

Advanced Twitter



It has been a few years since my post on 'Twitter for urologists' was published in *Urology News* [1]. Given the continued rise of the platform, I thought it was time to revisit and expand on Twitter's functionality. In this review, I will attempt to expand your use of Twitter and explain how to make your Twitter time more relevant, and to boost and track your social media influence.

Twitter provides many advantages in the information age. Fundamentally, it allows access to a community who can narrow down the information needed to stay current. It enables individuals to have a voice within their community, whether it is on literature reviews (International Urology Journal Club @iurojc) or as an independent view on national issues such as the UK junior doctors' strike.

If you are new to using Twitter, please first read my previous guide to using Twitter [1], establish a Twitter profile, and read some guidelines on the safe and appropriate social media use for urologists [2-5]. Since 2013, Twitter has undergone many changes including adding Highlights, a Night Mode, and displaying videos and live feeds. However, the most useful feature is probably Lists.

Lists

Lists are curated groups of Twitter accounts. You can create a list of people by going to the gear icon drop-down menu, or by clicking Lists on your profile page, then click Create List, name the List and provide a description, designate the List as private or public and finally save the List.

Lists provide an easier way to engage a particular group of people and follow a conversation or series of topics e.g. you can create an UK endourology list, pelvic oncology list or just the most active Twitter users lists that you happen to follow. You can also be added to other users' lists or follow lists already created by other twitter users.

Tweetdeck

Tweetdeck's tag line is "tweet like a pro". Tweetdeck [6] allows users to follow and engage across multiple twitter accounts, follow certain hashtags, users or lists. In essence, it is a 'souped' up version of the twitter app, and the initial software was so good that Twitter bought the Tweetdeck company. If you run it on a laptop you can

display multiple feeds and organise these feeds in whichever way you choose. This can be a great way of seeing the latest developments at a conference by simply following the hashtag of the conference e.g. #BAUS17. Tweetdeck is available as an app on iOS and OSX (App Store), and the Twitter app is available on Windows computers. You can also run Tweetdeck through the web version of the software.

The science of popularity

If your goal is to accrue as many followers as Kim Kardashian (@KimKardashian, 48 Million followers) or Dr Ben Davies (@daviesbj, 3520 followers), there are ways to maximise your exposure on twitter, without resorting to "breaking the internet".

To increase your influence you can use tools such as **Tweriod** [7] to work out when most of your followers are active. A social media scheduling app, such as **Buffer** [8], will then allow you to schedule your posts to the set period when your followers are most active. This allows the optimal period for your tweet to be read and reposted and for your notoriety to prosper in the twittersphere.

Socialrank [9] allows you to find the most influential people within your network, and can give additional information such as the most engaged, most valuable and best followers. Once you have put all of this new information to work, you can track your growing influence using **Klout** [10]. Your Klout score tracks your social media influence using the amount of engagement with your social media accounts such as Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Twitter.

If all this new found knowledge sounds a bit tortuous, you can just try and make sure to use hashtags when you tweet and reply directly to users e.g. @urosurg. Following people is a good way to get lots of users to follow you back, especially if you identify yourself within your profile. Additionally, adding images to tweets increases the chances of your tweet being clicked on or reposted.

Get a spare battery

All of this tweeting tends to drain smartphone batteries, and carrying a spare portable battery charger is a useful addition to any conference bag.

Clearly, this is not an exhaustive list of tips, tricks or features. If you have any other suggestions please get in touch using the hashtag #advttwt or tweet me @urosurg.

References and links

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