

A #FurtherEd Guide To twitter



Love it or loathe it, Twitter is seemingly everywhere. Across the globe last year, there were an estimated 500 million users.

From Joe Bloggs and the guy who runs the local chip shop, to Hollywood celebrities and multinational corporations, more and more go on there by the week.

So what is Twitter and why should you sign up?

To many, it looks like another social networking fad similar to MySpace — and let's be honest, keeping on top of your e-mails is bad enough, right?

The main thing to know is that you've got just 140 characters to say what you want on Twitter.

And what you say with those characters is posted for all to see, unless that is, you've made your Twitter account private.

However, the assumption in the pages that follow is that you want to communicate publicly and for your tweets to be seen by all.

It really is that basic in essence — write something and hit enter.

On top of that you can choose to follow users to see what they're saying, what conversations they're involved in and who they're following. Likewise, other users can do the same to you.

This simple website has revolutionised the way millions of people discuss, organise and market themselves.

If you're a college, sixth form or any other kind of FE body or professional, now is the time to jump in and take advantage.

Others in the sector have already done so, including FE Minister Mathew Hancock, a host of college principals, lecturers, provider directors and staff and key organisations such as the National Apprenticeship Service and the Skills Funding Agency.

Creating an online debate has never been easier thanks to Twitter. Are you considering whether or not to scrap a particular subject? Or do you want to know what other people think of the latest fee policy? A quick tweet and you could have a large selection of people telling you what they think. With the right use of hashtags (don't worry, it's covered inside), it's the perfect way to take a quick reading of public opinion, or even join in with the latest discussions trending (again, don't fret - see inside) worldwide.

Best of all, it's free. The only resource it uses is time – and even that, it's arguable, is a small price to pay considering the business and public service opportunities it offers.

This step-by-step guide includes:



How to create a new account and start tweeting



How to use hashtags, direct messages and lists



Play our FE Twitter 'Top Trumps' game



Find out about the *FE Week* principal challenge

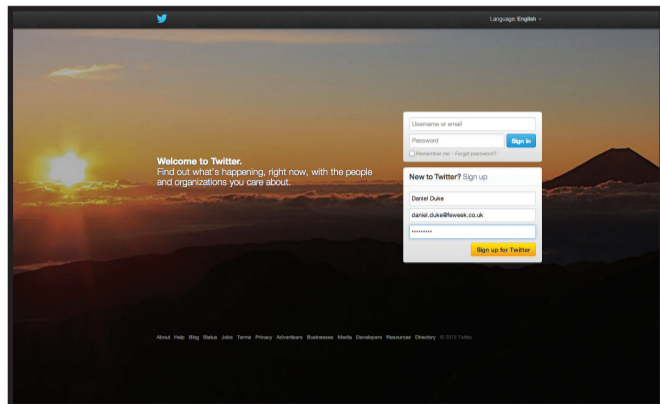
An *FE Week* publication in
partnership with

ncfe
ncfe.org.uk



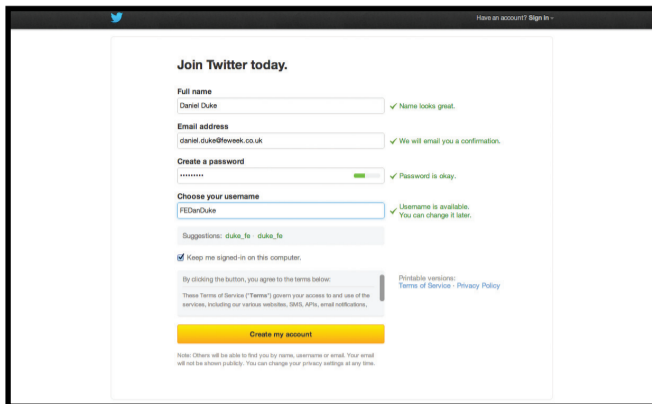
Step 1: How to create a new account

Setting up a Twitter account is quick and straight forward. Simply type www.twitter.com into your browser and follow our handy guide



This is the Twitter home page. Click on the three boxes headlined with “New to Twitter? Join today!” and start typing in the required details.

Most of these can be changed at a later date, including your e-mail address. However, it’s always good practise to think about the contact details you’ll be using before registering. As an aside, the top right has an area where you can log in to any account once it’s been registered.



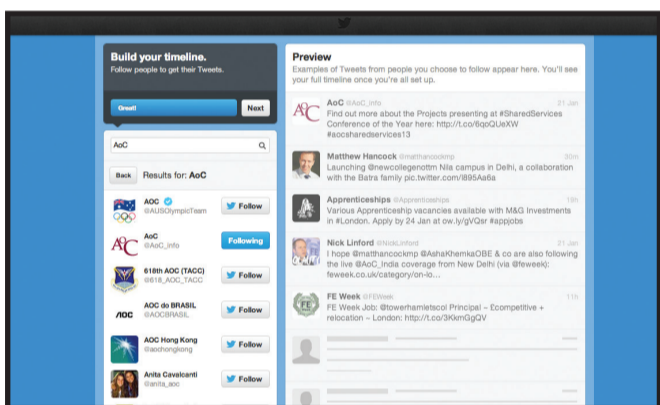
Twitter will then direct you to a page confirming whether or not your details are valid. The bottom box will suggest a username, and at this point carefully think about what you want to be called.

