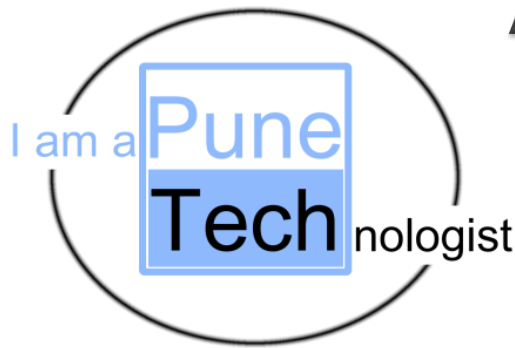


# Why you should be on Twitter

## And how best to use it



Navin Kabra

<http://punetech.com>

@ngkabra and @punetech on twitter

# Twitter is now a legitimate source of news

Actual tweet:

“#mumbai: had a chat with someone at BBC world service. They are following twitter to keep themselves updated.”

By @shaktijs

*If it's good enough for BBC its good enough for you*

It's a huge marketing tool and information tool

– Michael Arrington  
of TechCrunch  
(#1 tech blog in the world)

In many cases, Twitter updated developments faster than many TV networks or newspaper websites.

The site's contributors also questioned the veracity of some news reports, pointing out contradictions and errors.

When Indian reporters announced that the siege at the Taj hotel was over, for example, Twitter contended that gunfights were continuing.

– The Guardian, 28 Nov 2008

# Useful in personal life too

need suggestion to name my boy, staring with I

- @thecancerus asking his twitter followers for suggestions

# Not everyone uses it that way...

My nose is leaking

– user @zapples on twitter

But you can choose how you use twitter!

# What is Twitter

- ▶ 140 character updates
- ▶ Send from any where
- ▶ Receive anywhere

# Send from anywhere

- ▶ PC, laptop, cellphone
- ▶ SMS, Browser, GPRS, IM, Desktop client
- ▶ RWW counted 142 clients in 24 hours

Send from:

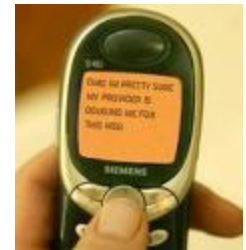
- ▶ Office
- ▶ Restaurant
- ▶ Biking in Ladakh





# Receive anywhere

- ▶ Receive other people's updates in all those same varied places
- ▶ Incredibly flexible
- ▶ Many, many, many different ways for how/where you use it



# How to use – website

- ▶ Go to twitter.com
- ▶ Enter 140 character update
- ▶ Press Enter
- ▶ Whole world sees it!

# Follow

- ▶ “Follow” anyone in the whole world who uses twitter
- ▶ You will see all their updates on twitter.com
- ▶ Your friends
- ▶ Co-workers
- ▶ Celebrities
- ▶ Powerful people
- ▶ Experts
- ▶ Websites
- ▶ And more...

# Following

- ▶ My twitter stream
- ▶ Updates from people I'm following
- ▶ Work-related
- ▶ General info
- ▶ Politics
- ▶ Setting-up meetings
- ▶ *etc.*

# Whom to follow?

- ▶ Anyone in the world
- ▶ Friends
- ▶ Coworkers
- ▶ Family
- ▶ Experts
- ▶ Websites
- ▶ News

# Whom to follow

- ▶ Start with your friends & coworkers
- ▶ And the people they are following
- ▶ At least follow 20 or 30 initially
  - Otherwise twitter will be very boring
- ▶ Keep adding
  - Keep checking out twitter pages of new people whose names you see in your twitter stream
- ▶ Keep deleting
  - The ones whose tweets you don't like
  - Don't want information overload

# Everyone is on twitter

- ▶ Twitter is lightweight enough that even extremely busy people find time to send out these one liners
- ▶ So you'll find lots of interesting/powerful/influential people on twitter – actively twittering!
- ▶ Not true of most other communication media

