Twitter Toolbox

Once you have established your social media outposts, the next question becomes how to keep them updated and attracting new visitors. This simple guide will introduce you to some new tools (that are all free!) to make updating your Twitter accounts as quick and easy as possible.

See the other PBS Engage best practices and guides or contact us for more information about developing strategy for using Twitter and other social media effectively.

TwitterFeed – http://www.twitterfeed.com - Twitterfeed provides an automated way of posting information to your Twitter account. Typically this site is used to link to a new blog post, or headlines from a site. Once you've signed up for a Twitterfeed account you input any RSS feed and it will begin posting all new content into your Twitter stream for you.

Twitterfeed may seem like a "set it and forget it" tool, but there's no alternative to personal, manual tweets.

TweetBurner – http://www.tweetburner.com - TweetBurner can work in conjunction with Twitterfeed to provide stats and information about how many people are clicking on or spreading the links you post to Twitter.

The service is often used to make URLs shorter (very important when you only have 140 characters to convey your message). The service can also tell you who is "reTweeting" your post in their own Twitter timeline and giving you more visibility.

Search.Twitter.com – http://search.twitter.com - Twitter (the company) recently purchased Summize, a Web site that collected ALL tweets (Twitter messages) and made them searchable. Summize then became search.Twitter.com and it is now one of most useful and important tools in your Twitter toolbox.

Twitter Search lets you search for all tweets that contain a set of keywords. So if you wanted to know what people were saying about your station you might search for your call letters, a host or program name. Search then shows you a list of all of those messages, lets you reply to the author, and tells you when new tweets come through the system.

The service also provides an RSS feed of the search results so you can add it to your feed reader and not have to visit the site directly to see the results. (If you're a little more advanced you could also create a widget and put it on your own Web site, a "What people are saying…" type of feature.)

Matt (Multi Account Twitter Tweeter) - http://www.themattinator.com – This is a new service that allows you to post to multiple Twitter accounts from the same page. (Cool note: It was built by 10 people in 4 days just to see if it was possible to build a Web application that quickly.)

Matt can be a little buggy and quirky sometimes -- it was built in 4 days, after all. But if you have multiple Twitter accounts - for instance if your station has a primary account and some of your shows or personalities have their own – you can post to all of them without logging in and out of Twitter constantly.
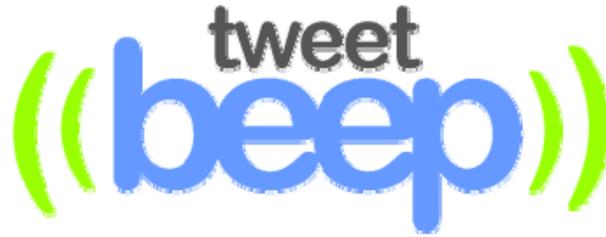
Tweetbeep – http://www.tweetbeep.com – Google Alerts for Twitter! Tweetbeep will e-mail you hourly, or daily with all of the Tweets that mention your chosen keywords. For instance you could create an alert for your station call letters and whenever you get mentioned anywhere on Twitter, you'll know who it was and what they said. This is a great way to connect and help viewers.

Ping.FM – http://www.ping.fm – This web service allows you to post status updates and micro-blog posts (like on Twitter) to lots of social networking sites. When you sign up for Ping.fm you provide your username and password to the sites that you want to post to, and the service will ping your updates to all of them.

As of this writing ping.fm will blast your update to Bebo, Blogger, Brightkite, Facebook, FriendFeed, hi5, Identi.ca, Jaiku, Kwippy, LinkedIn, LiveJournal, Mashable, MySpace, Plaxo, Plurk, Pownce, Tumblr, Twitter, WordPress, and Xanga.

Ping.FM is currently a private beta site. If you'd like an invitation to signup email Jonathan Coffman, Engage product manager (jdcoffman@pbs.org) and he'll send you the latest secret code.