Although you can change your username at a later date, there will be hundreds of new Tweepers ‘claiming’ handles each week. Just like an e-mail address, every Twitter username has to be unique, so you might not be able to instantly access your desired name.

Tip: Think about your username

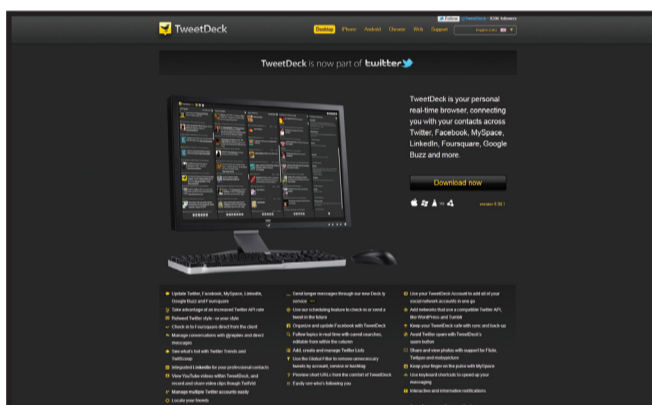
* Is it obvious who you are? Choosing an acronym that you use in the office, such as “@NCG” for Newcastle College Group could be unclear to some of your intended audience.

* Is it too long? For example, “@EdinburghCA” is much easier to type into short tweets than “@EdinburghCollegeOfArt”.



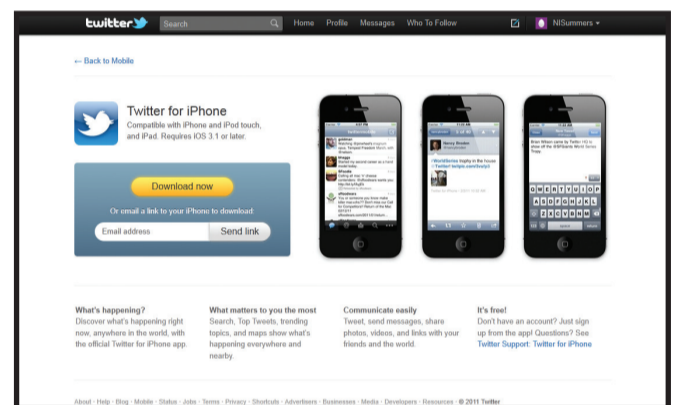
Twitter will then take you to a page which recommends some people to follow. There’s no obligation to choose any of them, but it can help fill your feed in the beginning and give you an idea of how Twitter works.

Clicking on the button at the bottom will bypass these steps and send you to a blank confirmation page. To access all of the features on Twitter, you need to log into your e-mail inbox and find the confirmation message that’s been sent to you. Clicking the link will send you to a new page that confirms your account.



Now you can log into your account anytime you have an internet connection. Return to www.twitter.com and put in your username and password. You may wish to look into a specific Twitter client for your desktop PC or laptop – many active users use programmes such as TweetDeck, HootSuite or Twitter on the Mac App Store.

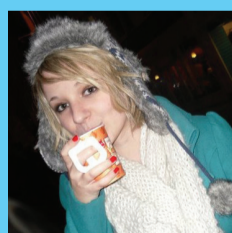
These will allow you to use more advanced features of Twitter and follow multiple ‘feeds’ of information at any one time. It’s also helpful if you plan to use more than one account.



Using Twitter on a mobile phone will allow you to stay in touch with your followers from anywhere in the world. For example, iPhone owners can download Twitter from the App Store, and Android users can find the app by searching in the ‘Market’ application. Anyone with a Blackberry device can download the Twitter app from the Blackberry App World.

Once this has been installed on your phone (some devices come with an app pre-installed), you can login with your username and password and continue to tweet as normal.

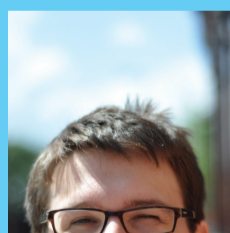
Tip: Follow the further education ‘Twitterati’



@Toni_Pearce
Toni Pearce, NUS VP for Further Education



@josephlee
Joseph Lee, FE Reporter for TES



@XtopherCook
Chris Cook, Education Correspondent for FT



@GordonMarsdenMP
Shadow Minister for FE & Skills



@NickLinford
Nick Linford, Lsect Managing Director



@EMPRA
Ruth Sparkes, Director of EMPRA



@BrianLightman
General Secretary of ASCL



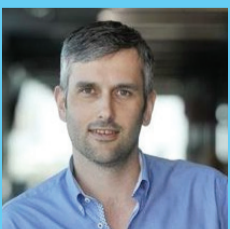
@Jan_Murray
Freelance Education Journalist



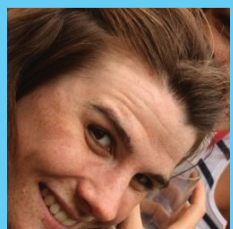
@GregHurstTimes
Education Editor of The Times



@AnyNameButBecky
Rebecca Cooney, FE Week Reporter



@Chris_Henwood
Deputy Editor/ Chief Reporter for FE Week



@EleanorRadford
Senior Reporter for FE Week

Step 2: How to use hashtags, direct messages and lists

Hashtags are words and phrases that can be searched for on Twitter. If there's a particular event, issue or piece of news that's being talked about on Twitter, you'll be able to find the 'discussion' by searching for the hashtag. On the Twitter web page, try typing in '#education' in the search bar at the top of the page and see what it comes up with.

