

TWITTER TIP SHEET

**NATIONAL WOMEN'S LAW CENTER | PROGRESSIVE LEADERSHIP AND ADVOCACY NETWORK | FALL INSTITUTE 2011
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Why Twitter?

Want to start a conversation or be part of a conversation? Welcome to Twitter. It's a great venue to have a real-time conversation with people interested in your issues and to highlight great tidbits of some of the work you are doing. When used strategically, Twitter can also be a great way for your organization to produce interest in your work to influential bloggers and reporters.

Just make sure – you are clear about your goals on Twitter and that you understand that to be effective it needs to be an ongoing conversation.

What to Tweet

Got a great stat from a recent factsheet? Saw a great article on an issue you are working on that might interest others? Maybe a head of the organization is testifying or participating in a conference... this is all great fodder for Twitter. Remember, those that follow you are interested in your work and hearing that someone from your office is at a rally can be just as interesting as seeing an item you are working on. And remember – they call Twitter “social media” for a reason – make sure to share your content *and* content from other organizations, blogs, etc that you like!

Communicating in 140 characters or less

For those that think this is an impossible task to say anything meaningful in 140 characters or less...

- Be the change you want to see in the world. – Mahatma Gandhi (43 characters)
- A bird doesn't sing because it has an answer, it sings because it has a song. – Maya Angelou (78 characters)
- Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has. Margaret Mead (132 characters)

And unlike these great quotes, you also have the ability to add a link to a longer blog post or factsheet. Finding one sentence that encapsulates what you'd like to link to might be difficult, so we suggest trying to find the most important or eye-catching quote and using it as a teaser.

Shortened links (we'll discuss this more) is 20 characters. After that, you'll also want to add a hashtag to have people follow a conversation (use hashtag.org to figure out what hashtag others are using and might fit with your particular tweet and always feel free to create your own). Hashtags start with “#” and is all one word: for example, #nwlcrocks. You can only use alphanumeric characters in a hashtag – symbols like “!” or “?” will end the hashtag.

Influencing the Influencers

Twitter is also a great tool to reach people who might help spread the word about your work. If you “@reply” someone (by including that person's Twitter name in your Tweet, prefaced with the “@” symbol), they'll be notified. @replies can be a good way to let a blogger, journalist or activist know that you've posted something they might care about. And, @replies are one of the main ways that Twitter becomes a conversation rather than a broadcast, since they can let you converse back and forth with someone in a very public venue.

Updating Twitter

Using a third-party client (Tweetdeck, HootSuite, etc) to tweet is beneficial – many give you the ability to schedule tweets, track multiple searches, hashtags, and users, and view multiple streams at once.

Short URLs

Twitter will shorten all URLs posted via twitter.com with their own URL shortener, t.co. However, other URL shortening services let you see more of the stats on your URLs, such as how many clicks each has received, stats on individual URLs, and your URLs as a whole. We recommend using bit.ly to shorten URLs. While HootSuite, the third-party client NWLC uses to update Twitter with, offers its own short URLs (ow.ly/ht.ly) the reports that bit.ly generates are more comprehensive. HootSuite will let you update Twitter through its platform using a short URL from an outside service, like bit.ly

Tracking Results

Tracking can be tricky, and one free online service won't meet all your needs. We recommend the service Crowdbooster (Crowdbooster.com) for tracking your Twitter *and* Facebook accounts – it will keep track of your mentions, retweets, etc. In addition, it can even give you feedback on the impressions your tweets are generating and tips on users to engage with on Twitter. We have found it useful to develop an Excel spreadsheet to keep track of things manually – it will take some time, but if done well is worth the investment. Keep in mind that many of the raw numbers, like the number of mentions or retweets, you can get from Twitter **won't** give

you a full picture of how your organization is performing or improving on Twitter. At the moment, there is no service available that will count the number of times you were mentioned or retweeted.

Making Twitter Easy


Schedule tweets! This will help you manage your tweets throughout the day and lets you make use of more time on Twitter. On the west coast? Set something to post at 6am – you’ll catch east coast folks up and at work at 9am. On the east coast? Post something well after work hours – even after 9pm – and you’ll catch west coast followers and any Twitter night owls in earlier time zones. Did you know that when you start a tweet with a @mention, **only** people who follow both you and the user you mentioned will see that tweet? If you want to get around this and send a tweet that starts with an @mention to **all** your followers, start the tweet with a period (for example, [.@nwlc](#) instead of @nwlc) – this will ensure your tweet appears in the timelines of all your followers.

Try to keep your messages **under** Twitter’s 140 character limit. By only using 100-120 characters for your message, you’ll leave room for people to retweet you and add commentary of their own – mentioning you and adding commentary all counts toward the 140 character limit.

Need Help?

The National Women’s Law Center has staff that is dedicated to working on all things social media. We are more than happy to assist you with getting started on Twitter, improving your tracking results, or even just writing tweets. Get in touch with us and we’ll help you become a Twitter superstar!

Dissecting Tweets

 **@nwlc** Handle, aka username
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Hashtags - five total in this tweet

#HydeAt35: how **#Hyde** has made the
#righttochoose illusive & in name only for
many American women. **bit.ly/qTYMHT**
#prochoice **#fem2**

21 hours ago via HootSuite ☆ Favorite ↻ Reply 🗑 Delete

Short URL, we used bit.ly to make this one

BASIC TWEET

 **@nwlc**
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This is a "mention," also written as an "@mention" - its when you reference another user by their handle

What's your priority? **@PPact**
Investigation Out of Step With America's
Priorities **bit.ly/p1S3Ri** **#defendPP**

28 Sep via HootSuite ☆ Favorite ↻ Reply 🗑 Delete

MENTION

This is a retweet - the "RT" is shorthand for "retweet." In a "RT" always precedes the handle of the username you're retweeting.

 **@nwlc**
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→ **RT @dayofthegirl**: 22 things you can do to
create **@DayOfTheGirl** every single day of
the year: **dayofthegirl.org/22things**

22 Sep via HootSuite ☆ Favorite ↻ Reply 🗑 Delete

RETWEET