# Twitter Advanced Concepts

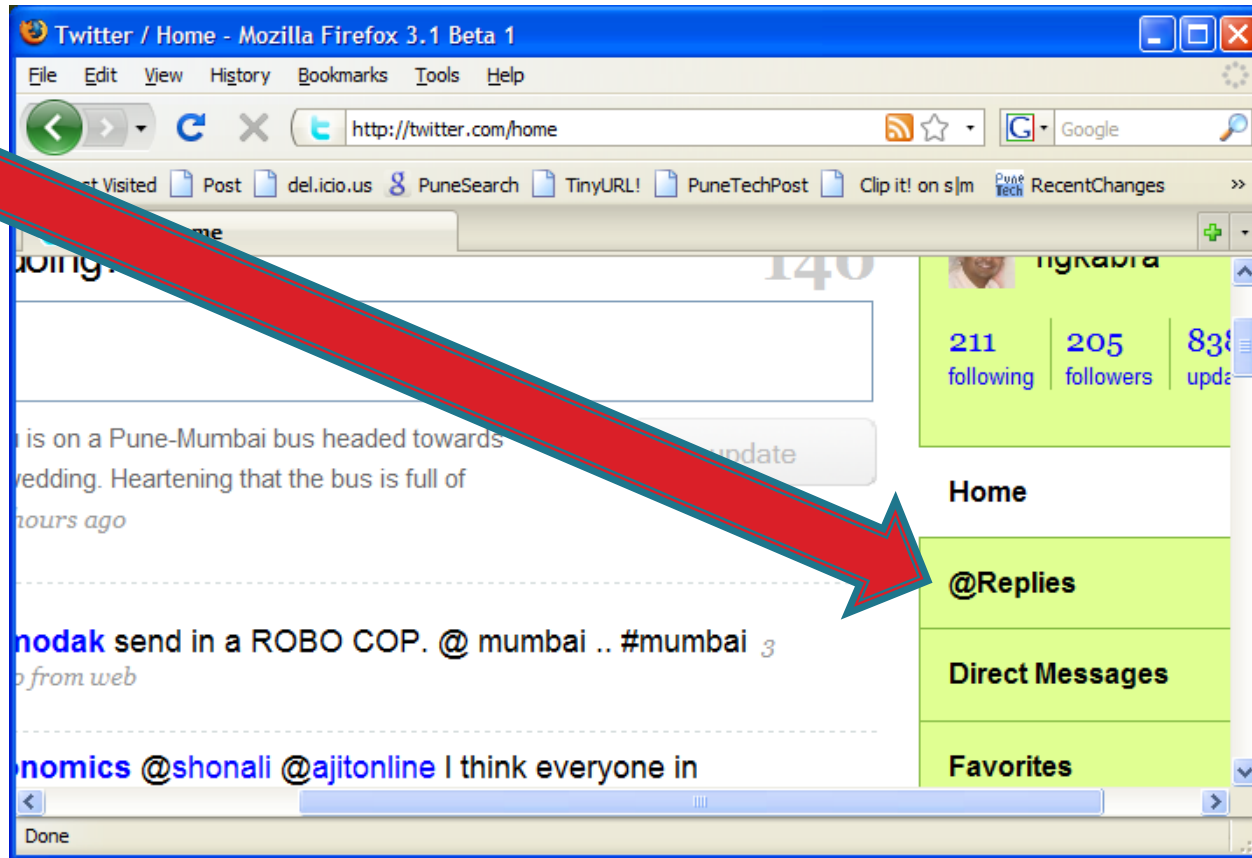
- ▶ Replies
  - Send replies to people not following you
  - See replies from people you aren't following
- ▶ Direct Messages
- ▶ Retweets
- ▶ URL shortening services
- ▶ Search
- ▶ Using desktop clients to for twittering
- ▶ Using multiple accounts
- ▶ Using TweetDeck: groups
- ▶ Auto-posting to twitter from your blog
  
- ▶ Details in next few slides...



# Replies

- ▶ Embedding “@twitter\_username” in a tweet sends a “reply” to that person
- ▶ Example: “@techcrunch Please check out my company <http://pune-hot-web2.0.com>”
- ▶ Even if they aren’t following you
- ▶ You can reply to Shaquille O’Neal, Barack Obama, Michael Arrington
  - ▶ (and sometimes they reply back)

# Check for Replies from strangers



- ▶ That's how you meet new interesting strangers that share some common interest with you
- ▶ After all they replied to something you wrote

# Direct Messages

- ▶ Use instead of @reply if world doesn't need to know
- ▶ Like email but more “urgent” (*e.g.* might reach via SMS)
- ▶ Example: “Call @rohandighe urgently at +91 982xx xxxxx. He is looking for you at the IndicThreads conference.”

# Retweets

- ▶ When you see an interesting tweet from someone you are following, forward the tweet to your followers.
- ▶ Keep the name of the original tweeter, so that your followers can decide to follow that person if they find the tweet interesting
- ▶ Example:
  - punetech tweets “Useful website <http://punemate.com/>”
  - ngkabra wants his friends to know this. Tweets: “Retweet @punetech: Useful website <http://punemate.com/>”
  - Some of ngkabra’s followers check out punetech’s profile on twitter ([twitter.com/punetech](http://twitter.com/punetech)) and start following punetech

# Tips: URL shortening services

- ▶ If you want to tweet about a link to an interesting website
- ▶ But the URL is too long: e.g.  
[http://punetech.com/wiki/Category:Groups\\_and\\_Organizations](http://punetech.com/wiki/Category:Groups_and_Organizations)
- ▶ Use <http://tinyurl.com/> or <http://is.gd/> (or other similar sites) to convert the long url to a short URL
- ▶ Save characters in twitter
- ▶ e.g. “Hey guys! Check out PuneTech’s list of tech groups and organizations in Pune at <http://tinyurl.com/4cfsex>”
- ▶ Twitter sometimes does this automatically
- ▶ Desktop clients have inbuilt capabilities to do this

# Tips: Advanced Clients

- ▶ If you end up using twitter a lot (you should!) easier to use a desktop client instead of the website
- ▶ Good clients:
  - Twitterrific (Mac only!)
  - TweetDeck
  - Twhirl
  - TwitterFox (Firefox Plugin)

