

The Decoding Dyslexia “How To” Guide For Twitter

[Twitter Basics Guide](#) Link

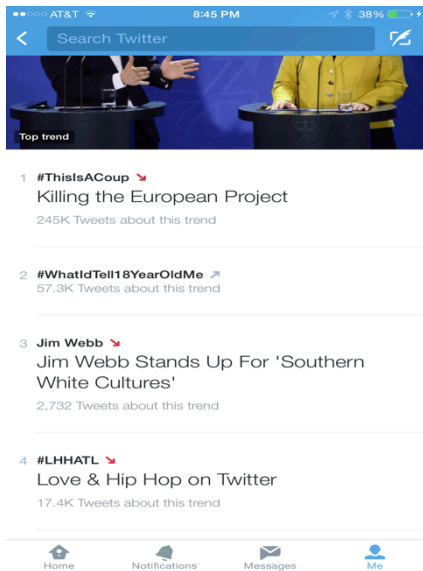
Twitter is an amazing venue that allows a ‘real time’ response to various topics. The mainstream news media as well as blogs scan Twitter for topics that are getting a lot of traffic and are generating noise. They will write news stories based on Twitter happenings. This is a free, easy way for us to get PR for all issues #dyslexia.

What is Trending? What is a #hashtag?

One of the ways the press and others can see what people are talking about is via what is “trending.” Typically they have visibility into this via one key word or a particular #hashtag, which is a word with a # in front of a word (ie: #dyslexia) or string of words slammed together (ie: #FailingDyslexicKids, #ItsNotWorking, #EpicFail.) Twitter keeps a running list of trending words or hashtags. These change minute by minute depending on what people are talking about.

Twitter is very different from Facebook and can seem overwhelming at first. The best way to understand the venue is to get on Twitter and start using it. The main difference is that it is about volume of noise or volume of tweets.

Here is an example of what the Twitter trends look like: Notice they are listed in order of most Tweeted subject. This is what everyone is talking about on Twitter at that moment in time.



Can You Tweet Too Much?

Unlike Facebook, sending out one post will rarely have an impact. Twitter looks at volume of discussion on one topic. Instead of sending out one profound post, you need to send out as many posts as you can using the same hashtag. On Twitter more is always better.

Coordinated Tweeting Using a Pre-Set HashTag

The best case scenario is if all DD members are doing this at a coordinated time and date so that there is volume and mass. If enough people, especially on a slow news day, make #dyslexia a trending topic nationally, dyslexia will get attention as press will want to see what all the fuss is about. This is how you get the

attention of the media and get great, free PR.

Getting Started on Twitter

Get on Twitter and set up an account. The key to Twitter is to have a public account so that everyone can see your tweets. This is different from Facebook where you post personal information and pictures of your kids using privacy settings. This account will have NO privacy settings. This is the account you will be using to send out massive tweets. Everyone should be able to see what you write. If you want to tweet personal information, please set up a personal Twitter account.

How to Set Up Your Twitter Account

- 1) Your name and picture. People will know who you are, if someone Google's your name, your tweets can/will come up in the search.
- 2) You can use a fake name and a picture of a carton, drawing, animal, or object. If you go this route and want complete privacy, you can also choose to set up another email account just for your Twitter account. Either way, you will need to provide an email account to set up your Twitter account.

A step by step guide:

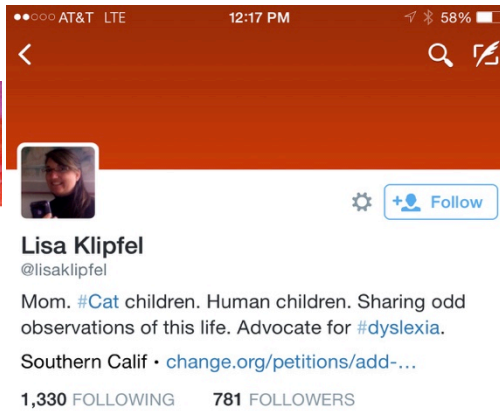
- A) The account is set up with a "twitter handle" which starts with the @ sign. (See below example: @HoraceMann or @mma718) It can include letters, numbers, and symbols, and is case sensitive. This will appear in all of your tweets. Helpful hint: When picking a "Twitter handle" try to use the shortest handle you can (meaning using the least amount of letters) (ie: @cnn is a better handle than @washingtonpost.) In Twitter you are limited in how many characters you can write in a tweet. Shorter is always better. People are more likely to copy you into tweets if your handle is shorter.
- B) The account is also set up with a user name (See below example: Horace Mann or Mary Ahern) The name appears in your profile only.

