

# Twitter 101



Welcome to 'Twitter 101', one of the training modules from Community Literacy of Ontario's *Social Media Marketing* project.

This project is designed to develop resources to help Ontario's literacy agencies, and others, use social media for marketing.

[Click here](#) to access our resources.

## Introduction

[Twitter](#) is a social platform and social network made up of 140-character messages called *tweets*. Twitter is an easy way to connect to other online users, as well as a way to discover information related to various topics, initiatives, campaigns, or events that are of interest to your organization. One of the unique and magical aspects of Twitter is that tweets are shared in real-time. Real-time tweets allow you to share or seek out information instantly, as it is happening, around the world.

Every day, more than 500 million tweets are posted around the world! That's a lot of information being shared. This statistic can be daunting to consider when so much information is out there in the [Twittersphere](#) (*refers to the total universe of Twitter, tweets, and its users collectively; the culture associated with Twitter*).

Twitter is a wonderful resource, marketing tool, and social platform for any individual or organization looking to learn more about the world around them, as well as engage with other individuals and organizations. Using Twitter will also help you to connect with people who care about your mission, your organization, and the values and goals of [#literacy](#). (← This is a hashtag! We will learn more about hashtags, how to use them, and why they are important, later on in this module).

Sharing information on Twitter, through the writing and posting of tweets, is a wonderful benefit of having an account, but the magic of Twitter exists primarily in your timeline. Your timeline is where real-time information and tweets from the accounts and users you have chosen to 'follow' will appear. This module will help you to discover the magic of Twitter, and which part of the Twittersphere your organization fits into!



# Twitter 101



## How Do I Use Twitter?

### Creating a Twitter Account

#### Step 1: Choose a Handle

To get started, first go to [Twitter's website](#) and enter your name, email and password to set up your account.

Then, choose your “handle”. A handle is what comes after the ‘@’ symbol on Twitter to represent your organization’s account. This is similar to your username on other social media platforms, but in the Twittersphere it is referred to as a “handle”. Your Twitter handle will be a consistent part of your organization’s personality on Twitter. It may be difficult to get the handle of your choice, as there are so many active users on Twitter, but it’s important to find a handle with the right fit! Your handle should:

- Be relevant
- Be memorable and recognizable
- Be unique

Your organization’s handle is visible to the public every time you tweet. When other users on Twitter want to connect with you or follow you, your handle is the first piece of key information they will need to know. Your handle can be changed later on, but it’s best to start with a handle that suits your organization from the beginning of your Twitter journey. Your handle is your Twitter identity. It’s important that your handle is *unique* to you, and *easy to remember* for others.

[Community Literacy of Ontario](#) selected [@Love4Literacy](#) as our Twitter handle. It’s relevant, short and memorable – and it conveys exactly what we stand for.



# Twitter 101



For example, if an organization called Springwater Literacy Council were to develop a Twitter account, here is a rating of some of their options for creating an organizational handle:

Bad	Better	Best
@sprngwtr_lit_cncl	@LiteracyInSpringwater	<b>@SpringwaterLiteracy</b>
or	or	or
@springwater_Lit44	@SPLiteracyCouncil	<b>@SpringwaterLit</b>

## Step 2: Choose Your Profile Picture

When deciding on an image for your profile picture, it's important to consider whose voice you are representing through your Twitter account. Is this Twitter account the voice of your organization? Is it an account dedicated to an annual event your organization is running? Does the account represent a campaign or project of your organization? Below, you will see an example from an organization, an event series, and a personal account in images.

**Organization/Agency** → Choosing an organizational logo as your profile picture is ideal. You want to encourage brand identity by attaching your organization's logo to every part of your online presence so you will be noticed and recognized for the right reasons. Your logo will be recognized more as you engage online through various social media platforms.



**Personal** —→ Your profile photo should be a headshot, and as professional, or suited to your persona as possible. (Try to steer clear of cropped or bad quality pictures!) Ensure that your personal Twitter account doesn't act as the account for your agency, and vice versa. You should use a professional headshot for your personal Twitter account's photo, and this same photo should be used across other social media platforms for which you have an account (i.e., LinkedIn or Facebook) to create consistency, be recognizable, and facilitate personal branding.



**Event or Speakers Series** —→ An ongoing speaker series, like [Creative Mornings TO](#) or a national event like [Family Literacy Day](#), should be recognizable as a brand of its own, even if it is collaborated upon by different organizations. Instead of tweeting from the agency or organizational account, a separate account should be made for an ongoing event series, or one that will inevitably occur on an annual basis. If a separate account doesn't suit the event or event series, a hashtag should be assigned to the event and used from personal staff accounts, as well as the organizational account. i.e., [#FamilyLiteracyDay](#) or [#FLD2015](#). (Remember, we will be telling you more about hashtags later in this module!)





# Twitter 101



## Step 3: Choose Your Cover Photo

Cover photos were introduced to Twitter early in 2014. Similar to your profile photo, cover photos let you visually depict what your organization represents and stands for. Cover photos can be updated regularly to promote new programming, events, or other exciting happenings in your organization. Shutterstock has put together some [helpful tips](#) on choosing cover photos for your Twitter profile.

[Canva](#) is a tool your organization can use to create a free, one-of-a-kind photo for your organization. Canva is very easy to use, and it can help you create an image specifically designed and sized for a Twitter cover photo.

