Sharing on Twitter

One of the greatest aspects of Twitter is that it's a global platform for sharing information, images, and video. We'll show you how.

Sharing music on Twitter

Sharing video on Twitter

Sharing images on Twitter

Get your questions answered on Twitter

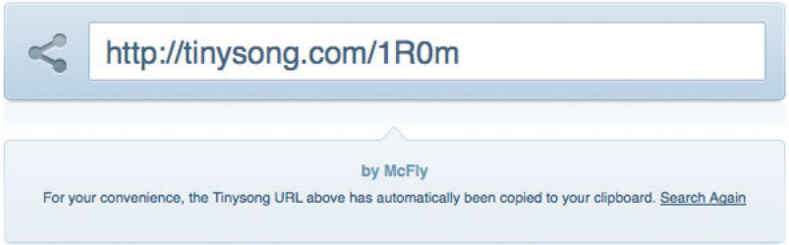
tweet this chapter

Sharing music on Twitter by Josh Catone

Twitter is fast becoming one of the most important ways to share information quickly, easily, and instantly over the web. Users and developers have found a lot of innovative ways to pack a ton of utility into just 140 characters, including sharing images, sharing video, and sharing documents. What about music? Turns out, there are plenty of ways to share tunes on Twitter as well. Below are ten of the best ways to tweet about what you're listening to.

If you know of any other ways to share music on Twitter that we should be aware of, please let us know in the comments.

1. Tinysong

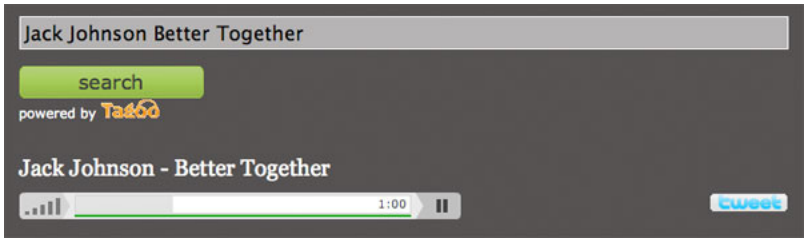


Tinysong is a very basic URL shortener for music powered by P2P music sharing service Grooveshark. On the plus side, that means it has a huge library of songs to draw from, but it also isn't very tightly integrated with Twitter. Tinysong is dead simple: search for songs, find the one you want, get a shortened URL pointing toward that track. Actually sharing it on Twitter is up to you. Tinysong has an API, meaning that developers could easily integrate it into their applications.

2. Twisten.fm

If you want a more complete integration between Grooveshark and Twitter, you'll want to check out Twisten.fm. Like Tinysong, Twisten.fm searches the Grooveshark library for songs, but it goes two steps further by allowing you to share what you're listening to directly from the site, and also monitoring your timeline to create a stream of what your friends are listening to.

3. Song.ly



Song.ly is a Twitter music sharing service powered by the Russian media search engine Tagoo. You search for an artist or track and press the tweet button, which sends you to Twitter and pre-populates the tweet field with a Song.ly shortened URL pointing at your song. Song.ly has IE and Firefox add-ons and an API.

4. Blip.fm

On its own, Blip.fm is kind of like Twitter for music, where users share tracks with one another in a Twitter-style real-time stream. But Blip.fm also integrates with Twitter (among other sites), and allows you to share tracks back out to your Twitter friends with one click once you have synced your accounts. The site borrows some concepts straight from Twitter — like reblipping, which is akin to retweeting — and helps users find friends to follow that have similar music tastes in order to build a real-time "radio station" stream.

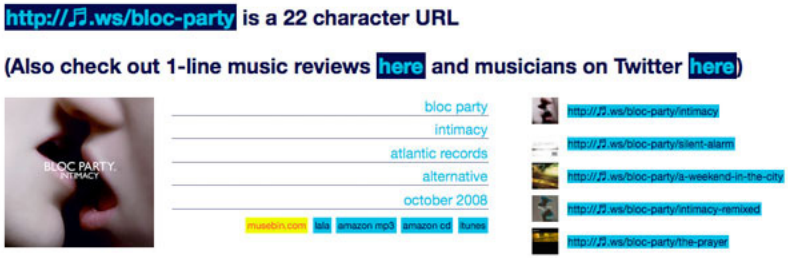
5. Twt.fm

Twt.fm uses OAuth to connect you to your Twitter account then recreates your Twitter page, including your background and avatar, to store your playlist of music tweets, each including a Flash-player. The site allows you to search for tracks (which it pulls from imeem), or add direct links to MP3s, YouTube music videos, SoundCloud, or imeem. You can then tweet those songs directly from the site using a Twt.fm short URL. Unfortunately, sometimes the tracks it finds are just clips, and it doesn't allow you to search by just artist or track, so you have to know the entire name of the song you want to play, who sings it, and how to correctly spell it.

