

Manipulate One of the Web's Fastest Growing Trends to Help You Cash in on Consumers' Short Attention Spans!

(As Seen in Newsweek and Time)
[Recognized as 1 of Time's 50 best Websites of 2007](#)



Written By: Tiffany Dow



Brevity. It's what's hot on the web right now. You have a split second to grab your target audience by the eyeballs and pull them into your lair – and if you can't manage to do it, you'll be back flipping burgers or cutting through cubicle mazes in no time.

How often do you get frustrated with Google AdWords because you have to sit and brainstorm a clever way to use 25 characters to capture your audience? And you're *paying* for that, too!

For those of you wanting to get your feet wet with web 2.0, but who don't have the time it takes to set up lenses on Squidoo, profiles and bulletins on MySpace, or other extensive content on social networks, Twitter may be just what you're looking for.

I have a blog.

In fact – I have four.

Now ask me how often I post on them. It's hard to muster up the content and find time to post valuable information for these blogs on a regular basis – *and I'm a writer!*

I can't imagine how difficult it is for those of you who have to struggle through the writing process, too. With [Twitter](#), you're going to love the couch potato environment it offers because you can be lazy and still cater to your niche – as often or infrequent as you want to!

Social networks like Wikis are great places to find information. That's one reason so many of us marketers are working our butts off to position ourselves as experts in our niche. Consumers are holding peer-to-peer socialization in high regard and relying less on seller to buyer websites with hard-hitting copy mucking them up.

But a lot of socialization isn't about information. It's about connecting. About seeing and being seen while you're stuck at work, home alone at 4 o'clock in the morning, or while you're multi-tasking with 100 other things throughout your day.

You may not care about being "known" in social circles – but your customers do. The ones who line your pockets with purchases of how to cure acne in 3 days or how to start an at-home business so they can tell "the Man" where to stick it!

I'm a voyeur.

No, I'm not a peeping Tiffany. But I am a college-educated, six-figure salary head-of-the-household woman with buying power who's web-fluent and happens to be a reality TV addict.

I can sit for hours and watch shows that follow some unknown person around – no matter how boring it is – because I just love to people-watch. That's what got me interested in Twitter in the first place.

I don't know why, and it doesn't really matter, but human nature for many of us is to be consumed by the doldrums of another person's life. Twitter is offering a peephole into the world of other online entities and if you use the site right, you might be able to take your customers by the virtual hand and lead them onto your *own* domain.

What Is Twitter?

It's a strange cross between an instant message and a blog. People are short and to the point. Some get creative and post haiku-like messages. Have you ever emailed someone and instantly received an email back saying, "I'm away from the office right now, but...?"

It's kind of like that – only this time, everyone sees what you're doing right now and you develop followers similar to the friends on MySpace or Fanpop sites. You and your friends can turn Twitter on and off so that you're not notified of every move your friends make.

Note: Twitter found there was confusion about having both "friends" and "followers" on the site, so they got rid of the friends and left followers intact. I use the term interchangeably here because people are so used to friends lists – just know that it means the same.

Think of it as active Post-It™ notes from one friend or business associate to another online. If you don't have time to crank out paragraph after paragraph of witty writing on a full blog, you can dash off notes to all of your friends, business partners, and customers on Twitter.

Connection is only a click away.

The thing that makes Twitter so appealing is how easy it is. You can write your Twitter notes from your computer using their online form, your mobile phone or an instant message program.

By making it easy, Twitter is making it fun.

Even better, Twitter offers a personal profile page for each user that's like an online collage of your Twitter activity. It creates this collage out of your Twitter friends

and contacts, messages you've sent and received, links, a photo of you, a brief bio and favorites.

Then people viewing your profile can see this collage of your activity on Twitter and decide if they want to be your friend. Twitter has turned into more than just a tool for sending your quick thoughts to people you know online.

Because it allows links and can be integrated into your other blogs and websites, it can work as a great socialization marketing tool as well. Like other tools for marketing similar to MySpace, it's easy to be considered spam, so the key to being *Twitteriffic* is to be friendly and unobtrusive.

