



Tips for Authors Using Twitter

By Carolyn Burns Bass, founder and moderator of #litchat

www.litchat.net

What's In a Name?

It's best to use your real name when creating a twitter account for book promotion. Not only is it wise branding of your best asset (your name) but it also protects you from squatters who may want to pose as you. (It has happened. Someone posed as Oprah for a long time and fooled many people.)

Create Your Profile

You'll want to upload a photo to show as your avatar. Select the PROFILE tab and upload a photo. We've found that people don't enjoy interacting with the generic Twitter icon that appears when people don't upload a photo. On this same page, you'll see a window that says, BIO. Be sure to fill in the essence of what you want people to know about you. Be sure to click SAVE when finished.

Once profile is set-up, look at the top menu and select HOME. This is commonly referred to as your Twitter Feed. Here is where you'll see the tweets from people whom you follow. You will not see tweets from anyone except those you follow, or those who have sent you a message specifically with your @twittername.

Next, click the PROFILE link on top menu and you'll see what is commonly known as your Profile Feed--these are the tweets that you send out to your followers. No one sees these tweets unless they are following you, or if they are RT (re-tweeted).

Go ahead and send a welcome tweet to the world.

Build Your Following

You begin building your following by following interesting people. To find people of similar interests, go to the SEARCH window at top of screen and type in words of things that you are interested in. When I started LitChat nearly three years ago, I searched for terms such as BOOKS, AUTHORS, LIBRARIANS, PUBLISHING, READING, etc.

Follow those people who seem interesting to you. Once you've followed several people of interest, go back to your Twitter Feed (HOME) and you'll see the results of what those people are talking about today. Twitter is only as interesting as the people you follow.



Use It

Some authors are gregarious tweeters, posting many times a day. Others don't post much at all. It's up to you to fit Twitter into your day, but my recommendation is at least one tweet a day. If you don't have something interesting to post, tweet a short excerpt from your book. Interesting things to tweet are book signing dates, book review URLs, books you are reading, progress on WIP, lessons from the writing life.

Engage your followers. If you see an interesting post from someone, reply back to them. Your readers enjoy hearing from you and will become allies in recommending your books to others.

Using Twitter shouldn't be a burden, just another thing in the list of things you need to do for promotion. If you find it doesn't work for your lifestyle, don't use it. Twitter is here today, but in the rapidly changing digital world, it may not be around tomorrow.