Here are some examples of how people have set up their accounts, and how they appear in tweets:



- C) The account also should have a profile picture. Tweeters call this your “Avi” short for Avitar. This picture will show alongside your twitter handle (@yournamehere) with every tweet you send. Your profile default Avi (or picture) will be of an egg. Replace the egg with a picture or tweeters will be wary of your account and question its validity. It’s a Twitter thing—you must have a picture of something, anything, even if it’s your pet, a blackboard, or a random flower in your profile. (See below: John Chase @getwhatyougive has a hand for his profile picture, Horace Mann @HoraceMann has a carton owl.) There is also opportunity for a second picture in your profile. I would put something there too. You can always use something #dyslexia related☺
- D) Write about your interests in your profile. I would mention dyslexia as a hashtag (some examples of profile verbiage: #Dyslexia advocate, fighting for change for #dyslexic students, member of Decoding #Dyslexia) You can also put other hashtags in your profile so likeminded people can find you (ie: #education, #LD) This will also indicate to other tweeters your interest in Dyslexia and that you have a legit account. Putting a hashtag in your profile will help others interested in that subject to find you and follow you. You can also put your state in your profile if you wish. This will help other DD members know where you are located.

Here are some examples of profiles: Reminder: you do NOT have to use your personal picture if you don’t want to.



I Have Zero Followers, Now What?

One thing you will notice starting out, you will not have any followers. The hardest thing to get on Twitter as a new user is followers as Tweeters are wary of new accounts. The best thing for people to do is let others in DD know your Twitter handle, and we all need to follow each other. You want to get as many followers as you can on Twitter.

You can find **trending hashtags** on the smartphone by clicking on the search button. They will also appear on the computer

in a list on the left side of your computer screen. What is trending on Twitter will change constantly and it is something monitored by the press.

You can also search for hashtags by typing #dyslexia in the search engine. All of the #dyslexia tweets will come up. From there you can see other hashtags people are using. If you click on the hashtag in someone's tweet you will be able to view all of the tweets on that hashtag you clicked on. You can also go on to hashtags like #dyslexia and look for people tweeting on the hashtag, look at their profile, and/or what they are tweeting about. If it looks like another Tweeter interested in dyslexia, or education...follow them (especially if they look like they follow back.)

What is Following?

Follow back? What? Helpful hint: Look at their profile and see how many people they are following and how many are following them. If the ratio is about equal they will probably follow you back and would be a good person to follow. Twitter is about volume and that includes number of followers. You want to get as many solid followers as you can. People who are following most people back will probably follow you back as well, so they are good people to follow. I highly recommend following back everyone that follows you. Here is the caveat: If an account follows you who is someone selling something, porn related, or selling twitter followers...DO NOT FOLLOW BACK! Look at every profile before you follow, but if they are legit (ie: another dyslexia mom) please follow back. Many Tweeters will drop you if you do

not follow back. There are issues in Twitter regarding ratios of followers to following. There are programs out there to help people with large accounts dump people en masse that do not follow back. I won't go into detail on this, but do yourself a favor and follow all DD members, and legit accounts back.

How Many People Can I Follow?

Twitter likes a nice ratio of people you follow to people who follow you. It is best to keep this ratio balanced. Twitter does not let you follow thousands of people when you only have 50 followers. I suggest you stay away from following celebrities and people who will not follow you back. Try to follow people with balanced accounts who have a high probability of following you back.

What is Follow Friday? #FF???