# Tips: Multiple Accounts

- ▶ Use different twitter accounts for different purposes
- ▶ Example: I use
- ▶ [@ngkabra](#)
  - For personal tweets
- ▶ [@punetech](#)
  - only tweets related to Pune technology
- ▶ [@punetechlive](#)
  - live reporting of events
  - Don't want to clutter regular [@punetech](#) twitter stream with lots of live-tweeting updates
- ▶ Use [Twhirl](#) desktop client to easily manage multiple accounts



# Tips: TweetDeck Groups

- ▶ If you're following more than 50 people (and you should!), you'll get information overload – too many tweets
- ▶ Separate groups of people into different categories – and read them in different windows
- ▶ Use TweetDeck desktop client
- ▶ For example, I use three groups:
- ▶ Group **AllTweets**: for everything. I only skim this group
- ▶ Group **IndiaReadCarefully**: Indian tweeters to read carefully – read all tweets in this window
- ▶ Group **WorldReadCarefully**: World tweeters to read carefully – read all tweets in this window if I'm not busy



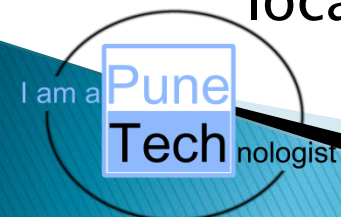
# Tips: Search

- ▶ Twitter allows you to search for any keywords
- ▶ Will show you all tweets in the world with that keyword
- ▶ Very useful to follow some technology or trend or news event
- ▶ Example:
  - ▶ “pune”
    - Any tweet in the world about Pune
  - ▶ “#bcp5”
    - Barcamp Pune 5
  - ▶ “#mumbai”
    - Mumbai terrorism updates



# Tips: Use search, you'll be glad

- ▶ Example: I keep a TweetDeck window open with search on “Pune”
- ▶ Useful to find out about events in Pune
  - (e.g. “Anyone going to KK concert this weekend?”)
- ▶ Useful to find interesting visitors to Pune
  - (e.g. “Boarding Mumbai flight on way to Pune”. Now I can find out who this person is and is s/he interesting to me.)
- ▶ Useful to find Pune-related websites
  - (e.g. check out @punemate, @punefast)
- ▶ Useful to find experts in Pune
  - (e.g. “Giving a talk on PHP frameworks at barcmap pune this weekend”. Now if this person is in Pune, I've found a local PHP guru!)



# Tips: Auto-post from blog

- ▶ You can find plugins for your blog that can automatically update your twitter account when you post a new blog article.
- ▶ Convert your twitter followers to blog subscribers and *vice versa*
- ▶ Example: “Posted to my blog: Why you should be on twitter and how to go about it <http://tinyurl.com/6b3tz4>”

# Twitter for work

- ▶ Follow co-workers, customers, company senior execs, competitors
  - Other end of building or other end of the world
  - Check out “yammer” for doing this securely/privately
- ▶ Follow experts & newsmakers in your field
- ▶ Twitter “search” on your technology areas
- ▶ “Replies” are cool!
  - Example: I tweeted “*Zemanta stopped working for me this morning. Anybody else notice the same problem?*” None of my followers answered. But the founders of Zemanta found this via “search” and replied to me. One happier customer! This is not possible/easy in any medium other than twitter!

# Twitter in personal life

- ▶ Non-intrusive way to stay in touch with family friends
- ▶ Now a way to keep track of long lost friends on the other side of the globe
  - Similar to facebook/orkut/linked-in status updates
  - In fact can automatically update those from your tweets
- ▶ Quickly ask questions / suggestions without disturbing anybody who doesn't want to be disturbed
  - “Feel like watching *Pulp Fiction* today. Anybody have a DVD they can lend me?”
  - “Thinking of buying a camera. Should I get a Canon or a Sony?”

# Summary: What is twitter good for?

- ▶ Quick, lightweight thoughts
  - Interesting websites
  - News, events
- ▶ Retweet – spread the word
- ▶ Unobtrusive way to stay in touch
- ▶ Find experts
- ▶ Find answers
- ▶ Get opinions, advice
- ▶ Market yourself – build a brand

# My personal twitter “best practices”

(Not everyone will agree!)

- ▶ Useful / relevant to 200 people
  - “My paneer is too spicy” – nobody cares!!
  - “Good morning tweeps” – wasting everybody’s time
  - “@lalu thanks for following” – use a DM!
- ▶ Include a link whenever possible
  - If tweet has no link – think twice before posting
- ▶ Retweet interesting tweets
  - Always reference the original tweeter
- ▶ When in doubt – don’t tweet
  - Don’t contribute to your followers’ info overload

# Further Reading

- ▶ Why I use Twitter by Tim O'Reilly (inventor of the term Web-2.0)

<http://radar.oreilly.com/2008/11/why-i-like-twitter.html>

- ▶ <http://twitip.com> tips on how best to use twitter from ProBlogger Darren Rowse

- ▶ Wikipedia entry for twitter

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Twitter>



# About the author

- ▶ Navin Kabra, PhD
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- ▶ Linked-in:  
<http://www.linkedin.com/in/navinkabra>

