Managing Your Twitter Stream

For the uninitiated, the speed at which information flows on Twitter can be overwhelming. Learn how to manage your Twitter stream.

Tools for organizing your Twitter community

Twitter from your iPhone

Managing multiple Twitter accounts

Managing Twitter on your desktop

Filtering your Twitter stream

Creating groups on Twitter

tweet this chapter

Tools for organizing your Twitter community

by Josh Catone

As Twitter surges toward an estimated 12 million registered users by year's end (though some new stats may disagree), some of us are starting to deal with what we recently dubbed "followholism." You've followed so many people, it's hard to keep up, and it's probably time to do a little housekeeping.

But where do you begin? Twitter's own tools for managing followers are subpar. It's nearly impossible to figure out who among your followers are following you back, and the interface for paging through followers is clumsy and difficult to use. Fortunately, Twitter's API has given rise to a vast universe of amazing third party apps. So we've assembled a toolkit below of 10 services that can help you take control of Twitter and organize your followers. If you know any other tools that would be helpful for organizing tweeps, add them in the comments.

Find Out Who You're Following

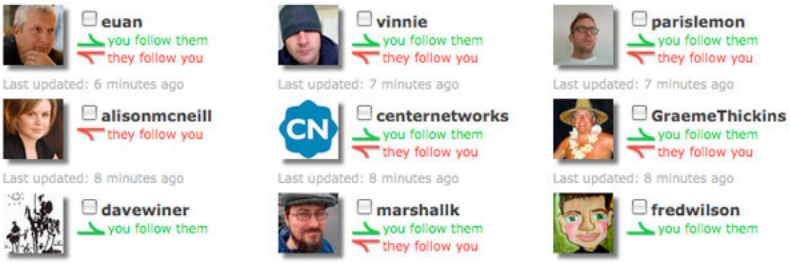
When I first joined Twitter, I started following people right out of the gate in order to get some utility out of the site — after all, the only way to join the conversation is to start following it. After I got used to Twitter, though, I had the urge to clean up my follow list. Eventually, I found that some of the people I had initially followed as a way to get into the community weren't necessarily people that I was interested in continuing to follow. Here are some tools to help you investigate your tweeps and make an informed decision about whether to keep following them.

1. Twitter Grader – Using a detailed 5 piece algorithm, Twitter Grader assigns every users you run through its system a grade from 1-100. Using this tool you can investigate how engaged the people you're following are and that can help you decide if you want to keep following them.

2. Twinfluence – Twinfluence is a scientific approach to measuring the influence of Twitter users. It's another set of metrics you can use to help you figure out who you want to follow.

3. Tweetcloud – One of the most important factors when deciding whether you want to follow a Twitter user is what sort of content they tweet about. If someone tweets mostly about topics you don't care about, they might not be the best person for you to follow. Tweetcloud creates a tag cloud of a person's tweets to give you a bird's eye view of the type of things they tweet about.

Find Your Friends



Not all relationships on Twitter are equal. Unlike many social networks, Twitter allows you to follow (most) people without their permission. There might be a bunch of people who are following you that you aren't following back, and likewise there are probably some people you're following who aren't reciprocating. That's not necessarily a bad thing — if their content is good, then you shouldn't worry about whether they follow you back. But knowing who your friends are is helpful when you're trying to organize your Twitter follows.

4. Twitter Karma – Twitter Karma is a great app that lets you sort through all of your follows and see who's not following you in return, who you have a mutual follow/follow-back relationship with, and who is following you that you're not following back.

5. Friend or Follow – Friend or Follow does essentially the same thing as Twitter Karma, helping you figure out who your friends, follows, and fans are on Twitter. The difference is in the presentation, and it might be a little easier to use for those with a large number of follows or followers.

6. Qwitter – Once you've done your initial cleaning, Qwitter is a nice app that will update you via email whenever someone stops following you. It will even let you know what you tweeted that caused them to stop following you, which could be useful (if you lose five followers every time you tweet about your cat, for example, that might be a hint to stop talking so much about your cat if you want to retain followers).

UPDATE: We've had some reports that Qwitter hasn't been as reliable lately as it had been in the past. An alternative service that also notifies you when you lose a follower is Twitterless. If you really want to keep on top of when your followers jump ship, it might be a good idea to sign up for both services to make sure you have all your bases covered.

Get Rid of Inactives

According to a recent study, 80% of Twitter users have less than 10 total tweets. That might not be a bad thing — some people might join Twitter specifically to follow others and track their updates. But inactive users might also not be the best people for you to follow. Here are two tools that can help you weed out the inactives.

7. Nest.Unclutterer – Nest.Unclutterer will automatically block Twitter users who are following more than a certain number of people or who have been inactive for a certain number of days. You can specify those thresholds and white list certain tweeps so that they are exempt from the cleaning. Nest.Unclutterer is actually less about who you're following, and more about making sure people following you are actually friends you want to be associated with.

8. Twitoria – Twitoria scans through your Twitter account and finds anyone who has been inactive for the past week, two weeks, month, two months, six months, or year.

Manage it All

Now that you've cleaned up your Twitter follow list, you'll want to keep on top of things from here on out. Here are two apps that will help you better manage new follows and followers.

9. TweetSum – TweetSum digests all your new followers, rates them using what they call the DBI ("Douche Bag Index"), a number that supposedly weeds out Twitter users likely to be annoying, and then lets you easily follow them back or categorize them as tweeps you don't want to follow. You can see a list of recent tweets for each new follower as well, which is helpful.

10. Tweepler – Tweepler is a new follower management application that lets you make quick, one click decisions about whether to follow people back or drop them into an ignore pile (out of sight, out of mind). In addition to being able to view recent tweets, Tweepler gives helpful stats about new followers, such as average tweets per day.

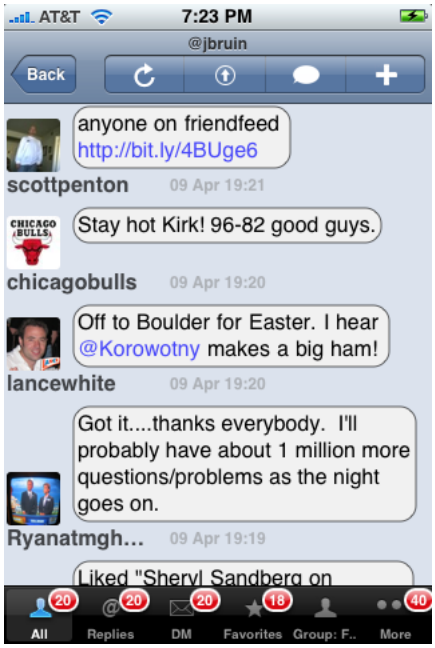
Twitter from your iPhone by Jennifer Van Grove

Remember the days when we could count iPhone apps for Twitter on one hand? Well, those days are long gone, and if you're having trouble keeping up with all the new additions, you're not alone.

Which apps are the real deal, worth the price, over-hyped, underrated, or just a plain waste of space? We'll break it down for you and showcase the best based on categories like pay to play, freebies, search and trends, one hit wonders, and multi-purpose. Keep reading to find out which apps are worthy of your attention.

Tell us what you think of the apps below in the comments.

Pay to Play



Tweetstack: Newcomer Tweetstack brings your TweetDeck columns to the iPhone. Tweetstack is also one of the most feature-rich Twitter clients we've seen, and we're all a-twitter about multiple accounts, retweets, extra search goodness, and custom tabs. The only thing bringing Tweetstack down is the incredibly lengthy load time for new tweets once you launch the app.

iTunes rating: 2.5 stars
Mashable rating: 3.5 stars

(Note: all ratings are based on a 5 point scale)

Tweetie: Not to be confused with impostors, Tweetie combines beauty, speed, and function in an im-

pressive option that will only set you back $2.99. The app supports multiple accounts, search, saved searches, retweets, user profiles, follow options, a landscape keyboard, Instapaper integration, conversation views, and flashy UI elements. It's the Twitterati's app of choice, and ours too.

iTunes rating: 4 stars
Mashable rating: 5 stars

Twitterville: Twitterville is not a bad little $1.99 Twitter app when it comes to viewing tweets, replies, DMs, favorites, and user profiles. You can even follow people right from the app, but without search or multiple account support, it can't live up to its better competitors.

iTunes rating: 2 stars
Mashable rating: 2.5 stars

TwitterView: This relatively new 99 cent app isn't the most feature-rich app, but it does provide a clean view of your twitter stream. If you're not following a ton of people, and you enjoy full-tweet content in landscape view, then you'll like the fact that with TwitterView you can flick through tweets in this fashion.

