

# Web 2.0 – The Web’s Edge

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Microblogs / Twitter – Class # 8

## Microblogging

**Microblogging is a new form of communication** in which users can describe their current status in short posts distributed by instant messages, mobile phones, the Web or other software applications.

## Microblog

A Microblog is a web service that allows the subscriber to post short messages on a Web site and to other subscribers of the service, similar to a blog. The length of the post of a microblog is usually limited to about 140 to 200 characters, which makes it considerably different from a blog.. The posted message is text, although some microblogging services allow video or audio posts and hyperlinks. The posts are listed in reverse chronological order.

## Writing and reading the post

Post can be made from the microblog website, an instant message (IM) client, a mobile device or a third party software application Microblog posts can be read online. Subscribers can also read posts with an instant message program or with a mobile device as an SMS text message. Microblogs have an RSS or Atom feed so they can be syndicated.

**Anyone with a mobile phone can send and receive updates at any time, from anywhere.**

## Nature of the post

Due to the short length of the post, the content of a microblog post is usually more specific than a traditional blog, but is the same in that people utilize it for both business and individual reasons. Since the posts are small, people usually post messages more frequently than they would on a traditional blog. Many microbloggers post personal information or status updates about their daily lives. Businesses use microblogs to share news about a company's products and services.

## Comparison to a blog

Compared to regular blogging, microblogging fulfills a need for an **even faster mode of communication**. By encouraging shorter posts, it **lowers the amount of time and thought** needed for content generation.

The second difference is the **frequency of update**. On average, a regular blogger may update a blog once every few days; on the other hand a microblogger may post several updates in a single day.

## Microblogs do not have

- Archives
- Categories
- Tags
- Comments

**Blogs = Publishing / Microblog = Communication**

## Microblogs are very popular

- Lightweight, easy, quick form of communication
- Sent and received via various methods
- Syndicated.
- Many third party applications / widgets available

## Microblogs are used in today's world

Microblogging is slowly moving into the mainstream. Barack Obama microblogged from the campaign trail using Twitter, one of the most popular microblogging services. Traditional media organizations, including The New York Times and the BBC, have begun to send headlines and links in microblog posts.

## Microblog have potential uses

Microblogging sites often work well on cell phones and other mobile devices, making it easy for you to deliver content that people would want on the road, even without building a site specifically for mobile devices.

Microblogging can be used for announcements, to post news, to post special events such as holiday hours, new products, updated resources, reminders, instructions, or to post answers to frequent questions. A microblog can provide a way for attendees at a conference to share thoughts and post Q&A.

Microblogging also can be very useful for issuing directions or warnings during emergencies. Other potential applications of microblogging include traffic and sports updates and emergency broadcast systems.

## Microblogs facilitate social sharing and community

Many microblog allow you to connect with others and to communicate directly with members, thereby creating a community .Many users want to maintain a presence in more than one of the various social networks. There are many third party microblogging tools to facilitate sharing messages either publically or within a social network. Services such as Socialthing.com, Friendfeed.com, and Profilactic.com will aggregate microblogs from multiple social networks into a single list. Services such as Ping.fm will send out your micro-blog to multiple social networks.

Other leading social networking websites Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn, and Xing also have their own micro-blogging feature, better known as **status updates**.

## Some common microblogging services

- Twitter.com
- Plurk.com
- Jaiku.com
- Pownce.com – shut down 12-08
- Identi.ca
- Tumblr.com

## Twitter home page and bird image



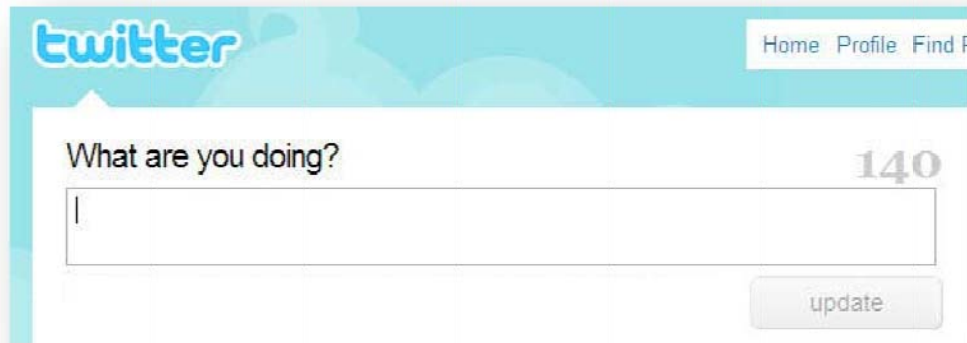


www.Twitter.com

Twitter is a social networking and microblogging service that allows users to post their latest updates of up to 140 characters. Based in San Francisco, Twitter was founded by Jack Dorsey, Biz Stone, and Evan Williams. It was launched in July 2006 and by April 2007 had gained immense popularity. In April 2008 a version of Twitter was created in Japanese. As of January 2009 Twitter has sold no advertising and produced no revenue.