6. Twiturm

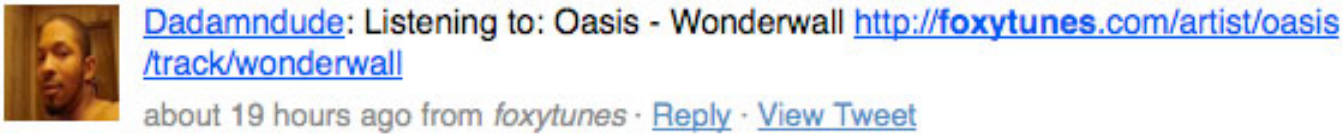
Twiturm (the "urm" stands for "ur music") is really aimed at artists looking to share music with their fans. The site lets users upload MP3 files, or point to existing MP3 links on the web, then share them directly on Twitter via a shortened URL that links to a Twiturm player page. The player page allows visitors to play, download, or retweet the tracks, and keeps stats on how many plays and downloads each song gets.

7. Musebin



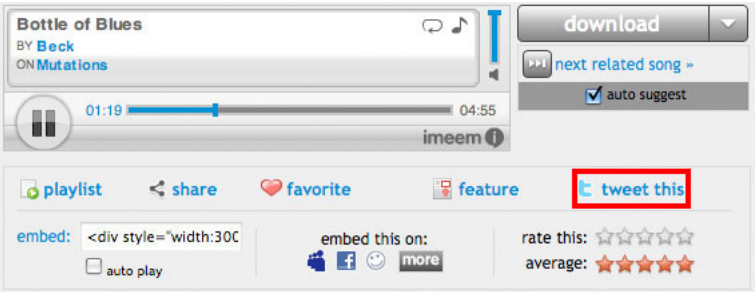
Musebin lets you share your favorite albums and artists over Twitter using exquisitely tiny URLs made possible by using a domain with a non-standard character: http://☐.ws/ The shared URLs link to a simple page about the artist or album that includes information about the year of release, record label, cover art, links to additional info, and a stream of tweets about the artist.

8. Twittytunes



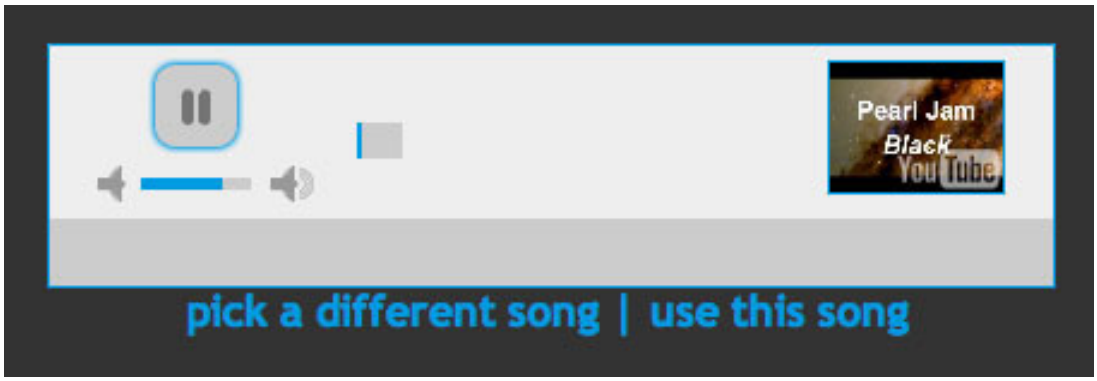
Twittytunes is a companion Firefox (and Flock) plugin for the Foxytunes music player plugin from Yahoo! Music. Twittytunes essentially adds a button to the Foxytunes player that lets users tweet about what they're listening to in one click. Tweets don't actually include links to playable songs, but they do include links to Foxytunes informational sites about the artist that often include song clips and music videos.

