

## Tweet Tweet! The wonderful world of Twitter

What is Twitter I hear you ask? [Twitter](#) is a microblogging platform. What is microblogging I now hear you ask?! Micro blogging is a form of blogging that allows users to write brief text updates (140 characters in Twitter's case) and publish them, either to be viewed by anyone or by a restricted group which can be chosen by the user. These messages can be submitted by a variety of means, including text messaging, instant messaging or the web.

The form of dialogue that this engenders is multi-faceted. It can be direct between two parties; a group debate about an issue; passive awareness about what people in your community are doing or thinking or a sharing of information or resources. This flexibility combined with the brief nature of dialogue makes for a very dynamic and sometimes chaotic conversation!

The tool has been used by a number of interesting organisations or situations. The Phoenix Mars mission operation used the tool to keep interested parties apprised on the mission's progress resulting in nearly 40,000 followers <http://twitter.com/MarsPhoenix>. And perhaps the most famous Twitterer is Barack Obama whose campaign used the tool right up until his election and had over 140,000 followers.

A recent [article in the US version of PR Week](#) illustrates the growing use within the Communications industry at large "From a PR standpoint, Twitter is a great way to seek and create media opportunities. Reporters are now proactively tweeting to inform their followers of upcoming projects to help find spokespeople. It's also a valuable tool to help monitor key trends, breaking news, and find out about reporters' interests."

It's the same over here in the UK too. A recent piece of research by RealWire's ex Social Media Manager, Stephen Davies, found a number of [UK journalists](#) and [PR professionals](#) actively using Twitter in their day-to-day professional lives.

But as with social bookmarking the benefit of this tool is both in its use as a way of communicating online and being part of a relevant community to either you and/or your business and also as a way to monitor the word of mouth about your organisation. In a similar way to social bookmarking you can track what people are saying about you in the Twitter community. Visit <http://search.twitter.com> and you can search for references to a search term that has been used in "tweets". You can then subscribe to an RSS feed of future tweets that mention this search term and so track references as they occur. You can find even more ways you can use Twitter [here](#).

So what are you waiting for? Start tweeting!