



Guide to Tweeting Professionally

Social media are technologies that facilitate interactions between users through internet-based platforms. Specifically, [Twitter](#) is a worldwide, public platform open to anyone. It is made up of **Tweets**, which are short messages (maximum length 280 characters) that can include links or other media such as images and videos. The use of social media, such as Twitter, has been growing. Below we provide a set of tips to help physicians who are newer to the platform navigate safely.

Professionalism

1. This is a public realm for anyone to see, your public account is a reflection of yourself as a professional. **Maintain professionalism, always.**
2. Your interactions represent the University of Toronto Department of Anesthesiology and Pain Medicine.
3. **Never post patient-identifying information**, including any details or photos in interesting cases that could allow the patient to identify themselves. Consider changing identifying information to anonymize your post. If you do have permission from patients to post to a public forum, it would be prudent to include that explicitly within your post. Post the clinical pearl, not the patient!
4. Do not tweet emotionally.
5. Re-read your tweets before posting.
6. Be as accurate as possible. Consider including quotes or citing the reference or author's handle to add credibility.
7. Do not tweet or interact in a manner that could create perceived conflicts of interest.
8. Any interactions with patients must be within appropriate physician-patient boundaries and there should not be any public discussion of the patient's medical care.

Your Account

1. Make it obvious you are posting as a physician, make sure everything appears professional and credible.
2. Use your real name, and add an indicator of your status (i.e. Dr, MD, etc.).
3. Choose a professional twitter **handle**; most people use their name (i.e @DrJaneDoe). This can be changed at any time.
4. Add your own photo (this improves credibility and engagement).
5. Add a header photo (the larger image on top), make sure it is high quality.
6. Add a concise profile biography, including words or phrases that indicate any professional titles or are relevant to your interests; consider including twitter **handles** or links.
7. Consider adding a disclaimer to your bio (although this does not guarantee legal protections of your posts), for example "RT are not endorsements. Opinions are my own."

Maximizing Your Audience

1. Be engaging, monitor your account, respond to people responding to your tweets.
2. Include an image whenever possible.
3. Include a link whenever possible.
4. Use **hashtags** (see definition below).
5. If there are people you think would be interested or should be in the know, tag them by including their **handle** (for example **@UofTanesthesia**).
6. Tweet regularly, ideally once a day or once a week, but only with valuable content. Do not tweet just for the sake of generating tweets.



7. Follow as many people or organizations as you can, especially those relevant to your practice or areas of interest. This will ensure you are contributing to conversations where you are an expert and have significant insight.

Glossary

1. **Tweet:** a post that can include text, links, or other media (images or videos) limited in length to 280 characters.
2. **Handle (@):** essentially a username. Every account has a unique handle, which is a single string of text starting with the @ symbol with no spaces. These can be included in tweets to mention specific accounts or people that might have an interest in the topic you are discussing. Using these will alert that account that you have mentioned them.
3. **Hashtag (#):** essentially a label. It is a word or phrase (without spaces) beginning with the # symbol that can be clicked or used to search for any tweet mentioning that hashtag.
4. **Retweet (RT):** a way to react to a tweet that essentially re-posts someone else's tweet to your timeline to share it and ensure credit is given to the original poster.
5. **Like:** a way to react to a tweet that will not show up to your main timeline, but shows you support the message. A "RT" is a stronger endorsement than a "Like".
6. **Direct Message (DM):** a private message to another Twitter user.
7. **Feed:** a list of the tweets you see on your homepage.
8. **Follow:** when you follow an account, it simply means you are subscribing to Twitter activity of that account. This activity (such as Tweets and Likes) will show up on your feed.