Casual Twitter users often follow people who they find through hashtag 'conversations'. So if you're responding to a discussion, or talking about an issue which you think others would like to hear about, try using a hashtag in your tweet. This will make it searchable and help others find you. Many businesses use hashtags to promote events and campaigns, allowing other users to add to the scale and 'buzz' of the proceedings.

The most popular hashtags can be found under trends and these are called 'trending' topics. If you create a hashtag which trends worldwide, you know everyone is talking about it!

Direct messages (DM) are very similar to personal e-mails or text messages. Only the person you're writing to will see your tweet, allowing some privacy when you don't want to share something with all your followers. To send a DM, click on the messages tab at the top of the page and type in the username of the person you want to send a message to.

Note: Both users will need to be following each other in order to send a DM. This stops any follower from being able to contact you privately.

You'll likely follow users for different reasons. You might follow a college to keep up to date with their latest news, but also follow a personal colleague to hear their witty remarks or humorous anecdotes. Lists are used to categorise the people you follow and to make it easier to look at specific groups of people. To create a list, click on the homepage, followed by the 'following' link. Next to the green tick which follows each user, click on the downward arrow followed by 'add to list'. You can choose these to create a new list, or add the user to an existing list.

From the top of the timeline (the feed of tweets in the middle of your page) you can access your lists by clicking the appropriate link.



Step 3: Weave mentions, hashtags and links

Mentioning a user with the "@" symbol (@SummersNicholas, for example) will help bring the tweet to the person or company's attention. It's a way of directing your tweets to specific people, so they acknowledge you've written about them, and so others know who you're talking about.

The best way to mention someone is to 'weave' it into your tweet. So, a normal message which might say:

"Students from Bolton College have received excellent results today"

Should become: "Students from @BoltonCollege have received excellent results today"

Not: "About @BoltonCollege: Students from South Downs College have received excellent results today"

Hashtags work in a similar way. Embedding them into your tweets will keep your message looking clean and concise. A good tweet will say:

"Glad to hear students are thinking about the #environment in their #biology classes."

Rather than: "Glad to hear students are thinking about the environment in their biology classes. #Environment #Biology"

Links can be also used to direct a follower to a specific

"Students from @BoltonCollege have received excellent A-level results today."



web page, such as press releases, YouTube videos or PDF documents. It's a good way of offering people some context or further information about your tweets. Links would normally come at the end of a tweet, and can be fitted within the 140 character limit via 'shortening'.

This usually happens automatically, although some users like to use specific websites such as Tinyurl, Bit.ly and Twurl.

"Glad to hear students are thinking about the #environment in their #biology classes."



"Glad to hear students are thinking about the #environment in their #biology classes."
<http://bit.ly/lxg7RQ>



Step 4: Follow your fellow colleges

Stay in touch with the industry by following other further education providers. This handy table lists all the current education institutions using Twitter