Setting Up a Twitter Account

Go to www.Twitter.com and click on the right side of the screen where it says, "Join for Free!" You'll be taken to the sign-up page, where you just enter the following information:

- Name
- Username
- Password
- Email Address
- Time Zone
- Picture
- Protect My Updates
- The Security Code

Two things you want to do here:

First – upload a picture, even if it's one you get off of [istock](http://www.istock.com). Social sites are personable, people – I can't say it enough! So when I started playing around on the site, I was concentrating on the golf niche. Here's the profile picture I used (and no, it's unfortunately not me – it cost me \$1 at iStock):

Also, if you DO upload a picture, you'll appear in the public timeline. If not, you're limiting your coverage. The public timeline is a constantly updated section of Twitter where people can sit and watch new entries on a rolling basis every four minutes.

Second tip – do NOT check the box that says “Protect My Updates.” It defeats the whole purpose – which is to reveal your profile and links to as many people as possible.

Next you’ll be asked to invite your friends or skip this step. Never hurts to invite people who can add you as friends on the site. If you’re on www.LiveJournal.com, then it’ll automatically add those friends to your invite list *if you want it to*.

After the invites, you’ll have your first shot at Twittering. You only get 140 characters to Twitter – but it’s better than 25 on AdWords, right? Not only that, but you can exceed the 140 limit a little bit.

Twitter just puts the end of your message on your profile page only. That means that if you go over by a few characters, your message won’t get lost. As you see on the screen below, you get to enter what you’re doing, but if you have a followers list, then it will show you what they’re doing, too.

After you enter your text, you click “Update.”



You’re then entered into the public timeline where everyone can read your Twitters. I want to promote my Social Networking on Squidoo eBook, but I don’t want to appear spammy – so instead, I post a Twitter with a hyperlink back to my blog.

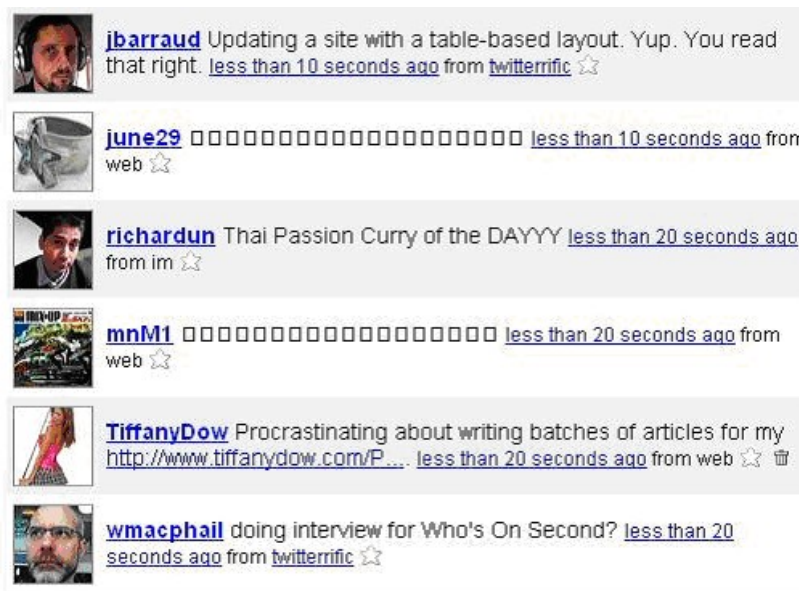
You don’t want to link directly to your sales site. Well, you *can*, but blogging is much more welcomed by fellow Twitterers than spamming it up with 25-page sales letters.

Here's what my Twitter entry looks like:



When you post messages, people have the opportunity to mark you as a favorite and add themselves as followers to your profile. To mark a favorite, you just click on the star at the bottom of the Twitter, as shown above where it says, "4 minutes ago from web."

In this entry below, I'm linking to my PLR website and I cloaked it to see how many hits I'm getting. As you have more followers, you have more clicks. I only have 1 friend because this account is brand new. You can see my entry on the public timeline as everyone else sees it.



People can follow your Twitters by getting notification via web, phone, or instant message. It's a bit like stalking online, isn't it? Only in this instance, you're **hoping** your consumers stalk you!

You want to bulk up your followers list so that they'll add you, too – and then your reach will begin to grow. To add a friend, click on their profile name and then on the right side of the screen, where it says Actions, click on “add.”

