

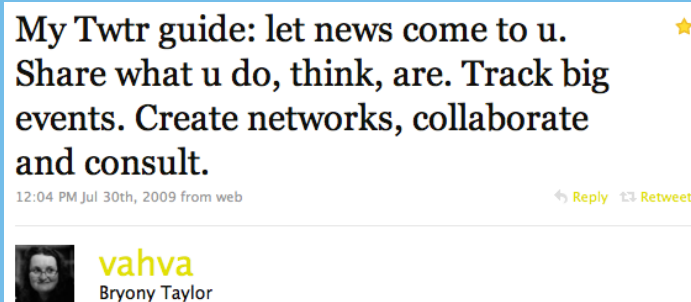


# Twitter: An Introduction

## What is Twitter?

Twitter is a web-based social-networking and micro-blogging service that enables you to post short updates to your personal stream or timeline. Think of Twitter as combining elements of Facebook status updates, instant messaging, text messaging and email.

Twitter is a great way to keep in touch with what others are doing or thinking and to create small communities. Here's a tweetable definition of its strengths we really like:



Twitter posts or 'tweets' are no longer than 140 characters in length and can include hyperlinks. One becomes a Twitter user, or twitterer, by creating a free personal account and by posting tweets to a personalised online news feed or timeline which displays them in reverse chronological order (i.e. most recent at the top).

The default setting for Twitter accounts is that user timelines are public unless the account holder decides to make them private, in which case, they are only accessible to approved followers of that account. If a Twitter user decides to follow another twitterer, then they will receive that person's tweets on their timeline. Twitter timelines, therefore, comprise of both tweets by the account holder as well as the users they are following.

Part of Twitter's popularity is its ease of use and versatility; although Twitter was developed initially as a web-based platform, it's possible to tweet via a mobile phone as an SMS message. On some mobile phone networks (e.g. currently Vodaphone, O2, 3 and Orange in the UK), users can view tweets from users they are following as text messages. There are also numerous mobile 'apps' (e.g. Echofon, Twitterberry) for various types of 'smart' phones (e.g. iPhone, BlackBerry, Nokia) that make sending, organising and reading tweets easier for the mobile user.