ABINGDON AND WITNEY COLLEGE	@AWCollege	HALESOWEN COLLEGE	@halesowencoll
ACCRINGTON AND ROSSENDALE COLLEGE	@accrosscollege	HARLOW COLLEGE	@HarlowCollege
ALTON COLLEGE	@altoncollege	HARROW COLLEGE	@HarrowCollege
AQUINAS COLLEGE	@AquinasCollege	HARTPURY COLLEGE	@Hartpury
ASHTON SIXTH FORM COLLEGE	@ashton6FC	HAVANT COLLEGE	@HavantCollege
AYLESBURY COLLEGE	@AylesburyColl	HAVERING COLLEGE OF FURTHER & HIGHER EDUCATION	@HaveringCollege
BARKING COLLEGE	@FEinBarking	HAVERING SIXTH FORM COLLEGE	@havering6thform
BARNET COLLEGE	@barnetcollege	HENLEY COLLEGE, COVENTRY	@HenleyCollege
BARNFIELD COLLEGE	@BarnfieldFed	HEREFORD COLLEGE OF ARTS	@HerefordArtsCol
BARNESLEY COLLEGE	@barnsleycollege	HEREFORD SIXTH FORM COLLEGE	@HerefordSFC
BARTON PEVERIL COLLEGE	@bartonpev	HOLYWELLS HIGH SCHOOL	@holywellhs
BASINGSTOKE COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY	@bcotlrc	HOPWOOD HALL COLLEGE	@hopwoodhall
BEDFORD COLLEGE	@bedfordcollege	HUDDERSFIELD NEW COLLEGE	@huddnewcoll
BERKSHIRE COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE	@BerksCollege	HUGH BAIRD COLLEGE	@HughBaird
BEXHILL COLLEGE	@BexhillCollege	HULL COLLEGE	@hullcollegegrp
BEXLEY COLLEGE	@bexleycollege	ISLE OF WIGHT COLLEGE	@iwcollege
BICTON COLLEGE	@BictonCollege	ITCHEN COLLEGE	@ItchenCollege
BIRKENHEAD SIXTH FORM COLLEGE	@BSFC	JOHN LEGGOTT SIXTH FORM COLLEGE	@JohnLeggottColl
BISHOP AUCKLAND COLLEGE	@bishopcollege	KENDAL COLLEGE	@KendalCollege
BISHOP BURTON COLLEGE	@BishopBurton	KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA COLLEGE	@KC_College
BLACKBURN COLLEGE	@bbcollege	KIDDERMINSTER COLLEGE	@KidderminstColl
BLACKPOOL AND THE FYLDE COLLEGE	@B_and_FC	KINGSTON COLLEGE	@Kcupdate
BLACKPOOL SIXTH FORM COLLEGE	@BlackpoolSixth	KIRKLEES COLLEGE	@kirkleescollege
BOLTON COLLEGE	@BoltonCollege	LAMBETH COLLEGE	@LambethCollege
BOSTON COLLEGE	@bostoncollegeuk	LANCASTER AND MORECAMBE COLLEGE	@lm_college
BOURNVILLE COLLEGE OF FURTHER EDUCATION	@Bournville	LEEDS COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN	@leedsartsu
BRADFORD COLLEGE	@bradfordcollege	LEEDS COLLEGE OF MUSIC	@LeedsMusic
BRIDGWATER COLLEGE	@Bridgwater_Coll	LEICESTER COLLEGE	@LeicesterColleg
BROCKENHURST COLLEGE	@brockcollege	LEWISHAM COLLEGE	@lewishamcollege
BROMLEY ADULT EDUCATION COLLEGE	@BromleyAdultEd	LINCOLN COLLEGE	@lincoln_college
BROMLEY COLLEGE OF FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION	@BromleyCollege	LORETO COLLEGE	@loretocollege
BROOKLANDS COLLEGE	@FEBrooklands	LOUGHBOROUGH COLLEGE	@Lborocollege
BROOKSBY MELTON COLLEGE	@BrooksbyMelton	LOWESTOFT COLLEGE	@lowestoftcoll
BURNLEY COLLEGE	@BurnleyCollege	LUDLOW COLLEGE	@ludlowcollege
BURTON COLLEGE	@BSDCofficial	MACCLESFIELD COLLEGE	@macccoll
CADBURY SIXTH FORM COLLEGE	@cadburycollege	MID-CHESHIRE COLLEGE OF FURTHER EDUCATION	@midchesh
CALDERDALE COLLEGE	@CalderdaleCol	MIDDLESBROUGH COLLEGE	@mbrocollege
CAMBRIDGE REGIONAL COLLEGE	@CambridgeRegCol	MID-KENT COLLEGE OF HIGHER AND FURTHER EDUCATION	@MidKentCollege
CANTERBURY COLLEGE	@canterburycoll	MILTON KEYNES COLLEGE	@MKCollege
CAPEL MANOR COLLEGE	@capelmanor	MOULTON COLLEGE	@MoultonCollege
CARMEL COLLEGE	@CarmelCollege	MYERSCOUGH COLLEGE	@MyerscoughColl
CARSHALTON COLLEGE	@CarshaltonAC	NEW COLLEGE STAMFORD	@NewCollegeStamf
CASTLE COLLEGE NOTTINGHAM	@CastleCollege	NEW COLLEGE, SWINDON	@NewCollSwindon
CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COLLEGE	@TUC_Studies	NEWBURY COLLEGE	@newburycoll
CENTRAL SUSSEX COLLEGE	@CentralSussex	NEWCASTLE COLLEGE	@Newcastle_Coll
CHELMSFORD COLLEGE	@chelmsfordcol	NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME COLLEGE	@NULC
CHESTERFIELD COLLEGE	@ChesterfieldAC	NEWHAM COLLEGE OF FURTHER EDUCATION	@newhamcollege
CHICHESTER COLLEGE	@Chi_College	NEWHAM SIXTH FORM COLLEGE	@talknewvic
CIRENCESTER TERTIARY COLLEGE	@cirencoll	NORTH EAST SURREY COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY (NESCOT)	@Nescot
CITY COLLEGE, BIRMINGHAM	@citycol	NORTH EAST WORCESTERSHIRE COLLEGE	@NEW_College_
CITY COLLEGE, BRIGHTON AND HOVE	@citycoll	NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE COLLEGE	@N_HertsCollege
CITY COLLEGE, NORWICH	@norwichcollege	NORTH WARWICKSHIRE AND HINCKLEY COLLEGE	@nwhcnews
CITY COLLEGE, PLYMOUTH	@cityplym	NORTHAMPTON COLLEGE	@NorthamptonColl
CITY OF BATH COLLEGE	@BathCollege	NORTHBROOK COLLEGE SUSSEX	@Nbcol
CITY OF BRISTOL COLLEGE	@CoBCollege	NORTHUMBERLAND COLLEGE	@NorthlandColl
CITY OF STOKE-ON-TRENT SIXTH FORM COLLEGE	@SOT6FC	NORTON RADSTOCK COLLEGE	@nortcoll
CITY OF SUNDERLAND COLLEGE	@CitySun_College	OAKLANDS COLLEGE	@oaklandscollege
CITY OF WESTMINSTER COLLEGE	@CityWestCollege	ORPINGTON COLLEGE OF FURTHER EDUCATION	@OrpingtonColl
CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COLLEGE	@wolvcoll	PALMERS COLLEGE	@PalmersCollege
COLCHESTER INSTITUTE	@ColchesterInst	PETERBOROUGH REGIONAL COLLEGE	@prclatest
COLLEGE OF HARINGEY, ENFIELD AND NORTH EAST LONDON	@CollegeNELondon	PLUMPTON COLLEGE	@PlumptonCollege
COLLEGE OF NORTH WEST LONDON	@CNWL1	PORTSMOUTH COLLEGE	@pompeycoll
CORNWALL COLLEGE	@CornwallCollege	PRESTON COLLEGE	@PrestonCollege
COULSDON COLLEGE	@coulsoncollege	PRIESTLEY COLLEGE	@priestleySFCold
CRAVEN COLLEGE	@cravencoll	QUEEN ELIZABETH SIXTH FORM COLLEGE	@QESFC
CROYDON COLLEGE	@CroydonCollege	QUEEN MARY'S COLLEGE	@qmcoll
DARLINGTON COLLEGE	@Darlingtonfe	REASEHEATH COLLEGE	@Reaseheath
DERBY COLLEGE	@derbycollege	REDBRIDGE COLLEGE	@RedbridgeColleg
DONCASTER COLLEGE	@DonnyCollege	REGENT COLLEGE	@regentcollege
EAST RIDING COLLEGE	@ERCollege	REIGATE COLLEGE	@ReigateCollege
EAST SURREY COLLEGE	@EastSurreyColl	RUNSHAW COLLEGE	@RunshawCollege
EASTLEIGH COLLEGE	@Eastleigh_Col	RUSKIN COLLEGE	@Ruskin_College
EASTON COLLEGE	@easton_college	SALFORD CITY COLLEGE	@salfordcc
EXETER COLLEGE	@ExeterCollege	SCARBOROUGH SIXTH FORM COLLEGE	@S6F
FAREHAM COLLEGE	@FarehamCollege	SEEVIC COLLEGE	@SeevicCollege
FILTON COLLEGE	@filton_college	SELBY COLLEGE	@SelbyCollege
FRANKLIN COLLEGE	@FranklinGrimsby	SHIPLEY COLLEGE	@Shipley_College
FURNESS COLLEGE	@furnesscollege	SHREWSBURY SIXTH FORM COLLEGE	@ShrewsburyCol
GATESHEAD COLLEGE	@gatesheadcoll	SIR GEORGE MONOUX SIXTH FORM COLLEGE	@MonouxCollege
GLOUCESTERSHIRE COLLEGE OF ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY	@Gloscol	SOLIHULL COLLEGE	@SolihullCollege
GOLDSMITHS COLLEGE	@myGoldsmiths	SOMERSET COLLEGE OF ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY	@SomersetCollege
GRANTHAM COLLEGE	@GranthamCollege	SOUTH BIRMINGHAM COLLEGE	@southbirmingham
GREENWICH COMMUNITY COLLEGE	@GCCMarketing	SOUTH DEVON COLLEGE	@sdcollege
GRIMSBY INSTITUTE OF FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION	@gifhe	SOUTH EAST ESSEX COLLEGE OF ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY	@SouthEssexColl
HADLOW COLLEGE	@Hadlow_College	SOUTH LEICESTERSHIRE COLLEGE	@SLCollege