9. imeem



Music sharing site imeem, on which many of the other sites in this round up rely, added their own "Tweet This" buttons a couple of months ago. It's a pretty basic way to tweet about the music you're listening to, essentially just sending you to Twitter with a pre-populated form field that includes the name of the artist and track and a link to the song's page on imeem. But imeem has a huge library of music to search, so it's definitely a good site to have in your arsenal when sharing music on Twitter.

10. SongTwit



SongTwit is one of the newest options on this list, and lets you search imeem and YouTube for songs, point to MP3 links, or upload an MP3, M4A, WAV, WMA, OGG or ACC file. You then log into Twitter (no OAuth), add a message in the remaining ~115 characters, and send your tweet. Your message should probably include the song's title, since SongTwit doesn't automatically include it. When I tested it, it was a bit finicky (or my connection was) and kept timing out before it would actually share something, but I have actually seen SongTwit working for some people in the wild.

Sharing video on Twitter by Jennifer Van Grove

There are a number of useful ways to share video on Twitter. Pretty much every social site across the web has enabled a quick, no brainer way to tweet your content out to your Twitter network. At the rate Twitter is growing, we can certainly understand why.

Since we're seeing a lot of healthy competition in the "TwitPicfor video" space, we thought that we'd give you the lowdown on five different services that you can use to upload video to Twitter. You'll even see a few that support photo and video uploads, allow for webcam recordings, and track video mentions across Twitter.

It's safe to say that none of the available options have hit critical mass yet, but you can bet the major desktop clients, like TweetDeck and Seesmic Desktop (which just keeps getting better), are paying special attention to the most popular video sharing apps for Twitter. The end game for these services is to get integrated into the most popular Twitter clients, where they'll no doubt gain immediate exposure and new users.

1. TwitVid

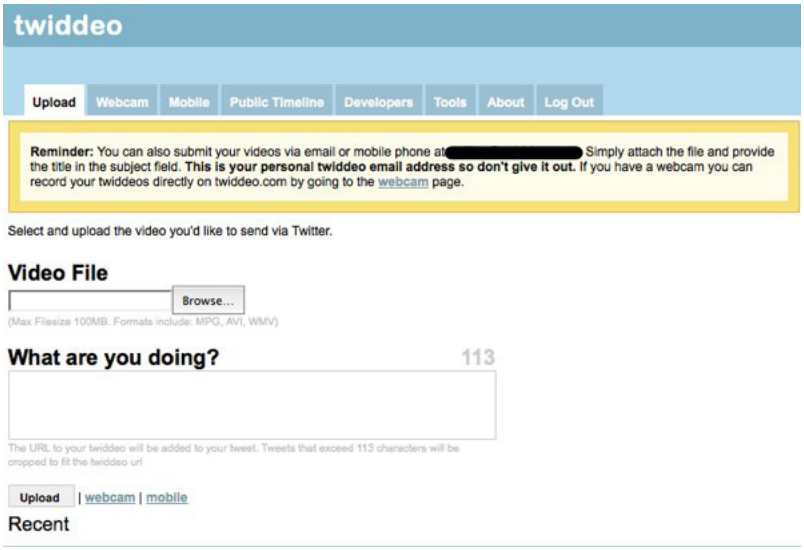
Let's face it: there's yet to be a single video sharing site for Twitter that's managed to attract the same level of attention or substantial user base as TwitPic has done for the photo sharing world. Hoping to capitalize on this, is TwitVid, a new Twitter video sharing site that supports upload via Web, email to u@twitvid.io, and eventually webcam.

The site is crazy simple to use: just log in with your Twitter credentials, choose your video file (up to 1 GB or 20 mins), enter 117 characters or less, and hit the tweet button. That's all there is to it.

If TwitVid is trying to become the TwitPic of video, then it's certainly taking the right steps. TwitVid

displays all the tweets that mention a particular video on Twitter right on the video page, something that TwitPic can't match. You can also retweet, share, like, and reply to videos on site.

