



## Susan Mernit Consulting

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### **The twitter glossary: what do all those terms mean?**

By Deanna Zandt and Susan Mernit

Based on our workshop on twitter presented at Women! Action! Media!, Boston 2009 and a post on Deanna's blog called A non-fanatical beginner's guide to Twitter at <http://www.deannazandt.com/2009/02/26/a-non-fanatical-beginners-guide-to-twitter/>

**Following.** These are the people whose tweets you've selected to read; their tweets appear in your "feed" or "stream."

**Follower.** This is someone who is reading your tweets.

**The @ symbol.** Put this before any other Twitterer's username to refer to them. Why? It creates a link to their profile automatically, which is handy for your followers to track conversations or look at people you're referring to.

**Reply:** If you put the twitter name in front of your message, the person you address will see your tweet whether they follow you or not. So will everyone else following your stream. (Ex: @PresidentObama, make sure you eat those veggies from the White House garden, now.)

**@replies** will usually also show up the reply section of someone's twitter account. This has to be turned on in the settings, but most people select it.

**Retweet:** Rt, RT or rtwt. These stand for "retweet." If you read someone else's tweet and you want to share it, put this before copying and pasting the whole thing, including the original tweeter's username into your tweet.

Here's an example, where Deanna retweeted something that Nancy Scola posted: "rt @nancyscola: isn't there something uniquely DC about 1/5 of Politico's "top 10" DC Twitterers not actually tweeting? <http://ow.ly/qmy>"

**(Via):** Instead of using retweet, you can use "via @username" to attribute something that you saw with another user. This is good when you are not directly quoting word for word, but paraphrasing or passing a link along.

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**Hashtag:** The # symbol. Words that follow # in Twitter are called "hash tags." It's a way of assigning a keyword to a tweet so that so that others can follow the topic.

For example: When folks were attending the WeMedia conference in February 2009, they would tweet information about the conference and put #wemedia somewhere in the tweet. That way, everyone else interested in news from the conference could easily find and track them via twitter search.

**DM or Direct messaging.** This is a way of sending a message to someone so that only they can see it– like sending a txt message. The person has to be following you in order to receive messages from you, though! (No DMing Jane Fonda or Henry Rollins unless they're following you, ya hear?)

To do this, you can either go to the person's twitter page (aka, their profile page), and click on the "message" link in the left sidebar. Or, if you're using another device or application besides the Twitter website, you can type the letter d, the person's username, and then your message. I.e., "d randomdeanna let's go to happy hour at abilene later"

**The Find people tab:** The Find People tab on twitter allows you to search for people you know, and to import your email contacts from many web based services and see who you know and then follow them.

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