Updates are displayed on the user's profile page and delivered to other users who have signed up to receive them. Senders can restrict delivery to those in their circle of friends (delivery to everyone being the default). Users can send and receive updates via the Twitter website, SMS, RSS (receive only), or through third party applications such as Tweetie, Twiterrific, Twhirl, and Feedalizr. Twitter itself is free to use over the web, but you may incur SMS services provider fees.

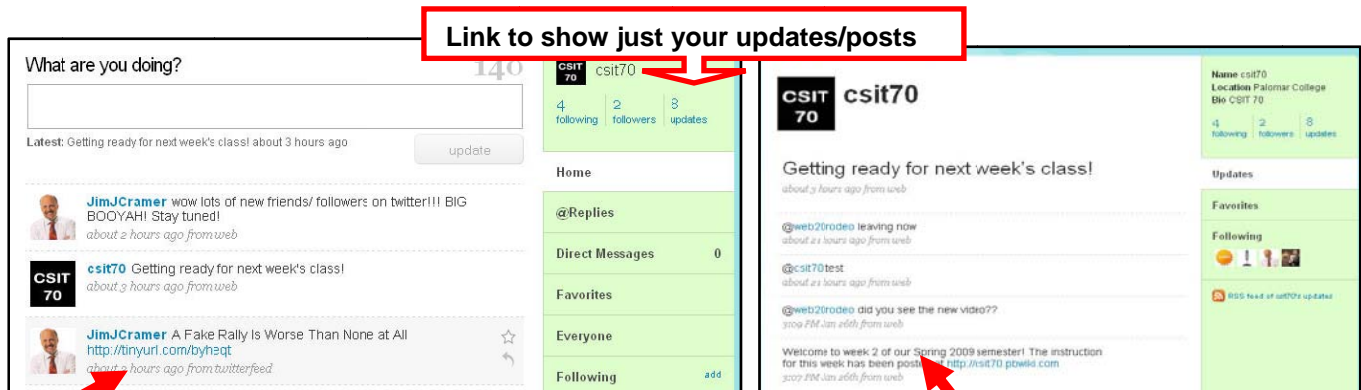
Your update or post is the answer to this popular question "What are you doing?"



An update/post is called a "tweet". Also called "twittering" or to "twitter"

### Posts

Your posts become an RSS feed within the website that others can read.



Home page shows post you made and post of those you are following

Updates shows only posts you made

## Twitter Page AFTER you have logged in

Takes you to this page

The screenshot shows the Twitter interface for a user named CSIT 70. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Home, Profile, Find People, Settings, Help, and Sign out. Below this is a text input area with the placeholder "What are you doing?" and a character count of 140. To the right of the input area, there are statistics for the user: 4 following, 2 followers, and 8 updates. A red box with an arrow points to the "8 updates" link, with the text "Shows just your updates/posts". Below the input area, there is a "Latest" section showing a tweet from CSIT 70: "Getting ready for next week's class! 1 day ago". Below this, there are several tweets from JimJCramer. A red box with an arrow points to the "Direct Messages" link in the right-hand sidebar, with the text "Click you see who has sent you a message". At the bottom of the sidebar, there is a red circle around the "RSS feed" link. At the bottom of the page, there is a red box with an arrow pointing to the main feed area, with the text "You will see YOUR updates (posts) AND the updates of the people you are following".

You will see **YOUR** updates (posts) **AND** the updates of the people you are following

## Following a user / being followed

People can "**follow**" you, meaning that each time you log in to your account, you will see the posts of everyone you have followed. **This can be overwhelming if you follow too many people.** When someone follows you, you will receive an email notice. You follow someone by clicking on the "follow" button on their profile page.



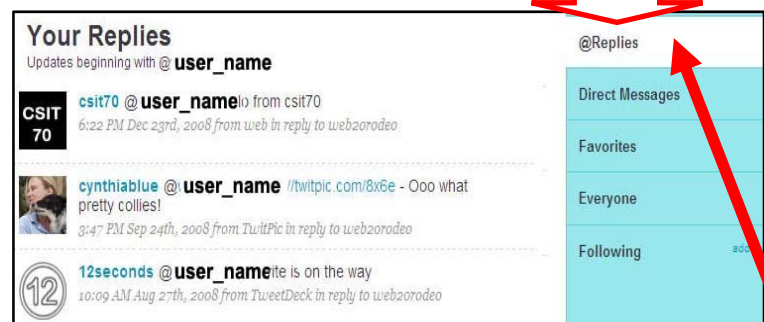
**Click button on another user's page to follow them**    **People you are following appear in your side bar**

## Sending a message - @Replies

You can send a message to other Twitter users by beginning the post with the **@ symbol** followed immediately by the user name, a space, and then the message. The reply will appear on a special screen when that user logs in.



