

A teachers' guide to Twitter

"Do you think you could teach a lesson to your class using only 140 characters and then have your class teach the world? Welcome to Twitter!"

Those two sentences above come to 140 characters, the length of a message sent using the online social network, Twitter. A message sent this way is called a tweet: a cute name for something that's not just a simple idea but is also a powerful tool for teachers.

Teachers are using Twitter as part of their professional learning network. With a Twitter account, teachers are finding and following other teachers and sharing their ideas to help improve their teaching.

A short guide to Twitter

- A Twitter account is simple to set up at www.twitter.com
- Your username starts with the @ symbol.
- Always add a picture and brief information about yourself. This can encourage people to follow you.
- When setting up your account, you'll be prompted to search for other accounts you might want to follow, such as people, publications or an area of interest, e.g., education.
- Following someone on Twitter is as simple as clicking on the green 'Follow' button on their Twitter page.
- Some teachers have already set up lists on Twitter to make finding and following other teachers easier, for example: <https://twitter.com/#!/levdavidovic/teachers>

CPD for teachers on Twitter

One example of Twitter being used by teachers in a professional capacity is the weekly #edchatIE discussions. Every Monday, from 8.30-9.30pm, teachers use Twitter to discuss educational topics. The tweets in these discussions are kept together by using a hashtag. Hashtags start with the # symbol. This enables the

chat to be collated and made available to all at <http://delivr.com/1523l>

From Tweets to Treats

One Sligo school has been tweeting with a school in Indiana, USA, where they have shared their lessons, learning and hopes for 2011. But it hasn't all been virtual. Both classes decided to send each other some treats (sweets that each liked) to see what their fellow tweeps (people on Twitter) would think of them.



Useful links to help you use Twitter in your classroom

"Interesting Ways" to use Twitter in the classroom: <http://goo.gl/koqy3>

How to use Twitter in the classroom: <http://goo.gl/nlhpq>

The Ultimate Guide to using Twitter in Education: <http://goo.gl/WzPQp>

Useful Tweeps to follow:
[@ncteireland](https://twitter.com/ncteireland)
[@ScoilnetPrimary](https://twitter.com/ScoilnetPrimary)

You can read a copy of the tweets at this shortened url: <http://goo.gl/Otkjz>

Twitter Art Project 2011

Three tweeps collaborated in a week of activity based around art that was created digitally (@fboss, @simonmlewis and @seomraranga). The students created and posted their artworks online. Led by @Leo_the_V on Twitter, an art treasure hunt also ran, in which the clues were tweeted out to all the classes following him. They had to work out the answers to various art-related questions to claim pieces of a famous painting. Remember, your first tweet isn't necessarily the hardest – just introduce yourself to the world!

FRED BOSS (@fboss on Twitter), Project Officer, NCTE

Below: QR codes for the examples mentioned in this article



#edchatIE



From Tweets to Treats



Twitter Art Project

NCTE Online Courses

Responding to demand, the NCTE is now offering a shorter version of its highly successful online summer course, *Developing e-Learning in your School (Primary)*, during the school year. Enrolment is expected to open before Christmas for the

spring course, so please keep an eye on the NCTE website for details.

This course is suitable for all teachers in a school with intermediate level ICT skills, including the principal and ICT coordinating teacher. It is highly

interactive, with videos, templates and lots of practical examples. A Teaching Council Registration Number and a Scoilnet Account (username and password) are needed to enrol. The course is free of charge.

Other new short online courses on blogs, podcasts and wikis will also become available soon. Further information and enrolment details on all NCTE online courses are available at: www.ncte.ie/onlinecourses