This is the profile for w2e – a Web 2 Expo person or company I'm adding. Once I click on *add*, the screen will change to show me the new Actions I can take, including message, nudge, leave, and remove:



Using Your Twitter Account

Most of the time, Twitter messages are general updates to an entire group. You can also target a specific Twitter user on your list by using the @ symbol followed by their username, like @TiffanyDow.

This is a great way to make your Twitter experience more personal.

By occasionally targeting specific users with the @ symbol, you're displaying to the other Twitter users that follow you that you are a real person having a conversation with a real friend.

This lets them know you're not a bot, and they'll more accepting of links in your Twitter messages. Another handy feature for connecting with your Twitter friend list is the Direct Message.

This allows you to send a longer message to a specific user for their eyes only. This is key – it helps you develop a more personal relationship with people you may not know outside of Twitter.

I can't stress often enough that this is a social tool that only benefits from personal contact! The catch with the Direct Message feature is the aspect of friendship. You can't send a Direct Message to someone until they add you as a friend.

Basically, you both have to be on each other's friend list to Direct Message a person. All Direct Messages are delivered to the friend's email account, which is kept hidden from view.

The Nudge is a feature that lets you virtually tap another user on the shoulder if they haven't updated in awhile. It sends a virtual "nudge" to the friend to let them know you're "asking" about them.

Like Direct Messages, this requires the two users to be on each other's Twitter friend lists. Posting regular Twitter updates is essential. You don't have to spend every waking minute at your keyboard or phone texting Twitter.

You *do* need to post an update or two a day at least – if you really want to work it to its full advantage. In order to be picked up by the public timeline view, you need to post and let the community get to know you.

The public timeline view gives you exposure. Exposure draws people to the links you post. Posting a Twitter update gets you onto the public timeline. Being interesting and personable gets you noticed while you're there. Getting noticed gets people to click your links and add you as a friend.

See how it all ties in together?

Putting Twitter Bots to Work For You

Because Twitter is a new Web 2.0 service, it's changing daily. As the Twitter "powers that be" discover how users are using (or in some cases abusing) their system, they're choosing when to close loopholes and when to embrace them as features.

One recent loophole they discovered is one that allows bots to add friends by sweeping the public timeline. If you've used a bot or program to automatically add friends on MySpace, you know the kind of bot I mean.

Needless to say, Twitter users were not happy about this bot.

Twitter is closing this loophole. It's better to manually add friends and do your socialization the right way, anyway. Everyone's sick of people who run amok in web 2.0 sites just to make a quick buck.

Make a buck – but prove your worth first.

Just because the Twitter loophole of using a bot to add friends automatically is frowned upon doesn't mean you can't use any bots at all. You can! Many Twitter users use bots to enhance their experience.

So how do you create a Twitter bot? First, you need to decide what you'd like your 'net bot to do for you. Some bots send out sports scores to subscribers. Some bots send weather reports, link lists, web feeds, stock information, or news to your Twitter friends.

You'll need to host the bot on your own web server to get it to work. Twitter is designed to be a portable application, so there's no way to host the bot you create on your Twitter account directly.

Once you have your web server ready, it's time to get started creating your bot. Once you've registered a Twitter account for your bot to reference and set up your web server, it's time to program your bot.

You'll need to decide if you want your bot to be a Push bot or a Pull bot. Push bots send information **to** the people on the bot's friend list. Pull bots send answers to commands or queries Twitter users send it.

If you're a little confused, don't worry. You can hire a programmer to help you with this project if you don't want to do it yourself. If you **do** want to do it yourself, you can go to [Twitter's API](#) to find out how their program works for sending queries and answers.

Your bot will be sending Direct Messages, so it will need to get accepted as a friend by the users that want to use your service. To get your bot to add people as friends when they request the service your bot offers, you need to have your bot use the code found [here](#). You can also use the code found [here](#).

Once your bot is created and in action, monitor it carefully. Pay attention to how people are using it. Make sure it isn't intrusive, and that it doesn't invade Twitter users' privacy.

If your bot is useful, you'll start to see your Twitter friends growing by leaps and bounds. You can see Twitter bots in action giving weather forecasts, sports scores and stock reports.