At [Community Literacy of Ontario](#), we chose to use the same cover photo on both our Facebook page and our Twitter timeline. This helps with brand recognition and creates a cohesive social media presence to multiple audiences.



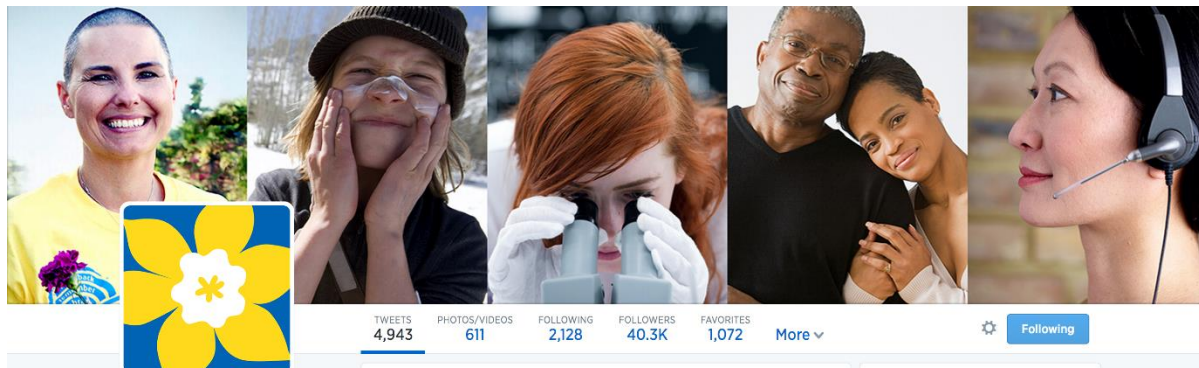
Tim Hortons changes their cover photo regularly to advertise current promotions to the Twitter community.



# Twitter 101



The Canadian Cancer Society uses their cover photo to highlight the many ways they are involved in research and in providing support for cancer patients and their families. This cover photo humanizes the Canadian Cancer Society as an organization.



## Step 4: Write Your Organizational Bio

A short biography, describing your account, appears beside your handle for the entire Twittersphere to see. At a glance, it allows users to know what your account is all about. A concise and informative bio (in 160 characters or less) is a fabulous way for users, who have never heard of you before, to become interested in what your organization has to offer.

Here are a few rules to follow when writing your Twitter biography:

- **Basic Information** is useful and should be included. What do you fundamentally do and care about? Do you offer one service specifically, or a wide range of services? Are you a nonprofit agency? How should the public access your organization if they have questions? Consider including an email address or a phone number in your bio.
- **Your website** can also be included in your profile. Including your web address directs people to your website, where they can discover more information about the programs and services you offer—the end goal of having a presence on social networks.
- **Keywords** should be included in your bio. When users search for words that appear in your Twitter bio, it is highly likely that you will appear in their search. Users who may never have heard about you before will notice you. Keywords in your bio greatly impact users' first impressions. More people, who have no previous knowledge of who you are or what you do, are more likely to find you on Twitter than on any other social network!



# Twitter 101



- **Location** can also be noted in your profile. Specify your city or your province (or both) so that your profile appears in local search results. Including your location in your profile is a great way for local agencies, community initiatives, and businesses to connect with you.
- **Include hashtags** as part of your bio. Use a hashtag to represent your agency's mission. However, do not add on a hashtag to the end of your bio. Include the hashtag as a part of your sentence for the sake of clarity and easy reading.

## DON'T DO THIS:

Literacy Org providing learning and growth opportunities throughout our community! #Literacy #Learning #AdultLit

## DO THIS:

#Literacy Agency helping learners succeed with programming that provides confidence, #LifeSkills & #Learning opportunities!



For more information on setting up your Twitter account, be sure to view GCFLearnFree's [Twitter 101](#) and Twitter's [Help Center](#).

As well, CLO's recorded webinar called [Taming Twitter](#) is an excellent resource.

## Step 5: Send Your First Tweet

How exciting is this?! Your profile is set up, and you are ready to release your wisdom, expertise, and unique self to the Twittersphere in 140-character increments. But, what should you say?

Your first tweet is one of the most difficult to write. Why? Exciting things will be happening for your new Twitter account, and this is your first chance to showcase to the world what your organization is all about! This task can feel a bit daunting.



Here is the first tweet sent by Community Literacy of Ontario:



**Community Literacy** @Love4Literacy · 8 May 2012  
Hello big world - it's little us! [pic.twitter.com/QjpOXuDU](http://pic.twitter.com/QjpOXuDU)

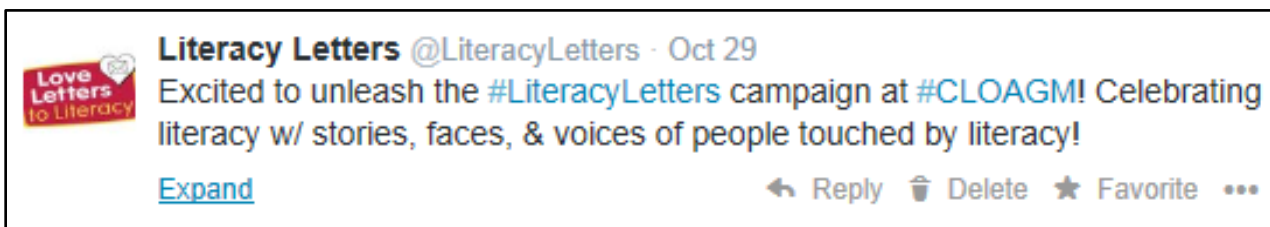


Here are a few things to consider when drafting your first tweet:

## Be Specific

Your first tweet doesn't need to be spectacular or fancy. It doesn't need to link to an amazing piece of content, or attempt to entice people to follow you. It should have a specific tone of "Hello! We are new to Twitter, and we are excited about it!"

