Twitter is a free, online service that enables you to broadcast short messages to your friends or "followers." It also lets you specify which Twitter users you want to follow so you can read their messages, all in one place. Twitter is useful for close-knit groups. If you follow your friends, and they follow each other, you can quickly communicate group-related items.

Twitter is designed to work on a mobile phone as well as on a computer. All Twitter messages are limited to 140 characters, so each message can be sent as a single text message (SMS). You can't say much in 140 characters. This challenges you to think of the most precise way to send an update.

Create Your Account

2. Fill in the fields underneath New to Twitter? Sign up
   Note: For the best results, use your real name when signing up; otherwise your friends won't be able to find you easily.
3. Click on the Sign up for Twitter button.
4. On the next screen, try to keep your Username short and useful. It will appear as part of your URL for Twitter.
5. Click on the Create my account button.
6. Twitter will prompt you to search for and follow five Twitter users. (You can remove these later if you like.)
7. Click the Next button.
8. Twitter will prompt you to search for and follow five brand Twitter users. (You can remove these later if you like.)
9. Click the Next button.
10. You can use your email contacts to follow more individuals on Twitter if you like, or you can skip this step.
11. It is helpful to upload a picture on the next page. Click on the Upload image button at the top of the page. Locate an image on your computer.
12. You may change your password and update any information by click on the image of the gear at the top of the page and choosing Settings.

Post Your Tweets

13. You are now able to create your first update. Things to remember:

- You only have 140 characters. Make your words count.
- Updates are referred to as “tweets”.
- When tweeting, answer the question: What are you doing?
- If you are responding to someone else’s tweet, choose the Reply link underneath their post, or place the “@” sign before their username, then type your response.
- If your tweet is concerning something specific, place a hashtag before the word (e.g. #UISedu). This ties all tweets about that subject together for Twitter users.
- If you are simply re-posting an update someone else made, this is called a Retweet. You can use the Retweet link below their post, or type the letters RT, then place the “@” sign before the username of the person you are re-tweeting from, then the message.

There are many different plug-ins for the Firefox browser that allow you to have a side bar containing Twitter information, so you don’t always have to return to the site. Also, setting up your mobile phone allows you to view or post to Twitter from anywhere.