All you have to do is add [Forecast](#), [Stock](#) or [Sports](#) to your followers list and you'll get their updates. You can use these examples for ideas on how to make bots for your company, service or product.

If you want your bot to be a success, you need to set up a website that tells people how to use it. Make the site simple, and make it look similar in appearance to Twitter itself.

You want people to know they're in the right place right away. You can even make separate Twitter user accounts for each bot, and use the website link on the profile page to link to your bot's website.

Can You Monetize A Twitter Username?

The short answer to this question is yes. Just like domain names in the early 90s, Twitter usernames are unique. Because of Twitter's fast rise in popularity, it may be possible to "name squat" on a Twitter username like people squatted on URLs way back when.

What this would do for you is provide you with a way to make some fast cash once the big corporations start catching on to the Twitter craze and its potential for advertising their product.

Because of the delay between when a fad like MySpace or Twitter becomes popular to the masses and when mainstream corporate America picks it up, you have a small window of advantage here.

Your advantage is increased by the fact that registering on Twitter is free. You can snap up as many usernames based on existing trademarks, brands, and niches as you can think of, and all you're spending is time.

Then you just add a link to a website on the username profile. That website should have the purchase details of the Twitter username. Easy as pie!

Creating Backend Twitter Applications

The people who made Twitter want us to create backend user applications for their product. Having people like us create applications that require Twitter makes Twitter more useful to everyone.

The more useful Twitter is, the more people depend on it, and the longer it will stick around. There's a ton of potential out there for making Twitter work to your advantage.

Think of what you'd like Twitter to do. Think of the websites and web service you use right now. Wouldn't making them work with Twitter bring attention to your product, service or company? Definitely.

Some ideas for backend Twitter applications you can create to bring Twitter users flocking to your door include:

- An interface with social bookmarking sites like Digg or Fark that brings a Twitter user updates in real time for new articles that match keywords they enter.
- An application that tracks eBay sales for each user in real time, or that tracks items the user is watching to bid on.
- An application that tracks the URLs people post in their Twitter messages and posts the stats on a website. This could be marketable data for the Internet marketer looking to find out what would sell well to Twitter users, or what would be the next great Internet-based product.
- An application that integrates MySpace and Twitter.
- An application that mashes Google Maps and Twitter users to help you track where your followers are located.
- A melding of iTunes, Last.FM, Mog.com or other e-music services and Twitter, similar to NowPlaying.
- An application that meshes Twitter and sites like del.icio.us or mag.nol.ia.
- A MyBlogLog and Twitter mashup application.
- A Twitter-based dating service.
- A Twitter voting service, where you can rank your favorite Twitter messages and favorite Twitter users.
- A Twitter-based event notification and planning service.
- Twitter categories.
- Twitter tags and tag clouds.
- Twitter RSS blog feeds.

There's no end to the possibilities. And I know many of your marketers are more technologically sound than I am. I like to keep it simple.

Tracking Twitter

There are several ways to track Twitter. Why would you want to do this? I do this so I can see what's popular, what people are Twittering about – because I may be able to create a product for them in the future.

The most popular way to track Twitter is to install a widget on your blog. Twitter provides the code to do this. Once it's installed, you can track Twitter users on your followers list right on your web page or on your blog sidebar.

The widget has a nice, streamlined, semi-transparent look and feel to it that you can customize to your blog colors. If you don't want to look at Twitter on your blog, you can get it on your phone.

By signing up for the Mobile Twitter service, user updates will go directly to your mobile phone. All you have to do is enter your mobile number on your Twitter account home page and say "OK" to the phone option.

If that still doesn't work for you, you can use the Twitter instant message option. This puts Twitter on your instant message program as a friend, and lets you send updates to everyone on your Twitter followers list through your instant message program.

It also delivers updates from people on your Twitter followers list right to your instant message window. Are you a FireFox user? If you are, you can use [TwitBin](#), a FireFox plug in.

TwitBin puts your Twitter updates right in your sidebar while you browse. You don't even have to switch windows to see what's going on with your Twitter contacts.