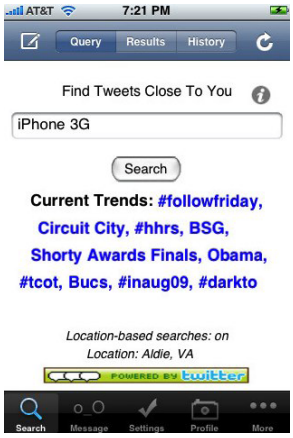
iTunes rating: not available
Mashable rating: 2.5 stars

Twiltr: Twiltr's main purpose is to allow you to filter your tweet stream. So even though you can't create groups, for $3.99 you can have a filtered view of tweets from the people you really want to follow, as well as save keyword filters (ie. searches).

iTunes rating: 3 stars
Mashable rating: 3.5 stars

iTweets: At the rate Twitter iPhone apps have evolved, we'd expect one with a price tag to be better than free alternatives, but that's not the case with iTweets. 99 cents gets you a single, custom color-coded view of your Twitter stream that's impossible to filter or manage. Sure you can shake to fetch tweets, but what good is it if your prettily colored @replys and direct messages fly by?

iTunes Rating: 2 stars
Mashable Rating: 1 star



Tweetion: Even though Tweetion does more than just search, the first screen you see is an unattractive view of current trends and the option to search for tweets nearby. True, you can view your full tweeting history, update Facebook with each tweet, and change your Twitter avatar, but at $4.99 your wallet and your eyes are better off if you take your business elsewhere.

iTunes rating: 2 stars
Mashable rating: 1 star

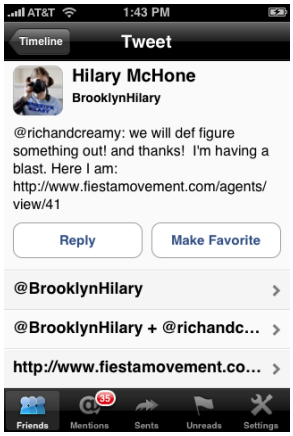
Tweetsville: Priced $1 higher than fan favorite Tweetie, Tweetsville falls about a buck short. There's no support for multiple accounts or location-based networking, but you can expect Twitter trends, advance search (this is cool), favorites, tweet history, unread direct message count, inline links, and navigation bar customization. Plus, since Tweetsville comes from Tapulous, you can expect a beautiful app, pleasant niceties (like iChat-style view), and plenty of functionality.

iTunes rating: 3 stars
Mashable rating: 3 stars

LaTwit: Combine a myriad of features, a strange UI, and $2.99 price tag, and you get LaTwit. Worthy of note is multiple account support, URL shorteners, Ping.fm posting, the ability to hide users, custom font sizes, and interchangeable tabs. If it weren't so buggy, we'd be much more enthusiastic about it.

iTunes rating: 3 stars
Mashable rating: 2.5 stars

Freebies



NatsuLion: Not a bad offering for a free app – NatsuLion's got all the basics covered – though we'd love to have the ability to add photos and retweet. One feature we love is the option to view our Twitter friends conversations.

iTunes rating: 3.5 stars
Mashable rating: 3.5 stars

Twittelator: This oldie but goodie was the first ad free iPhone app to manage replies, dms, and overall twitter streams in a way that worked for me. It's certainly managed to evolve with the times, changing both its look and feature set. It now includes search, bookmarks for tweets and searches, the ability to view friends of friends, and a page down button.

Need more? The $4.99 version is pricey, but includes Twitter trends, themes, threaded conversations, groups, and the ability to search nearby.

iTunes rating: 3 stars
Mashable rating: 4 stars

Twinkle: A former personal favorite, Twinkle still glitters with its prettiness and location-aware features, but has definitely lost its shine when it comes to necessary Twitter functions. We love the look and the landscape map mode, but our biggest problem is that processing replies is impossible since they're only included in the main stream.

iTunes rating: 3 stars
Mashable rating: 3.5 stars

Twitterific: Another standby Twitter app that's seen its feature set trumped by newcomers is Twitterific. The current version of the app still doesn't siphon replies and dms out of the main feed. There are some cute quirks we like including flicking through profiles, double tapping to change views, and left and right keys to navigate the in-app browser.

There may be some changes to the app soon, though. Twitterific has recently completed Twitterific 2.0, which fixes some of the problems stated above and adds even more features. It should be available to all next week.

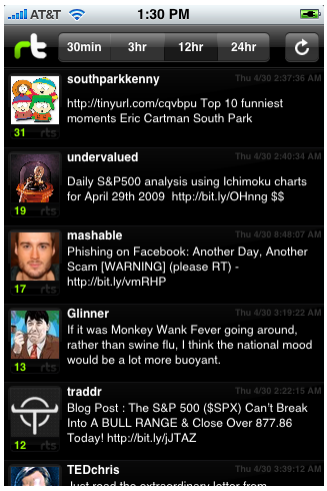
Don't overpay for the premium version, which costs $9.99 and comes ad-free and includes an extra theme.

iTunes rating: 3 stars
Mashable rating: 3 stars

Twitterfon: For a free app, Twitterfon comes pretty packed with goodies and rivals more than a few of its pricier alternatives. Search options allow for location-based search, Twitter trends, and saved queries as bookmarks. You even get user profiles, retweet options, hashtag recognition, an in-app browser, and a Twitter address book for adding usernames to tweets (we love this!).

iTunes rating: 3.5 stars
Mashable rating: 4.5 stars

Search and Trends



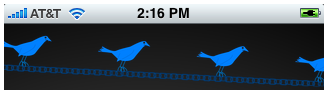
ReTweet: When retweets are all that matter, Retweet can you help view the most popular retweets over the past 30 minutes, 3, 12, or 24 hours.

iTunes rating: 3.5 stars
Mashable rating: 3 stars

Summizer: The free version of Summizer allows you to search Twitter, view trending topics, save two searches, view related tweets, reply, and retweet. The full version comes with unlimited saved searches and a $2.99 price tag. It's probably best to spend your money elsewhere (like on a full-featured app with search included).

iTunes rating: 2.5 stars
Mashable rating: 2.5 stars

One Hit Wonders



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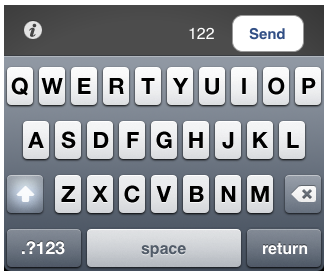


Twitterlink: Send tiny URLs in the is.gd form from your phone. Twitterlink is free and works when you add a bookmarklet to your phone's Safari browser. It's not super easy to setup, but it makes tweeting the interesting links you find while browsing a breeze.

iTunes rating: 2.5 stars
Mashable rating: 3.5 stars

Twittervision: The iPhone version of the popular web app isn't about tweeting at all. Twittervision is just a great way to visualize real-time tweets on a map. It's so simple, and yet so great. We likey!

iTunes rating: 2.5 stars
Mashable rating: 3.5 stars

Gyazickr: Gyazickr's free app just supports tweeting photos. You can opt to crop photos and have posts hosted on Gyazickr, TwitPic, or Tumblr.

iTunes rating: 3 stars
Mashable rating: 2.5 stars

Twitterboost: If Mr. Tweet had an iPhone app it would probably look a lot like Twitterboost, but give better recommendations. $1.99 gets you this app that continually (and randomly) suggests twitterers for you to follow. Want to be recommended? You'll need to add yourself to the app for that.

iTunes rating: 2 stars
Mashable rating: 1.5 stars

GPSTwit: A single function Twitter app for only posting tweets. GPSTwit's calling card is posting a link that shows location, status, and photo (if included on a map. At 99 cents you might find its single-mindedness a barrier to purchase.

iTunes rating: 2.5 stars
Mashable rating: 2 stars

Tweeter: All you can tweet for free. But with no image upload options and no Twitter-viewing options, we'd almost rather use SMS over Tweeter.

iTunes rating: 2 stars
Mashable rating: 1 star

Twitfire: Twitfire's good for one thing and one thing alone – browsing the web to easily insert links into your tweets. Once the iPhone adds copy/paste, this handy free app might be obsolete.

iTunes rating: 2.5 stars
Mashable rating: 2 stars

JustUpdate: Certainly keeping it real with their name, JustUpdate does nothing more than let you update Twitter. No photos, no frills, just update.