2. Twiddeo

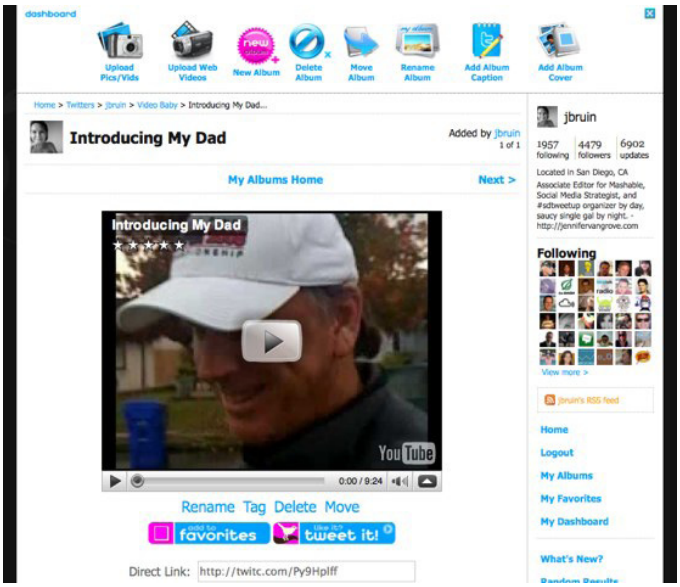


When it comes to sharing videos on Twitter, Twiddeo's certainly a viable option, as long as you're not the type to judge a book by its cover. The aesthetically unappealing site comes with the basics for Twitter video sharing, so you can upload, email, or record (via webcam) your videos for instant sharing with your Twitter network.

Video pages are pretty sparse, but you can leave comments (powered by Disqus), grab embed codes, and get a glimpse of all the videos that a user has shared.

A feature that Firefox users who tweet via Twitter.com will love is Twiddeo's Greasemonkey script. The script enables Twiddeo videos to play right from your Twitter home page. Pretty neat, eh?

3. Twitc

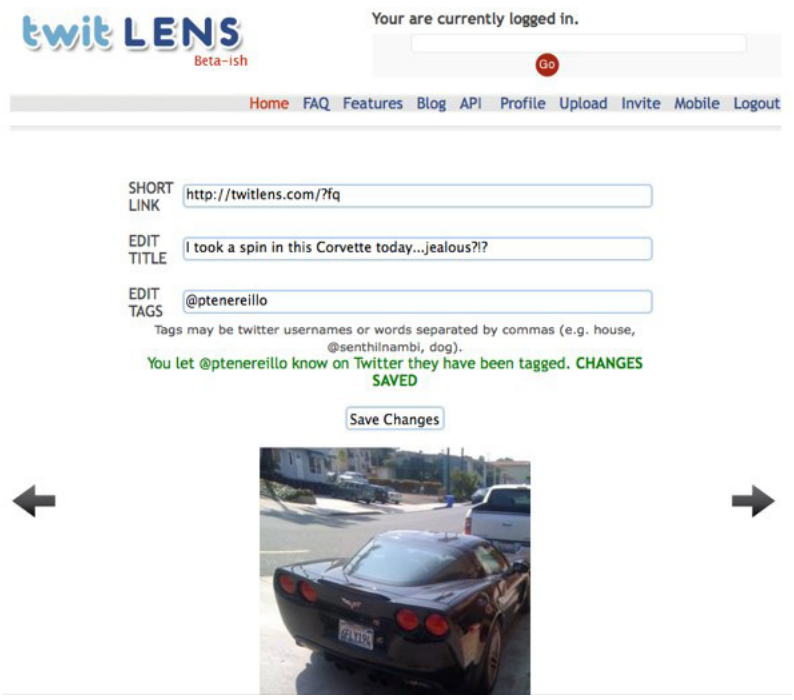


If you're looking for a one-stop shop for sharing photos, videos, and a myriad of different file types with Twitter, then Twitc's multipurpose hosting service could be just what the doctor ordered. Not only can you upload your own content — multiple files at a time — but you can also import videos via URLs, so YouTube and Hulu videos are all fair game.

What you get in extra features from Twitc comes with a cost. It takes more than just a few steps to actually tweet a video (and any other content you want to share). Before uploading content, you'll need to create and name your albums (which are like folders). Then while you're uploading or adding content, you can specify the appropriate album. Finally, you can return to your albums to select the appropriate video or image, and then click to push out to your Twitter stream.

Twitc is not the most immediate way to share videos with Twitter, but it does come with some extras that might make the additional steps worthwhile. With Twitc, not only can you update your Twitter status (no video or image required), but you can search, comment, favorite, and check out the most viewed, highest rated, or just plain random content on the site.

