



ABA's Guide to Twitter for Booksellers

What is Twitter?

Twitter is a microblogging platform. No one gets to be verbose here: 140 characters per post is all you're allowed.

What's the point?

Community and conversation, and a way to share them with some very smart people.

How do I start?

- Create an account.
- Set up your profile. Include enough information to make it clear you're a real person, not a spammer. Upload a picture.
- Follow other Twitter users. Start slowly – following hundreds of people right away makes you look like a spammer, and makes people disinclined to follow you back.
- Start tweeting. Give people an idea of what to expect from you.
- Read some of what's already out there before you jump into conversations.



And then what?

- Use Twitter in your web browser at Twitter.com, or download one of the third-party applications, like TweetDeck, Twhirl, TwitterBerry, or Twitterific.
- To indicate that your message is directed at a particular person, start your tweet with @username. (The message is still public, and can be read by anyone who follows you.)
- To send a private message, use the Direct Message function. (You can only send direct messages to people who are following you.)
- To reply to someone else's tweet, click the arrow below it before typing.
- If you like what someone else has posted, share it by retweeting. Start your tweet with "retweeting @username" and copy the earlier tweet. (Because of the 140-character limit, "retweeting" is often shortened to anything between "retweet" and "RT.")
- Copying a complete URL doesn't often leave many characters for your message. Use TinyURL.com or a similar site to save space.
- Check your @ replies using the link on the right side of the website to make sure you know who's talking to you.
- At least half of any conversation is listening. Make sure you're not just shouting. (You may notice a theme in this document – any one of the many guides to Twitter will make this point over and over, too.)

What else can I do with it?

- Use [Twitpic](http://www.twitpic.com) (www.twitpic.com) to upload pictures and tweet them easily.
- Find out what people are already talking about. Use Twitter's search function to find out if anyone's talking about your store, your city, or your favorite book. (If you see people talking about Summize, they're referring to Twitter's search engine, which was developed independently. Some people just aren't ready to let go of the old ways.)
- Procrastinate. Take a look at tweets from around the world with [Twittervision](http://www.twittervision.com) (www.twittervision.com) or [TwitEarth](http://www.twitearth.com) (www.twitearth.com).

How can I use Twitter as a marketing tool, when you keep telling me it's all about listening?

You can use Twitter to announce upcoming events, sales, new blog posts, and other opportunities for self-promotion, but go beyond a simple announcement.

- Handsell a favorite title, and include a link to your store website.
- After you add a business to IndieBound.org, tweet about why you like it.
- Live-tweet an event.
- Ask for help, and thank everyone who gives it to you.

Read this post (www.chrisbrogan.com/50-ideas-on-using-twitter-for-business/) from Chris Brogan for more suggestions.

I still don't believe Twitter is useful. Can you prove it?

After I put most of this guide together, I tweeted about it: "Working on Twitter guide for booksellers - any non-obvious hints/tips/etc. for beginners?" Within ten minutes, I had these responses:

- Here's a great resource: <http://www.twitip.com/>
- Tell 'em to use it like a virtual handselling tool for overlooked titles. We authors will love you even more!
- For beginners? To find ppl they might want to follow -- make use of search.twitter.com :) Perhaps that was obvious...
- Consider using the search function first -- to track issues/authors, rather than joining & tweeting. Less time consuming.
- Identify your account clearly as either personal or as a public persona for the store.
- People need help learning to hit the reply arrow in a tweet's box to reply to THAT tweet. And to click name to see replied-to tweet.
- I think that deciding exactly what it's for is important. Is it industry? Marketing? Personal?
- I seem to remember that Twitter encourages you to opt out of seeing @replies--that's the default. Mistake. Those are good stuff.
- Unlike a Facebook update, your tweets should be self-sustaining; there's no need to work your Twitter handle into the sentence.
- Another thought: They need to take care in doing follows. Figure out what they're going to do and then be consistent.
- Not sure if it's obvious or not, but Tweetdeck allows you to set groups which is very helpful.

Is the terminology associated with Twitter dumb?

Yes, absolutely. But somehow, it stuck.

Who's on Twitter?

The URL for any Twitter user is [www.twitter.com/\[username\]](http://www.twitter.com/[username]).

ABA staff

@avindomnitz – Avin Domnitz, chief executive officer
@IndieBoundMeg – Meg Smith, chief marketing officer
@IndieBoundPaige – Paige Poe, IndieBound outreach liaison
@MattSupko – Matt Supko, web content coordinator
@dancullen – Dan Cullen, Senior Director, Editorial Content
@SarahRettger – Sarah Rettger, marketing coordinator
@JillSP – Jill Perlstein, Director of Member Services
@cheydog44 – Kristen Gilligan, Director of Meetings & Events
@lenhouse – Len Vlahos, chief program officer

Other smart Twitterers

@FredRamey – Fred Ramey, Unbridled Books
@HarvardBiz – Harvard Business School publications
@harperstudio – HarperStudio
@unbridledbooks – Unbridled Books
@AlgonquinBooks – Algonquin Books
@ami_with_an_i – Ami Greko, Macmillan
@mediabistro – MediaBistro
@charlesbridge – Charlesbridge
@mesjak – John Mesjak, independent sales rep
@chrisbrogan – Chris Brogan, PR maven
@KatMeyer – Kat Meyer, Wheatmark Books
@planetmoney – NPR's economy/finance experts
@wholefoods – Whole Foods
@zappos – Tony Hsieh, Zappo's CEO
@timoreilly – Tim O'Reilly, O'Reilly
@MaudNewton – Maud Newton, book blogger and reviewer
@paperhaus – Carolyn Kellogg, Los Angeles Times
@mkindness – Michael Kindness, Random House
@AnnKingman – Ann Kingman, Random House
@softskull – Richard Nash, Soft Skull Press
@RonHogan – Ron Hogan, Beatrice.com and GalleyCat

Booksellers

@RichRennicks – Rich Rennicks, Malaprop's
@literaticat – Jennifer Laughran, Books, Inc.
@BookSoup – Book Soup
@CityLightsBooks – City Lights Books
@bookslielibis – Drew Goodman, University Books
@kashsbookcorner – Arsen Kashkashian, Boulder Bookstore
@SamWellers – Sam Weller's
@mysterybooks – Mystery Bookstore
@BayShoreBooks – BayShore Books
@AaronsBooks – Aaron's Books
@Powells – Powell's
@OnceUponAStory – Once Upon a Story
@Booksmith – Booksmith
@jchristie – Josh Christie, Sherman's
@JoniParagraphs – Joni Montover, Paragraphs Bookstore
@TatteredCover – Tattered Cover
@vromans – Patrick Brown, Vroman's
@wynmorris – Wyn Morris, Morris Book Shop
@FountainBkstore – Kelly Justice, Fountain Bookstore
@bookpassage – Book Passage
@briancassidy – Brian Cassidy, Bookseller
@kingsenglish – Jenn Northington, King's English
@lillaweinberger – Lilla Weinberger, Reader's Books