SOUTH THAMES COLLEGE
 SOUTH TYNESIDE COLLEGE
 SOUTHAMPTON CITY COLLEGE
 SOUTHGATE COLLEGE
 SOUTHPORT COLLEGE
 SOUTHWARK COLLEGE
 SPARSHOLT COLLEGE HAMPSHIRE
 ST HELENS COLLEGE
 ST VINCENT COLLEGE
 STAFFORD COLLEGE
 STANMORE COLLEGE
 STEPHENSON COLLEGE
 STOCKPORT COLLEGE
 STOCKTON RIVERSIDE COLLEGE
 STOURBRIDGE COLLEGE
 STRATFORD-UPON-AVON COLLEGE
 STRODE COLLEGE
 STRODE'S COLLEGE
 STROUD COLLEGE OF FURTHER EDUCATION
 SUFFOLK NEW COLLEGE
 SUSSEX COAST COLLEGE HASTINGS
 SUSSEX DOWNS COLLEGE
 SWINDON COLLEGE
 TAMESIDE COLLEGE
 TAUNTON'S COLLEGE
 TELFORD COLLEGE OF ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY
 THANET COLLEGE
 THE BOURNEMOUTH AND POOLE COLLEGE
 The City Literary Institute
 THE DUKERIES COLLEGE
 THE HENLEY COLLEGE
 THE LEEDS CITY COLLEGE
 THE MANCHESTER COLLEGE
 THE OLDHAM COLLEGE
 THE SHEFFIELD COLLEGE
 TOTTEN COLLEGE
 TOWER HAMLETS COLLEGE
 TRAFFORD COLLEGE
 TRESHAM INSTITUTE
 TRURO AND PENWITH COLLEGE
 TYNE METROPOLITAN COLLEGE
 UXBRIDGE COLLEGE
 VARNDEAN COLLEGE
 WAKEFIELD COLLEGE
 WALFORD AND NORTH SHROPSHIRE COLLEGE
 WALSALL COLLEGE
 WARWICKSHIRE COLLEGE
 WEST CHESHIRE COLLEGE
 WEST HERTS COLLEGE
 WEST KENT COLLEGE
 WEST NOTTINGHAMSHIRE COLLEGE
 WEST SUFFOLK COLLEGE
 WEST THAMES COLLEGE
 WESTMINSTER KINGSWAY COLLEGE
 WESTON COLLEGE
 WEYMOUTH COLLEGE
 WIGAN AND LEIGH COLLEGE
 WILBERFORCE COLLEGE
 WILTSHIRE COLLEGE
 WINSTANLEY COLLEGE
 WIRRAL METROPOLITAN COLLEGE
 WORCESTER COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY
 WORKERS' EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION
 WORTHING COLLEGE
 WRITTLE COLLEGE
 WYKE SIXTH FORM COLLEGE
 YEOVIL COLLEGE
 YORK COLLEGE