iTunes rating: 3 stars
Mashable rating: 1 star

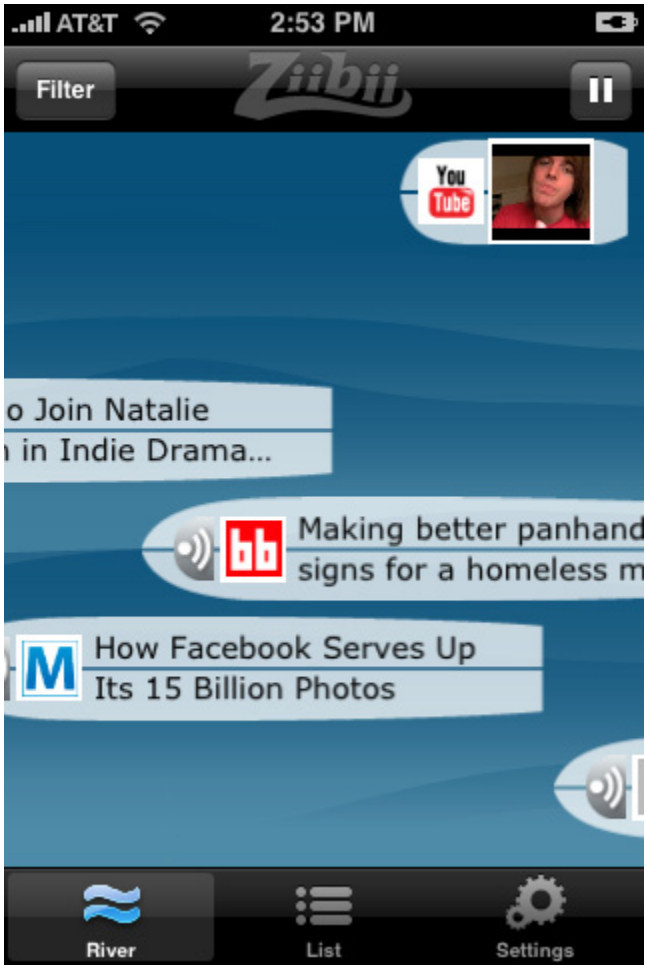
TwitterPics: Use TwitterPics to search for photos by keyword, user, or hashtag. You can also follow the photos from your favorite users or trends and share image links with Twitter. It's a nifty way to experience Twitter photos and might even be worth the $3.99 price tag.

iTunes rating: 2.5 stars
Mashable rating: 3.5 stars

Pic.im: A simple and free app just for sharing and viewing photos. Pic.im's a TwitPic-like app with a mobile, web, and desktop presence (integrated with Nambu).

iTunes rating: 3 stars
Mashable rating: 3 stars

Multi-Purpose



Ziibii: A free app for keeping up with Facebook, Flickr, YouTube, Twitter, and RSS feeds (like Mashable!) all in one stream that actually flows like a river. Ziibii's probably not the best way to consume information, but it's certainly fun to look at it.

iTunes rating: 2.5 stars
Mashable rating: 3.5 stars

Twitxr Perfect for sharing geo-tagged photos with not just Twitter, but Facebook, Flickr, and Picasa too. Twitxr's also a great app for viewing photos from Twitxr friends. The only downside is that you have to create a Twitxr account and configure your other social profiles from the website.

iTunes rating: 2 stars
Mashable rating: 3 stars

Nambu: Nambu's iPhone app brings popular desktop client features to your phone. It's a free way to fully engage with Twitter and FriendFeed, update Identi.ca, post to Ping.fm, upload to pic.im (and view images), and create tr.im URLs. Once priced at $1.99, the app is now free and definitely worth checking out.

iTunes rating: 3 stars
Mashable rating: 4 stars

Best in Show

We've certainly covered a lot of Twitter apps. If your head is left a little dizzy, don't fret. Take our best in show pics as a cheat sheet for finding the best Twitter apps in iTunes App Store.

Without further ado, here are the apps that we think ace the Twitter for iPhone test. Of course, we always want to hear what your favorites are, so feel free to share those in the comments.

Pay to Play: Tweetie

Freebies: Twitterfon

Search and Trends: ReTweet

One Hit Wonders: Twitterlink

Multi-Purpose: Nambu

Managing multiple Twitter accounts by Jennifer Van Grove

It may seem like an impossible task to keep up with all the Twitter apps that have come to market as of late. Even though you have plenty of directories to help with the process, we noticed that it's still difficult to ascertain which apps support multiple accounts.

As more and more people are using Twitter for personal and professional reasons, the demand for a Twitter client to match those multifaceted needs is rising. Here are several options to help you tweet now or later from different accounts on your desktop, via the Web, and while on the run. We've also included a few browser add-ons and business-specific clients to help you find the right application to suit your Twittering needs.

Desktop

Nambu: A great single or mutli-column app for multiple Twitter, Identi.ca, and Laconi.ca account management. Nambu also includes Twitter trends, saved searches, filters, link aggregation, and groups. Plus, if you have a Nambu account you can use tr.im to shorten URLs, and pic.im for better Twitter photo tools than Twitpic.

Seesmic Desktop: A viable threat to TweetDeck, Seesmic Desktop has no limitations on the number of accounts you can manage. Plus, since it fully integrates with Facebook, and also allows for unlimited columns, it's a fantastic way to engage with Twitter from your desktop.

Twhirl: Even though Seesmic Desktop is the replacement desktop application for Twhirl, it still continues to dominate the TwitStat Twitter client leader board (currently in the number 5 slot). Users love having multiple account support and a single column view of tweets. Also of note is cross-posting to Ping.fm, and the ability to record and follow Seesmic videos.

Tweetie for Mac: This single column gem launched with a bang, thanks the popularity of their mobile app. We're mad about Tweetie for Mac's sleek design, which does an amazing job at multiple account management while respecting our screen real-estate. Power users will enjoy the keyboard shortcuts, conversations, and threaded direct messages.

Twibble Desktop: Twibble allows users to manage up to 3 different Twitter accounts, and includes keyboard shortcuts, location awareness, and viewing options.

Digsby: This desktop app is probably most recognizable for its multi-client IM support, but Digsby(for Windows only) can handle your social network profiles, and manage multiple Twitter accounts.

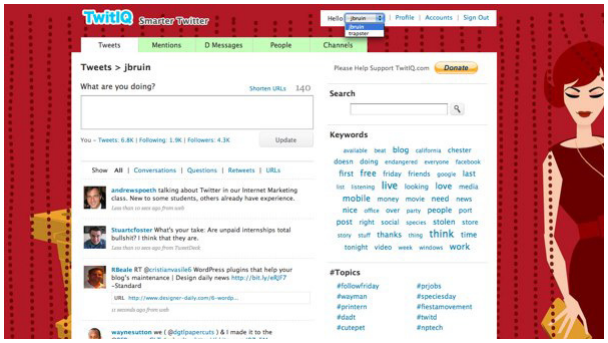
Web

Matt: Matt, which stands for Multi Account Twitter Tweeter, is a colorful and simple Twitter app that just lets you update multiple accounts from the Web.

TwittBot: TwittBot makes it possible to not only update multiple accounts, but allow multiple people to update the same account. The service looks for @replies to repost to specified Twitter accounts, and bots can be open to anyone or closed to a select group of individuals. This is a perfect tool for Twitter accounts that aggregate tweets from a variety of sources.

Tweet3: For web-based multiple account support that's slightly different than the rest, there's Tweet3. The site provides you with a dashboard view for each account, where you can customize the color, integrate with Facebook, follow and unfollow Twitterers, and adjust settings. Should you tweet links, Tweet3 will track their performance in the analytics tab.

Splitweet: Designed around managing multiple Twitter accounts, Splitweet is great for viewing a stream of tweets from all your accounts, posting tweets to multiple accounts, and following brand mentions. Positioned as tool for brands, Splitweet doesn't really deliver on that promise, and companies would be better off with CoTweet, EasyTweet, or HootSuite.

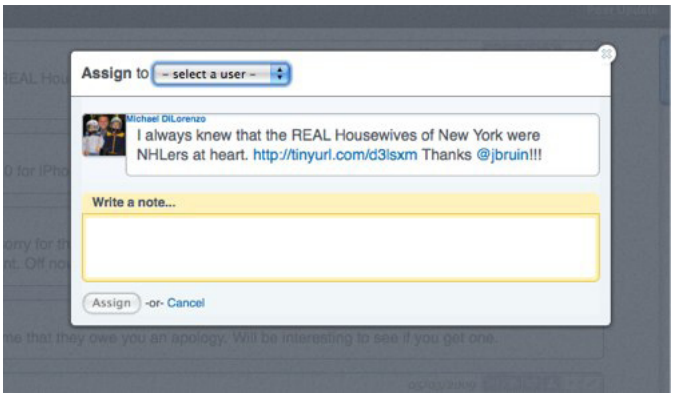


TwitIQ: TwitIQ is exactly like Twitter.com, except function-rich. So imagine your Twitter homepage including options to toggle through accounts, view a keyword tag cloud, and tab through conversations, questions, retweets, and URLs.

Twitomate: A very basic app designed just to let you queue tweets to publish on a rolling basis. But, if you've got multiple accounts and you just want to keep them fresh with regular updates, Twitomate is worth a look.