Friday is a huge day for Twitter. They have what is called "Follow Friday." Tweeters will send out tweets of people they suggest others follow. The way they do this is by using the hashtag #FF and then listing the Twitter handles of people they suggest you follow. It looks like this:

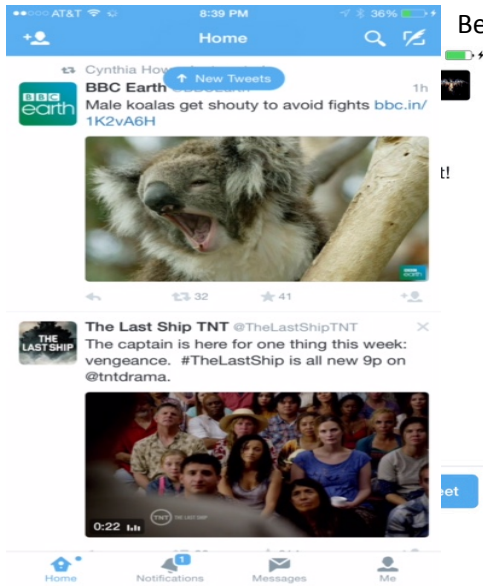
#FF @DDNC13 @DDNJ12 @DDVA13 @DcodeDyslexiaKY @DyslexiaYale

Send out tweets like this on Fridays to help other Dyslexia tweeters find each other. You can also add the hashtag #dyslexia to the tweet. Add as many people as 140 characters allows.

How Do I Tweet?

Hit the little box with the quill pen inside on the upper right on the smartphone app and start writing. Look at the example below. On the smartphone: in the middle is the "home button," to the right of it is a magnifying glass which is the "search" button, to the right of the search button is the "Tweet" button which is the box with the quill pen. On the computer there is a box on the top right that contains the box and quill pen and says "Tweet".

You only have 140 characters or less to say what you want. That 140 character limit includes any links you paste, and people's twitter handles if you are copying them in on your tweet. If you run over the 140 character the "Tweet" button will be grayed out. If you look to the left of the "Tweet" button it will tell you how many characters you have left to use. Hit tweet and you tweet is published.



Below is an example of a Tweet being written. Notice how #hashtags are incorporated into the Tweet. At the bottom of the screen on the lower right corner you see the number “8,” that is the amount of characters I have left to use in this tweet. To publish or “Tweet” this out, I will need to click the blue button that says “Tweet” on the bottom right. If I use too many characters, the number on the bottom right will read in the negative (ie: -2 means I used 142 characters or 2 over the 140 character limit.) When you are over the character limit the blue Tweet button is grayed out and it will not let you Tweet until you are under the 140 character limit.

If I don't have any followers how will anyone see my tweets?

This is the importance of hashtags! When you tweet on a hashtag, people who look at the hashtag will see your tweets even though you don't have any followers. When you are just starting out it is imperative that you put as many hashtags as you can in your tweets. Make sure you use common hashtags and don't make up new ones that are not commonly used.

How Do I Know If Someone followed Me?

This will be in the "Notifications" Tab on Twitter. This is located at the bottom of your screen on a smartphone. In the "Notifications" you will find people who followed you (you can click on their profile, check them out, then follow them back if they are a legit account.) You will also see anyone who Retweeted something you Tweeted. (Note: you will see RT written on Twitter, that stands for Retweet.) You will also see anyone who mentioned you or copied you in a tweet.

How do I know what hashtags to use?

The best thing to do is look at what is currently trending, and incorporate that trending hashtag. Another is to copy hashtags that other people are using. You can also go to the search field and type in dyslexia or #dyslexia. Look at the hashtags others are using and put those in your tweets. When in doubt, use #LD or #dyslexia, or #education or all of them at once! As long as are below the 140 character limit, you can add as many hashtags as you wish.

What else should I be doing to get my message out on Twitter?

You can copy in press and legislators into your tweets . Go to the 'search' button at the top right of your screen and find out the Twitter handle of your legislator (ie: @BillCassidy) or the handle for a news organization (ie: @cnn) or a correspondant (ie: @wolfblitzer) You can also copy a link to an article and

paste it into your tweet (just like you would on Facebook.) The best way to find people on twitter is to type their name in the search bar and typically they will come up.