Using Twitter on Your Website or Blog

You can now integrate Twitter right into your website or blog, just like Digg, reddit, Furl and other social web services. Just go to [TwitThis](#) and get the code to place a link to Twitter at the end of every post or in the sidebar or links on your page.

A small graphic will appear. This graphic will allow your readers to click it and create an instant Twitter message with your website URL, or the URL of the blog entry they're reading.

This will get the word out about your site to everyone on their followers list instantly. TwitThis even has a tool you can put on your browser toolbar so that you can instantly notify your Twitter friends of websites that you're reading.

With the toolbar button, sharing your interests is as easy as a click. You don't even have to open your Twitter message window – just one click submits your URL.

Real Examples of Twitter's Marketing Power

If you still aren't convinced that Twitter can be a marketing tool, let me show you some real examples of Twitter in action. People everywhere are already using Twitter as a tech-savvy marketing tool.

The first big example of Twitter in action as a marketing tool is in politics. Two technologically -ware candidates are already establishing a presence on Twitter (and on Second Life and MySpace as well).

These candidates are John Edwards and Barack Obama.

Both candidates established Twitter user accounts early on in the Twitter madness, and both update them daily. They use Twitter to send campaign schedule changes, event notifications and press notes.

They Twitter about food on the campaign trail and Twitter their immediate reactions to breaking news. Both candidates use Twitter's URL feature to broadcast URLs supporting their ideas and giving information about their events.

Both use bots to accept friends and add users that add them to their followers list, so that they can send Direct Messages. Both use a personal user picture to enhance their Twitter profile and make it personal. They're even scheduling live Twitter discussions to reach the masses.

Scott Hanselman is a diabetic who Twitters about his condition and is inspiring and helping millions of others with the disease. He's developed an enormous following. If you're in the health niche, you could follow his lead and market to your niche on this still-new web 2.0 site. [Read about Scott's Twitter experience here.](#)

Gamers are plugging their xBox 360s into Twitter and updating other avid fans with every win, loss, and cheat they experience.

If politicians can use Twitter, then you can, too. Imagine the uses Twitter has for promoting new blog entries. Do you write eBooks or PLR articles? Send a Twitter message about working on the next installment in a series.

Are you offering a webinar or online class? Twitter it. Even better, think of a way to offer the class through Twitter alone! Use the message and URL feature in tandem with your website to make it happen.

Imagine getting that kind of instant response to your product or service! Twitter lets you grab instant reactions to your event. Just look at what it did for the SxSW tech conference this year in Texas – Twitter was the main instrument for uniting people for meetings, after hours gatherings and instant critique of the speeches and presentations.

Extra Cool Twitter Stuff

Okay, sometimes there's stuff that's just cool to use, and with Twitter – there's a lot of it. I haven't even had time to touch the surface of all the cool stuff and how it can impact a marketer's life, but you can believe I'm going to go through each one and put it to the test to see what marketers can do with it.

[MoniTwitter](#)

Want to know when your site has errors or goes down? If you've set your Twitter notifications for phone or text, this site will alert you via Twitter when it happens.

[Twitterific](#)

An application that lets you read and publish posts or “tweets” to the Twitter community.

[Twitteroo](#)

- Update your Twitter status from your Desktop
- URL shortening via [rurl.org](#)
- Double-click a status to message that user directly
- Twitter notifications
- View your Friends timeline or the Public timeline
- Clickable links from status messages
- Refreshes automatically or manually
- Set refresh time and notification transparency
- Support for international characters in status messages
- Browse to Twitter user page or personal websites
- Customize Twitteroo font size
- Set transparency for main Twitteroo window and notifications
- Optional sound notification when new tweets arrive
- Profile icon caching for faster Tweeting

- Bite-sized cookies made from real Twitter

[Tweetbar](#)