@SouthThamesColl
 @SthTyneCollege
 @city_college
 @Southgate_news
 @southportcoll
 @southwarkcolleg
 @Sparsholt_Coll
 @StHelensCollege
 @StVincent6FC
 @StaffordCollege
 @StanmoreCollege
 @stephensoncoll
 @stock_college
 @srcinfo
 @StourbridgeCol
 @StratfordColl
 @StrodeCollege
 @StrodeCollege
 @Stroud_College
 @suffolknewcoll
 @SussexCoast
 @sussexdowns
 @SwindonCollege
 @TamesideCollege
 @tauntonscollege
 @telfordcoll
 @ThanetCollege
 @BPCollege
 @citylit
 @DukeriesCollege
 @henleycol
 @leedscitycoll
 @ManchesterColl
 @OldhamCollege
 @sheffcol
 @TottonCollege
 @towerhamletscol
 @traffordcoll
 @Tresham_tweets
 @TruroCollege
 @TyneMetCollege
 @uxbridgecollege
 @varndean
 @WakefieldColleg
 @wnscollege
 @Walsall_College
 @WarwickshireCol
 @westccollege
 @whertscollege
 @WestKentCollege
 @WestNotts
 @WestSuffolk
 @WestThames
 @Westking
 @westoncollege
 @WeymouthCollege
 @wiganleighcoll
 @WilberforceSFC
 @WiltsColl
 @winstanleycoll
 @WirralMet
 @WCT_official
 @weastoke
 @WorthingCollege
 @writtlecollege
 @WykeCollege
 @YeovilCollege
 @york_college

Not on the list?
 Tweet us @FEWeek



Tip: Follow the key FE bodies

Skills
Funding
Agency

@skillsfunding

A partner organisation of BIS - funds regulates promotes adult further education & skills training in England



@educationgovuk

The official Twitter account for the Department for Education



@apprenticeships

"Apprenticeships - Good for business"



@skillscfa

CFA is the leading government-recognised apprenticeship issuing authority for business skills in the UK. We set standards to define key skills for business



@ofstednews

Ofsted inspects and regulates to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages



@NCFE

NCFE is a leading provider of nationally recognised qualifications, committed to delivering exceptional customer service.



@ukces

Transforming the UK into a world class leader in employment and skills



@bisgovuk

Official Twitter channel of the UK Department for Business, Innovation and Skills

Step 5: Play Twitter ‘Top Trumps’!

@matthancockmp #32

Further Education Minister
Matthew Hancock



Followers: 8,122
Tweets: 1,900
Date joined: 31 January 2009
Following: 332
Average tweets per day: 1.3

“Just delivered first major speech as Skills Minister, on key priorities of: quality in Apprenticeships; new Traineeships, Standards & Quals”

Tuesday, November 20, 2012, at 7.02am

@157lynne #102

Lynne Sedgmore, Chief Executive of the 157 Group



Followers: 710
Tweets: 2,157
Date joined: 12 June 2011
Following: 387
Average tweets per day: 3.6

“Speaking at @YeovilCollege FE awards ceremony tomorrow night, really looking forward to it, love seeing successful FE students”

Wednesday, January 9, 2013, at 12.09pm

@AshaKhemkaOBE #27

Asha Khemka OBE, Principal at West Nottinghamshire College



Followers: 219
Tweets: 133
Date joined: 5 October 2011
Following: 92
Average tweets per day: 0.3

“Today Baroness Prashar addressed our graduating students with an inspirational message. Joy to see proud parents, staff & students”

Saturday, November 24, 2012, at 1.28pm

@JaineBolton #96

Chief operating officer at NAS, Jaine Bolton



Followers: 1,020
Tweets: 3,777
Date joined: 30 April 2009
Following: 1782
Average tweets per day: 2.7

“@aidenbyrne: recruitment process for our new restaurant. 28 chefs required for a 60 seater restaurant.’ Hope you have some @apprenticeships”

Tuesday, November 27, 2012, 4.37am

Step 6: Get involved with FE Week

Why every college Principal should join the Twittersphere



It's a communications tool that can divide opinion sharply. On the one hand you've got those quick to offer up criticism of Twitter, referring more often than not to such inane posts such as 'just had breakfast' or 'hate this weather' as excuses to steer clear.

