



Tweeting: Not Just for the Birds

One of the core fundamentals of the internet is the sharing of information. As a free social networking site, [Twitter](#) allows its 100 million plus users to connect to one another through textual postings called tweets. These tweets contain a maximum of 140 characters each and can include hyperlinks to other sites as well as links to other Twitter users.

While the majority of users are individuals, business and other organizations like the [American Library Association](#) have begun to use Twitter as a marketing and advocacy tool.

Lately, libraries are getting in the game.



Public libraries like the [New York Public Library](#) have created Twitter accounts with the goal of connecting to their patrons outside the walls of the library. School libraries are slowly moving towards using social networking as a means of communicating with students, teachers, parents, and the surrounding community. However, the issue of privacy and web safety is a major concern in the school setting, especially when it comes to elementary-age students. For this reason, some schools might be hesitant to try social networking sites. Fortunately, Twitter's privacy settings can be used to control who is able to see and add content to a page.

Twitter is very user friendly, which is a major plus for a school librarian who more than likely will be charged with maintaining the school's website. Good web designers should be

looking for ways in which to drive traffic to their websites. Because Twitter allows for hyperlinks within a tweet, users can link directly from the school library's Twitter page to their



school's website. Inversely, through the use of Twitter's "[Goodies](#)" page, the school librarian can copy and paste a few lines of html directly into their website's code. This html can be used to create a button that will link the user directly

to the school library's Twitter page. There is also code available if the school librarian wants to add a Twitter widget, which will show the Twitter feed on the school library's website.

The school library has decided to create a Twitter account. There is a button on the library's website linking users to their Twitter page and an opening Tweet welcoming followers and linking back to the school's website. That is a great start, but Twitter has much more to offer. The school librarian can tweet about new materials, upcoming events and programs, or

WEBB 2.0

The Webb School is leading the way with Web 2.0. **Stay connected!** Visit Webb on [YouTube](#), on Facebook at [The Webb School](#) (for basic campus connections); [The Webb School Library](#) (for book lovers and scholars); and [W.R. Sawney Webb](#) (for alumni and the entire Webb community), and on [Twitter](#).

Don't see a video? [Download the latest version of Flash Player](#) or [enable JavaScript to view the video](#).

Webb on Twitter

Nashville area alumni and friends gather in Belle Meade to mix, mingle and meet incoming Head of School. <http://t.co/FtqTFgl> #thewebbschool about 6 hours ago

Feet win at home invitational honoring former student John Freeman. <http://t.co/1RMC0WW> #thewebbschool 7 days ago

It's Showtime! WSPA Auction and Dinner set for Nov. 5 <http://t.co/LsjvRer> 8 days ago

Webb students to offer campus tours during annual Arts and Crafts Festival <http://t.co/pyHZD97> #thewebbschool 13 days ago

link to articles and pictures. [The Webb School](#) in Tennessee has an entire page of their website dedicated to "Webb" 2.0 tools. They have made use of the Twitter widget and also link directly to their Twitter page from the website.

These postings are a great way to get information out to the school community. However, the main focus of Web 2.0 is to create an atmosphere of interaction and creation on the web. Through Twitter, students, teachers, and parents have the opportunity to take an active role in

their school. Student's can be encouraged to tweet about good books they have read; teachers can post links to interesting articles; parents can offer suggestions of ways in which the community can be involved with the education process. Some students will have a better learning experience when they are able to take an active role in their education.

As with all things, there are a few pitfalls that school librarians should be aware of. First and foremost is always student safety. While Twitter does offer privacy settings, they must be activated by the user in order to be effective. In addition to safety and security, content management becomes an issue. The school librarian will have to take on the responsibility for every follower and every tweet posted to the school library's page. This can be a daunting task as the school librarian has many other responsibilities within the school. Finding the time to type a 140 character message might be difficult, let alone having to approve followers and read tweets from other staff, students, and parents. Fortunately, the overall positives of using Twitter outweigh the negatives. Visit the [New Tools Workshop](#) wiki for articles and videos related to incorporating Twitter into the school environment.