Twitter is a useful tool for providing quick updates regarding events, services, research developments, and activities. Tweets are very short—limited to 140 characters—and often provide links to more-detailed information. With a smartphone, you can tweet from almost anywhere.

**Note:** Twitter is available online at the Twitter website or as a mobile app. The following instructions apply to using the Twitter website.

### GETTING STARTED:
How to create your Twitter account

1. Go to www.twitter.com

2. Fill in your actual name, email address, and preferred password before clicking "sign up for Twitter.”

3. Fill out the form, create your profile, then walk through the tutorial on how to use Twitter.

When you fill out the profile, follow these guidelines:

- Your username should be listed as “UIExtensionYourlastname”

- Your bio should be short and to the point, something like "4-H coordinator, robotics enthusiast, camp volunteer.”

- Your location is generally not a physical address but rather your city and state or county.

- Your website. Enter the web address of your county’s website.

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**LEARN THE LINGO**

**Tweet.** Noun: 140-character message sent out via Twitter. Verb: Tweet, tweeting, tweeted—the act of posting a message on twitter.

**RT, Retweet.** Noun: A reposted or forwarded tweet. Verb: To repost or forward a tweet.

**DM, Direct message.** Tweets that are private between the sender and the recipient.

**Favorite.** You can “favorite” a tweet by selecting the star underneath it. Tweets that you have “favorited” are saved in their own list for easy access later.

**Feed.** The place where all the tweets from all the users you follow are aggregated in chronological order.

**Follow.** To subscribe to a user’s tweets on Twitter. Followers are users who have subscribed to your tweets.

**Hashtag.** The # symbol placed in front of words to mark keywords or topics. Hashtags are searchable. Standard UI Extension hashtags for county offices are #UIextension and #YourCounty

**Username or Twitter handle.** A name, unique to you, that identifies you on Twitter.

**Reply or mention.** Using the @ sign in front of a user’s Twitter handle in a tweet. The user who was tagged is notified that they were mentioned.

**URL shortener.** Services that shorten URLs are available on the web at goo.gl and bit.ly. Mobile devices shorten URLs for you.

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**NEED HELP?**

Contact:
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University of Idaho Extension
Click the pencil in the upper right-hand corner to upload a header photo. The header photo should show something that exemplifies what you do—a group of 4-H youth, a Master Gardener class, etc.

For the profile photo, upload a professional photo of yourself or use the approved UI Extension social media logo (contact cals-social@uidaho.edu).

**TWEETING:**
**How to tweet**

1. Sign in to your UI Extension profile at www.twitter.com. Select the blue feather button on the far right of the navigation bar.

2. Type your tweet, keeping an eye on the character countdown next to the "tweet" button. You can also upload a photo from this window. Just click on the camera icon, select the photo, and hit "open."

3. When you are finished writing your message, click “tweet” and you are done!

**FIND AND FOLLOW:**
**How to find and follow other users**

You can search relevant hashtags to find other Twitter users who tweet about similar things. You can also search for individual users.

1. Utilize the “search” box in the top navigation bar. You can enter general search terms like “Idaho” and find tweets and users with that word.

2. Click on a tweet to pull up the profile of that user. To follow them, select “follow.” Their tweets will now show up in your feed. And even better, they may follow you back.

**Tips for terrific tweets**

- **Don’t use slang.** Because a tweet is limited to 140 characters, it can be tempting to use internet/texting slang such as “ur” instead of “your” and “y” instead of “why.” Dedicate a few extra moments to rewording a tweet so you are using proper spelling and grammar. It is more professional, more readable, and will lend your tweets more credibility.

- **Save space.** You can save space in other ways. For instance, you can use the “&” symbol instead of writing out “and,” and you can use URL shorteners to make any links you post shorter than 20 characters.

- **Use hashtags.** Hashtags introduce your tweet to a realm of potential followers. Don’t use more than two per tweet, or your tweet will be considered spam. For example, “Sign-up for the Latah County Master Gardener class begins today. #gardening #greenthumb” or “Sign up for Master Gardener program #uiextension #LatahCounty. Deadline is Jan. 12.”

- **Make yourself retweetable.** Leave 15–20 characters of empty space in your tweet where users can add their own comment to the discussion when they retweet.

- **Call to action.** Use words that direct users and motivate them to engage with your content. Encourage them to attend an event, go to a web page, engage in a discussion, or retweet you with their followers.

**Further reading**

- Official Twitter help
  https://support.twitter.com/

- University of Idaho social media policies and guidelines

- How to use Twitter videos

- Other Extension Twitter accounts
  https://twitter.com/PurdueExtension
  https://twitter.com/UMNExt
  https://twitter.com/ISUExension
  https://twitter.com/urbanturfmn
  https://twitter.com/umnfoodsafety
  https://twitter.com/Hannah4MSUE