Another way to get your tweet seen by more people is to “reply” to someone’s tweet who is famous and has a lot of visibility on Twitter. Anyone looking at the tweet you are replying to will also see your tweet. This strategy is most effectively used when “replying” to legislators, press, or anyone famous with the dyslexia messaging...even if it seems unrelated. This is a great way to get your message out to a lot of people.

Here are two examples of a reply:



How to REPLY to a Tweet

When replying to a tweet, always put a period in front of the person’s name. It’s a Twitter thing that requires a long explanation. The reply should read like this:

.@TeamFlacco have a Great Day w/the Fam Joe #Elite

.@TeamFlacco wish it wasn’t raining

Should I (or my DD group) have pre-canned tweets ready to go?

I think DD members can tweet differently from their personal Twitter handles than the each State DD group can from its official Twitter handle. If the tweets are identical it will look canned and fake and not pack the same punch.

The idea is that this information is coming from all over the country from individuals all experiencing the same thing. If the tweets are robotic it takes that away. I do recommend using #dyslexia stats in tweets. These are very effective and never get old.

What is Retweeting and When Should I ReTweet a Tweet?

Tricks for sending the same tweet over and over:

I try to send out individualized tweets, but sometimes it is necessary to send the exact same information over and over. To do so you must change something about the tweet. If the tweet is an exact replica, Twitter won’t allow you to send it. To send the same repeated tweet you can add a space, another word, change a word, copy in a different person, or add or delete a hashtag to send the same message over and over again.

Examples:

1 in 5 have #dyslexia, 1 in 5 have dyslexia, 1:5 have dyslexia, 1:5 have #dyslexia, 1 out of 5 have #dyslexia, @cnn 1:5 have #dyslexia, @NYTimes 1:5 have dyslexia, @NYTimes 1:5 have #dyslexia

Do You Read All of Your Twitter Feed? It's So Much!

No! Twitter is a lot of information coming all at once. You will never read all of it, nor would you want to. If you even glance at your Twitter feed I would skim it. Many people can feel overwhelmed by the volume of information. You are not alone. It can be hard to understand some of the tweets as many people abbreviate to reduce the amount of characters they are using.

I Want to Read Feed from Certain People, What Do I Do? Advanced Twitter:

If you want to follow the tweets of certain people, the best thing to do is to create a list. This can only be done on the computer, but this function allows you to create a list of tweeters so that you only see their tweets when viewing the list. To create a List, on your computer, look at the top right screen. Click on your Avi next to the "Tweet" button. This brings up a drop down menu. Click on "Lists." Now look to the right of your screen and click on "Create a New List." Give your list a name and a description, then find people to add to your list. You can put people's names or even the word dyslexia in the search and profiles will come up. To add the profile click on the gear icon next to "following", click "add or remove from list," click the name of your list you created. Add all of the people who you want to read, then you are finished. When you go back and click on your list you will just see the twitter feed of the people on your list. Your main Twitter feed will still be of ALL of the people you are following.