TweetLater: Another web service dedicated to automating the tweeting process, TweetLater includes support for unlimited Twitter accounts and bulk upload and scheduling of tweets. There are even some extra goodies thrown in for professional accounts.

Semi-Professional



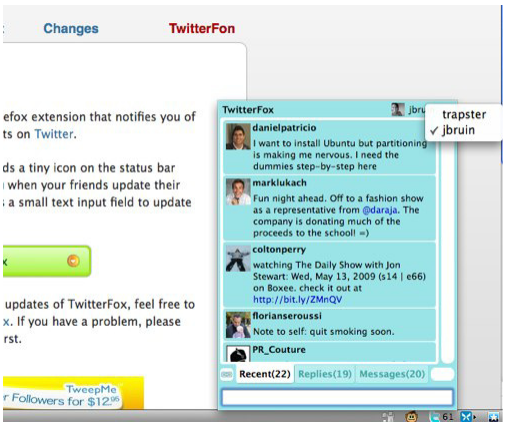
CoTweet: CoTweet's already the Twitter CRM Tool of Choice for BestBuy, JetBlue, and Ford, and that's because it adds a business layer to Twitter account management. Yes, you can have multiple accounts, but the key with CoTweet is allowing multiple people to safely manage the same account so there's no duplication of effort. We also love it for scheduling tweets for later, assigning tweets to coworkers, and

adding notes to Twitter users.

EasyTweets: Positioned as a tool for marketers, EasyTweets is similar to a blogging platform, and comes with a minimum price tag of $24/mo if you choose to upgrade to get continuous searches, support for more than three accounts, post to multiple accounts, SMS alerts, and Google Analyticsdata on links. EasyTweets has a few tweet viewing options, but TweetDeck fans will especially like the Deck View (columns) of tweets.

HootSuite: A nifty web-based app for multiple accounts with multiple admins, HootSuite is also great at giving you visibility into link stats right within their dashboard view of tweets (so long as you use their ow.ly URL shortener). It's also a convenient app for Twitter search, scheduling tweets, and posting to Ping.fm to update more than just Twitter.

Browser Add-Ons



TwtterFox: TwitterFox is a Firefox extension from the same guys that are behind the TwitterFon iPhone app. TwitterFox sits within the right hand corner of your browser and does a great job at keeping out of the way. Users can add multiple accounts in preferences and toggle through each of them in a single column view.

Adjix2TwitterLink: This bookmarklet is brought to you by URL shortening service, adjix. It's simply for tweeting links while you browse, but since you have the option to specify which account to tweet from, and send later, it could prove extremely handy.

iPhone

Twitteriffic: The new and improved Twitteriffic 2.0 is a beauty and an extremely functional, free iPhone app that makes Twitter terrific on the iPhone and manages multiple accounts nicely. If tracking is your thing, you'll love how Twitteriffic handles saved searches and supports advanced search queries.

Tweetie: The leader of the mobile pack, and the number 3 Twitter client overall according to TwitStat, Tweetie's ($2.99) multiple account support is just one of the features that you'll love about this iPhone app.

SimplyTweet: This full-featured iPhone app ($3.99) does the basics and then some. On top of managing multiple accounts, you can view trends, add notes, create saved views of friends (groups), use the Safari bookmarklet, and look up contacts while composing your tweet.

TweetStack: TweetStack ($2.99) brings your TweetDeck columns to the iPhone, and unlike TweetDeck, supports multiple accounts. Pick TweetStack if you want a customizable tab bar, groups, search, and retweets.

LaTwit: A multi-account Twitter client ($2.99) for the iPhone that supports posting to Ping.fm, the option to hide users, custom font sizes, and interchangeable tabs.

More Mobile

Gravity: A native Twitter client for S60 devices (Nokia, Samsung, and LG phones), Gravity costs 10 bucks and works wonders for multiple accounts, Twitter Search, a tabbed view of your timeline, replies, messages, and friends, as well as groups, and multiple photo upload options.

Poketwit: This app is for Windows Mobile users and is perfect for multiple accounts, groups, conversations, retweets, tweet shortening, and having a Twitter address book.

Managing Twitter on your desktop by Jennifer Van Grove

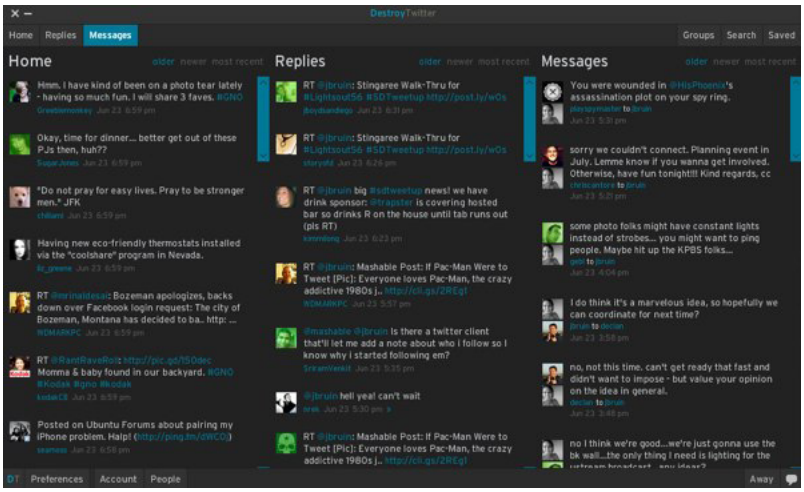
Twitter has become an integral part of our social media lives, marketing strategies, and business objectives. We have multiple accounts, hundreds of followers to watch, Twitter trends to track, hashtags to follow, and a frequent need for continuously updating search results.

As such, getting by on the limited feature set available via Twitter.com is difficult at best. Enter the desktop application, a third-party piece of software that you can install on your computer to interface with Twitter and get more out of your microblogging activities.

Now that Twitter is older than a toddler, you have a variety to choose from. From apps for groups, Mac and PC specific clients, and apps that let you do a whole lot more than tweet, you can use this guide to help you find the desktop client that's right for you.

*Note: all ratings are based on 5 stars

Power Users Only



Destroy Twitter: Certainly not your most sophisticated Twitter client, but definitely above average and packing a few hidden nuggets. Destroy Twitter is a single account, single column app (but does allow for multiple columns in the expanded view), that's clearly not for power users who have multiple presences to manage. It does, however, have a simple yet powerful groups feature that supports groups of users or groups of multiple keywords. The only problem is that accessing those groups can be a challenge.

Mashable rating: 3.5 stars
Hit feature: user-created themes that you can download to skin the app
Common concern: better features are hidden

TweetDeck: Our current head-to-head winner in the desktop space, TweetDeck's most recent updates improve upon the column experience to include a report spam button, recommended people to follow, better video playback, auto-suggest for usernames, yFrog integration, and unlimited columns. Oh and it also happens to have a complementary iPhone app that syncs with your desktop columns. Nice.

Mashable rating: 4.5 stars
Hit feature: sync with the iPhone app
Common concern: groups need a little fine tuning

*Disclosure: TweetDeck partnered with Mashable to create MashDeck, a branded version of the software.

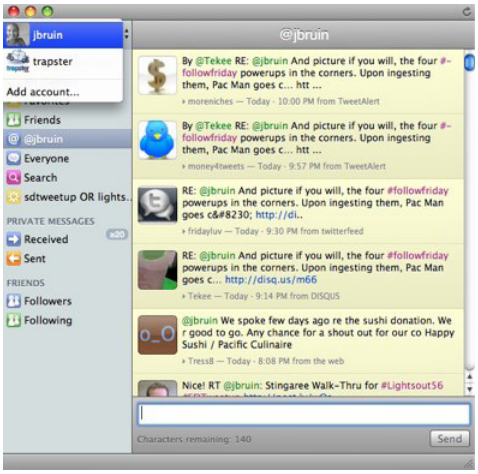
Seesmic Desktop: This really is the everything Twitter app. It features support for unlimited Twitter accounts and columns, a smattering of URL and photo options, hands down the best Facebook integration we've seen, and unlimited saved searches. We're really in love with Seesmic Desktop, and it seems to be evolving at record pace.

Mashable rating: 4.5 stars
Hit feature: fantastic Facebook integration for comments and likes
Common concern: system resource hog

PeopleBrowsr: The desktop version is just as complicated and feature-rich as the web app (you'll need to log in to the website to find the download link in lower right-hand corner). With PeopleBrowsr you get a full-featured Twitter app that is bloated with features like export, sort by Twitter name or number of followers, map or gallery views, stats on stacks (which are like columns), an aggregate view of tweets across stacks, simultaneous posting to other services, quick access to a number of different filters, and so much more. And we haven't even begun to discuss the integrations with every popular social site on the planet. Even though the light mode is a little easier, this app is better left to extreme power users. Plus all those features seem to really slow it down.