Additional Resources

1. **CMPA:** Top 10 tips for using social media in professional practice - <https://www.cmpa-acpm.ca/en/advice-publications/browse-articles/2014/top-10-tips-for-using-social-media-in-professional-practice>
2. **CPSO:** SOCIAL MEDIA — APPROPRIATE USE BY PHYSICIANS - <https://www.cpso.on.ca/Physicians/Policies-Guidance/Statements-Positions/Social-Media-Appropriate-Use-by-Physicians>
3. **CMA:** Social media and Canadian physicians: Issues and rules of engagement <https://policybase.cma.ca/documents/policypdf/PD12-03.pdf>

Credits and Contact

This guide was written by **Dr. Nan Gai (@nanesthetist)**, with contributions from **Dr. Fiona Campbell (@DrFCampbell)** and the **Social Media Committee - Dr. Pablo Perez D'Empaire (@pperezde)**, **Dr. Mandeep Singh (@MndpSingh7)**, **Dr. Richard Ahn**, **Dr. Sanjho Srikandarajah (@DrSanjhoSri)**, and **Ms. Pilar Barrios**. If you are looking for accounts to follow, please check out one of ours listed here, as well as the departmental Twitter account [@UofTanesthesia](https://twitter.com/UofTanesthesia) to get started. There are many more colleagues from across the city on Twitter!

If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact us at communications.anesthesia@utoronto.ca.

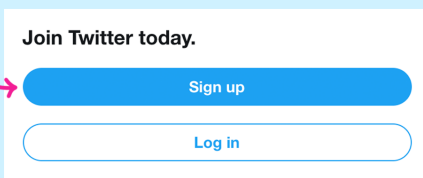


If you do not have a Twitter account and would like to create one, follow these steps below:

CREATE YOUR TWITTER ACCOUNT

1. Go to twitter.com via your internet browser

2. Find the Sign Up button



3. Enter your name (a twitter handle will be generated)

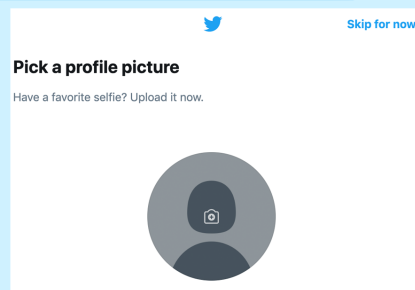
For tweeting professionally and to build your brand it is best to use your full name
Many physicians denote this as well with "Dr." or their credentials
This can be changed later

Then Verify and Create your account and Choose a Password

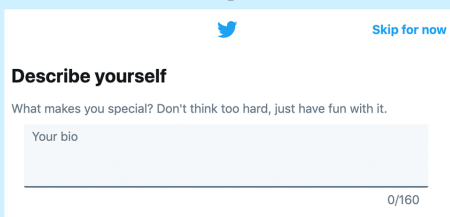
4. Upload a profile picture

This can be changed later by clicking "Skip for now"

It is recommended to upload a photo of yourself as helps people feel more connected and that there is a "real" person behind the posts

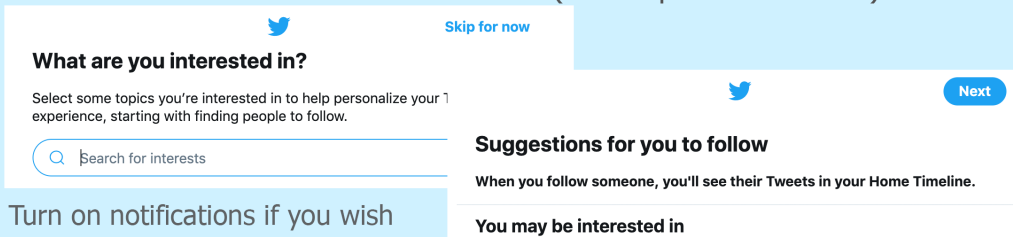


5. Write a short profile bio



Include some key words or a brief summary of your interests
Often people indicate their specialty and where they work
160 characters max

6. Pick some interests and followers (can skip and add later)



Turn on notifications if you wish

7. Start Tweeting!



Click this icon on your bottom left sidebar to start writing your first tweet!