

What is Twitter?



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Twitter is a social networking site that allows people all over the world to comment on news, events and things that are happening to them as they occur. Known as 'microblogging', these comments – 'tweets' – have to be very short.

Twitter's key benefits and features

- Tweets can be no longer than 280 characters.
- Anyone, anywhere in the world can join in. Users can follow and have access to the opinions of and information shared by experts, politicians, authors, celebrities and more.
- Tweets can be on any subject - although users are not allowed to post illegal content of any kind.
- Twitter users can share comments from other people by 'retweeting' them to their own followers.
- Twitter users can 'favourite' tweets that they like, and this enables them to look back at all their 'favourited' tweets at any time, using the favourite function as a bookmarking tool. It is also a way to show appreciation to other users.
- Twitter users can choose who they 'follow' allowing them to get news and views relevant to them.
- It is possible to remain private on Twitter, by using an alias and/or by locking a Twitter account so that anyone wishing to follow it must request the right to view the content.
- Twitter users can create lists of other Twitter users, grouped by interest, geography or all manner of other things.
- Tweets can contain links to news items, video and the like on other websites. These links will be shortened automatically by Twitter.
- Twitter can be used through an 'app' on a mobile phone or hand-held device, through the [Twitter website](#) or through third-party-created software for computers such as [Hootsuite](#).

Online safety information

- Protect your identity and personal information by never sharing your personal details such as your email address, name, and mobile phone number
- Avoid web-based applications that ask you to supply your Twitter username and password
- Regularly change your password
- Avoid clicking unsafe websites by checking the URL
- Beware of unsolicited direct messages
- Remember to block and report spam
- Use an anti-virus and firewall software on your computer or device

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Next steps

[What is social networking?](#)

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