

Twitter Cheat Sheet

*Everything you need to know about
using Twitter to market your
writing
(in a classy way!)*



Laura Pepper Wu

by 30 Day Books.com



Twitter Cheat Sheet for indie authors

Hi! Laura from 30 Day Books here. I hope this cheat sheet helps you to make more sense of the Twitterverse :) It's a confusing place, but well worth taking the time to figure it out.

Enjoy!

- Laura



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Psst... Want to know a secret?

No one "gets" Twitter in the beginning. It's very rare that someone takes to it like a duck to water. Rather, there seems to be an 'aha' moment where you suddenly get what it's all about and understand the value and huge potential of this strange thing. Keep that in mind - that no-one understands it at first, and remember that we all started at zero. Like anything it's all about trial and error but I firmly believe that if you use it right, Twitter can be a vital key to your book marketing strategy. Here are some tips to help you reach that point a little faster!

How I use Twitter for my book marketing:



In the beginning, while I enjoyed connecting with a few famous people on Twitter (I was so excited when I received a message from Jamie Oliver!), I couldn't quite grasp how Twitter could help me promote my writing. I certainly wasn't convinced that Jamie wanted to help me promote my books. I had this nagging feeling that though it was fun, I might just be wasting my time.

But at some point it started making sense to me. This got me wondering, when was that point, and how can I explain this to the un-converted?

I believe that Twitter started making sense – and becoming valuable to me – when I wrapped my head around the fact that Twitter is just another place to have a conversation that you would anywhere else on earth. It's just an unfamiliar place, at least in the beginning, and that's the problem for most people. We're not quite used to having conversations in exchanges of just a few words, and oh-so publicly.

But once you envision Twitter as the coffee shop, or outside your kid's school, or in the University cafeteria, or [insert other public place where it's acceptable to talk to strangers here], you will start to use it in the way it's meant to be used, and in a way that works.

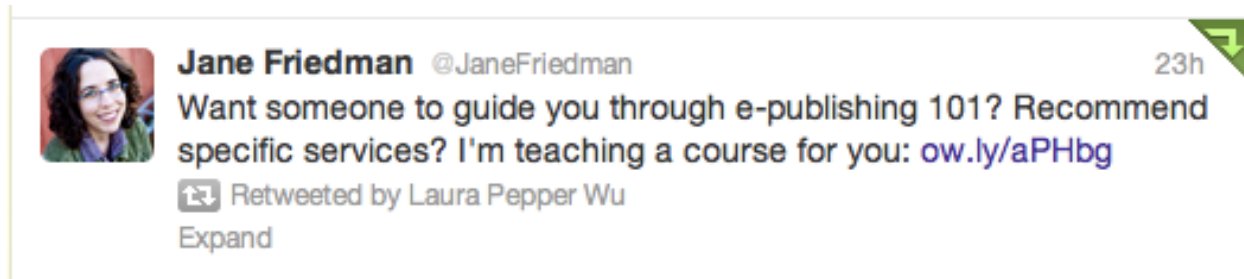
Much like if I were in a public place where it was acceptable to have chit-chat, I started replying to people's queries and questions, asking my own questions, sharing (re-tweeting) interesting news or announcements,



mentioning articles that I thought contained really valuable advice and so on. I wasn't forcing anything, rather I was building valuable relationships with people who were interested in my books and, as a result were willing to help me spread the word about my books.