4. twitLENS



twitLENS is another dual purpose tool that handles both video and image sharing via Twitter. This beta site supports multiple uploads at one time, videos up to 50 MB, mobile uploads, comments, and even anonymous uploads.

There are two things we love about twitLENS. First, it's the only app on this list that's actually supporting Twitter OAuth for secure login. Second, it's super easy to tag people in photos and videos using their Twitter names. To accomplish the latter, just upload your content, and then return to your profile to access the photo or video and tag away. Those tagged will get tweets from you (so use this wisely) notifying them that they're staring in your rich media content on twitLENS.

5. Tweetube

Tweetube started out as a way to share YouTube videos, then the service expanded to include Tweetube for Mac OSX, a desktop application for creating video via webcam to share with Twitter. Tweetube then hosts the videos and even allows for comments. Most recently, Tweetube added support for multiple photo uploads by web or email, and multiple link sharing.

Even with the updates, the only way to share video with Twitter is by YouTube URL or desktop webcam recordings, which happen to be limited to 25 seconds in length. Still, we like what Tweetube's doing. If they continue to evolve their product, it could be a great way to share videos with your Twitter friends.

Sharing images on Twitter by Josh Catone

As the web moves toward its real-time future, Twitter is clearly becoming one of the most important ways for people to share content. From celebrity gossip to customer complaints, from blog post links to breaking news, Twitter is an amazing platform for sharing short bursts of information, both meaningful and mundane. But how many words can you fit into a 140 character tweet? If you could include images, the answer would be at least a thousand, right?

Unfortunately, Twitter doesn't have any built-in way to attach images to its 140 character posts, so we're left turning to third-party solutions to add a little visual flair to our tweets. There are a number of good ways to share images on Twitter, though, and here are five of them.

1. Via a Twitter Image Sharing Service

Because Twitter doesn't directly support image attachments, a large number of third-party services have sprung up to fill that need. There are a lot of these, and new ones seem to appear almost daily. Here are six of the best.

Twitpic: Twitpic is the largest and most popular image sharing service on Twitter, in part due to all the attention it got in January when the first pictures of the Hudson River plane crash were shared on the site. It also has some popular celebrity users, like Grant Imahara from Mythbusters.

TweetPhoto: Competing with Twitpic will definitely be a steep, uphill battle for any other Twitter photo sharing service, but TweetPhoto offers a numbers of compelling features, such as stats, geo-tagging, favoriting, and Facebook integration, that make it a worthy competitor.

Pikchur: A multi-platform app, Pikchur lets users share images automatically in multiple places, in-

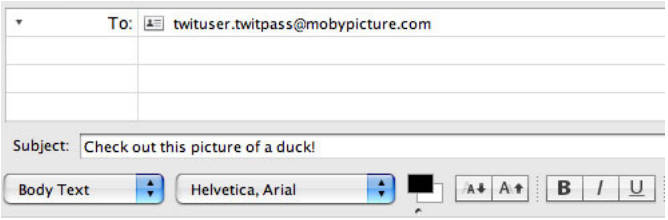
cluding Twitter, Facebook, Friendfeed, Tumblr, and Flickr. Sign up is optional, meaning you can get started very quickly.

Twitgoo: Borrowing the look and feel of Twitter, Twitgoo asks its users, "What are you lookin' at?" It is integrated into a number of third party apps, including favorites like Tweetie for Mac and TwitterBerry.

yfrog: Since yfrog comes from the guys behind ImageShack, you can bet it is going to be extremely simple, with a singular purpose in mind. Upload, log in, share — that's it, but that's all you need, right?

Picktor: Like Pikchur, Picktor helps users more easily share photos across multiple social sites. The new dead-simple Twitter image sharing service they launched last month uses Twitter's oAuth implementation, so you rest easy knowing your login credentials are safe.

2. Via SMS or Email



Sharing images via a third party service is great, but what about users who want to send updates to Twitter via SMS message or email? Fortunately, three third-party services have your back.