Mashable rating: 3.5 stars
Hit feature: export
Common concern: information overload

Mac Apps



Mac Lounge: This app is incredibly appealing for its dead simple, single column interface and respectable feature set. We, of course, love the multiple account support, but also appreciate saved searches, quick access to view followers and following, and tweet options to link to tweet, copy tweet, or copy tweet URL. There's also an accompanying iPhone app [iTunes link], which syncs with the desktop version and greatly improves the app's relevance.

Mashable rating: 3 stars
Hit feature: drag and drop categories to reorder (on left-hand panel)
Common concern: lack of support for groups or image posting

Nambu: This really sophisticated Mac app should be more than enough for any and all of your Twitter needs. You've got access to your followers and friends, custom groups, search (integrated with FriendFeed and One Riot), trends, tr.im and pic.im integration, multiple accounts, Ping.fm integration, filters, and three view options for a one or many column view of tweets.

Mashable rating: 4.5 stars
Hit feature: Twitter search with FriendFeed, OneRiot, and Yahoo results
Common concern: needs more variety for photo and URL shortening

Tweetie for Mac: Beautiful, sleek, and simple, Tweetie for Mac is everything you'd expect from the developers of the top mobile application for Twitter. You can get a beautiful view of conversations, toggle through and manage multiple accounts, save searches, and even post videos to yFrog. It's the cleanest single column app with multiple account management that we've ever seen.

Mashable rating: 4 stars
Hit feature: killer conversation threads
Common concern: groups are strangely absent

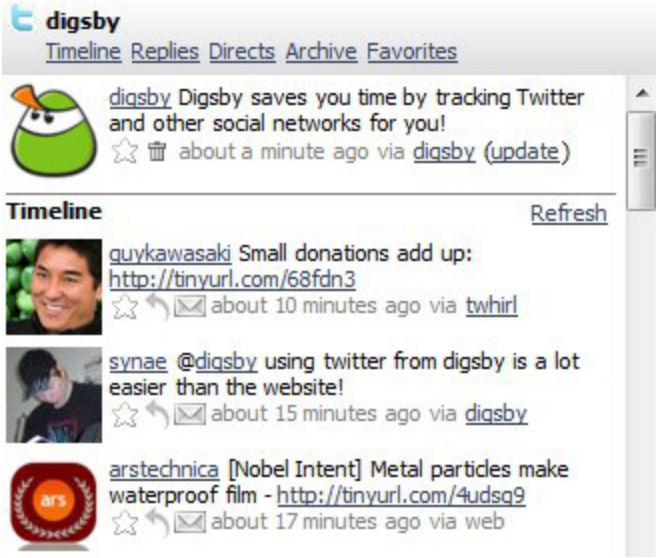
TwitterPod: This app isn't known for its sophistication or advanced Twitter functionality. TwitterPod is a basic single column Twitter app with an inline browser and the ability to filter for just tweets with links. Its heyday has long since passed, but original fan boys and girls may still be using this for their twittering.

Mashable rating: 2 stars
Hit feature: inline browser
Common concern: not reliable

EventBox: This just-for-Mac app is a favorite of many because it supports Twitter, Facebook, and Flickr integration, and also supports feed reading with Google Reader, and internet trend watching with Reddit and Digg. Keyboard shortcuts, hotkeys, Instapaper integration, and photo uploads to Flickr and Facebook make EventBox pretty nifty. It's also got a very slick interface with a navigation menu on the left-hand side.

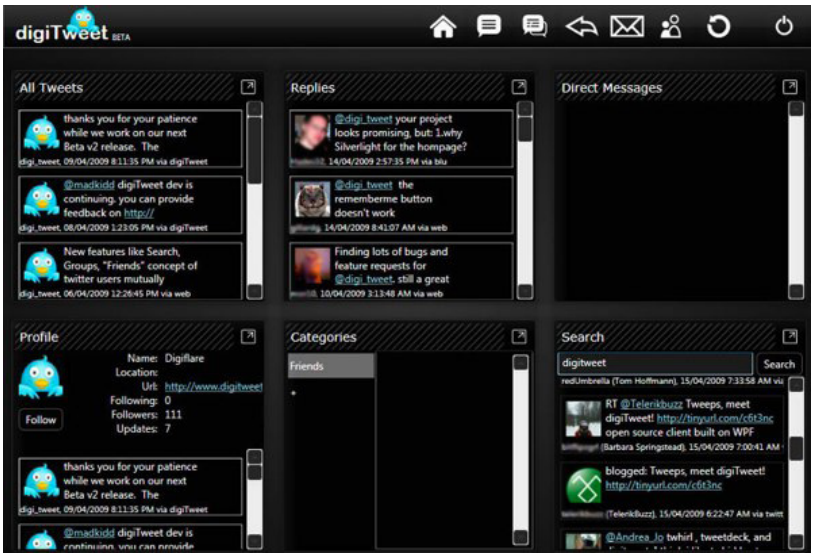
Mashable rating: 4 stars
Hit feature: feed reading alongside tweet watching
Common concern: single Twitter account support only

Windows Apps



Digsby: The beloved IM, email notification, and social networking application also does Twitter, but it's only available for PCs at the moment. On the social networking side, Digsby pulls in Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, and LinkedIn so you can get a more complete view of what's happening across your entire social presence.

Mashable rating: 2.5 stars
Hit feature: IM and email integration
Common concern: not robust enough for power users



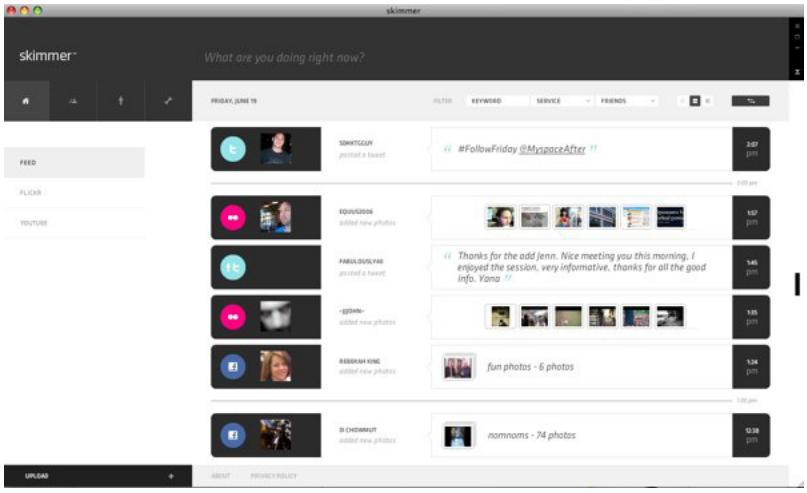
DigiTweet: This open source desktop Twitter client for Windows is built on Windows Presentation Foundation (WPF) and allows for a lot of customization in the layout and view of your Twitter stream with an interactive dockable pane. DigiTweet has also evolved to include multiple search tabs, color coding users you follow by categories (kind of love this), alerts for specific users, follow/unfollow, and link preview.

Mashable rating: 3.5 stars
Hit feature: toast alerts for specific tweeters
Common concern: tricky user interface

A Few More Options

Twhirl: This oldie but goodie, though no longer actively being updated (Seesmic Desktop took its place), is still working just fine and many a Twitter early adopter are happy to have a single column Twitter experience, with additional windows available for additional Twitter accounts, plus FriendFeed, Seesmic, and Identica integration for viewing and posting content to those sites. Since you can still save Twitter searches, Twhirl is actually a really great desktop client if you're not beholden to groups.

Mashable rating: 3.5 stars
Hit feature: FriendFeed support for viewing threads and adding comments
Common concern: window overload



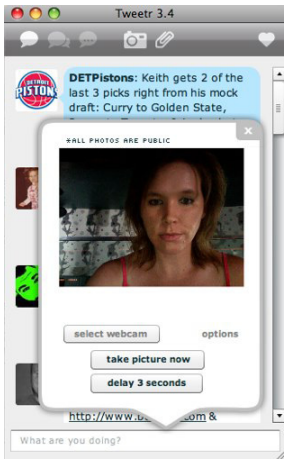
Skimmer: It's hard not to love this app. Not only is it beautiful to look at it, but it also tracks your favorite social sites. Skimmer's certainly not an application for the social media beginner, but power users of Facebook, Flickr, YouTube, Blogger, and Twitter, will appreciate the aggregation of content, filtering options, view types, and enhanced content viewing experience.

Mashable rating: 4.5 stars
Hit feature: gorgeous Flickr and YouTube video viewing
Common concern: sacrificing a few advanced twitter app features for beauty

Sideline: Sideline is just a search and trending topic app from Yahoo, but it does a darn good job at satisfying those specific needs. You can view current Twitter trends, select to see the three latest tweets or pop out as its own saved search, and create custom search groups as tabs.