For example, here is the first Tweet sent by CLO's [Love Letters to Literacy](#) Twitter account:





# Twitter 101



## Predict the Future

Okay, we don't actually expect your organization to predict the future! However, we do think it is important to offer your audience a small slice of what to expect from your tweets in the coming months and years.

## Offer a Unique Perspective

Various organizations will be tweeting about the same topics, causes and issues that you will be tweeting about. How will your tweets demonstrate uniqueness? Be compelling and honest concerning the topics you will be tweeting about. Provide relevant, community-based information to your audience. This is a great chance to showcase your organizational culture and personality!

## Consider Attaching a Photo

Sharing a photo in a first tweet is rarely done because so many individuals are afraid to attach media to their introductory tweet. If you have a worthwhile picture you could use, it would be worth sharing!

## Great First Tweet

Here's an awesome first tweet by the CIA. Making your first tweet go viral doesn't happen often, but when it does, you can bet that a great deal of effort and strategy have gone into its planning!

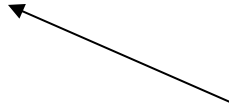
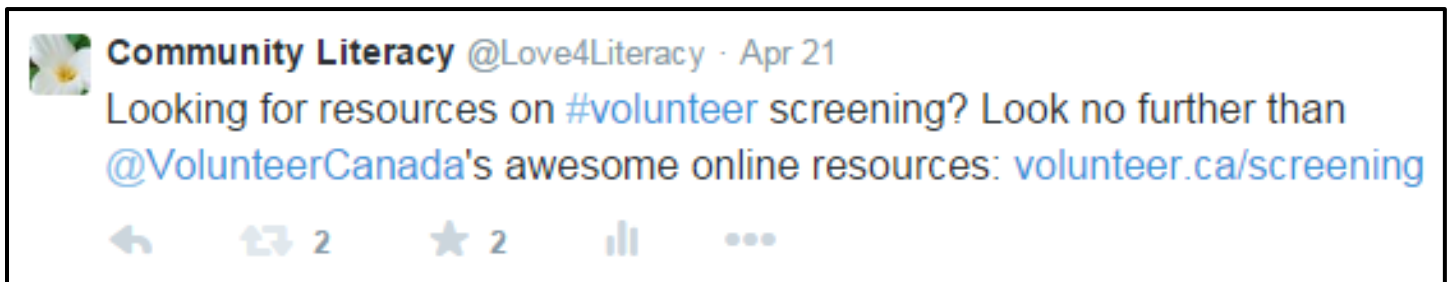


# Twitter 101



## Step 5: The Anatomy of a Tweet

Date and/or Time  
of Tweet



You can click on these first three icons to see any replies to your tweet, re-tweets, and who has marked the tweet as a 'favourite'.

Click these three bars to view tweet activity and engagement.

