

Still Resisting Twitter?

By Glenna Herald



It's been a little over a year since we last used this forum to discuss Twitter, the microblogging site. Then, we examined how Twitter could negatively influence court proceedings. Now, I will offer some suggestions on how to use Twitter to market your business.

To set up an account you need only an internet connection and/or a wireless mobile device, like an iPhone. Visit Twitter, choose a username and a password and answer the question, "What are you doing?" To make the most of this service, invite business associates to open Twitter accounts. Make sure to "follow" them, as well as your favorite news outlets, blogs and organizations.

Be prepared, however, for uninvited Twitter-ers to pop into the scene. At times, depending on the content of your updates, some strange "followers" might connect to your Twitter profile. Fear not, you can block them. And, if these intrusions become bothersome, Twitter gives you the option to "protect" your updates by keeping them hidden from the public timeline, which means only those who "follow" you can view your posts.

Currently, Twitter is in the process of enhancing its user interface. The changes include a streamlined view on the left of the screen and easier access to embedded photos and videos. This new eye candy allows users to jazz up their tweets a bit. In addition, when clicking on a "tweet" the details pane will share more information related to the author or subject.

For more information about Twitter and its new design, visit the *About Twitter* page at: <http://twitter.com/about>.

Twittering for Lawyers

Only 4 percent of attorneys surveyed use Twitter, according to the 2009 ABA Legal Technology Survey Report.¹ Why don't more use this effective, no-cost service to build and strengthen professional connections? Some speculate that those who overlook Twitter's potential could be unimaginative.

Kevin Quinlan, the law firm marketing dude, offers some compelling reasons why attorneys should board the Twitter train. He points out that many govern-

ment agencies are now using Twitter to alert the public to breaking news. He suggests that attorneys should take advantage of this function to become experts in their fields, by being the first to know when quality information that affects them is released.²

To find out which government agencies currently use Twitter, visit Govtwit. GovTwit claims to be the largest directory of government agencies on Twitter. It lists state and local, federal, contractors, media, academics, non-profits and

What is Twitter?

Twitter, according to its website, "Is a real-time short messaging service that works over multiple networks and devices . . . A service for friends, family, and co-workers to communicate and stay connected through the exchange of quick, frequent answers to one simple question: *What are you doing?*"

"What are you doing?" must be answered in 140 characters or less. These short updates, called "tweets," post to your Twitter profile allowing your "followers" to keep up with you.

"Followers" populate Twitter. What is a "follower?" What does it mean to "follow" and be "followed?" Twitter's Help Resources page explains:

Followers are people who receive other peoples' Twitter updates. When you post an update to your Twitter account, your followers will get it on their home page and/or phone. You don't have to follow everyone who follows you, and unless an account is private, you can follow and un-follow whoever you want without them following back. Mutual followers can send each other private messages, and you can even choose to get notified by email when someone new follows you or sends you a private message. Your follower/following stats are listed on your profile page.


In other words, were it not for the congregation or "followers," there would be no church or Twitter.

governments outside of the U.S. To find out more about Govtwit, visit www.blog.govtwit.com.

In addition to keeping attorneys in the know, Twitter can also help solos and firms increase their visibility and credibility to potential clients. The key to making this work, according to The Inspired Solo, is to be selective about posting. Limit your tweets to the useful and interesting. The more useful and interesting you are, the more likely people will follow you, expanding your circle of influence.³

In addition to attracting clients, Twitter allows users to track trends. "Pick the right mix of people to follow and you'll get smarter, not just about your own profession but about your clients, their problems, the solutions that exist for them, self-improvement, productivity, time management, and life in general," says the Inspired Solo on the web.

Whether or not attorneys are ready to capitalize on Twitter, and like services, the social media revolution has reached the legal profession. In order to thrive, practitioners will need to consider innovative and imaginative ways to nurture their online personas.

"The bottom line is that there is no right way for a lawyer or law firm to use social media effectively. It's not a one size fits all approach, nor is it possible to throw together quickly a compelling social media presence," according to Nicole Black, author of *Social Media for Lawyers, the Next Frontier*.⁴ 

Herald, though not a social-media-user herself, continues to be fascinated by the phenomenon.

- 1 Catherine Sanders Reach, A Guided Tour of Social Media, ABA Legal Technology Resource Center: www.abanet.org/legalservices/lpl/downloads/a_guided_tour_of_social_media.pdf.
- 2 Marketing Dude Kevin Quinlan, Top Reasons to Tweet, June 11, 2010, www.wiredprnews.com/2010/06/11/law-firm-twitter-marketing-form-firm-cepac-shares-top-reasons-to-tweet_2010061111827.html.
- 3 The Inspired Solo, What's the Point of Using Twitter Anyway, Oct. 18, 2010, www.theinspiredsolo.com/twitter/101-whats-the-point-of-using-twitter-anyway/trackback/
- 4 Nicole Black, Different Strokes for Different Folks, Daily Record, June 6, 2010.



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