Let me jump over to my Twitter stream and show you some ways in which I use Twitter now (oh so different to those early days!), and hopefully it will begin to make more sense to you too:

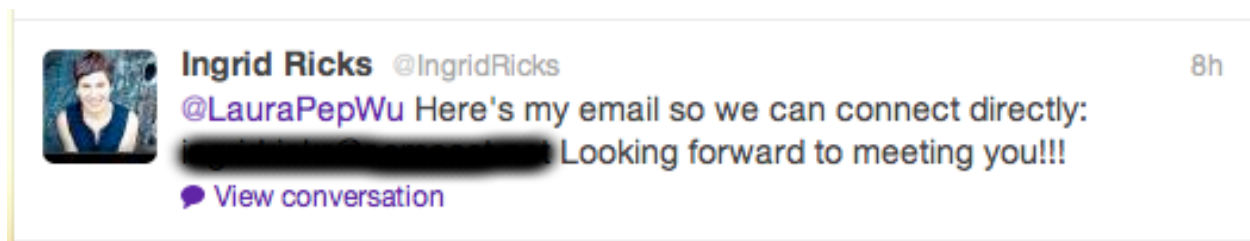
1. I share the word about a course that I believe will bring real value to people, because I highly respect the teacher of it (Jane Friedman):



2. I ask people for a small favor in a friendly, conversational way:



3. I make connections with other local authors online, so we can meet offline:



And here is how people interact with me in turn:

4. They share articles I have written because they think it provides value. Twitter is the #1 source of traffic to my website, so it definitely helps spread my reach.



5. People thank me for sharing their links, too.



Twitter helps increase your exposure, your access to resources, and it broadens and strengthens your network. All of these lead to more opportunities to sell your books - it might not be a direct connection, but that's the beauty of it.

You aren't directly trying to sell anything on Twitter - instead, think of Twitter as a great way to expand your network, communicate with more people, and get access to important news and advice in your given field. By forging relationships, supporting your peer in abundance you will in turn start gaining traction. . really fun! ;)

Next up, some Twitter-specific terms you'll need to know:





- A Tweet— a text-based messages of up to 140 characters (including letters, symbols, words, spaces, & punctuation.)
- @—a way of referring to another user by adding their username (@LauraPepWu)
- Twitter Feed— a running list of tweets from the users you follow
- RT—A Retweet (when you share the tweet of one user with all of your Twitter followers)
- MT—a retweet that’s been modified or changed in some way (Modified Tweet)
- Reply—when you respond to user (use their Twitter handle / username to do this)
- DM—Direct Message— The ability to ‘inbox’ message someone a private message. You can only DM someone who is following you back.
- Hashtags—A hashtag (#) is a word or phrase preceded by a “#.” You can add a hashtag to any tweet.

Read on to find out how and why to use hashtags!



Hashtags are important in the vast Twitter sea because they make your tweets more visible. How? They help categorize the onslaught of messages being pumped out by acting as searchable tags and keywords.

You can make one up, OR (highly recommended!) you can use one that's already out "there".

Tip! Be sure not to include any spaces anywhere otherwise the hashtag won't work. For example #bookmarketing does not work if you type #book marketing or # bookmarketing.

In a nutshell: More #'s = Increased connection by plugging into conversations already happening on your topic, with people that you most probably want to network with/ your target audience.

When you use a hashtag, that phrase becomes a link and is searchable by other users. By using a third party software (such as Hootsuite or Tweetdeck) OR by going to <http://twitter.com/#!/search/>, then you can then keep track of all the conversations happening with this particular hashtag. Here's an example – It's Mother's Day, at least here in the US. So if I want to join the Mother's Day conversation, I would say something and then add #HappyMothersDay to the end of it.



Laura Pepper Wu @LauraPepWu

18s

A cute tale about writing and balancing twins from the #LWCritique blog! bit.ly/KDXtQZ #HappyMothersDay to all the writing Mamas!

Expand



And here is what the column of tweets using this hashtag looks like. Suddenly I'm thrown into a conversation with everyone talking about Mother's Day!

A screenshot of a Twitter search results page for the hashtag #HappyMothersDay. The interface shows a dark header with the Twitter bird logo, the search term '#HappyMothersDay', and navigation icons. Below the header, there are six tweets, each with a profile picture, name, handle, time, text, and an 'Expand' link.

