Using Twitter as a Powerful Social Medium

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What is Twitter?

Definition:

A microblogging system that lets a person send brief text messages up to 140 characters in length to a list of followers.

Source: Twitter.com
Limited to 140 character updates

Twitter is a scrolling series of headlines.
Twitter Statistics

There are 500 million users in 2012.
There are 340 million tweets sent daily.

Brief History of Twitter

Launched in July 2006 by Jack Dorsey, an employee of then podcasting company Odeo which specialized in RSS directory content.
Dorsey’s Original Sketch for Twitter
A Quick Twitter Vocabulary Review
What is a Hashtag?

Isn’t it just a pound sign? Not on Twitter!

A hashtag is a search meant to label a topic or filter a conversation.

#WLA, #MilwaukeePubLib, #ALA
Hashtag How To’s

• Using hashtags correctly:
• If you Tweet with a hashtag on a public account, anyone who does a search for that hashtag may find your Tweet.
• Don't #spam #with #hashtags. Don't over-tag a single Tweet. (Best Practices :recommend using no more than 2 hashtags per Tweet.)
• Use hashtags only on Tweets relevant to the topic.

From Twitter.com
The @ sign in Twitter
Why Use Twitter at your Library?

Connect with patrons who don’t visit the library.
Broadcast real time library updates.
Succinct communication.
Network with other community tweeters.
Tweet about Programs!

Stuff Animal Sleepover @ Bay View Library

Last week, staff at Bay View Library let kids keep their stuffed animals at the library for a sleepover. Pictures were taken of the animals (with model releases signed of course) engaged in various activities. Memory books were made for the kids to keep with the pictures.
Tweet and be Retweeted!
Tweet about special collections.
Excellent for Time Sensitive Posts.
Encourages Real Time Conversation!
Encourages Transparency and Trust

Keeps the library relevant in the digisphere and on people’s minds.
Tips for Effective Tweeting

• Time your tweets for maximum effectiveness.
• Hootsuite, Tweetdeck useful for setting up timed Tweets.
• Do not bombard your followers with Tweets.
Twitter Clients

• Hootsuite
• Tweetdeck
• Twitpic
Hootsuite

• Most popular of the Twitter dashboard clients.
  - Manage multiple social media accounts.
  - Assign work teams to Twitter account.
  - Schedule Tweets ahead of time.
  - Automatically converts content into Twitter format using owl.ly extension
  - Tracks statistics
  - Fee based but basic account free
Tracking your Twitter Activity

Tweets stay on Twitter an average of 4 days. Twitter soon to make archiving available.

Twitter Client such as HootSuite keeps Tweets longer
Measuring Usage
Humanize Your Library’s Voice

Followers need to have the sense that a person is conversing with them.
The best person to tweet for your library may not be a librarian -
- Assign staff who already enjoy social media.
- Are conversational and convey warmth
- Has a sense of humor and will interact well with a wide variety of followers.
Spotlight Important Library Weeks

Examples:
Teen Tech Week – in March
National Library Week – in April
Banned Books Week – in October
Eschew Library Jargon.

Bad example: “Use the RFID machines to check out current periodicals found in the reference section of the first floor.”

Good example: “Hey! Current mags now available for check out with a swipe of your library card!”
Talk about standard Library FAQ’S

How to apply for a library card.
How to reserve a meeting room.
How to download ebook/audiobook content.
Encourage the Good, the Bad and the Ugly!

Do not be afraid of negative comments. It’s all part of the conversation.

The good news:
most followers are very enthusiastic and supportive.
Leave Formality at the door, be casual in tone.

Do: “Hey, it’s so hot outside – that we’re staying open so you can avoid melting into the sidewalk.”

Don’t: “The library is open for extended hours due to the heat advisory.”
Quickly respond to any interaction.

Even 24 hours is a lifetime in the social media realm!
Ideas for Twitter Posts

Share reminders about civic services:
Examples:
Where to vote.
Property tax bills released today.
Municipal Trick or Treat schedule.
Tweet about

- Library Programs
- Digital Collections
- Super Readers!
- Databases
- Old Library Photos
- Exhibits
Contests and Giveaways

Ex: The first five correct responses will win a set of tickets to the Milwaukee Film Festival!
MKE CC Oct 11, 2:47pm via Web MKE residents may register to vote at City Hall or any @MilwaukeePubLib until Wednesday, October 17 - call 286-3491 for add'l voter info
More ways to engage followers:

Author Birthdays-
Favorite library quotes –
“Outside of a dog, a book is man's best friend. Inside of a dog it's too dark to read. **Groucho Marx**

*US comedian with Marx Brothers (1890 - 1977)***
A program attendee provided the perfect re-tweet opportunity!

MidwestPhoto 2:28pm via TweetCaster for Android

Quoting another book, Kevin said: "I am built by books." (Kevin Henkes at @MilwaukeePubLib)  
cc: @neilhimself
Thank you for attending this session.