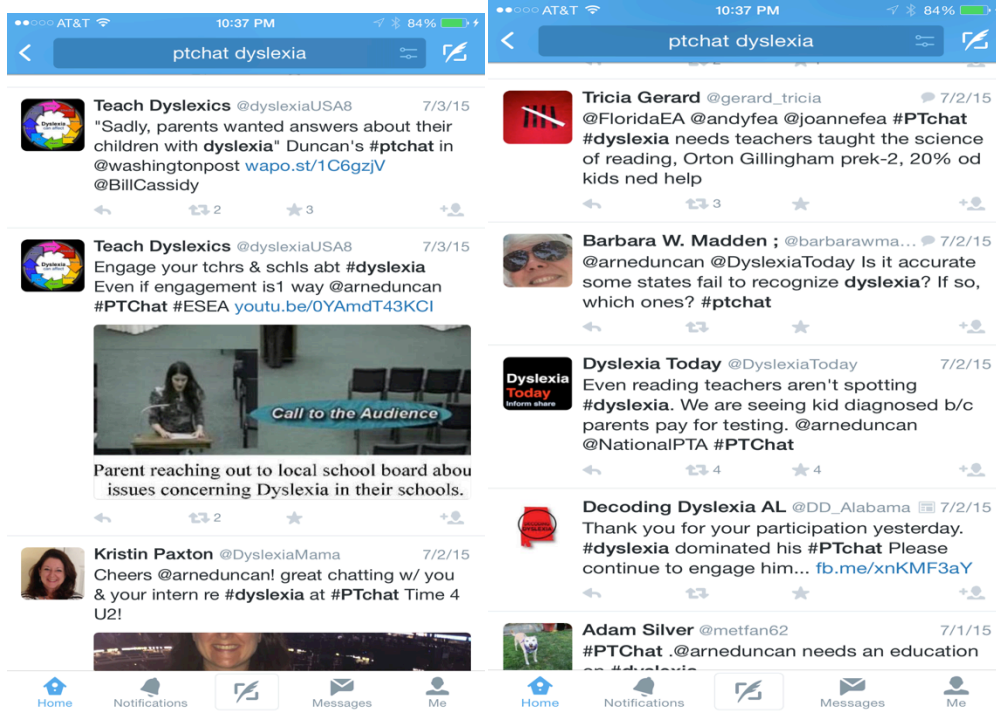
Best Practices on Twitter

In case you missed it: The Secretary of Education Arne Duncan recently held a #PTChat where he planned to talk to parents about parental involvement in the schools. The National Decoding Dyslexia group posted info regarding his planned Twitter Chat on the National Facebook page. Decoding Dyslexia mobilized on Twitter and took over the hashtag asking questions about his lack of response to our dyslexic kids. (On Twitter they call that "hijacking the hashtag")

There were so many tweets he cut the live tweet session short. The tough questions on Dyslexia and lack of response from Duncan was picked up by an Education Blog, and then The Washington Post ran a brief introduction and posted the blog on the WP education blog site.

Twitter works, especially if it is a coordinated effort. Here is the blog post by Valerie Strauss with the Washington Post on Duncan's #TwitterFail: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/wp/2015/07/03/arne-duncan-pushes-for-parent-engagement-and-gets-some-angry-feedback/>

Examples of Good Dyslexia Tweets:



What does Decoding Dyslexia need to do?

- 1) Every DD member needs to have a Twitter account.
- 2) DD members need to follow each other.
- 3) Every member needs to know how to use Twitter.
- 4) Find out when these types of “Twitter Chats” are taking place, notify all members and deploy on Twitter en masse and hijack the hashtag just like we did for #PTChat
- 5) Have separate, designated Twitter days (maybe once a month?) where we all use a preplanned hashtag on a particular date at a particular time. Tweeters tweet and keep tweeting for specified period of time (45 minutes-1 hour.) copying in press and legislators.
- 6) Develop a list of press/legislators who have a national audience and impact and post in a google doc to the DD FB Group so all states can access this information quickly and easily.
- 7) Each state should develop a legislative twitter list that includes: their State DOE, State Education Committee Legislators/Senators, State Media, State education reporters and teacher education unions and groups like PTA – education thought leaders.

Other helpful hints:

- 1) Be witty. You are limited by 140 characters on Twitter. Grab people's attention.
- 2) Be provocative without being disrespectful. Keep it classy.
- 3) Send out as many tweets as you can and use hashtags in all of your tweets. It's about volume.
- 4) If you can, use Twitter on your smartphone. I find this the easiest way to stay engaged.
- 5) When in doubt, ask a teenager! They all know how to use social media 😊
- 6) For DD official accounts, consider the value of connecting to your official DD FB page – it's not always worth the automatic post if you are doing high volume tweeting. Your FB followers will get annoyed.
- 7) Have fun!

This guide is written by Elizabeth Hembling with Decoding Dyslexia Maryland to assist new Twitter members. If you have suggestions or questions, please contact DecodingDyslexiaMD@gmail.com. Thank you!