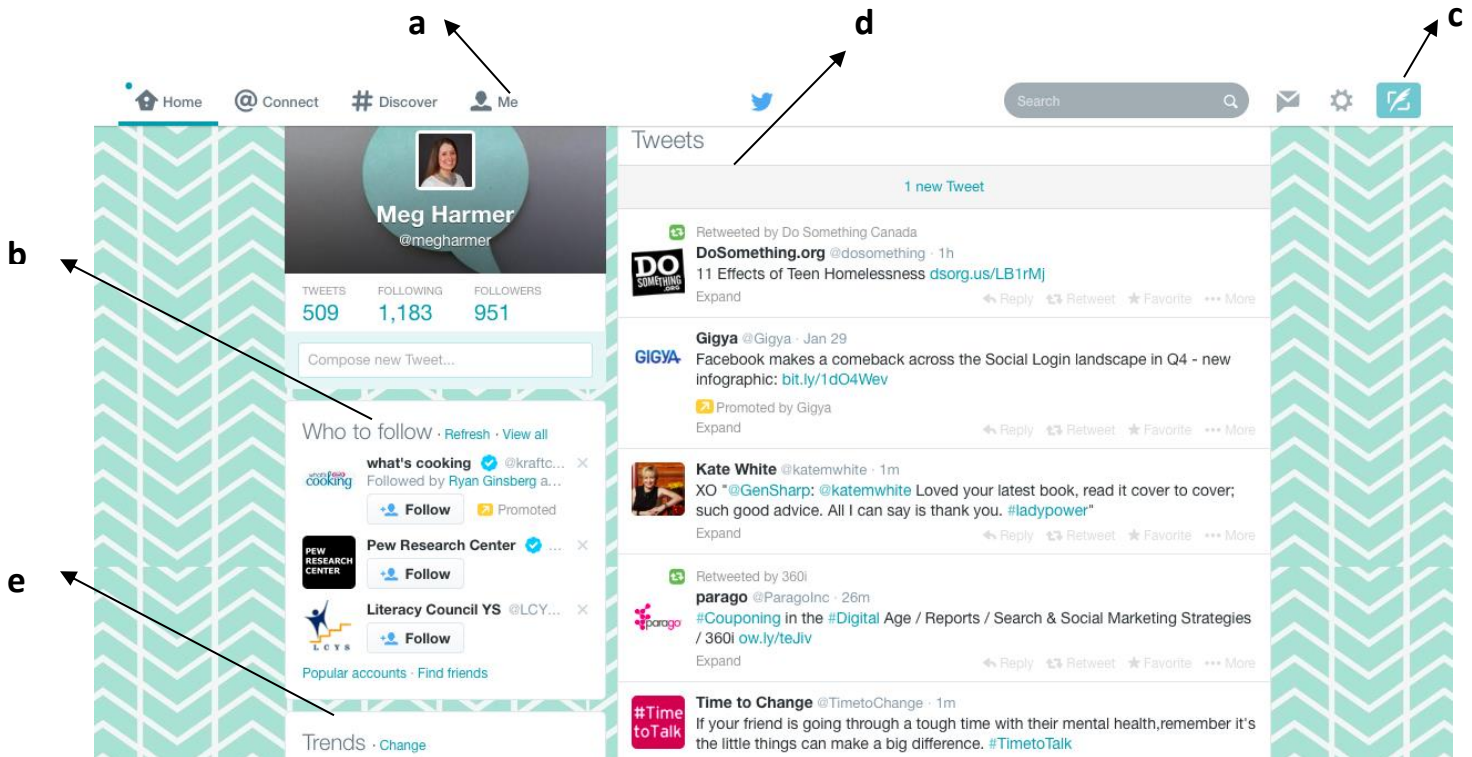
By clicking the three dots, you are given additional options such as deleting, pinning, or embedding your tweet.



# Twitter 101



## Step 6: Getting Started With Your Homepage



**a** – ‘Me’ allows you to view your profile as it appears to the rest of the Twittersphere, view your profile and profile design in more detail, or view a stream of your public communication (i.e., your tweets and your retweets). This gives you a quick glance at your number of tweets, the number of people or users you are following and the number of followers you have.

**b** – ‘Who to Follow’ We will explore strategies regarding who your organization should follow on Twitter in more depth later on, but it is important to be familiar with the ‘Who to follow’ area of your homepage. In this area, Twitter will make suggestions of accounts you might be interested in following (based on what you tweet about and who you are already following).

Please be advised that Twitter promotes many accounts that have paid for advertising. These accounts have paid Twitter a small amount of money to appear in the timelines of accounts who do not follow them, in an effort to gain more followers. Although there is merit to some of the accounts that Twitter will suggest for you, blindly following suggested accounts isn’t professional and can lead to others unfollowing you or reporting you for spam activity.



# Twitter 101



**c – Tweet Box** allows you to compose a tweet without leaving your homepage. This is convenient, as it allows you to simultaneously view your timeline.

**d – Timeline** is where tweets and retweets appear from accounts that you have chosen to follow. The newest updates to your timeline are at the top and are shown in real-time as users you follow post tweets of their own. Any tweets or retweets you post will be shown in your own timeline. Clicking on a tweet anywhere in your timeline expands it.

New to Twitter in 2014 is the option to “pin” a tweet. Pinning a tweet means that it will show up prominently on your timeline and stay at the top of your Twitter profile. You can pin and unpin your own tweets (but not a retweet) by clicking on the “more” option, i.e., the three dots that appear beneath a tweet.

**e – Trends** display trending hashtags or topics in real time. View current trends in other countries or cities by clicking ‘Change’. Or, click a displayed trend to reveal the most popular tweets and articles linked to that trend.

One of the most unique aspects of Twitter is its ability to connect users with one another in real time. Trends rise to popularity as quickly as they disappear. Trends are also a gateway to audiences your organization may not have had prior ability to reach. If you are able to connect your organization with the Twittersphere through a trend or popular topic, you have gained strategic momentum!

When tweeting about a trend in an effort to have your organization’s account noticed, make sure you are familiar with exactly what trend you are tweeting about. Many trends involve abbreviations or short forms, so it’s important to understand what the hashtag means before using it.





## Who is my Target Audience on Twitter?

If you aren't familiar with the term *target audience* in reference to social media marketing, then a great way to brush up on your marketing terminology would be to review our [Marketing 101](#) module!

When considering a target audience on Twitter, an organization needs to have a strategy for maintaining a professional online identity. Ideally, your marketing strategy should be developed before creating your Twitter account. This way, your aim is clear and you will already have ideas in place about who you want your target audience to be, and the message(s) you want to send out. Your target audience should encompass various groups of people belonging to certain demographics or identities.

Below are two examples of specific target audiences for a nonprofit organization:

### Community Members

We hope for community members to buy into our services, to believe in them, and pass on information about our organization throughout their communities.

Your community is your 'word of mouth' and could include local community members, literacy community members, current and former learners and volunteers.

### Partners & Donors

We should give community and government partners reasons to *believe* in your programs.