Expand

Penny Chic @PennyChic 23s
Here's a pic from mother's day 4 years ago in NYC. What are you doing for #mothersday today? #happymothersday
pennychic.com/happy-mothers-...
Expand

Laura Pepper Wu @LauraPepWu 58s
A cute tale about writing and balancing twins from the #LWCritique blog! bit.ly/KDXtQZ #HappyMothersDay to all the writing Mamas!
Expand

Guido/Chris/AmoreOne @Guido_Corleone 1m
MY MOTHER - I ALWAYS LOVE HER - SO TREAT YOUR MOTHER RIGHT!: youtube.com/watch?v=tFNJLs... FROM ME AND MR. T!
#HAPPYMOTHERSDAY
[View video](#)

Chely Alvarez @Chely_xoxo 1m
I love you mom, thank you for everything mwaaa
#HappyMothersDay pic.twitter.com/4bR30cFx
[View photo](#)

Chon Reneé™ @LifeAsChonRenee 2m
Compilation of my Full Course Five Star Dinner made especially for my grandmother & mommy. #HappyMothersDay
instagr.am/p/KIhmzuKLXD/
[View photo](#)



As for the best hashtags for writing and authors, you shouldn't have to guess or make them up. I recommend using common ones otherwise your message won't travel as far as no-one will be tracking them. There are already several hashtags that you can use to connect with fellow writers or readers. Here's a nifty list:

Top Twitter Hashtags for Writers & Authors:

#amwriting and #amediting – I've heard these particular hashtags referred to as a virtual "watercooler for writers" and I couldn't agree more! Highly used and shared, these are a must for writers. Both are Twitter "chat" hashtags that anyone can join at anytime and have become so popular, they've even spawned a web community over at www.amwriting.org.

#ww / #writerwednesday – I like this one because it really helps authors/writers promote their work as well as giving shout-outs to fellow writers.

#writetip / #writingtip – Need some help with your writing? These are resourceful hashtags offering plenty of tips and tricks – perfect for novice and aspiring writers.

#writingprompt – We've all been stuck staring at a blank screen, unsure of what to write or how to get our creative juices flowing. #writingprompt offers tons of great writing prompts to help break your writer's block.



#bookgiveaway – I am a HUGE fan of book giveaways. #bookgiveaway is a great way to let people know you are running one and where they can find it.

#mywana – Based on the title for Kristen Lamb’s great book *We Are Not Alone!* #mywana is for all of Kristen’s followers, her Tribe, her community. Who really are an awesome, supportive bunch that you should join!

#indie – Indie authors are often supportive of each other, so it’s a good one to use.

#selfpub – Great for self publishing tips, news, advice.

#fridayreads – This is to let people know what book you are currently reading. A great opportunity to support your fellow authors on Twitter and get the word out about their books.

#nanowrimo – The hashtag for National Novel Writing Month which takes place every November.

#samplesunday – A chance for writers to link to an excerpt from their book or WIP

#teasertuesday – A favorite line or paragraph, or a link to a blogpost containing them, from your book or current manuscript.

9 Tips to making Twitter work for indie authors

1. You need to look presentable!



To get people to follow and want to interact with you in the first place, make sure your profile looks appealing. There are only a few things people see in order to make the split second decision of whether to talk to you and / or follow you or not. Keep this in mind:

- **Your profile pic** - so make sure it's professional. Ask yourself, would [insert best selling author here] be content with this image quality? Find a pic that looks good even at thumbnail. Make sure it's high res and not fuzzy.
- **Don't use a book cover.** Why? This is SOCIAL media, people want to connect with a face. Not a piece of paper, no matter how pretty it is.
- **Craft an intriguing bio.** Intriguing not boring. Add something unique about yourself along with the work/ professional stuff.
- **Include a working URL** (start it with http:// to make sure it is working), customize your background to reflect you and your genre, choose a professional username that is not your book title (you want to think long term not just one-title).
- **Choose an author name that you can use for life** and PUH-LEASE, no numbers or gimmicks!

Tips!

You can edit all of these things by going to the upper right hand corner of your Twitter page and clicking on settings → profile.

