

How to make the most of Twitter without getting lost in an endless stream of tweets

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A few months ago, a Twitter friend deleted her account in favour of Facebook, then signed on again because she missed the interaction with her Twitter friends. Another friend signed up for Twitter, but soon dropped out because it seemed too noisy and busy, and the short form was just too short for what he wanted to say.

I agree that Twitter can be overwhelming, but mainly I've found it fun and a great way to connect with people who I might not otherwise have gotten to know. Here are my best tips on how I've managed to make the most of Twitter without getting lost in an endless stream of tweets.

**Focus on content and connecting.** When I first started Twitter, I would send out welcome tweets and more recently thank you for the mentions/retweets. But as my followers and interactions continue to grow, these routine tweets are becoming more cumbersome, so I'm now moving away from them in favour of tweets with more content, and I'm hoping to interact more meaningfully with those who are following and interacting with me.

**Use lists.** By Twitter standards, I don't have a lot of followers, and I follow even fewer, but it's still too many to track and engage with everyone. So I made up my own list of members from my church and other lists for spirituality, simpler living, writing, and other topics, plus I subscribe to a few other lists. When my main Twitter stream seems overwhelming, I can turn to a list and focus on just one portion.

**Ignore DMs.** At first I tried to answer every direct message, but I soon found that many are automated, or come from people who aren't actually following me so I'm not able to reply back, or may be ads like True Twit, or downright spam. I see some people say no DMs as part of their profile, but I'm more for selective DMs—largely ignoring any unsolicited ones, but DMing on occasion to exchange phone numbers or continue a more private conversation.

**Schedule.** Twitter has actually helped me be more disciplined in reading Scripture since I've been tweeting a verse of the day every morning. But most often, the verse

is from the day before, and I schedule it with [Hootsuite](#) to appear in the morning. I know that some say scheduling is less social, but I like the flexibility and find it helps me to be more consistently present on Twitter without tying me down.

**Take breaks.** I don't have Twitter on my phone so it's not as relentless or as constant a companion as it might be. I also try to take a weekly Twitter Sabbath at least from Saturday 6pm to Sunday 6pm, and sometimes extend that to Monday morning or get a head start on my Twitter Sabbath on Friday.

What about you? If you use Twitter, how do you manage it instead of letting Twitter manage you? If you're not on Twitter, why not?

*Originally posted at [Yamasaki's blog](#)*