

Twitter

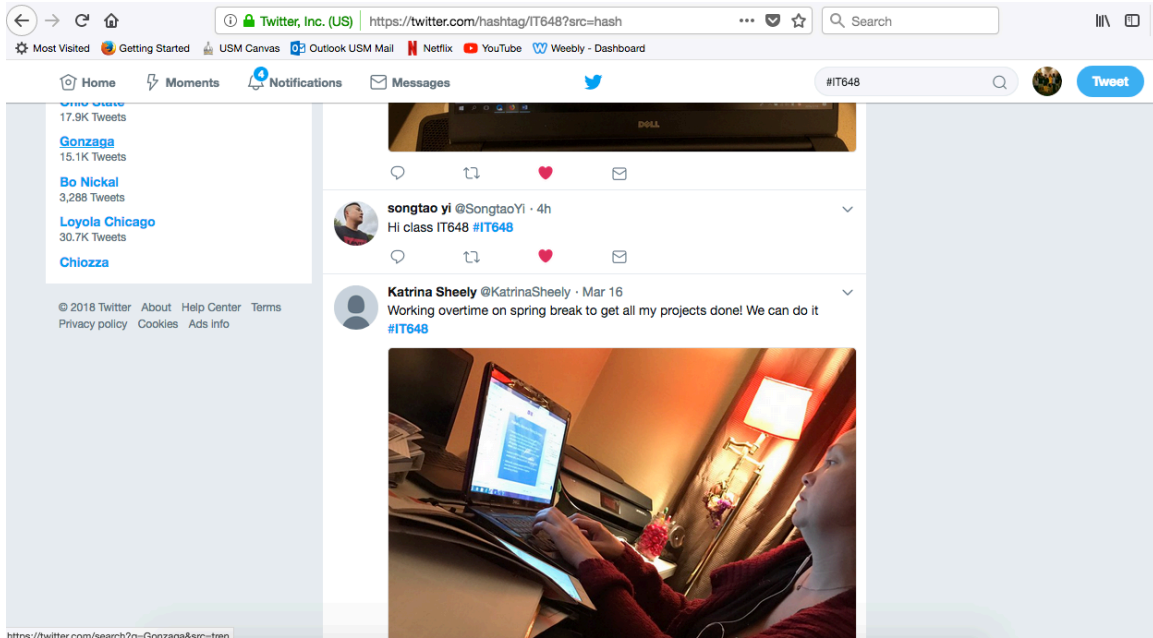
Twitter is a social media website and application (available for iOS and Android devices) in which people communicate and share thoughts through a maximum of 280 characters. Twitter was founded in 2006.

Functions

The main function of twitter is to share information in small increments of 280 characters or less. This can be done through text, video, pictures, or gifs. The setup process for Twitter is fairly simple. You must use your email address in order to setup an account where you will choose a username also known as your "twitter handle." This username will appear as @mspeed_usm (or whatever you choose). Once you have setup an account you are able to choose a profile picture, a header picture, and fill out a short bio. After these steps, you are good to go!

Twitter is a social media platform that people use for news, sports, entertainment, fun, and their personal lives. Twitter was the first social media sight to use the hash tag (#). Since, other social media platforms have adopted the hash tag feature into their design. The hash tag enables Twitter users to use # plus any words or numbers without spaces within their tweet and then links all of these tweets together. (See examples below).

The screenshot displays a Twitter interface for the hashtag #IT648. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'Home', 'Moments', 'Notifications', and 'Messages'. Below this, the hashtag #IT648 is prominently displayed. The main content area shows a poll by Molly A. Speed (@mspeed_usm) asking 'What time of day do you find yourself most productive with getting work done?'. The poll results are: 50% Early in the morning, 0% Afternoon, 0% Late at night, and 50% Anytime. Below the poll, there's a tweet from songtao yi (@SongtaoYi) mentioning the first project of IT648. The left sidebar shows search filters and a 'Who to follow' section with profiles like Americans for Vision Car..., Roland Lazenby, and Patrick Henry.