**Send a message to a user**



**Click you see who has sent you a message**

**Receive messages sent to you by others - @Replies**

You also can set up your account so that only people you approve can see your posts, and you can block specific users if necessary.

## Where Twitter has been used – taken from Wikipedia

### Legal

Twitter has been used as a "social justice tool" to connect groups of people in critical situations. On April 10, 2008, James Buck, a graduate journalism student at UC Berkeley, and his translator, Mohammed Maree, were arrested in Egypt for photographing an anti-government protest. On his way to the police station Buck used his mobile phone to send the message "Arrested" to his 48 "followers" on Twitter. Those contacted UC Berkeley, the US Embassy in Cairo, and a number of press organizations on his behalf. Buck was able to send updates about his condition to his "followers" while being detained. He was released the next day from the Mahalla jail after the college hired a lawyer for him.

### Emergencies

Twitter was used during the fires in California in October 2007 and kept their followers (who were often friends and neighbors) informed of their whereabouts of the location of various fires minute by minute.

The American Red Cross uses Twitter (<http://twitter.com/RedCross>) to exchange minute-to-minute information about local disasters, including statistics and directions.

### News coverage

During the 2008 Mumbai attacks, eyewitnesses sent an estimated 80 tweets every five seconds as the tragedy unfolded. Twitter users on the ground helped in compiling a list of the dead and injured. In addition, users sent out vital information such as emergency phone numbers and the location of hospitals that needed blood donations

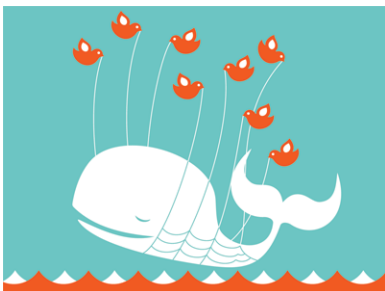
In January 2009, US Airways Flight 1549 experienced multiple bird strikes and had to be ditched in the Hudson River after takeoff from LaGuardia Airport in New York City. Janis Krum, a passenger on one of the ferries that rushed to help, took a picture of the downed plane as passengers were still evacuating and tweeted it via TwitPic before traditional media arrived at the scene

In February 2009, the Country Fire Authority used Twitter to send out regular alerts and updates regarding the 2009 Victorian bushfires.[60] During this time, the Prime Minister of Australia, Kevin Rudd, also used his Twitter account to send out information on the fires, how to donate money and blood, and where to seek emergency help.

### Twitter outages

Twitter began experiencing problems related to its growing number of users in 2007. The service has experienced outages resulting from traffic overloads due to its increased popularity. The "Fail Whale" would be displayed when Twitter went down. This image has become universally known.

See [http://www.readwriteweb.com/archives/the\\_story\\_of\\_the\\_fail\\_whale.php](http://www.readwriteweb.com/archives/the_story_of_the_fail_whale.php)



## Tools used with Twitter

Hundreds of applications have been developed to work with Twitter.

- Twitpic.com is a popular service that allows you to link a photo to a tweet.
- The tinyURL.com service helps to shorten long web addresses.
- <http://justtweetit.com/twitter-graphics> - Twitter graphics
- **140 Twitter tools** - <http://mashable.com/2008/05/24/14-more-twitter-tools/>

## • **Twitter tools and widgets from Twitter** - <http://twitter.com/downloads>

- **Twitter badges are pretty popular** – ways to show your Twitter updates on another website or blog
  - Blogger badge: <http://twitter.com/badges/blogger>
  - <http://saytweet.com/>

**Sites that shorten and track URLs** you post (with only 140 characters, shortening long URLs is critical):

- Tinyurl.com
- Snipurl.com
- Tweetburner.com

## Interesting Twitter related sites to visit:

- Twitter fan wiki: <http://twitter.pbwiki.com>
- <http://www.twitterbashers.com>
- <http://newthinking.bearingpoint.com/2008/11/20/govtwit-directory/> - govt agencies on twitter
- <http://bx.businessweek.com/twitter/> - articles and post about twitter, uses etc
- <http://www.twittervision.com> – real time tweets and map mash-up
- <http://www.twitterbackgrounds.com/> - backgrounds for Twitter
- <http://www.sitepoint.com/blogs/2008/12/18/the-10-most-creative-uses-for-twitter/> - 10 creative uses for Twitter

## National companies / people who use Twitter:

Newsweek, Southwest Airlines, Barack Obama, Jim Cramer from MSNBC Mad Money, **mostly everyone at this point**