While it's by no means perfect, you can look at my Twitter profile here for some ideas: <http://twitter.com/#!/LauraPepWu>

If your name is taken, try adding 'writes, books, author' to your name. e.g. JohnDoe becomes JohnDoeWrites, JohnDoeBooks etc.



2. Don't let the Twitter-timesuck* get you

Like Facebook and email, Twitter CAN eat up way more of your time than it is worth. Time yourself and get off after 10 minutes. That's all you need once or twice a day in order to use it effectively.

*actual disease.

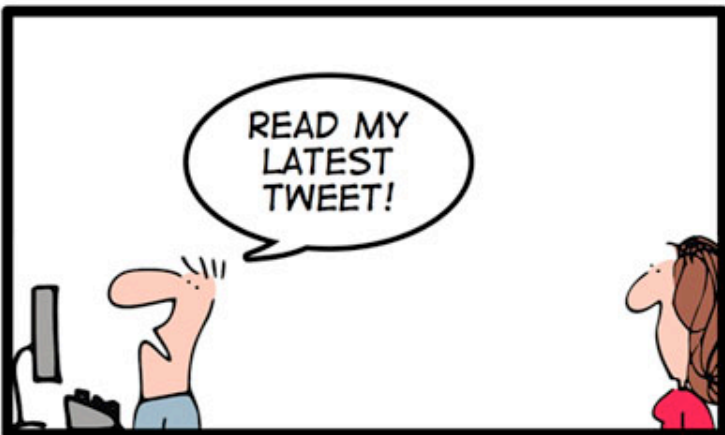
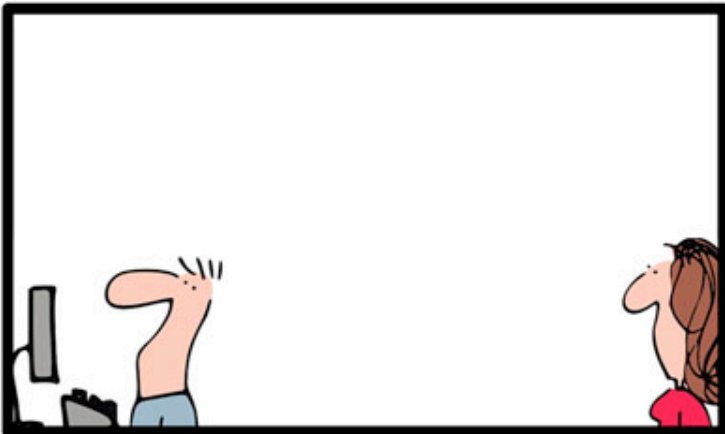
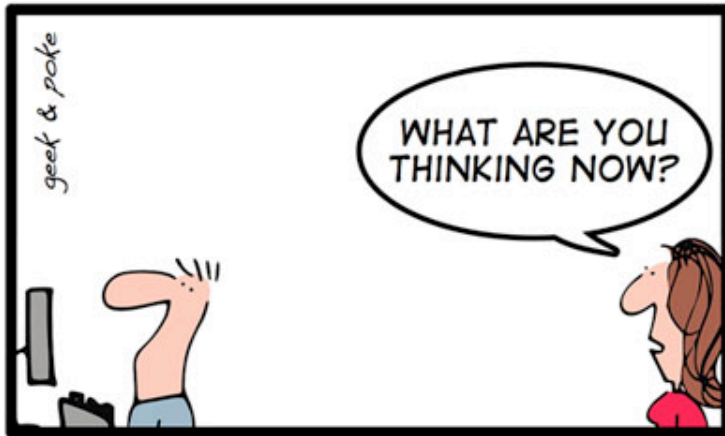
Tips!

- **3rd party applications** such as HootSuite & BufferApp can help you schedule Tweets in advance. Both have free basic membership options and allow you to schedule Tweets in advance to avoid having to jump onto Twitter several times a day.

