



TWITTER **FOR** AUTHORS

in

10 MINUTES A DAY

HOW TO PROMOTE YOUR BOOK,
ONE TWEET AT A TIME

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Twitter is the most immediate of all social media. As an author, Twitter allows you to instantly connect with your readers and your literary heroes all over the world. It's where today's writers are first sharing news about their upcoming publications, photos and musings, dates for readings or signings, and occasional personal confessions too — all in bite-sized posts called “tweets” that are limited to a maximum of 140 characters in length. About this long...

J.K. Rowling @jk_rowling

24 Feb 12 As you may have heard, I have a new book out later this year. Very different to Harry, although I've enjoyed writing it every bit as much.

But between writing, building your author platform, and your managing your existing online presence (website, YouTube, Facebook), you've got your hands full already, don't you? We get it. That's why we've outlined a plan to help get you up and running without spending more than 10 minutes a day on Twitter — well, except for one day at the beginning of each week where you'll spend 20-30 minutes handling most of your Twitter work for the following 7 days.

After reading through the tips in this guide, you'll have the tools and skills you'll need to get the rest of your book promotion on Twitter taken care of in 5-10 minutes a day.

Why Twitter is Better than Facebook

There are three big reasons why Twitter can be more advantageous to your writing career than Facebook:

- 1. You can reach everyone for FREE.** Facebook's Edgerank algorithm prevents a percentage of your followers from seeing the content you post — unless, of course, you pay Facebook to promote your post. Twitter has no such restrictions. If your followers are logged into Twitter, they'll see your tweets!
- 2. You can tweet as often as you want.** Unlike Facebook, where your Edgerank score suffers the more frequently you post, Twitter lets you tweet as much as you like without penalty.
- 3. Engage with your readers right now.** Because tweets are like little micro-blogs, Twitter users are accustomed to a social experience where information is being exchanged at a rapid-fire pace. It's the perfect way to spread the news about what's happening in your writing life at this very moment.

Getting Started on Twitter

In a matter of minutes, you'll be using one of the most powerful, free promotion tools available to authors. Follow these simple steps:

- 1. Sign up [HERE](#).**
- 2. Choose your “Twitter handle”** — or your Twitter profile name — and make sure it's related to your author name or pen name.
- 3. Import your email contacts** so you can immediately start following people you already know.
- 4. Customize your Twitter account** with a background image, a profile photo, and a header image. Make it pop! ([Click HERE for some creative inspiration](#)).

5. List your contact info, website URL, and brief bio. Your bio should include something that sells your books at quick-glance — genre info, press quotes, a blurb about your writing style, etc.

6. Start following fellow authors, avid readers, publishers, and critics. Use the Twitter search to find your favorite writers, fans, family, friends, and anyone else that enjoys the kind of writing you do. Start some conversations!

Twitter's Basic Terminology

Handle – A “handle” is your Twitter username.

Tweet – A tweet is Twitter’s version of a post or status update. The maximum length of a tweet is 140 characters (including URLs, though Twitter will auto-shorten URLs). Tweets are public to all — even people who aren’t following you.

Follower / Following – When you follow someone on Twitter, you are subscribing to their tweets. You can follow others without them following you, and vice-versa.

Retweet – A retweet is a tweet by one Twitter user that is tweeted again (or forwarded) by another user.

@reply – When you reply (or “at reply”), you are tweeting in response to someone else’s tweet. This is also a way to simply tweet AT someone. It doesn’t necessarily need to be in response to someone.

Favorite – You can “favorite” a tweet by starring it. Favorited tweets are grouped together on your profile page.

Modified tweet (MT) – A modified tweet is a tweet that has been shortened, edited, or altered in some way. Add “MT” to the beginning of any retweet that you’ve altered. Why would you modify a tweet? To change or add a hashtag; to comment on the tweet; to correct a typo or error.

Hashtag (#) – A hashtag (or # symbol) marks keywords or topics in a tweet so that related tweets can be grouped together.

Direct Message (DM) – A direct message is a private tweet that only the sender and recipient can read.

Best-Practices for Composing Tweets

1. Interact! You can’t just tweet “buy my new book” every couple hours and expect to see your number of Twitter followers growing. Instead — be interesting! Post compelling content. Share truly exciting news about your writing life. Let them behind the scenes on your latest book project. Be vulnerable, and show them the ups and downs of your creative journey. Ask questions. Reply to those folks you’re following. Join existing conversations. Be useful to others first. Then you can expect your followers to help promote your writing.