Corporate funders and donor are more likely to back your agency because of government and community support.

This target audience could include social service providers, employment services, employers, libraries, service clubs, government departments, and unions.



## Community Members

### Why are they part of your target audience?

- They help to increase knowledge of your organization's services.
- Community members increase accessibility to people who consume or support your services.
- They can act as your ally on social media.
- Community members help your organization to focus on community needs and issues.

### How can your services best appeal to them on social media?

- Storytelling through social media is powerful and allows your audience to see themselves in the stories. (Be sure to maintain the privacy of your clients, employees, and other individuals as applicable).
- Social media is highly accessible and used by many Canadians; as your organization builds a presence on social networks, community members are able to share and engage on your behalf.
- Provide meaningful content that showcases your impact in your community.
- To enhance linkages, share relevant stories by other community organizations and service providers.

## Funders, Partners and Donors

### Why are they part of your target audience?

- Partners, funders and donors want to be informed about what is happening within your organization, so share content to help them understand how you are making an impact.
- Enhanced knowledge of, and engagement with your organization could translate into increased support.

### How can your services best appeal to them on social media?

- Remain relevant and professional in your practices on social media so that partners and funders will gladly align themselves with your organization.
- Share content that impresses them with your great ideas, your services, and new initiatives, and information on how you are impacting your community!
- Use powerful words, quotes, and images to convey the meaning and importance of your cause to those who have power to support you.



## How Do I Know Who to Follow on Twitter?

Expanding your network through social media networks is a by-product of an organization's online presence (one that you should take full advantage of). When it comes to following other people and organizations on Twitter, a few considerations need to be made before pressing the 'Follow' button. With more than a hundred million users on Twitter, it may be difficult to know who to follow at first. Here are a few tips to get you started.



The users on Twitter that you choose to follow should be:

### Relevant to Your Cause

It's important to follow users who share information and content related to your cause and your audience. Following informative and relevant accounts allows you to remain 'on the pulse' of literacy, the nonprofit sector, the Canadian political economy, and countless other relevant topics and sectors.

Following these accounts is not enough, it's important to remain active on Twitter, while engaging with the accounts that share meaningful content. Get noticed by being social and engaging! Whatever your cause, you can remain current by following some of these types of accounts:

- **Organizations** with whom you share common goals or causes;
- **Governing bodies** who may affect change to sectors related to your cause (i.e., relevant provincial and federal government departments);
- **Influencers** and **thought leaders** such as various foundations and social causes;
- **Agencies** or networks advocating for your cause;
- **Media** outlets that produce content related to your cause (i.e., newspapers, journals, magazines, etc.).



## Active

Following accounts that remain active is important. If an organization's account has been inactive for more than two months, it is not worthwhile to follow. In fact, if you follow too many inactive accounts, your account may begin to lose credibility within the Twittersphere.

## Thought Leaders

The term 'thought leadership' has often been associated, in the social media world, with successful personal branding and organizational leadership. To be considered a *thought leader*, on Twitter, one would be tweeting about:

- Answers to questions from clients/consumers of services
  - Anticipating the thoughts, feelings, or questions of their audience
  - Identifying key topics and trends of concern to their audience
  - Providing pathways to solutions for their audience, with meaningful content
- Sharing expertise and experience
  - Success stories from clients related to the cause, and to the services provided by the organization/company
  - Thoughts and recommendations surrounding best practices
  - Connect other community services to organizations and/or clients
- The voice of their organization/company
  - Remain current on issues and topics relevant to your goals and cause
  - Manage reputation and validity of your cause by highlighting its importance
  - Encourage discussion and participation from other thought leaders, clients, consumers of services, and organizations with shared interests and goals

## Avoid the Bots

There are thousands of 'bot' accounts in the Twittersphere. As you become more familiar with the landscape of Twitter it will be easier to detect which accounts are real. Bot accounts regurgitate, or slightly repurpose, content that has already been posted, *without giving credit* to the original tweet. Other bot accounts will post links to spam or potentially hazardous websites. Bot accounts are the plagiarizers of the digital world. Stay away from the bots!







## More Tips on Who to Follow on Twitter

Now your organization has an account with Twitter! Reach into your pre-existing networks, find some contacts that you work with who may have an online presence and follow them first.

Take a look at which accounts the well-respected organizations are following on Twitter. You may decide that some of these accounts align with your own organization's interests and choose to follow them. For example, take a look at [who CLO is following](#); perhaps some of these organizations fit well with your own causes, projects and goals. Follow accounts that will provide valuable information regarding topics and issues your organization cares about.

Do not over-follow or under-follow. These concepts will be further explored in our [Twitter for Marketing](#) module. Maintain an equal balance between your followers and those you're following. An unbalanced ratio is a red flag and will prevent engagement from users on Twitter. Follow close to the same number, or less than the number of people who follow you.

### CLO's Twitter Lists

Community Literacy of Ontario has put together some lists on Twitter, grouping together meaningful accounts you can consider following as a starting point for your new account!

You can access our lists [here](#), which include lists of literacy programs, literacy networks, and our government partners. Our lists will expand and grow as our presence on Twitter develops.

Looking at lists that have been created by accounts or organizations you trust are a great starting point to discover accounts that will be worthwhile to follow. If you are interested in learning more about Twitter lists, we talk more about them a bit later on in this module.