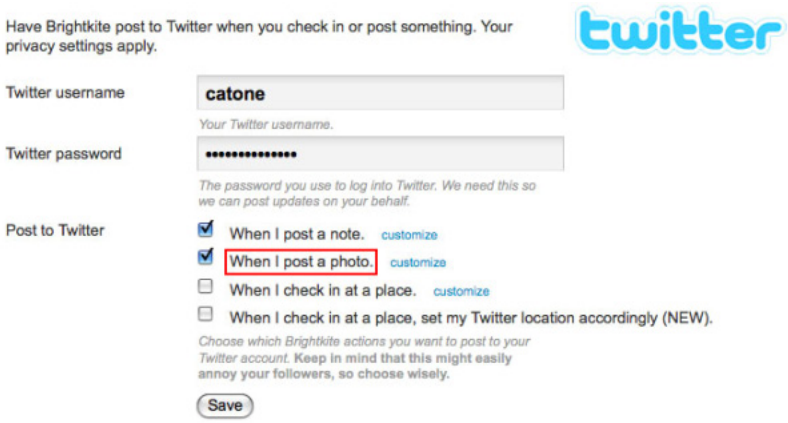
Mobypicture: Mobypicture's Twitter image sharing service is one of the easiest and perhaps most ingenious methods of pushing pictures to Twitter in this round up. All you need to do is send an email or MMS message containing a photo, a title (subject) and optional body text to twituser.twitpass@mobypicture.com, where 'twituser' and 'twitpass' are your Twitter login credentials. Mobypicture then sends out your tweet for you, no sign up required. You'll have to judge for yourself how secure it is to email your Twitter username and password to a third-party service, though.

Twitxr: Twitxr has end-to-end mobile photo sharing covered, with native applications for the iPhone, Windows Mobile and PocketPC, Nokia and Motorola phones, a mobile site and support for email posting. The site supports posting to Facebook, Picasa, and Flickr, in addition to posting photos to Twitter.

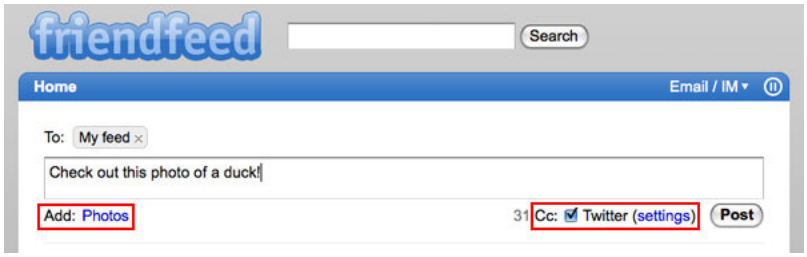
Posterous: The email-based blogging service Posterous recently noted on its own blog that its API can be used to upload photos to Posterous using just Twitter credentials. Essentially, users can email photos to Posterous, which are then automatically posted to Twitter (and Facebook) in addition to being added to their Posterous blog site.

3. Via Brightkite or FriendFeed

Both Brightkite and Friendfeed are useful micro messaging platforms in their own right, but neither have garnered near the level of attention that Twitter has. Both services integrate closely with Twitter, and because the services support photo sharing, users of each site can send images back to their Twitter streams.



Brightkite: To share images on Brightkite, navigate to the 'Sharing' tab of the 'Account Settings' page. Enter your Twitter username and password and make sure 'When I post a photo.' is checked. Now any time you post a photo via Brightkite, it will be copied back to Twitter using a shortened URL (bkite.com). This is especially handy for iPhone users, since Brightkite's native iPhone app has support for taking and sharing photos within the application.