2. Be consistent. Whether you tweet once a day or once an hour, stick with your schedule for a little while and you’ll soon see how effective Twitter can be as a book promotion and networking tool.

3. Share other peoples’ content. There’s an unwritten rule in the Twitter world: you share my content, I’ll share yours. By retweeting, you’re earning karmic points and increasing your chances that you’ll get followed back. Plus, if it’s interesting content, your followers will want to see it too! Tell your fans about some other great authors you love. Hype their books and readings. Link to other folks’ blog articles and YouTube videos.

4. Don't autopost everything. There are tools you can use to post a single update to multiple social profiles — Facebook, Pinterest, Twitter, etc. — with the push of a button. But people who follow you on every platform want to get a unique experience in each place. So while it's ok to use the autopost method occasionally, try to give your Twitter audience a little something different than they'd get on Facebook.

5. Pretend the whole world is watching. Unless you have a private/protected profile, everything you tweet is public. Don't write something you'll be ashamed of later.

6. Write longer tweets. Internet marketers like to tell you to keep things short. But a tweet is only 140 characters, so it's one of the few cases online where you actually benefit from using all the space you're allotted. Also, some data shows that longer tweets get more clicks.

7. Go verb-crazy! We're emotionally stirred by action. So make your tweets sing, screech, punch, and dance.

8. Tweet in the afternoon and evening. After 2pm, Twitter traffic increases fairly dramatically. Maybe folks at the office feel like they've gotten enough work done for the day that they can afford to sneak in 5 minutes on Twitter. Whatever the reason, you might want to schedule your tweets with those people in mind.

9. Tweet closer to the weekend. Similarly, as the workweek draws to a close, Twitter traffic soars, with Friday being the busiest day. So your heaviest Twitter activity should be on Thursday and Friday.

10. Don't be afraid to ask for a retweet. A lot of times in life the easiest way to get something is to simply ask. The same goes for Twitter. People are far more likely to retweet your content if you ask them. Doing this too much, of course, can have the opposite effect.

11. Spread tweets out by at least 1 hour. You want to get the most people possible to see your tweets. By spreading out your Twitter activity by at least an hour, you're increasing the likelihood of different folks seeing your updates. Plus you're not annoying your followers by cluttering up their news feeds all at once. There are occasionally exceptions to this rule: when you want to live-tweet an event; when you're in the middle of a Twitter conversation; etc.

12. If something is worth sharing, tweet it several times. Got a new video of you reading your favorite short story? Come up with a bunch of different tweets linking to the video. One could say, "Man, I look good in a tux, huh?" Another could say, "Check out my weird hairdo in this new video — and listen to me read my favorite short story." Another could say, "Can anyone guess why I'm making that face at the two-minute mark? Expletive alert!"

Monitor the Twitterverse using TweetDeck or HootSuite

The [advanced search](#) on Twitter.com is ok for finding people to follow, but it doesn't let you monitor multiple conversations on Twitter in real-time. That's where 3rd-party platforms like [HootSuite](#) or [TweetDeck](#) come in. Both TweetDeck and HootSuite let you see who is talking about your books and topics related to your writing career.

Imagine if you could graft instant Google Alerts over everything being said on Twitter. That's essentially what these social media apps/dashboards allow you to do. You can set up and monitor multiple "searches" in real-time — for instance: your author name, your book title, your genre, names of your



characters, discussions about real places you've used as settings, etc. — and see who's talking about the things that matter to you.

Add searches for:

- **your author name**
- **your book titles**
- **your genre**
- **your favorite authors, publishers, and literary magazines**

Monitor these searches once a day and start some conversations!

TweetDeck and HootSuite also let you manage multiple Twitter accounts from one dashboard. That's particularly useful for folks who may have a personal Twitter account, an author or publisher account, and a work account — and it saves them from having to leave multiple browsers open all at once just to manage those separate Twitter accounts.

Use Bitly and Google Analytics to track your Twitter interactions

Bitly — the popular URL-shortening site — also lets you see how well those links you've tweeted are performing. Are your followers clicking through to view the linked URL? When are you seeing the most clicks? This information will help you determine what content is most engaging, and what times of day you're most likely to see a response. You can then use that information to more strategically schedule your tweets. (More on scheduling tweets below.) Knowing *what* to post and *when* is key for interaction, and high engagement is more likely to lead to book sales.



For details on the specific kinds of data Bitly provides, click [HERE](#).