- <https://hootsuite.com/>

- <http://bufferapp.com/>

- **Hootsuite** also allows you to easily track mentions of your name and book title – so that you can always stay involved in the conversation.



SOCIAL WEB

Image courtesy of <http://www.webdesignerdepot.com>

3. Set up your blog's RSS feed to Twitter



This allows you to post your blogposts to Twitter automatically – a nice time saver. <http://twitterfeed.com/> can do this for you.

4. Find relevant people to follow

There are some amazing people to follow on Twitter outside of Lady Gaga. (Did I just admit that out loud?)

- **Perform keyword searches** using the searchbar on Twitter. If people are tweeting about topics relevant to your book, then you might want to follow them.
- **Find authors similar to your book/ style** and follow people who follow them.
- **Twitter will start to recommend people** for you to follow on the right hand side of your profile (under 'Suggestions'). There will be four listed here, you can find more by clicking 'View All'.

Tips!

- Always be sure to check out users' bios as well as their timelines to see how often and *how* they use Twitter.
- Also check out their following : follower ratio, this will give you a good idea about their popularity and the quality of their Tweets!
- **Aim to follow 10-20** people a day.
- **If you want to follow people that you already know**, you can use Twitter's 'Friend Finder' to import contacts from your email or Facebook. Find the friend finder here: http://twitter.com/#!/who_to_follow/import



- **If people follow you, check first** that they aren't spambots or trying to sell you something. If it looks like the coast is clear and that they might actually be interested in the same things as you, go ahead and follow them back.

5. Use hashtags to your advantage

- **Use hashtags relevant to your topic** in every tweet. This will allow you to join in the conversation revolving around that topic and allow others who are tracking that topic to find you! Think of hashtags as a great way of categorizing and labeling the millions of Tweets that get sent everyday.

6. Work out what to Tweet about

Start dialogue, make jokes, act NORMAL. In short, act as if you would in a coffee shop or at a party. It's SOCIAL media, after all and you are just using Twitter as a vehicle to have a conversation you might have elsewhere. Here are some more ideas:

- **Link to your blogposts.**
- **Link to other blogposts/ articles in your field** that you have found to be interesting. Set up Google Alerts in order to find great content.
- **Re-tweet other appealing Tweets** from other users.
- **Interact with people!** Ask questions, and answer questions.

7. Work out what NOT to Tweet about



- **What you ate for lunch**, complaints about the weather/ feeling sick and totally mindless stuff is okay ONCE IN A WHILE, but don't make it the bulk of your tweets. Who want to hear that? Positivity is always in style :)
- **Show some personality** (hell yeah!) but DON'T get too political, religious or strong-minded. Unless that's your brand and style of writing, of course.

Tip!

Ask yourself: "Is this clever, funny or providing value for my followers?" If the answer is no, go post it on Facebook instead :)

8. Find a good balance of how often to Tweet

- **For me this is 1-3 times a day**, 5 times max. I send out a mix of links, personal tweets, replies and retweets.
- **Avoid just retweeting, or only tweeting links.** Spread your tweets out! (see no.2 for this)

9. Wrap your head around the golden rule of Twitter

The number one thing to remember with *any* social media is that this online world is intended to replicate real life.



It's the virtual coffee shop, or dinner party. Therefore, whenever you send out a message on Twitter, Facebook or GoodReads, ***ask yourself whether you would behave like this in the real world.*** Try to be real. Make conversation with people; ask questions, reply to questions, start interesting topics, compliment others' achievements.

Engage with people and you'll start to build relationships. Focus on quality over quantity – it's the small things that can payoff bigger later.

When people are listening to you, then you can start talking about your book, or promoting your site **once in a while.**

But don't use Twitter for that reason. If you follow this simple rule then you have mastered social media: something 90% of people on Twitter will never do. Congrats!

Talk to you soon!



Laura

Laura Pepper Wu, Founder of 30 Day Books and The Write Life Magazine



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