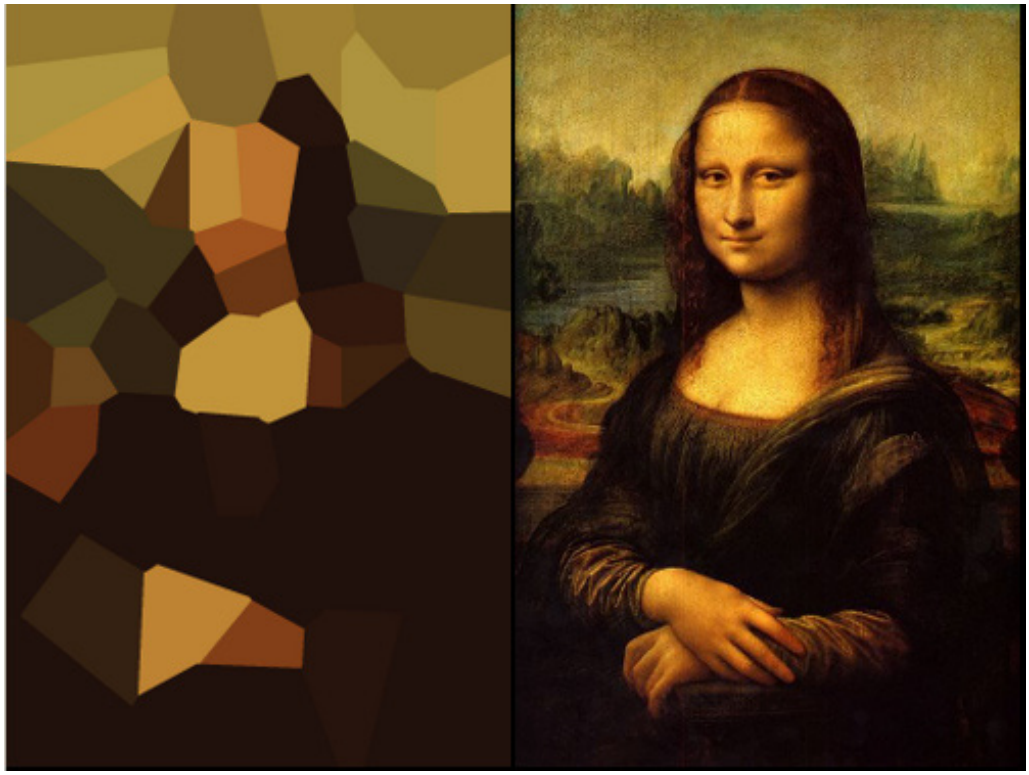


Friendfeed: A very large portion of Friendfeed's content is pulled in via Twitter, which is unsurprising given just how popular Twitter is and the nature of its service (which encourages the creation of a lot of small bits of content). But text, links, and images shared on Friendfeed directly can also be copied back to Twitter. Just make sure you check the "Cc: Twitter," box. If you add a photo, it will be shared via a shortened URL (ff.im).

4. Via Skitch

Skitch is different from the other sites mentioned in this post in that it isn't specifically made for Twitter. Rather, Skitch is a Mac-native image editing client that uniquely has sharing directly built in. Once you're done editing a photo, you can click the 'Webpost' button to automatically upload it to the Internet, and then you can share the image via the provided link.

5. Via an Encoded Tweet



This one is a bit theoretical, but pretty cool. Recently, Flickr user Quasimondo posted the results of a competition to write an image encoder/decoder that could pack up an image inside a single tweet. Not a link to a picture, as is the case in every other service mentioned in this post, but the actual data that makes up the image.

Quasimondo used Chinese characters for his encoder since UTF-8 encoding let him send 210 bytes of data in the 140 characters allowed per tweet. He goes into a good deal of detail about the technical aspects of how he's doing the encoding and compressing the data in his Flickr stream, but the actual visual results of his experiment are rather impressive.

It would make a lot of sense for Twitter to build image sharing functionality into the Twitter web and mobile interfaces natively. It's unlikely they'll actually host any images (Twitter has always outsourced URL shortening, after all, first to TinyURL and more recently to Bit.ly), but we wouldn't be surprised if Twitter someday added thumbnail preview functionality for shared image links.

In the meantime, though, there are a ton of options for sharing images on Twitter, including many not mentioned here. Which is your preferred method?

Get your questions answered on Twitter by Stan Schroeder

One of the rare services that Google was forced to shut down was Google Answers. Perhaps they anticipated that it was a battle they could not win because getting quick answers to your questions is easier than ever – on Twitter. You can, of course, just ask the question, but we've found five sites that try to add some structure to the process, and checked out if they're worth your time.

1. IKnowTweet

This simple site searches Twitter for phrases such as "does anyone know?" and "why does?" and collects them all at one place. There's an option to answer the questions and a list of popular terms; unfortunately, the site doesn't list answers anywhere, which makes it a lot less useful than it could be.