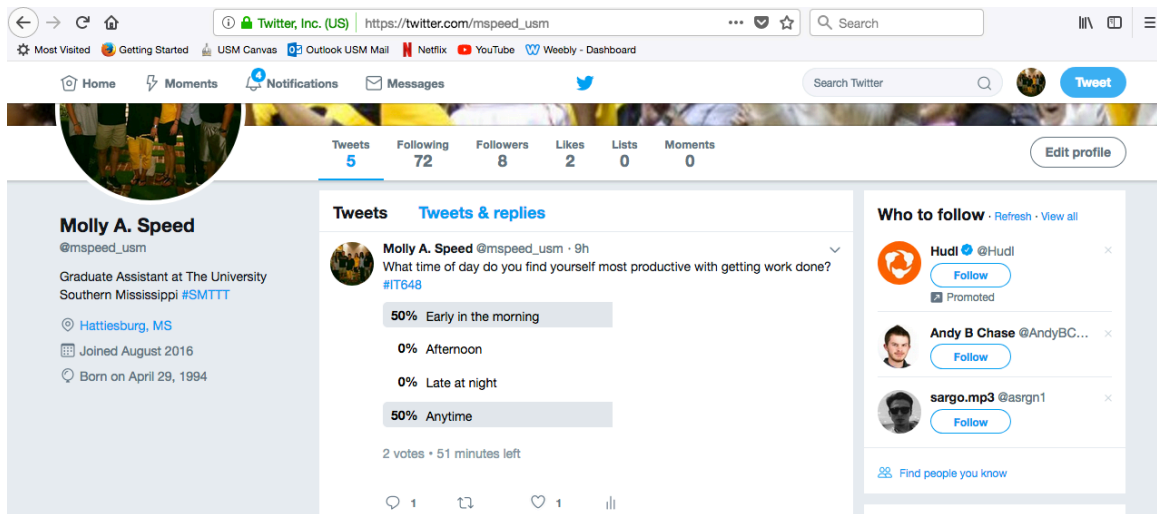
Let's take a look at some ways Twitter can be used in an educational setting and both the advantages and disadvantages that may come along with that.

Advantages

Twitter is an application that is easy to setup and is user friendly. The application is almost twelve years old, and has undergone a number of changes, but remains a source for short snippets of news, entertainment, sports, etc. Twitter allows one to protect their account and only accept people they know to "follow" them. Twitter is a great way to reach people and get insight from people all over the world. I believe Twitter could be advantageous to the classroom in that it provides students with news and other articles at their fingertips. In today's society, everything is fast paced and the attention of our youth is not what it used to be. Twitter provides "flashes" of information that can catch their eye and then be explored more if they are interested.

The use of the hash tag is also something I find to be of good use in the classroom. I have seen in semesters past teachers/professors use it as an assignment or extra credit. The student's assignment is to attend an event or find some information and then tweet about it. They would then use the hash tag that the teacher created ex. #IT648, #ENG101, etc. This then links all of the tweets together through the specific hash tag.

A fairly new feature on twitter is the voting tool. This allows a user to ask a question or make a statement and then provide up to four answers/response in which their followers can vote on.



Disadvantages

Although there are many advantages to the use of social media and learning tools in the classroom, there are also a number of disadvantages to be named. The first being that all content may not be appropriate for students. There are safeguards and parameters that can be put on accounts, but there is always room for things to slip through the cracks. Cyber bullying is always a downside to the use of social media. The last disadvantage I will note is that it could be distracting. I may be alone here, but I have before found myself only going to look through Twitter or another social media sight for a few minutes and then 15 minutes later I am still on it.

Teaching Strategies

While there are both advantages and disadvantages that I have found for the use of Twitter in the classroom, I still believe it can be used to the advantage of the educational setting. In my eyes, the majority of students have the application already, so why not incorporate it into their education and learning. Whether it be for fun, extra credit, finding what is "trending" in the news today, or any other use that a teacher finds for it, I believe we should work to incorporate these things into our classroom settings.