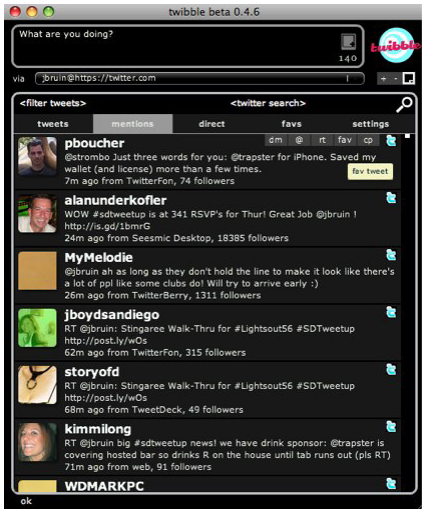
Mashable rating: 4 stars
Hit feature: search groups that support multiple keywords
Common concern: can't tweet from the app

Less to Tweet Home About



Tweetr: A lesser known simple app, Tweetr is beautiful Adobe AIR based app that doesn't support multiple accounts, and isn't right for power users, but might be just perfect for lightweight Twitterers. You're not going to get columns, groups, search, or filters, but you can share files and take photos with your web cam.

Mashable rating: 3 stars
Hit feature: file sharing and webcam photos
Common concern: URL shortening limited to hurl.ws

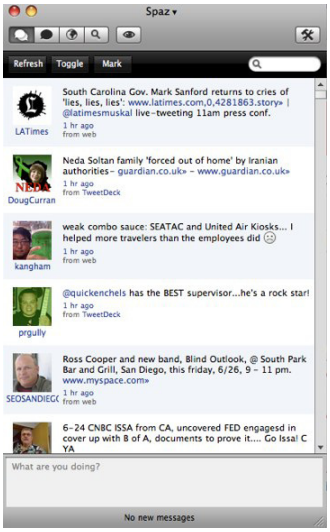


Twibble Desktop: Twibble is a bit of a riddle. It's not a bad app when it comes to feature set, but it's also not the most intuitive. You can manage multiple accounts, but all tweets are merged together in one stream. You can reply, DM, fav, RT, and copy tweets, but you'll have to hover over the tweet to even know those behaviors are possible. You can also use keyboard shortcuts, filter your tweets for keywords, or conduct searches that open up in new windows, but Twibble just doesn't seem to flow as easily as we'd like it to.

Mashable rating: 2 stars
Hit feature: drag and drop photo upload
Common concern: very tricky user interface

Twitterrific: Once the preferred app of the Mac Twitterati, Twitterrific has seen brighter days on your desktop (meanwhile the iPhone app is certainly an impressive option). As it stands, Twitterrific is hardly an improvement on the Twitter.com web experience.

Mashable rating: 2 stars
Hit feature: super lightweight
Common concern: hard to filter tweets for mentions and direct messages



Spaz: With a name like Spaz, you'd expect this AIR based client to be perfect for the Twitter spaz. Unfortunately, that's not quite the case. So even though it's not a terrible app for lightweight Twitterers, power users won't get by on the limited feature set.

Mashable rating: 2.5 stars
Hit feature: in-line short URL decoding
Common concern: no photo uploading options

Snitter: Another one of those apps that was all the rage back in the day, but is now in dire need of an update. This one is definitely a pass for the time being.

Mashable rating: 1.5 stars
Hit feature: filter by time period
Common concern: too many to count

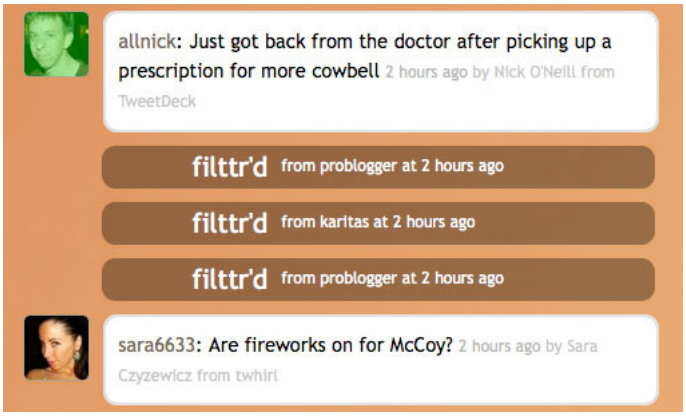
Filtering your Twitter stream by Josh Catone

Most Twitter users probably follow under a thousand other people, but that's enough to make it hard to keep track of the real-time stream. I actually started having trouble keeping up when I hit about 50 follows — and depending on how prolific the people you're following are, you could be dealing with a hard-to-parse Twitter stream even following just a handful of people. But while people like social media fanatic Robert Scoble, who follows over 100,000 people, appear to have the superhuman ability to stay on top of things, the rest of us need help filtering the Twitter stream.

Fortunately, there are a good number of methods and applications we can put to work to filter tweets from the people we're following. Which work best for you? Let us know in the comments.

(Please note that a few of the apps in this post actually do multiple types of filtering, and so could have theoretically been added to more than one category.)

By Keyword

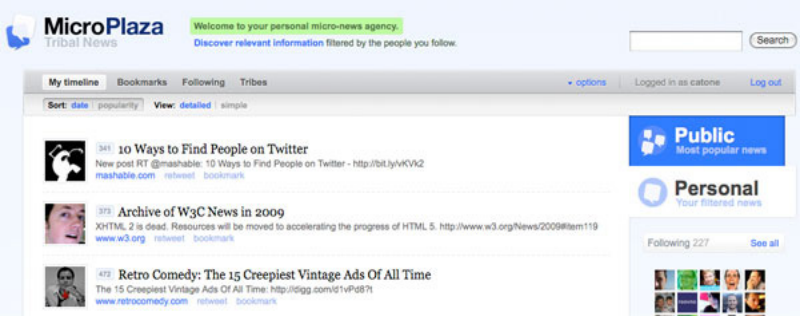


One way to filter Twitter is by keyword. Filttr is a full-featured, web-based Twitter app that includes keyword-based filtering. You can both blacklist and whitelist key phrases and Filtter will block or allow those tweets. Flittr, though, has a pretty steep learning curve, and before I even added any keywords it started filtering tweets — and took a particular dislike to a few of my Twitter friends. I'm not sure what criteria it was using for those initial filters.

Another full web-based client that includes keyword filtering is Mixero, which is in private beta.

Philtro, which is also in private beta, learns what types of tweets you like based on your ratings. Give thumbs up and thumbs down ratings to tweets, and Philtro slowly figures out what you like and attempts only to bother you with tweets you'd be likely to want to read.

By Links



About 19% of all tweets contain links, but if your Twitter stream moves quickly, you may miss many of the best unless you use a filter. MicroPlaza organizes the links tweeted by out by your followers by recency or popularity. MicroPlaza personalizes the concept employed sites like Tweetmeme, Twitt(url)y, and dailyRT, which assume that the more a link is tweeted, the more worthwhile it is of your attention.

MicroPlaza not only looks at which links are being tweeted and retweeted the most, but also which are being tweeted specifically by the people you're following. The idea is that you're most interested in things your followers are saying (otherwise, you wouldn't be following them), so if they tweet about popular links, they're more likely to be of interest to you.

One of the coolest features of MicroPlaza, though, is that you can assume the identity of any other Twitter user — so if you follow someone very connected to a specific industry, you can see the links that their friends are sharing.

By Grouping

Another way to filter Twitter, is by organizing your friends into groups. By putting the people you're following into groups, you can break up and effectively slow down your Twitter stream, making it easier to follow tweets from your friends, colleagues, and family members.

There are a ton of different ways to organize you friends into groups, but one of the easiest is to use a Twitter client that supports grouping, such as desktop heavyweights Seesmic Desktop, Destroy Twitter, and TweetDeck (which has a complimentary iPhone app that also supports groups), or a web-based app like PeopleBrowsr.

Another option is to use a service that helps you create channels or groups of Twitter users and moni-

tor their tweets. Floxee is one of the most full-featured such sites. It not only lets users monitor the tweetstream of a predefined group, but also displays stats about the activity of that group (or "flock"). Other sites you could use include TwitHive, Tweetizen, Twhanel, Crowdstatus, TwittGroups.com, and TweetChannel.

Disclosure: TweetDeck partnered with Mashable to create MashDeck, a branded version of the software.

By Favorites

Favorites aren't the best way to filter tweets, because the reasons you favorite tweets might not be the same as other people. However, by the same token, tweets that have been favorited by multiple users are generally worth reading for some reason: they're interesting, funny, clever, extraordinary, etc.

Favrd keeps track of the most favorited tweets, but is limited to those users who have signed up with the service to have their favorites watched. (Careful: Favrd is often NSFW.) Favotter is another favorite tracking site, but again, watches a limited number of users (due to API limitations, according to the site's about page).