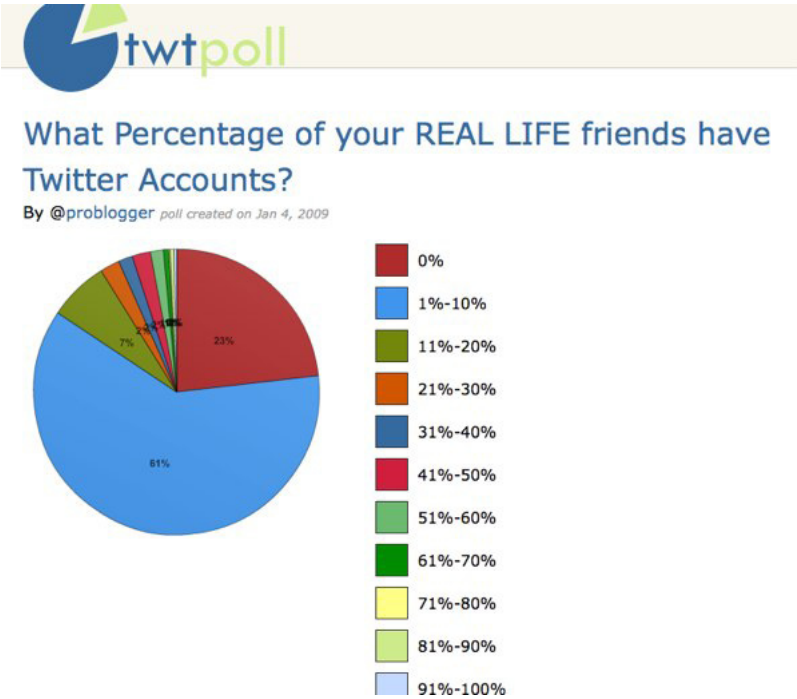
2. ToAnswer

By far the most elegant of the sites listed here, ToAnswer lets you ask questions on Twitter by simply prefixing them with @toask. The answers are displayed in a nice Twitter-like interface, and questions are asked through a lightbox-style window that opens with your Twitter account. The problem, however, is lack of answers, which means that the community hasn't really noticed it yet.

3. TwttrStrm

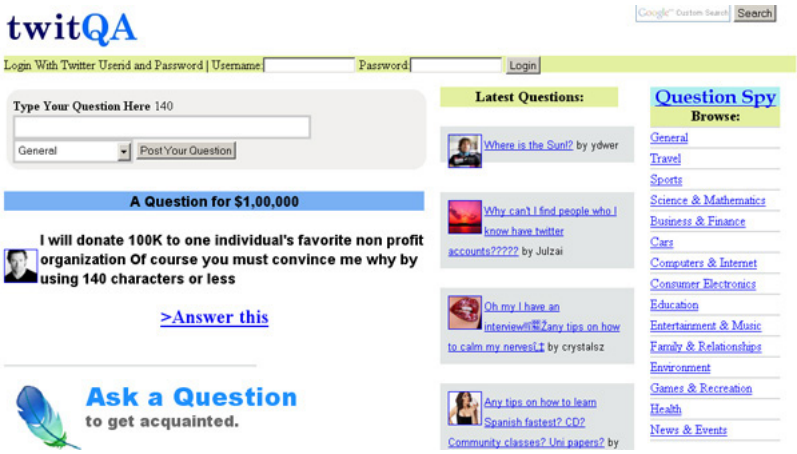
TwttrStrm is an interesting and slightly more complex service that combines Twitter with Squidoo and its "lens" approach to answering questions. Basically, you ask a question on Twitter, but instead of merely getting short answers, Squidoo will create a brand new Lens with a bunch of information on the topic you've asked about. The Lens can include latest tweets, but also images, Amazon shopping links and various other types of content. Compared to other sites on the list, TwttrStrm is definitely something else, and it can be used in a lot of different, creative ways; for merely getting some quick answers, though, there may be better alternatives out there.

4. twtpoll



There are many ways to ask a question; a poll is one of them, and twtpoll lets you create polls on Twitter. You ask a poll question, add some answer options (you can choose if it's a one answer or multiple answers type of poll) and you're done. You can share the poll via Twitter, email or Facebook. On the site, you can browse through the most popular and recent polls, and every poll is available on a unique link, with a nice accompanying graph. The site also offers an upgrade to the standard service, which lets you brand your poll page; the price for the upgrade is up to you; choose any amount and send it to the site creators.

5. twitQA



twitQA is a very new site that lets you ask questions in different categories such as sports, travel, health, business & finance, cars and the like. Instead of using hashtags, twitQA recognizes questions and fetches them directly from the Twitter feed, which makes populating the question database easier. The interface design, however, won't win any awards, and I'm afraid it's going to drive many potential users away.