### Explore Twitter!

Exploring Twitter will allow you to discover accounts that participate in meaningful conversations and share content that is relevant to your cause.



## Hashtags



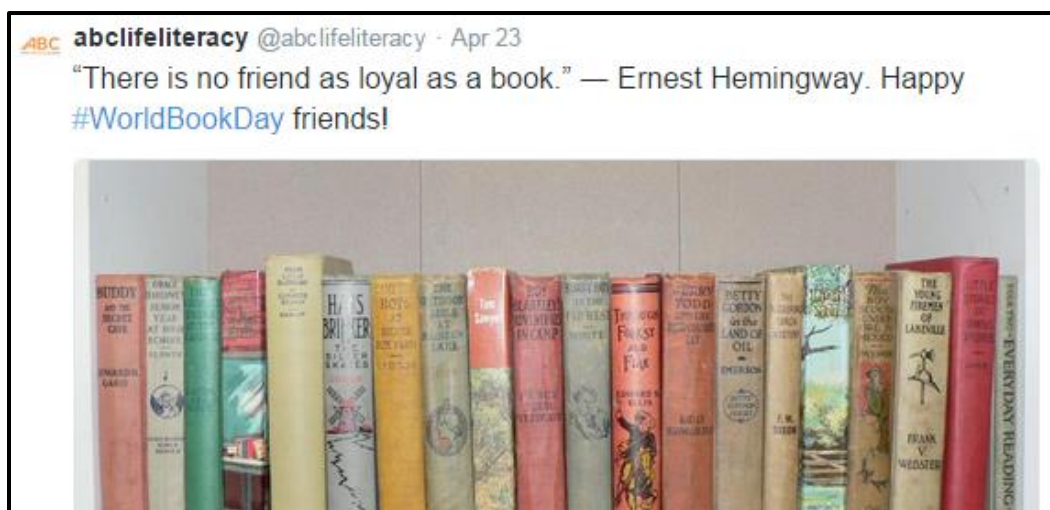
### What is a #Hashtag?

Over 500 million tweets are sent daily, making the Twittersphere a difficult social space to navigate for any social media newbie. Hashtags are used in tweets to help you connect with users, accounts, trends, or information related to a specific topic, cause or event.

A hashtag is the alphabetic or numeric characters which follow after a number sign # in a tweet. However, a number on its own, for example #2, will not act as a valid hashtag. Numbers must be paired with at least one letter to act as a viable, hyperlinked hashtag on Twitter (i.e., [#SMW14](#) but not #14).

Hashtags allow you to find information on Twitter related to specific users, topics, or events all in one place. Anyone can create a hashtag, or use a hashtag to be a part of an existing conversation.

Hashtags are used to participate in online conversations regarding general topics, or for specific events and focused topics. For example, exploring [#Literacy](#) would yield different, and more general results than exploring for [#FamilyLiteracyDay](#). Hashtags are wild and wonderful and can help you to link with new information, resources, issues, and connections.

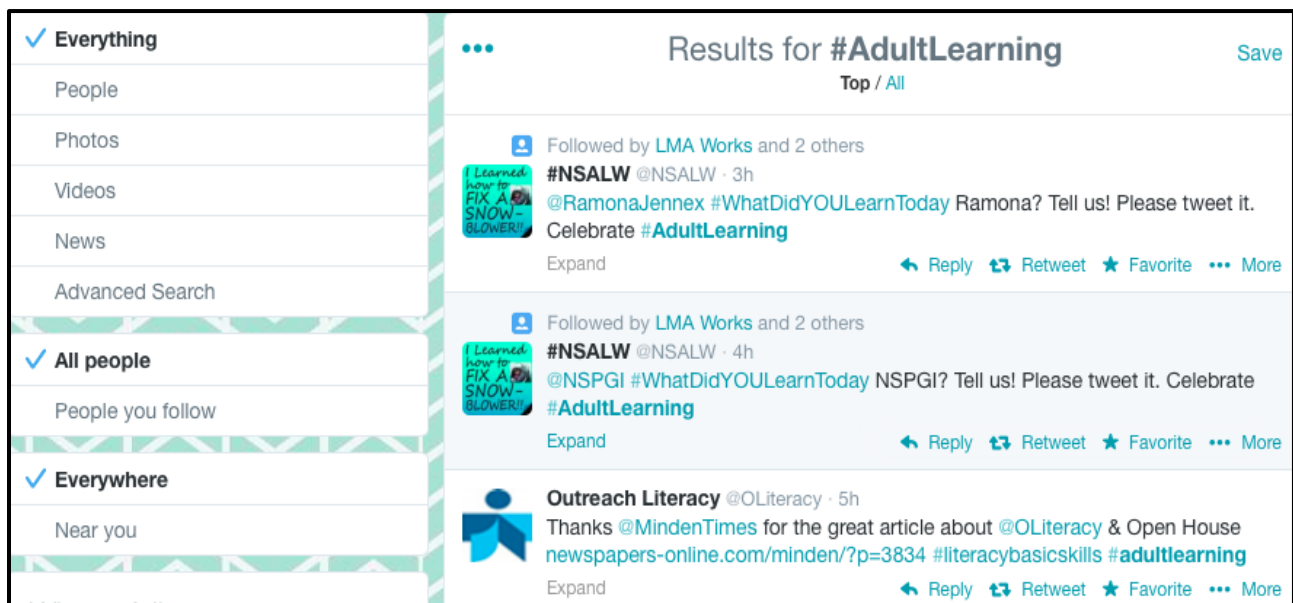


# Twitter 101



All properly formatted hashtags are searchable. They are automatically hyperlinked to list all tweets that include the selected hashtag. For example, if you are interested in joining the conversation on adult learning, and monitoring what other accounts are saying about it, search the hashtag [#AdultLearning](#).