On the other hand, though, you've got those who want to capitalise on Twitter as a means of conveying information or contributing to discussion.

Among those in this latter camp is Middlesbrough College principal Mike Hopkins. He's been a Twitter user since summer 2011 and in the space of around 18 months racked up almost 700 posts – or tweets.

"By nature I'm a communicator — I like talking," he said.

"I like communicating and as principal of the college I try to use as many channels of communication as I can. I like being out there in the public.

"Twitter seems to me an ideal way of communicating in a way that is, not abbreviated, but concise at 140 characters."

He added: "My tweets aren't anodyne — they can be pretty controversial and I'll often attach an article and a comment about government policy or something of relevance and interest.

"Twitter's a great way of doing that. It also gives me an opportunity to follow people and organisations that I respect

and some I don't particularly respect, but feel I need to follow. It's a two-way thing.

"I enjoy being able to communicate very concisely. I can go on at times, so it's a good discipline for me. It allows you to make good, clear and pithy comments."

From his Twitter profile of @mike-hopkinsmc, Mr Hopkins tracks more than 550 accounts and boasts around 600 followers.

"There are loads of users I particularly keep an eye out for," he said.

"I've got a number of principals on there like, Graham Morley at South Staffordshire College and Ian Pryce at Bedford College, and I follow newspapers and magazines, like The New Statesman."

And while some may shy away from Twitter, fearing it could prove problematic with tweets exposing users to legal considerations or abuse, Mr Hopkins thinks if managed properly, the pros outweigh the cons.

"I can't advise people about using it, but the kind of tweets I like to see are pretty forthright," he said.

"Some colleges just use it to promote their brand or open evenings and that's fine, but personally I think Twitter can do so much more.

"I had correspondence recently with a woman in America who was into access

to guns and I gave her what I thought would be a European perspective. So I get a kick out of it personally and professionally. But I've got a personal account on Twitter and I use that if I want to be really out there and controversial."

He added: "I'm of the left and that's clear in my tweets.

"I've got a board that's very supportive and has never complained. There are people who disagree with my tweets. I've had, not directly, but some staff apparently concerned with the fact I make it clear I'm against austerity and the damage it's doing to young people and colleges, etc. But I'd sooner people know who I am, where I'm from and what my position is.

"I'm happy to be challenged, I see my role as both a leader in a college, but also as a guy with 30 years' experience in the sector as an education leader as well and an advocate for FE. I want to advocate for FE therefore I'll say stuff because Twitter is a platform.

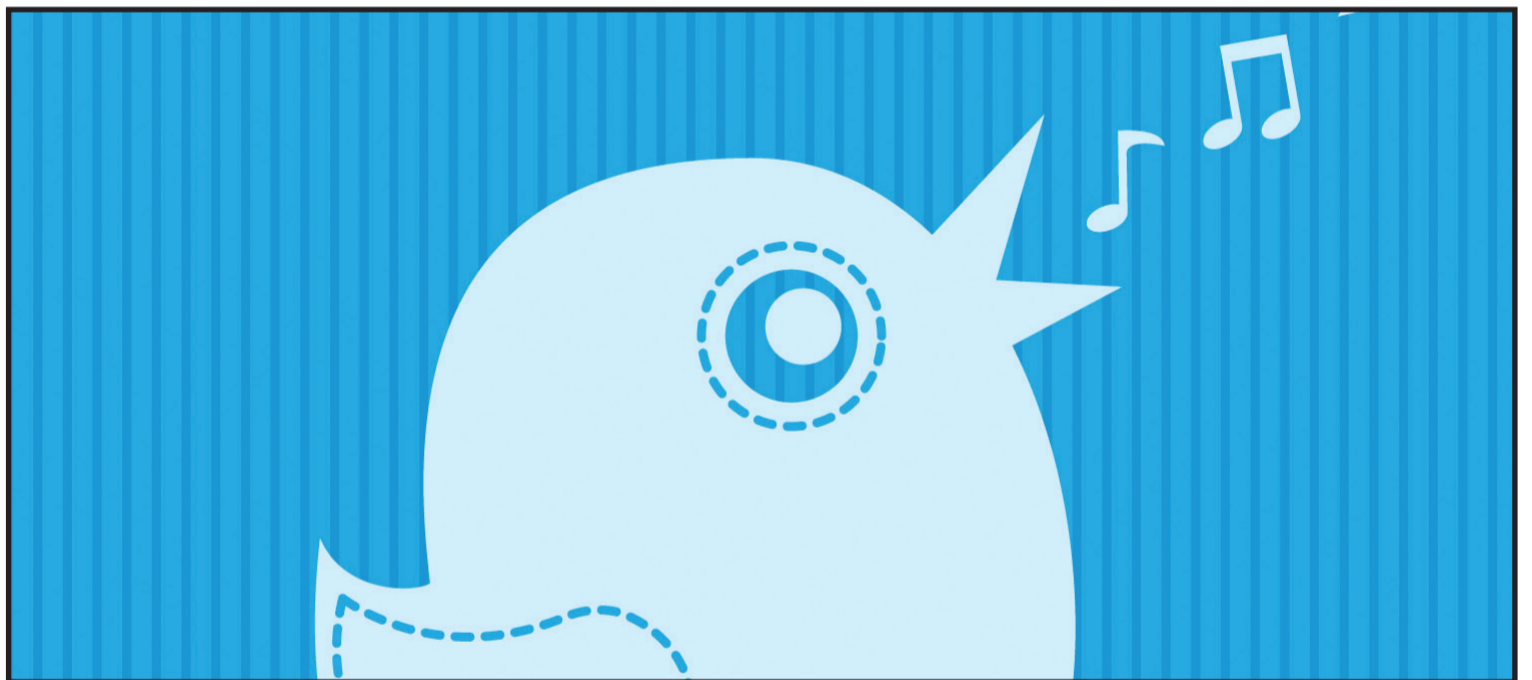
"Different principals have different styles, but if people are anxious to communicate then Twitter is a good, efficient medium. I'm not a technophobe, but I'm not very good at IT and Twitter is easy. It's direct and easy."

