



# twitter Basic Usage Conventions

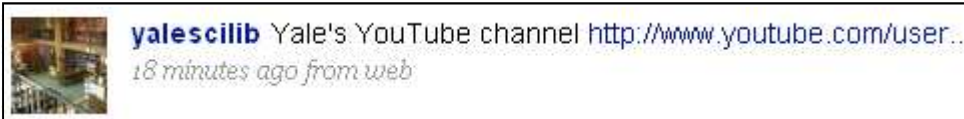
Twitter has its own language and customs, which might be a little confusing to first-time users. Here is a quick guide with examples:

**Follow/Unfollow** - If you want to see someone's updates (something Twitter sometimes refers to as having the person "in your timeline"), you need to follow them. If you don't want to see them anymore, you would unfollow.



If you're twittering to market yourself/your library, you may want to have a look at this blog post, listing 10 bad habits that will lose followers: <http://mashable.com/2009/01/06/twitter-follow-fail/>

**@ (aka reply)** - Replying to something someone said. The message will show up in a special "replies" area on their own Twitter account, whether they follow you or not. If they follow you, it will also show up in their timeline. (Click the arrow at the bottom of their message, in the Web interface.)



## DM (aka Direct

**Message)** - This is much like an @ reply, except that it is private. It must be done through the "Direct Messages" part of the interface you're using. Should be used sparingly.



## 🔒 (aka Locked)

Some Twitter users lock their posts, so only approved people can read their Twitter stream. This does not prevent their friends from retweeting them, but keeps them off the system timeline.

**RT (aka ReTweet)** - Resending something someone else said, and giving them credit.



**# (aka hashtags)** - Hashtags are used for trending and for large-scale following of topics. This is particularly useful at conferences; for instance, tweets about SLA 2009 can be tagged #sla2009 (capitalization matters), and the auto-retweeter bot, @sla2009, will repeat everything with that tag. Follow it to see what's going on. ALA Annual does not have a bot, but you can still search for #ala2009 and call up that search at any time. Hashtags.org also keeps track of and allows searches on all hashtags used by people who follow @hashtags.





# twitter Some Handy Applications

There are a number of useful (and not-so-useful) Twitter applications, in addition to the ever-improving Web interface. Here's a quick overview of some that I like:

## TweetDeck - [www.tweetdeck.com/](http://www.tweetdeck.com/)

This tool helps to organize one's Twitter stream by defined groups. Interfaces with Facebook, as well. Is a tool for power-users, with large numbers of followers and followees.

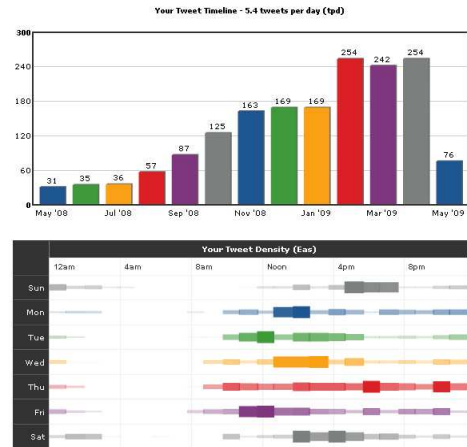
## TwitPic - [twitpic.com](http://twitpic.com)

No need to sign up for this one separately. It comes with your Twitter registration. Clicking "settings" will show you how to send pics.



## TweetStats - [tweetstats.com](http://tweetstats.com).

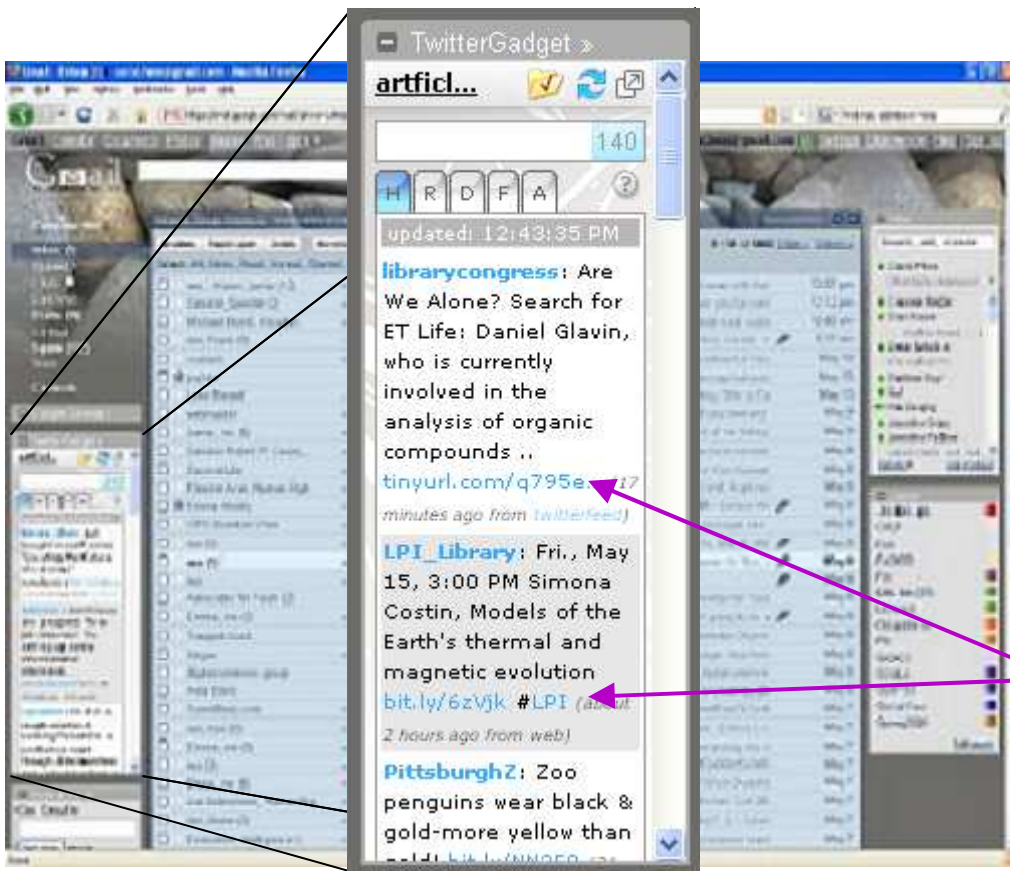
Tracks your Twitter usage by day, hour, month, etc. Can be run for any user.



Links to this and other applications for monitoring your Twitter activity, followers, etc., are available here: <http://www.onlinebestcolleges.com/blog/2009/100-twitter-tools-to-help-you-achieve-all-your-goals/>

## TwitterGadget - [www.twittergadget.com/](http://www.twittergadget.com/)

Can be installed as a Gmail widget; shows updates to your Twitter timeline, easy replies, DMs, and RTs by clicking a Twitterer's name (once, twice, and thrice, respectively).



## Digsby - [www.digsby.com](http://www.digsby.com)



This could be a good choice for libraries, as many use it for their IM reference already. Interfaces with many social tools.

## Twirl - [www.twirl.org](http://www.twirl.org)

Another popular desktop client, allows interaction with more social networking apps than TweetDeck, but does not allow sorting by group. Does allow following of search terms, unlike native Twitter interface.

## URL Shorteners:

These and other URL shorteners make it easier to fit your tweets into 140 characters: [bit.ly](http://bit.ly), [tinyurl.com](http://tinyurl.com), [snurl.com](http://snurl.com) Some Twitter applications auto-shorten for you.