Note: Select 'All' to view all tweets for this hashtag in chronological order, instead of only 'Top' tweets.



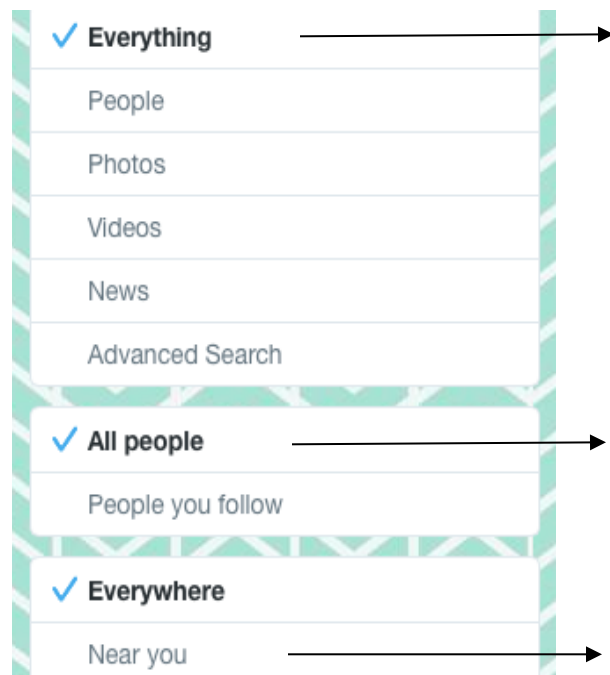
Hashtags can help you to find and follow accounts that are relevant to your organization's initiatives. Look at the hashtags that are included in tweets sent by organizations you respect. *What are these organizations talking about, and why does it matter to your organization?*

Hashtags are widely used all around us. Be sure to use them to join in conversations that are important to your cause!



## Narrowed Topic and Hashtag Searches

If you are searching a general topic, or a hashtag that yields a vast number of results, it can be overwhelming to know where to find pertinent information. Refine your results by using the following search preferences and tools:



Searching for influential accounts related to this topic or hashtag? Select 'People'.

If you only want to see tweets with a specific type of media related to this topic, select 'Photos', 'Videos' or 'News'.

Alternatively, 'Advanced Search' will allow you to refine your search even further.

Select 'People you follow' to only view tweets related to a given topic or hashtag from people you are already following.

Narrow your search by selecting 'Near you' to only view tweets from accounts geographically close to you that include the hashtag or topic for which you are searching.

## More Information on Hashtags

CLO's shares more information on the important topic of hashtags in our [Twitter for Marketing](#) module.

As well, Mashable's [The Beginner's Guide to the Hashtag](#) provides an excellent overview of the basics of hashtagging.





## Twitter Lists

Lists allow you to group Twitter accounts into meaningful, accessible, and organized groups.

Creating lists allows other users on Twitter to see what areas or topics your organization has some knowledge or expertise in. By creating a public list, you are essentially curating content to be shared with other accounts on Twitter. (Hmm, that sounds like something a thought leader would do!).

Get the attention of accounts you care about, by adding them to a meaningful list that connects your organization with theirs on common ground or shared practices.

CLO has created three [Twitter lists](#) to date: Our Government Partners, Ontario Literacy Networks, and Community Literacy in Ontario.



The screenshot displays three Twitter lists created by Community Literacy, each featuring a white flower icon. The first list is titled "Our Government Partners" with 11 members. The second list is titled "Ontario Literacy Networks" with 19 members and a description: "Literacy networks in ON dedicated to lifelong learning and literacy throughout our communities." The third list is titled "Community Literacy in ON" with 48 members and a description: "Community-based literacy agencies in Ontario."



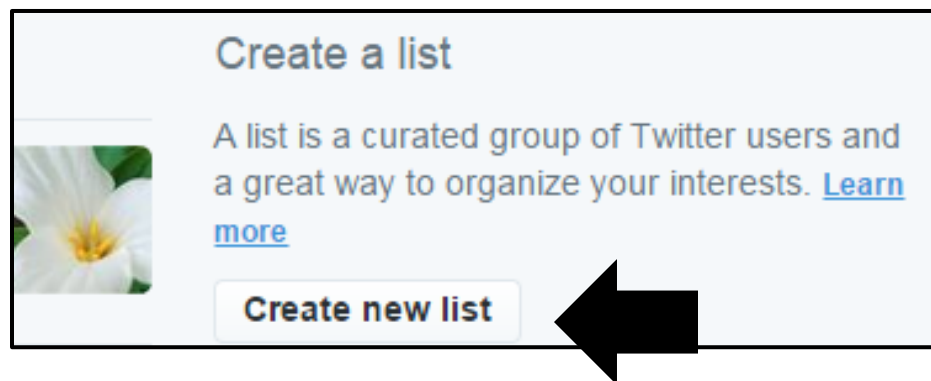
Twitter walks you through all of the steps in this helpful article called [Using Twitter Lists](#).