Mike Hopkins is Principal of Middlesbrough College

New to Twitter? Let us know

If you're new to Twitter, then tweet us with the hashtag **#FEfollowme** and let us know! We'll follow you, tweet you and see if we can get you some more followers.

Get in touch and good luck with starting out in the Twittersphere!



FE Week Video Masterclass

Want to find out more about Twitter? Log-on to the FE Week website (www.feweek.co.uk) for an exclusive master class video.

This visual guide will take you through setting up your account, searching for hashtags and including 'mentions' in your tweets.

The advanced section will also give you some useful hints and tips on using Twitter for business, marketing and networking.

You can also find the video through our YouTube channel : www.youtube.com/feweekpodcast.



Make a connection; join the conversation

NCFE, one of the UK's largest qualification providers, is having more conversations than ever before through social media. NCFE's PR Officer, Lindsay Plumptre, explains...



At NCFE, we're proud to be recognised for our friendly approach and unique culture. Social media allows us to be responsive and connect in an immediate way with students, teachers, employers and educational establishments.

Alongside our main website, digital platforms such as Twitter and LinkedIn help us to engage with our stakeholders, as and when we need to, throughout the day.

This year, we ventured further into the world of social media by introducing the NCFE Blog, offering points of discussion on relevant educational news topics, with monthly guest columns from Chief Executive David Grailley.

The Blog allows us to tap into relevant discussions for our audience and offer our viewpoint as well as gaining insight from others.

After all, social media is a 2-way conversation and to be a good conversationalist, you need to listen as well as speak!

Social media is also a positive outlet for our personality, allowing us to showcase our company culture and give an insight into 'planet NCFE'.

For every comment on a hot educational news story and for every piece of information about a new qualification, we'll tell our followers about a random

Mexican wave in the office or tweet a picture of us wearing double denim for charity!

Last Christmas, for our festive customer message, we recorded a video of staff singing 'Santa Clause is coming to town' dressed in an array of cheesy Christmas jumpers.

We uploaded the video to our YouTube channel NCFE TV, and spread the message through social media. The response from customers was fantastic, who told us that the short film had made them smile.

"Social media is a 2-way conversation – you need to listen as well as speak!"

With this in mind, it's important to remember that social media can be fun as well as functional; it's not just another business tool. Used in a relevant context, humour is a great way for us to build a rapport with our customers.

Because yes, we're absolutely focused on exceeding your expectations through

our superior level of service. But we're also all about eating cakes for breakfast (because it's Monday!); speaking like a pirate in the office (because it's fun!); and fundraising for charity (because we care).

We share these experiences with customers when they come to visit us in head office - so why not share via social media? After all, it's natural that people want to work with like-minded individuals, rather than a faceless organisation. Social media allows us to become human; to demonstrate NCFE's character and to let people know what makes us tick.

The education sector is an exciting and fast-moving environment to work in, and we don't want to be a wall flower. We want to participate, lead the way and make our voice heard!

The digital world has the power to thrive, despite the current economic difficulties and recent recession. It's therefore vital that we evolve alongside it and demonstrate flexibility and innovation.

We'll continue to do this in 2013, (for example with the launch of our Apprenticeship Finder service later this year), and we look forward to finding new ways to connect with our customers and others within the industry.

Follow NCFE on Twitter via @NCFE
Subscribe to NCFE's Blog through blog.ncfe.org.uk



National Awarding Organisation, NCFE, is passionate about designing, developing and certificating diverse, nationally recognised qualifications and awards.

We've got lots to say and we want you to join the conversation:
Follow us on Twitter: **@NCFE**
Subscribe to our Blog: **blog.ncfe.org.uk**

Last year alone, **over 400,000 learners** from **over 2,000 colleges, schools and training organisations** chose NCFE as the awarding organisation to help them move their careers forward.

Dynamic and responsive with a buzz that sets us apart, NCFE is proud to be recognised for our exceptional customer service and friendly approach.

Our product portfolio is made up of:

- Apprenticeships**
- Progression to Apprenticeships**
- Foundation Learning qualifications**
- Functional Skills**
- Induction and Enrichment qualifications**
- Accreditation Services**
- Qualifications that fit within the 16-19 Study Programme**

Visit us at www.ncfe.org.uk and use our qualification finder to view all of the qualifications that we offer, or call us on 0191 239 8000.