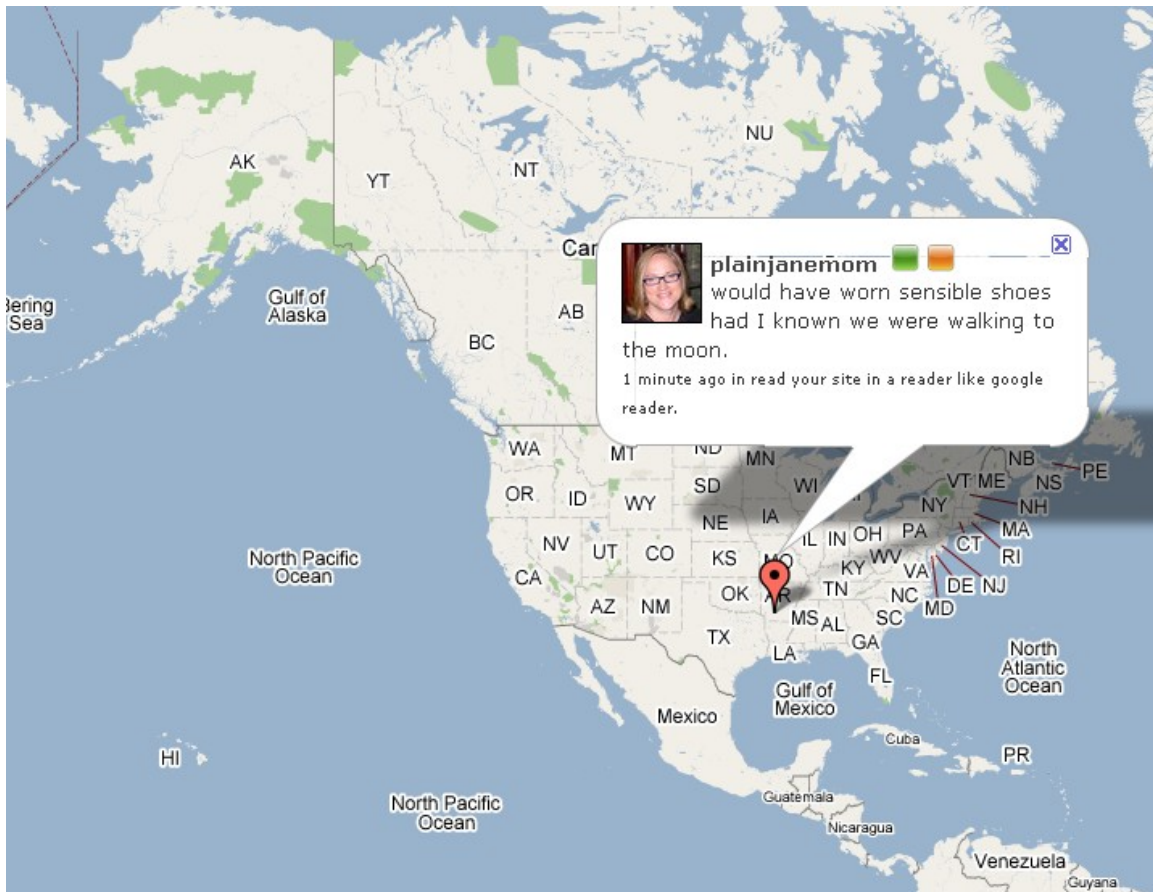
A Twitter sidebar for Firefox and Flock.

[Twitterholic](#)

Bots that scan the public timelines on Twitter for new users to watch. They calculate the stats for each user in their database. Then they put you on the list of Twitterholics, a true honor in the web 2.0 community.

[Twitvision](#)

This is THE most addictive tool for me. Bubbles pop up every few seconds to show you another Twitter, pinpointing the person's location on a global map. It's like a worldwide chat – you see their picture, envision where they're at, and read the scoop.



Or even better, look at the 3D version, where the globe spins around and you hear from other people on the planet (in this example, a gamer Twitters – but you could have included your URL if you were in that niche):



[Twitterment](#)

A Twitter search engine – enter your keyword or phrase and get results of past Twitters. This could enable you to target your audience for an add to your followers list.

Twitter is a real-time tool to help you tap into the thoughts of the masses sharing an experience. What Internet marketer wouldn't want to ride this wave?

Other Website Owned by Rhonda White:

[MommyRevenue.com](#)

[MommyAffiliates.com](#)

[SellInformationProducts.com](#)

[SmallBudgetAdvertising.com](#)

[Squidoo.com/private-label-content-tips-n-ideas](#)

[Wahm.Forumwise.com](#)

Content may be shared as long as no further revisions are made.