If you're not already using [Google Analytics](#) on your website — do it! Once you are, [add campaign tags](#) to the end of your website URLs before you shorten them with Bitly. Suddenly you have another window into the effectiveness of your Twitter links, since Analytics will provide you with detailed info about the traffic Twitter ended up referring to your website.

Once you know what kinds of tweets have the most reach and when they're most likely to be seen, it's time to schedule your tweets.

Scheduling Tweets in Advance

Ever wonder how some authors seem to be on Twitter all the time, day and night? Here's a secret: they're not. They're actually golfing, or eating, or sleeping. Those people are using the aforementioned TweetDeck or HootSuite tools to "schedule" their tweets for the day or week in advance. They write a bunch of tweets at once, feed 'em into the dashboard, set the date and time that each tweet should go live, press save, and bam! Back to living in the real world... or back to the worlds they inhabit in their writing.

I highly suggest you create a tweet schedule to simplify things. Here's one way to begin:

1. Determine how often you should be tweeting

I recommend at least twice a day, and up to 20 times a day (if spread reasonably throughout the day). Remember, Twitter users will usually only see your content if they're logged on at the same time as when your tweets go live — so it's ok to be highly active, as long as you don't see a bunch of "unfollows" in response.

2. Determine what kinds of content you want to share

I suggest an even mixture of original stuff from your blog, news and announcements about your book, re-tweets of other people's content, links to articles you find interesting, follower-engagement questions, etc.

3. Draw up your schedule

If you decide two tweets a day is ideal, it might look something like this:

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>MORNING <i>Link to an article about the publishing industry</i></p> <p>EVENING <i>Personal anecdote about your own writing life, or tweet from the perspective of one of your characters</i></p>	<p>MORNING <i>Link to your book or eBook on sale for Kindle, iPad, Nook, Kobo, etc.</i></p> <p>NIGHT <i>Recommend something you're currently reading</i></p>	<p>MORNING <i>Share a book review, quote from your book, or other bit of news about your writing</i></p> <p>NIGHT <i>Link to a video of one of your favorite authors being interviewed</i></p>	<p>MORNING <i>Tweet your latest blog post</i></p> <p>NIGHT <i>Complain about something in a funny way</i></p>	<p>MORNING <i>Ask a question of your readers</i></p> <p>EVENING <i>Re-Tweet something from one of your heroes</i></p>	<p>MORNING <i>Announce a special Friday book giveaway</i></p> <p>EVENING <i>Get CRAZY – the weekend's almost here!</i></p>	<p>MORNING <i>Talk about something controversial, or update your fans on the status of a work-in-progress</i></p> <p>NIGHT <i>Thank people who retweeted or followed you throughout the week</i></p>

Look at that: your tweeting for the whole week is done! Just spend 20-30 minutes on Sunday night (or whatever day works best for you) writing and scheduling all those posts. Then check back once in the morning and once in the evening for 5 minutes each. Use this time to reply to and "favorite" other folks' tweets, converse with your followers, follow anyone who's starting following you, retweet something that interests you, and you'll be set. Easy maintenance!

Use Twitter lists to make connections

With every Twitter account, you're allowed to create up to 20 lists. What is a Twitter list? It's a curated group of Twitter users. Basically, you can lump people together and view a stream of tweets from only the people on that list.

It's important to know that lists don't allow you to target your own tweets. They're used only for READING tweets. But by grouping people that you follow into lists (and even people you don't follow), you can more easily manage your own tweet reading. You can also subscribe to/follow lists that other people have created. Put authors in one list, publishers in another, agents, editors, or critics in a third, book stores or your own readers in another, etc.

Word of warning, though: lists are public unless you set them as private, so don't create one called "World Class Jackasses" and put a bunch of book critics in there who might review your next novel.

For more information on creating and using lists, click [HERE](#).

Vine: Harnessing the Power of Video on Twitter

[Vine](#) is a new app for iPhone that lets you quickly shoot and edit 6-second videos, upload them to your Vine account, and share them instantly with your fans on Twitter and Facebook.



It's also worth noting that these clips loop on repeat — so you can have a lot of fun playing with the circular nature of Vine videos.

How to promote your writing using Vine's micro-videos

1. Shoot video of you setting up for your next reading, putting out the books on the sales table, testing the mic, etc.

This can be a great way to get folks excited about your reading later that night.

