



## Introduction to Twitter

An easy way to interact with members, partner organizations, media and the public

### THE BASICS

Twitter is a useful resource for following events as they happen, and for sharing your own opinions or updates with your followers and the general public. By following organizations and media outlets you trust, you can get minute-by-minute updates on breaking news and current events.

Before you start following or tweeting, take a few days to get to know Twitter. Look at all of the features and explore. Scroll through other people's tweets to learn the way they interact. If you have a smart phone, download the free Twitter app to stay connected on-the-go.

### GETTING STARTED

- Create a Twitter handle that is both catchy and easy to remember.
- Following friends is a good way to get started. When you follow someone, they receive a notification, so they can follow you back if they wish. It can be hard to find someone if you don't know their handle. Share your handle with close friends or colleagues in order to gain followers initially. Many people even add it into the signature line of their emails.
- You can make your tweets as private or public as you want by keeping a private or public account. A private account allows you to see and keep up on current events without being seen by others, if you wish to limit your on-line interaction.
- You DO NOT have to update or even check your account often. In fact, you can use it as frequently or infrequently as you wish. To use Twitter as a news source, simply login for a few minutes each day and scan your Twitter feed for the latest updates.
- Create a Twitter List for tracking a group of specific users or topics.
  - Profile Button > Lists > Create a List (public or private)

## CREATE YOUR OWN TWEETS

- You can use Twitter as much or little as you want. You might choose to simply follow news organizations, offering no tweets of your own. If you do tweet, there are no limits on the number of tweets you can offer. However, other users may stop following you if you offer an excessive number of tweets or retweets.
- Keep your tweets short and simple, offering an overview of your topic. Include a link (to an article or photo) to emphasize your point.

The image shows a screenshot of a Twitter post from the account "LWV North Carolina" (@LWVNCarolina). The tweet text reads: "Get involved with your local League and help protect and strengthen our #democracy: [ow.ly/GZp3309ayJy](https://ow.ly/GZp3309ayJy)". Below the text is a large image with the text "MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK®". The tweet has 6 retweets and 5 likes. The date and time are "7:59 AM - 20 Feb 2017".

Annotations with red arrows point to various elements:

- CLICK HERE TO VISIT THE ARTICLE OR PAGE BEING SHARED IN THIS TWEET**: Points to the link [ow.ly/GZp3309ayJy](https://ow.ly/GZp3309ayJy).
- CLICK HERE TO FOLLOW**: Points to the "Follow" button.
- OTHER USERS WHO HAVE INTERACTED WITH THIS TWEET**: Points to the row of user profile pictures.
- REPLY**: Points to the reply icon.
- RETWEET OR QUOTE TWEET**: Points to the retweet icon.
- LIKE**: Points to the like icon.

## **TWEETING = PUBLIC COMMENT**

Engage with legislators or other public officials or business leaders to make your public comment searchable and available on Twitter.

### **MENTIONING LEGISLATORS PROMPTS THEM TO RECEIVE NOTIFICATIONS**

All North Carolinians deserve health care coverage. Please continue working toward #MedicaidExpansion in #NC. @RoyCooperNC

Wind energy is good for the NC economy and for our environment. Make it easier to implement. #NCGA #wind #RenewableEnergy @SenatorBerger

Charter schools receiving taxpayer \$ must meet educational, accountability & transparency standards like #publicschools. @NCHouseSpeaker

## **USING AND SEARCHING #HASHTAGS**

- Hashtags are keywords placed after a number sign. They are included as a tag to help users search for specific content. Users search popular hashtag terms, following them like an ongoing on-line topic-specific conversation.
- Include a widely used hashtag to add further emphasis or to tag your tweet and make it easily searchable. Example: #PublicEd
- Pairing #NC with issue-related hashtags can help Twitter users filter that issue by state. Example: #PublicEd #NC
- Some hashtags stay current for long periods of time, like #NCPOL (filtering tweets about North Carolina politics), #NCGA (filtering tweets about our NC general assembly) or #breaking (filtering tweets about breaking news, often used with #NC).
- Hashtags can also be used for short-term initiatives or trends, like a special event or a trending topic. Teams participating in the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio used the hashtag #RoadToRio to get followers excited about the upcoming games.
- Use the Twitter search bar at the top of the page to search a hashtag, just like you would do if you were using an Internet search engine.

## **SUGGESTIONS: WHO TO FOLLOW**

- Ask your friends for their twitter handles and for their follow suggestions.
- Look under the “Who to Follow” section on the right side of your home page, which recommends users you may want to follow based on your connections and interests.
- Search topics you are interested in, like “public education” or “health care”. Scan search results for handles you might want to follow. You can stop following any user at any time by selecting, “unfollow”.
- Follow your favorite organizations and news outlets:

**@LWVNCarolina      League of Women Voters of North Carolina**

**@LWV      League of Women Voters U.S.**

**@CommonCauseNC      Common Cause of North Carolina**

**@democracync      Democracy North Carolina**

**@scsj      Southern Coalition for Social Justice**

**@ncjustice      North Carolina Justice Center**

**@NCCapitol      WRAL Government Coverage**

**@asheville      Asheville Citizen Times**

**@FayObserver      The Fayetteville Observer**

**@newsobserver      Raleigh News & Observer**

**@NewsandRecord      Greensboro News & Record**

**@theobserver      Charlotte Observer**

**@nytimes      New York Times**

**@washingtonpost      The Washington Post**

## Commonly Used Hashtags

Capitalization won't change the searchability of your tweets, but capitalizing the first letter of each word in a hashtag make them easier to scan by other Twitter users.

### BUDGET & TAX

- #TABOR Tweets related to the Tax Payer Bill of Rights
- #EITC Tweets related to the Earned Income Tax Credit

### EDUCATION

- #PublicEd Tweets related to public education
- #nced Tweets related to public education in North Carolina

### ELECTIONS & VOTING

- #Election2016 Tweets about elections - substitute date for other election yrs
- #Redistricting Tweets about congressional or legislative redistricting
- #FairElections Tweets related to making
- #VoterSuppression Tweets discussing voter suppression
- #gerrymandering Tweets about drawing legislative districts for political gain

### ENVIRONMENT

- #ClimateChange Tweets on the topic of climate change
- #RenewableEnergy Tweets on the topic of renewable energy
- #wind Tweets on the topic of wind energy
- #solar Tweets on the topic of solar energy
- #CleanEnergy Tweets on the topic of clean energy

### EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT

- #ERA Tweets related to the Equal Rights Amendment

### GOVERNMENT

- #ncga Tweets related to the North Carolina General Assembly
- #ncpol Tweets related to politics in North Carolina
- #congress Tweets related to the United States Congress
- #SCOTUS Tweets related to the Supreme Court of the United States

### GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION

- #GunSense Tweets encouraging common sense gun legislation
- #EndGunViolence Tweets encouraging action toward ending gun violence

### HEALTH CARE

- #ACA Tweets related to the Affordable Care Act
- #SaveACA Tweets opposing the repeal of the ACA
- #ProtectOurCare Tweets opposing the repeal of the ACA
- #keepNCcovered Tweets about saving the ACA in NC