GETTING STARTED WITH TWITTER

Overview
Twitter is a social network where people connect and share resources. Similar to Facebook, when you write something on Twitter, the message is pushed to your friends (known as followers). Unlike Facebook, you have the option to make your messages (known as tweets) available to anyone in the world. This makes Twitter a great tool for discussions between colleagues, friends, and yet-to-be friends and a great way to find resources from the world’s top professionals.

Terms that are helpful to know
- **Tweets**: Twitter is the website you are using to post messages; these messages are called “tweets”. So when you hear someone say that they’ve tweeted about something, or “Did you see my tweet?”, what they mean is that they’ve posted a message (tweet) on Twitter.
- **Following/Followers**: If you “follow” someone that means that you’ve subscribed to their twitter posts (when they post a tweet, you’ll see it). If someone is following you (they’ve subscribed to your twitter posts), they are one of your “followers”.
- **Twitter Stream**: When you login to your twitter account, you’ll see messages from all of the people that you are following. This is your twitter stream. If you’re familiar with Facebook, this is akin to the Facebook “wall”.

Anatomy of a tweet
Take a look at the picture below. This is a screenshot of a tweet that recently appeared on Elon’s Technology twitter stream. Since you are limited to posting 140 characters, Twitter has created ways to fit more information into less space!

- **Tweet Branding**: In the example above, you see a picture of Elon’s mascot (the Phoenix) along with “ElonPhoenix” at the top of the tweet. So anyone can tell relatively quickly that this tweet was posted by ElonPhoenix ... thus, successfully branding their tweets!
- **@username** (e.g., @elonalumni): Creates a link to that user in the post. So if you clicked on @elonalumni, you go to their user information. Putting @username in your tweet is called “tagging”. In the above post @elonalumni and @ElonPhoenix were tagged.
• **RT**: Re-tweeting, or re-posting someone else’s tweet, is a good way to avoid recreating the wheel. It’s also good tweeting etiquette – never copy someone else’s tweet and post it as your own!

• **Shortened URLs** (e.g., http://ow.ly/65o9E): You don’t want your 140 character limit taken up by a long web address! When you post a tweet with a long URL, Twitter may offer to shorten the URL for you.

• **#hashtag**: Although the example above doesn’t include a “hashtag”, you will see #something from time to time. Know that hashtags are a great way to categorize tweets. If you click on a hashtag (e.g., #ElonTLC), you’ll be taken to other tweets that have that tag as well. It’s a great way to find information quickly (or categorize your own tweets)!

**Ok... Ready to get started?**

1. **Create an Account**: Go to [http://twitter.com](http://twitter.com). You’ll see “New to Twitter” prominently on the screen. Fill out the required information to sign up. Twitter does a great job guiding you through the process. Be sure to add some type of picture or graphic so that you can take advantage of branding opportunities!

2. **Find People to Follow**: Twitter will make recommendations for you to follow based upon your account information. Take a look at some of Twitter’s recommendations, or find some on your own by searching for names or topics. (Take a look at some of our suggestions below.)

3. **Tweet Away!** You’re ready to start tweeting! What should you tweet about? That’s up to you! Many people will tell you to avoid things like “I just headed to the grocery store.” Ok, yes, that’s telling people what’s happening, but is it really all that interesting?! Think about how you want to use twitter. Twitter is much more than just a way to share what you are doing day-to-day – it’s a great way to share information that you’ve found that could be interesting to others. So, let’s say you just read a great article that you want to share with others – that’s a perfect tweet (e.g., “Thought-provoking article from @TechRepublic on Leadership Trends http://url.com”).

**Recommended higher education Twitter feeds to follow**

Finding people or organizations to follow isn’t as difficult as you may think. Twitter is no longer considered a new technology, thus many people/organizations have Twitter accounts. Think of colleagues that you admire, or organizations that interest you. Search for them using Twitter’s search feature – chances are many of them will have Twitter accounts! Once you find a Twitter feed that you like, take a look at who they are following to get some more ideas. Here are a few to get you started:

- @chronicle (Chronicle of Higher Education)
- @educause (Educause)
- @elonteaching (Elon Teaching and Learning - ok, shameless plug!)
- @elontechnology (Elon Technology)
- @GdnHigherEd (Guardian Higher Education Network)
- @HuffPostCollege (Huffington Post – College Edition)