

Microblogging

MAALLT-SEALLT

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Introduction

A definition: Blogging, but shorter, easier, and (usually) more frequent. Twitter is most likely the best-known example; however, other microblogging tools (e.g., Yammer, the P2 theme for WordPress) exist.

Twitter	twitter.com
Yammer	yammer.com
P2	p2theme.wordpress.com

Why Twitter works

Simplicity: 140 character constraint; multiple ways to post (web, desktop application, mobile phone application, text message, instant message); simple relationships (follow, don't follow, block, report as spam); Twitter generally allows social norms to govern posting rather than imposing code-based rules.

Presence: Feeling of copresence with others (similar to instant messaging); not as focused on interpersonal relationships as other social network sites (e.g., Facebook); identity articulated via postings over time (users assemble impression of someone/something from available content).

Attention: Ability to calibrate your stream of information via following/unfollowing; "You can step in and out of the flow of information as it suits you."¹

Organization: Users use #hashtags to mark tweets as belonging to a certain topic or data type; hashtags can be planned in advance or emerge spontaneously; each tweet can be thought of as a piece of data (and there are many tools that allow you to see/use Twitter data in meaningful ways).

Case studies of how Twitter has been used in teaching and learning

Large classroom knowledge production/organization

Monica Rankin, University of Texas at Dallas

Video	youtube.com/watch?v=6WPVWDkF7U8
Comments	utdallas.edu/~mrankin/usweb/twitterconclusions.htm

Presence tool for American Studies thesis writers

Garrison LeMasters, Georgetown University

Tweet stream	twitter.myamericanstudies.com
Background	twitter.myamericanstudies.com/about.html

E-twinning with Italian high school Twitterers

Enza Antenos-Conforti, Montclair State University

Seth Dickens, Martino Martini

Background	enzaac.wordpress.com/2009/02/21/e-twinning-nj-trento/
Project home	martini.wetpaint.com/page/E-twinning
Presentation	wiziq.com/tutorial/37678-Twitter-for-Teachers-by-Enza-Antenos-Conforti
Interview	worldatways.com/2009/05/25/casta-ways-an-interview-with-enza-antenos-conforti/

¹ "Isn't Twitter just too much information? <http://twitter.com/about>