2. Capture something memorable about the writing process

Did your typewriter break? Are you printing out your finished manuscript for the first time? How about getting your shipment of printed books in the mail and opening that first box? Keep your fans engaged while you're working on new material.

3. Titillate the lit-geeks

Do a stop-motion video of your bookshelves, of your favorite words in the dictionary, etc.

4. Edit a stop-motion montage of your book tour

Whether you're flying in style from town to town, reading to packed college auditoriums, or you're sleeping in roach-infested motels and giving readings to half-empty rooms at indie bookstores, your adventures and misadventures will seem mighty romantic to a Twitter follower who's sitting in a cubicle. Share the adventure!

5. Ask your fans to shoot Vine videos of your next reading or signing

And make sure they tag those videos with your author name!

6. Show 'em what YOU see

Take some video of your audience while you're on stage or behind the podium at your next reading. Afterwards, they'll want to see if they can spot themselves.

7. Shoot a miniature book trailer

Hey, 6 seconds is a lot easier to tackle than 4 minutes! Shoot something captivating that accompanies the first sentence or two from your book. If it's cool enough, you'll entice folks to read more of the book — and you've done it all at a fraction of the cost of making a full book trailer.

8. Posters, buttons, T-shirts, audiobook CDs, oh my!

Musicians aren't the only ones who get to have cool merchandise. Authors can make buttons and t-shirts, put up cool posters for reading events, and record audiobooks too. Let your Twitter followers see the latest merch you've got available as it's being taken out of the box, fresh from the manufacturer, screen-printer, or Kinkos.

Twitter Widgets for Your Website

Now that you've built a following on Twitter and you're actively sharing great content and involved in conversations, it's time to show off your Twitter muscle.

Embed a Twitter widget on your website that will display a real-time log of your Twitter activity. Fans are more likely to follow you if they see you're frequently engaged — and a Twitter widget is going to grab their attention far better than a simple "Find me on Twitter" link.

To use Twitter's official embeddable and customizable widget, go [HERE](#).

There are also some great 3rd-party widgets for Twitter. A Google search will lead you to the gold.



Mobile Apps for Twitter

* The Twitter app

Twitter is available for your iPhone, Android, Blackberry, or other smartphone.

Check out <https://twitter.com/download> for details.

When you enable the Twitter app on your phone, you can monitor conversations, have alerts sent to you whenever someone interacts with you on Twitter, and send quick responses (if needed) from wherever you are!

Slow and Steady Wins the Race

You might try Twitter out for a couple weeks and throw your hands up in the air, frustrated at the lack of response and your short list of followers. Hold your horses! Slow-growth is healthy on Twitter. It's about building relationships, and you can't just crowbar your way into a meaningful connection.

Here are some final tips if you're feeling restless on Twitter. Try them out and, within a couple months, you'll be singing a different Twitter tune.

- 1. Take your time with Twitter.** You'll need it to figure out your 140-character voice, niche, Twitter etiquette, etc.
- 2. Grow your community of followers slowly.** After all, it's about connections. Pacing yourself will ensure that you actually get to know the people who follow you.
- 3. Join a conversation before you start one.** Don't just blast people with your content. Once you've replied, retweeted and commented on someone else's stuff, they're more likely to listen to you.
- 4. Don't be afraid to talk to your idols.** Everyone is equal on Twitter, and you can converse with anyone — not just your existing fans and followers. But you're not guaranteed a response, of course — so don't be offended if you don't get one from a publishing industry star.

We hope this guide helps you grasp the real power of Twitter as a promotional tool for your writing career.

Once you get the hang of it, you really can maintain an active Twitter presence in just 10 minutes a day. If you're looking for more tips, check out the [BookBaby Blog](#) and feel free to post any questions you have in the comments section below any blog post related to Twitter. Or, better yet — follow us on [Twitter](#) and let's chat there.

Happy tweeting!



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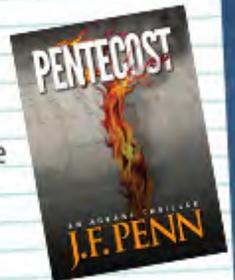
- Neil Cross, creator of *Luther* and script writer for U.S. Box Office No.1 *Mama*

<http://www.literatureandlatte.com/scrivener.php>



"We all have a lot going on these days, and anything that saves time for our marketing efforts is a good thing. Recently, I discovered Author Marketing Club's Premium option which includes a fantastic service for discovering appropriate book reviewers, as well as an HTML generator for making funky sales descriptions. Every author needs these tools to have a chance at selling more books."

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