

Twitter – The basics

What is Twitter?

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It's a kind of social networking site, and is generating huge amounts of buzz among the web's early adopters thanks to a simple conceit. All twitter.com does is ask: "What are you doing?"

The idea is that it offers a way for individuals or companies to provide more detailed status updates to their friends, family and contacts. And, crucially, it delivers those updates across a variety of different media - either through its website, over instant messaging or by SMS to your mobile phone.

Since launching a year ago as a side project by the people behind the podcasting and audio site Odeo, Twitter has gained traction with a large number of Silicon Valley cognoscenti and some of the web's most high-profile names. Critics say it is another pointless distraction in a world already suffering information overload, and wonder how users manage to keep tabs on what they're really up to.

True, on first glance it is a baffling and seemingly pointless service - but underneath it proves intriguing, useful and addictive for those who live on the move. One observer called it "the Seinfeld of the internet ... a website about nothing". Twitter's backers have form in this area. One, Nebraskan Ev Williams, was a founder of Blogger.com, the site that kick-started the huge growth of blogging in the late 1990s. Another, Biz Stone, was involved in the early days of Xanga.com - a MySpace-style affair that is now one of the top 50 sites in the world.

It is no surprise, then, that some believe Twitter's service is the logical evolution of blogging. The two platforms have much in common; and while blogging is still much derided, it has been adopted by millions of people.

Twitter has been growing fast too, and in recent times it has been doubling subscriber numbers every month. Its makers said that the past weekend saw the number of messages sent triple, thanks to the conglomeration of users at the SXSW festival in Austin, Texas. Some adopters have taken this growth as the reason to use it as a sort of "internet fire-hose", corralling quick-fire opinions from around the globe.

The rapid-fire model may be superseded when internet access become ubiquitous, but right now Twitterers have found that a quick text message does the trick for them. It's even been the medium of choice for some breaking news announcements.

So will it be a useful addition to the web, or simply another MySpace-like black hole that sucks away at our free time? Nobody knows, but when the big decision does arrive, it's likely to be Twittered before it hits the rest of us

2 Twitter for business

Twitter for business use seems to be growing in popularity every day. Most people have heard of twitter either on the news or sports channel or even in print media. It's quite easy to build a large network of followers on twitter in a very short period of time that can include friends, associates, business partners, or even people that might be potential clients/customers to your brick-and-mortar business. Twitter seems to be taking the social networking section of the Internet by storm.

Using Twitter you can create a post called tweet which is 140 characters long. I know this doesn't seem like a lot but it's actually quite a bit of room to get your message across. This means that the conversation will be very fast paced and let's do what you can do to stay on top. There's not a lot of room for idle chatter before start un-follow you.

This is different than a webpage or weblog, or even an e-mail in that the 140 character limit allows you to focus your message so that your reader understands what your niche is all about. You can also include links in your 140 character limit message; these links can go to other web pages, blogs, videos, or audio messages. Web pages and blogs are more about just giving out information so even the best blog updates itself once or twice a day. This is Web 1.0. However the social networking sites are updated every few seconds. This is Web 2.0.

You can invite your friends, family, acquaintances, and business associates to join you on Twitter by following you. Even though your friends may not be what help you build your business they may know people that are following them that might be interested in your business, this is the beauty of networking on twitter.

Other applications include things to show pictures and send video messages with. And that's only listing the applications that are directly related to the message in Twitter. There are other applications that allow you to find like-minded twitter users easier.

When promoting your business you should follow experts in their field. You should focus on the most powerful users of twitter. Marketing on a social network is different than marketing anywhere else including web pages, blogs, or e-mail. You have to be less in-your-face and offer beneficial information which leads your follower to the place you want them to go to see what you have to offer.

One of the biggest advantages of Twitter is that you can get a large following which will help you to meet more people. An original message on Twitter can be re-tweeted with the click of a mouse. In this way your message that started out in one spot in the viral on the Internet. Whenever you get a new message from somebody make sure that you reply because they do not have to follow you because it is a privilege to have a follower.

The Twitter community relies on each others treating each twitter with respect. Because it is so easy to un-follow is a very low tolerance for bad behaviour. If someone doesn't like how you're acting or what you're writing they will simply stop following you.