BONUS: TwitterForBusyPeople doesn't really filter Twitter, but it does organize your recently active follows in a way that you can get an "at a glance" view of the activity of people you're following. Once you get used to it, it is potentially a good way to make your Twitter stream more manageable.

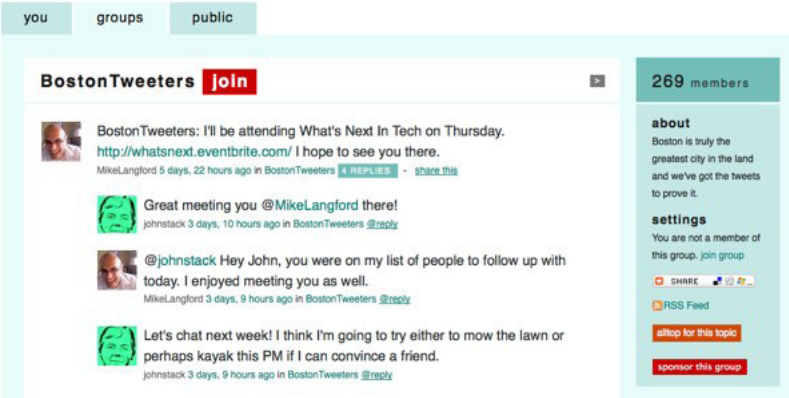
BONUS 2: Twalala does keyword filtering, but where it really shines is the ability to mute certain users to remove their tweets from your twitter stream temporarily.

Creating groups on Twitter by Jennifer Van Grove

Earlier this year we showed you how to create groups for Twitter. While the post is still a valuable resource, we've definitely seen a few new tools pop up that are also worth a look.

When it comes to Twitter groups, you're probably either interested in ways to communicate with a distinct set of users, or following a group of tweets based on Twitterer, topic, or hashtag. We've identified and separated out the web, desktop, and mobile apps that help you satisfy the group function of your choosing.

Participate in Public or Private Twitter Groups



If you're looking to create Twitter groups that allow for public or private communication between multiple Twitterers, you've definitely got a few choices. The apps listed below will allow you to, in one fashion or another, create custom groups allowing you to tweet to just a specified group of Twitterers.

Twitter4Groups: The most basic of the bunch. It's not chock full of functionality, but this private Twitter group option essentially passes direct messages to all members who have opted into a private group. The setup process simply entails creating a protected group Twitter account, having members follow the account, and making sure that the Twitter account in question follows them back. Then any time anyone direct messages the group twitter account, that tweet is dispersed to the group's followers.

GroupTweet: If communicating privately with a select group of Twitter individuals is your goal, than GroupTweet is your platform. Once you create a Twitter account for your group, you can register that account with GroupTweet and share it with the people you want to be included. Like Twitter4Groups, any direct messages to the group Twitter account will be relayed to all followers of the group.

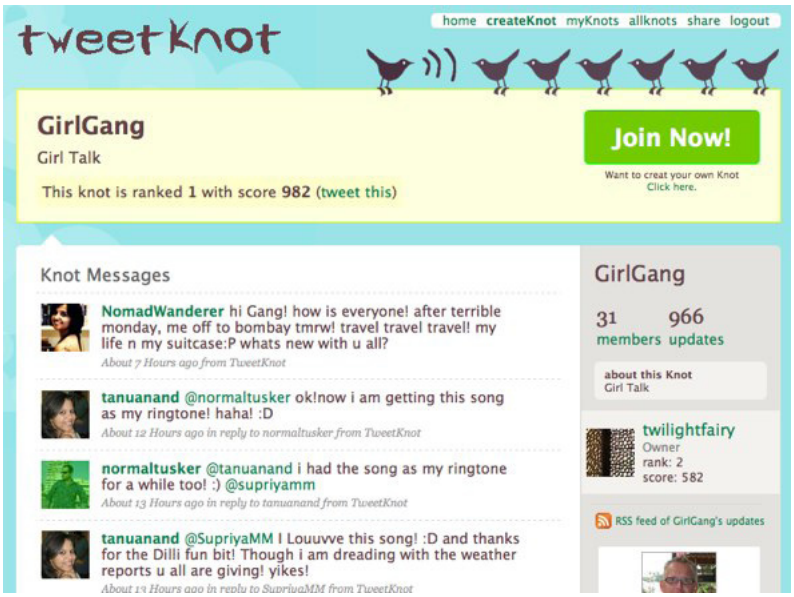
Tweetworks: Another great group site for public or private groups. With Tweetworks, you can join groups on the site and create your own, but best of all, the app attempts to thread conversations, so replies are grouped in a convenient, easy to read fashion.

Tweetparty: You can use Tweetparty to create your own personal groups, such that you can message

all the users you placed in your groups simultaneously with a single tweet. All you need to do is create your groups on Tweetparty, add the Twitterers you want in each group, and then DM tweetparty with the group name and message and it gets dispersed via DM to each individual.

TwitterTeams: Still in private beta, TwitterTeams promises to let you join Twitter teams and use team tags, similar to hashtags, to communicate with fellow group members.

Apps to Form People or Hashtags Groups



TweetKnot: Use this one to create public or private Twitter groups to follow people or RSS feeds. As a user, you can create an on-site knot, otherwise known as a group, name it, designate whether it's a private or public group, and add a group description. Then you can designate Twitterers or RSS feeds for the knot to follow, essentially creating a shared Twitter stream of updates that's specific to the people and sites you add. Knot members can post and follow group updates.

Crowdstatus: Yet another way to lump Twitterers into custom created groups. Crowdstatus does, however, take a slightly different approach by only displaying the most recent update from crowd members. It provides a visually stimulating dashboard — tweets are shown in individual boxes — that might make consuming member-specific tweets all the more enjoyable. Plus, you can even opt to turn auto-refresh on and off.

Tweetizen: Tweetizen isn't a robust Twitter app, but it does let you create and participate in web-based groups in order to follow the people or topics that are of interest to you. It's basically just an app to filter tweets, but Tweetizen's interface is much more impressive than some of the options available to accomplish the same purpose, and we like that you can login with Twitter OAuth, view active groups, check out feature groups, and keep up with Twitter trends.

Twitly: Essentially the same as Tweetizen, Twitly is a web app for separating the people you follow into groups. We had some issues logging into the app, so it's not high up on our list.

TwitHive: A web-based app for creating Twitter channels (like columns) of tweets from people you place in groups, or search terms that you designate. When creating a channel column you can name it and select whether you want it to be a column of specific Twitter user updates, a search query, or just

tweets from your stream that are questions, retweets, or include URLs. TwitHive does let you create channels based on multiple Twitter accounts, so it's essentially a good multi-account group-centric Twitter client.

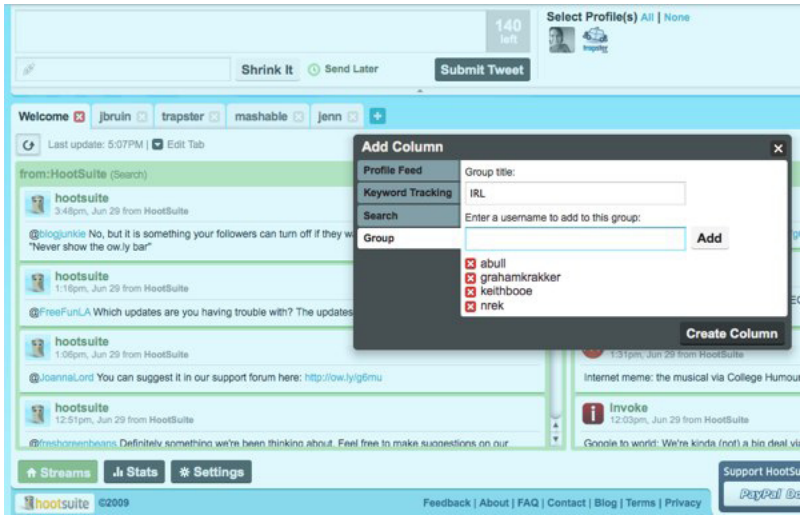
Twubs: Specifically designed to create Twitter groups around hashtag content. Twubs aggregates video, photos, and tweets that use a hashtag, and allows users to not only edit the hashtag description, but join the individual Twubs and contribute even more content. Since hashtags create community and conversation around a topic or event, Twubs provides a better way to engage with the content and people participating in hashtag discussions.

Twibes: You can use Twibes to create your own public topic-oriented Twitter discussion hub. Twibes' setup process is pretty similar to other sites, but one advantage is that it does allow for other users to join the Twibe simply by retweeting the group URL. You can create up to 3 Twibes per Twitter account, or pay to create more.

Twhanel: With Twhanel, you can create category or topic specific feeds of tweets. Essentially it's just a filter for Twitter, but you can host your Twhanels on your own site. One thing to note is that you'll have to create a Twhanel specific login to use the site.

