets containing the same keyword or topic.

Header photo: Your personal image that you upload, which appears at the top of your profile.

Home: Your Home timeline displays a stream of tweets from accounts you have chosen to follow on Twitter.

Impersonation: Online impersonation (pretending to be someone you're not) that is intended to deceive is prohibited under the Twitter Rules. Parody accounts are allowed. See "parody."

Like (n.): Liking a tweet indicates that you appreciate it. You can find all of your likes by clicking or tapping the "Likes" tab on your profile.

Like (v.): Tap the heart icon to like a tweet and the author will see that you appreciate it.

List: From your own account, you can create a group list of other Twitter accounts by topic or interest (e.g., a list of friends, co-workers, celebrities, athletes). Twitter lists also contain a timeline of tweets from the specific accounts that were added to the list, offering you a way to follow individual accounts as a group on Twitter.

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Mention: Mentioning other accounts in your tweet by including the @ sign followed directly by their username is called a “mention.” Also refers to tweets in which your @username was included.

Mobile web: Twitter's website tailored to fit your mobile device. Visit it at mobile.twitter.com.

Mute: You can mute accounts; mute words, phrases, usernames and hashtags from your notifications; and mute Direct Message notifications.

Notifications: The “Notifications” timeline displays your interactions with other Twitter accounts, like mentions, likes, retweets and who has recently followed you. If you request it, we send notifications to you via email, SMS, or through the Twitter for iOS or Twitter for Android apps.

Parody: You can create parody accounts on Twitter to spoof or make fun of something in jest. There are also commentary and fan accounts. These accounts must disclose that they are parody, fan or commentary accounts in order to comply with our strict policy against impersonation. See "impersonation."

Phishing: Tricking a user to give up their username and password. This can happen by sending the user to a fake sign-in page, a page promising to get you more followers, or just simply asking for the username and password via a DM or email.

Pinned tweets: You can pin a tweet to the top of your profile page to keep something important to you above the flow of time-ordered tweets.

Profile: Your profile displays information you choose to share publicly, as well as all of the tweets you've posted. Your profile, along with your @username, identifies you on Twitter.

Profile photo: Your personal image found under the Me icon. It's also the picture that appears next to each of your tweets.

Promoted Accounts: Promoted Accounts present suggested accounts you might want to follow as promoted by Twitter advertisers. These appear in your Home timeline, and via Who to Follow, search results and elsewhere on the platform.

Promoted Moments: Promoted Moments are Moments that are authored by a brand and featured in the Moments guide. They are clearly marked as “Promoted.”

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Promoted Trends: Promoted Trends display time-, context-, and event-sensitive trends promoted by our advertisers. These appear at the top of the Trending Topics list on Twitter and elsewhere on the platform, and are clearly marked as "Promoted."

Promoted Tweets: Promoted Tweets are tweets that are paid for by Twitter advertisers. These appear in your Home timeline, at the top of search results on Twitter and elsewhere on the platform, and are clearly marked as "Promoted."

Promoted Videos: Promoted Videos are videos within Promoted Tweets that are paid for by Twitter advertisers. These appear in your Home timeline, at the top of search results on Twitter, and elsewhere on the platform, and are clearly marked as "Promoted."

Protected Tweets: Tweets are public by default. Choosing to protect your tweets means that your tweets will only be seen by your followers.

Reply: A response to another person's tweet. Reply by clicking or tapping the reply icon next to the tweet you'd like to respond to. A direct reply count is displayed next to the reply icon of a tweet, and indicates the total number of replies the tweet has received.

Reactivation: You may reactivate a deactivated account within 30 days of the deactivation date. After 30 days, deactivated accounts are permanently deleted.

Retweet (n.): A tweet that you forward to your followers is known as a "retweet". Often used to pass along news or other valuable discoveries on Twitter, retweets always retain original attribution.

Retweet (v.):

The act of sharing another account's tweet to all of your followers by clicking or tapping on the "Retweet" button.

SMS: Short Message Service (SMS) is most commonly known as text messaging. Learn how to send a tweet via SMS.

Short code: A five-digit phone number used to send and receive tweets via text message. Find your short code, in the text message sent to you.

Spam: Refers to a variety of prohibited behaviours that violate the Twitter Rules. Spam can be generally described as unsolicited, repeated actions that negatively impact other accounts.

Suspended: Suspended accounts have been prohibited from using Twitter, generally for breaking Twitter Terms of Service.

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Text commands: When using Twitter via SMS, these commands allow you to access most Twitter features with simple text keywords. Learn the Twitter text commands, from the Twitter support [here](#).

Timeline: A timeline is a real-time stream of tweets. Your Home timeline, for instance, is where you see all the tweets shared by your friends and other people you follow.

Timestamp: The date and time a tweet was posted to Twitter. A tweet's timestamp can be found in grey text in the detail view of any tweet.

Top Tweets: Tweets determined by a Twitter algorithm to be the most popular or resonant on Twitter at any given time. Read more about Top Tweets.

Trends: A trend is a topic or hashtag determined algorithmically to be one of the most popular on Twitter at that moment. You can choose to tailor trends based on your location and who you follow.

Tweet (n.): A tweet may contain photos, videos, links and up to 140 characters of text.

Tweet (v.): The act of sending a tweet. Tweets get shown in Twitter timelines or are embedded in websites and blogs.

Twitter: An information network made up of 140-character messages (including photos, videos and links) from all over the world. Sign up!

Twitter emoji: A Twitter emoji is a specific series of letters immediately preceded by the # sign which generates an icon on Twitter such as a national flag or another small image.

Twitter Polls: Twitter Polls allow you to weigh in on questions posed by other people on Twitter. You can also easily create your own poll and see the results instantly.

Unfollow: See "follow."

URL, URLs: A URL (Uniform Resource Locator) is a web address that points to a unique page on the internet.

Verification: A process whereby a Twitter account receives a blue check icon to indicate that the creator of these tweets is a legitimate source. Verified accounts include public figures and those who may have experienced identity confusion on Twitter.

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Who to follow: “Who to follow” is an automated list of recommended accounts we think you might find interesting, based on the types of accounts you already follow and who those people follow.

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