As well, this article from Mashable called [How to Get Started with New Twitter Lists](#) will help you to learn the basics of using lists.

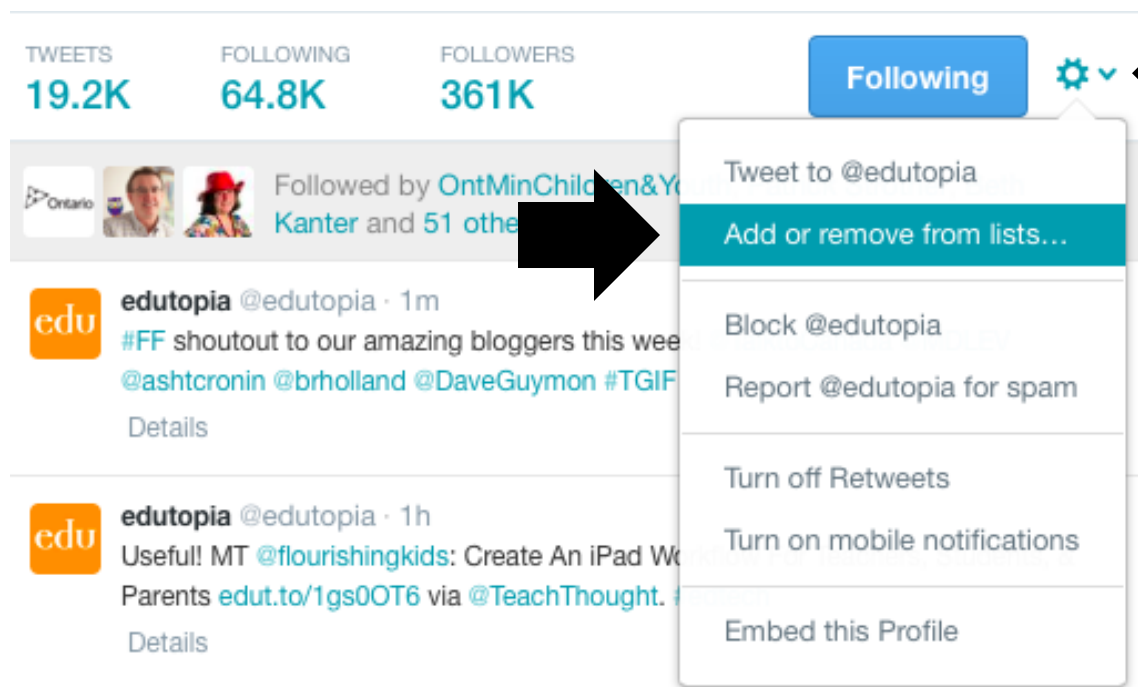
# Twitter 101



Luckily, it's easy to create lists! First, go to your Twitter home page and click on "lists". Then, the screen in the image below will appear. Just click on "Create new list". You will then be asked to develop a name for the list and write a short description of which type(s) of account(s) will be contained within that particular list. Lastly, select whether your list will be public or private. Public lists can be seen by other users visiting your account, while private lists can only be seen by the account that created them.



Twitter accounts can then be added to your list by clicking on the gear icon on a user's Twitter profile and selecting "Add or remove from lists". If you want to add an account to a list that you do not follow, no problem! Any Twitter account can be added to a list you have created.



## Resources to Learn More about Twitter

- [The Beginner's Guide to Twitter](#) (via [Mashable](#))
  - This resource defines each of Twitter's buzz words and outlines topics like direct communication on Twitter, mobile apps to use Twitter, and crafting your voice on Twitter.
- [The Twitter Glossary](#) (via [Twitter's Help Center](#))
  - This is a glossary of hundreds of words related to using Twitter. Did you encounter a word you're unsure of while setting up or using your new Twitter account? Look no further! It's most likely listed and defined here.
- [The Basics: Twitter 101](#) (via [Twitter Business](#))
  - Twitter provides answers for organizations and businesses regarding content that should and shouldn't be on Twitter, how to be engaging, and how often you should tweet.
- [The Beginner's Guide to the Hashtag](#) (via [Mashable](#))
  - This article overviews the basics of hashtagging and the social media platforms hashtags can be used on.
- [5 Apps to Help Manage Your Twitter Account](#) (via [Mashable](#))
  - Not for the weak at heart. These applications are for those of you who have mastered the basics of Twitter. Take your Twitter practices to the next level, with automated and scheduled tweets, by trying out one or more of these third party applications, and really step up your social media marketing!



80 Bradford Street, Suite 508, Barrie, Ontario L4N 6S7

EMAIL [info@communityliteracyofontario.ca](mailto:info@communityliteracyofontario.ca)

TEL 705-733-2312 | WEBSITE [www.communityliteracyofontario.ca](http://www.communityliteracyofontario.ca)

TWITTER [@Love4Literacy](https://twitter.com/Love4Literacy) | FACEBOOK [www.facebook.com/CommunityLiteracyOntario](http://www.facebook.com/CommunityLiteracyOntario)

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