TweetChannel: Though stylistically unimpressive, TweetChannel is another straight-forward way create and facilitate discussions in Twitter groups. There are no extra bells and whistles, and channels are public, but it gets the job done. Also, to have your channel listed in their directory, you'll want to use the hashtag format, ie #channelname, when you tweet.

More Twitter Clients to Put People/Keywords into Groups



In our first post on Twitter groups, we explored how TweetDeck and Twhirl could be used for groups. But there are also a myriad of other Twitter apps (of the web, mobile, or desktop variety) that help you create groups for your friends and followers, or your must-follow Twitter searches.

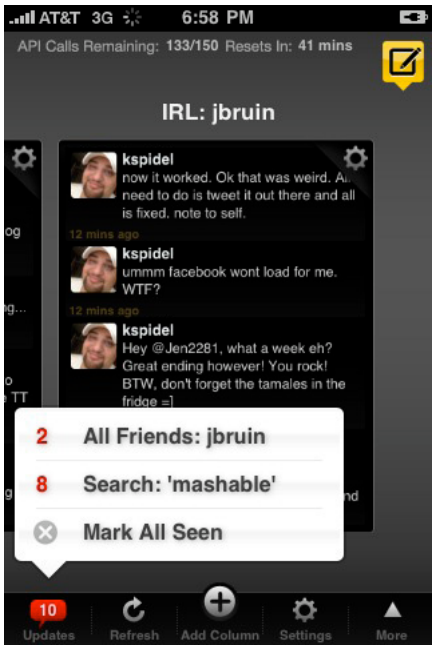
Seesmic Desktop: Just recently refreshed, Seesmic Desktop is a robust Twitter desktop app that calls their groups userlists, and you have complete control over these lists, which also pop out as columns. You can delete lists as a whole, or add and remove individuals one by one. Right now, though, you can't easily access a list of your Twitter friends or quickly add multiple Twitterers to a group in one single swoop. The new Seesmic web app currently lacks a groups feature, but it should be coming soon.

Destroy Twitter, PeopleBrowsr, Nambu for Mac, and Tweetr: Each of these Twitter apps is very group friendly, and each one has its own slightly unique implementation, but in general you define the group name and type, and add people or keywords as needed. PeopleBrowsr is available as a both a desktop and a web app and is the most sophisticated, albeit least newbie user-friendly, app for filtering of tweets and creating columns of grouped Twitter friends.

HootSuite: When it comes to web-based clients for Twitter, the newest version of HootSuite is great for creating groups of users or search results. In the 2.0 version, simply select to add a column, and from there you can create a group for keyword tracking, search, and people.

With the people groups you can add usernames one by one, and then edit the column later as needed. When it comes to keyword tracking, you can add up to three words or phrases per column, and with search you can use common search operators to narrow your results. You also have a group/column for pending tweets, which houses the tweets you schedule for later and provides a quick glimpse at your pending tweets, and gives you an easy way to delete or edit them.

Twitter Groups On the Go



As Twitter grows in popularity, so do mobile apps for tweeting. There are dozens of Twitter apps for the iPhone alone, with more and more created everyday, which means an abundance of the mobile Twitter apps on the market are likely to update to support Twitter groups.

TweetDeck for iPhone: TweetDeck's iPhone offering replicates the Twitter column experience on your iPhone so you can view tweets grouped by the topics or users that you've previously configured on the web. Its slick and innovative interface makes it a breeze to flip through existing columns or add new ones on the fly. Plus it comes completely free of charge.

iTwitter: This newbie for the iPhone will set you back $3.99, but you can use iTwitter to create and add users to groups for a filtered Twitter stream viewing experience.

SimplyTweet: At the same price point as iTwitter, SimplyTweet not only lets you create saved views of

friends, ie. groups, on your iPhone, but also manage multiple accounts, integrate with your HootSuite account, view Twitter trends, post to Posterous, and view replies in a conversation thread.

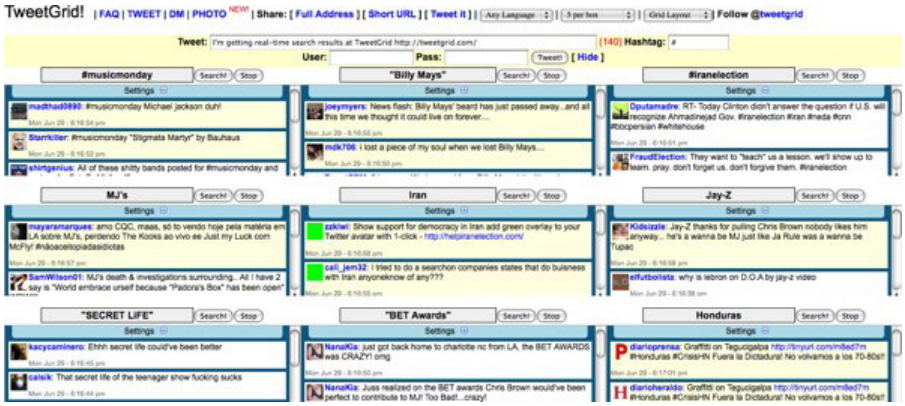
Twitterlator: The Pro version of Twitterlator for the iPhone will cost you $4.99 but it does support Twitter groups, called subgroups, and provides a super simple way of adding Twitterers from your address book to each of your subgroups (this feature is phenomenal). We, of course, are very fond the app now that it supports posting video from your iPhone 3GS to Twitter.

TweetFlip: This relatively new $1.99 iPhone app also supports groups, in a similar panel style to TweetDeck, though you will have to add members one by one by typing their Twitter name. TweetFlip's only differentiating feature from the other full-featured apps is an automatic insult option that generates smack talk you can quickly tweet.

PocketTwit: Windows Mobile users can turn to PocketTwit to get Twitter groups while away from their computer. The app also supports retweeting, includes an address book, allows for managing multiple accounts, integrates with several photo sharing options, and supports themes.

Gravity: This S60 app for Nokia, Samsung, and LG phones certainly does groups, but it will set you back about 10 bucks. You can, however, configure audio alerts for Twitter notifications, manage multiple accounts, as well as search Twitter and view trending topics.

Visualize Grouped Real-Time Twitter Search Results



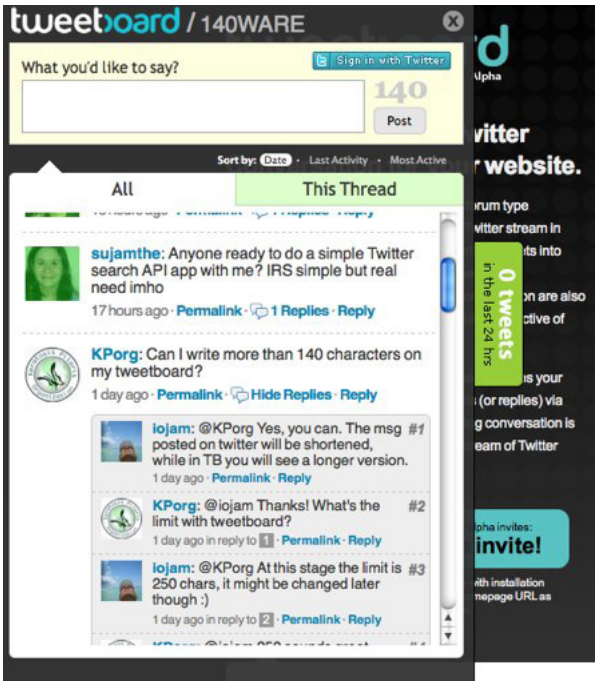
TweetGrid: This app helps you visualize search results for a number of different keywords or phrases in a grid-like fashion. It could certainly use a makeover, but we like the ability to customize the grid's columns and rows, and see search results side-by-side.

Monitter: Similar to TweetGrid, albeit much friendlier on the eyes, Monitter is limited to just column-centric search result viewing. It's pretty great for keeping a constant eye on search results.

TwitPicGrid: A mashup of TweetGrid and TwitPic, TwitPicGrid is perfect should you want to filter Twitter search results for photos only.

Floxee: This search, filter, and Twitterer grouping app has yet to be released in the wild, but when it's live it will be a great and visually impressive way to aggregate and showcase tweets around events, particular people of interest, or hot topics. Floxee features include a searchable historical tweetstream, stats on Twitterers, and an advanced group directory.

And One Truly Unique App



Tweetboard: As we recently discovered, Tweetboard, which is now in open alpha, adds an instant Twitter microforum to your site for engaging with site visitors in a unique way. By wrapping up (and grouping) your tweets and replies into threaded conversations, Tweetboard prominently showcases how Twitter customer service can really work. It's akin to creating a Twitter community around your website, product, or service.