

Twitter FAQ: RT, HT, OH, ETC

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So somebody talked you into using Twitter, and now you've got a few questions that weren't answered by **the Twitter Slang FAQ**. Here's a few answers in no particular order:

Twitter RT means ReTweet



amateria RT @kfoxaz "If Pandora had a love child with Last.fm, its name would be Grooveshark <http://tinyurl.com/57otlx>" ...
wow, must check out ... 27 minutes ago from web

Twitter RT is ReTweet

It's like forwarding, but for Twitters instead of emails. If you see something really cool from one of the people you follow, you may want to ReTweet it so that the people following YOU (and not the original person) can see it.

In the example above, amateria is repeating something from kfoxaz about a new music service.

Note that this is only useful if you have followers that the original person doesn't have - meaning, if you've only got a couple of followers, you probably shouldn't bother with ReTweets.

This is slang, not a system function. Twitter doesn't do anything special if you put in the RT.

Twitter OH means OverHeard



nmyra OH: "You might want to stop finding yourself. You won't like what you find." 28 minutes ago from web

Twitter OH is OverHeard

If you hear something funny or insightful with your ears (as opposed to reading it on Twitter) and you want to repeat it, you can prefix it with OH. Generally, this is used anonymously, not for quoting people, so you tend to read things that might be personally embarrassing to whoever actually said it.

In the example above, nmyra overheard a funny slam, but she's being polite and not telling us who slammed who. It's enjoyable to try to reverse-engineer who she's around at the moment, but that is left as an exercise for the reader.

This is slang, not a system function. Twitter doesn't do anything special if you put in the OH.

Twitter HT means Heard Through

If you found out about something through a Twitter user, and you want to name ‘em by name, you Heard it Through them.

Twitter Replies Start with the @ Sign



TheFuzzball @imelda: They make an excellent veggie burger! NOM NOM NOM! 10 minutes ago from web in reply to imelda



Reply

If you start a Twitter with a user’s name, like @imelda, the message is considered a “reply” to that user. The reply shows up in the user’s Replies page on Twitter.

In the example above, TheFuzzball is telling Imelda about a place with a great veggie burger.

Here’s an interesting side effect: this reply will only show up in your Twitter page if you follow both TheFuzzball AND Imelda. If you follow just one or the other, this conversation won’t clutter your incoming Twitter stream. This is Twitter’s way of keeping “personal” Twitter conversations out of the mainstream. You probably wouldn’t find this conversation interesting unless you could hear both sides of it - for example, if I was only following TheFuzzball (not Imelda) and this Twitter came into my list, I’d have no idea what restaurant they were talking about. But since I follow both of them, this remark is useful to me, because I can see what Imelda was talking about before TheFuzzball replied.

Otherwise, if TheFuzzball had just put @imelda anywhere else in her tweet other than the beginning, the tweet would be visible to all of TheFuzzball’s followers, not just those who follow both TheFuzzball and Imelda.

In the example below, since KeviKev started his post with something other than a username (“Hey”), everyone who follows him will see his post - not just people who follow both him and amateria:



KeviKev Hey @amateria, @BrentO might have made you famous. :) RT @BrentO New blog post: Twitter 101 <http://tinyurl.com/6cula7> 6 minutes ago from web



Name Dropping

This is a real system function, not slang.

Twitter Hash Tags (#)



BrentO SQL Server database administrators – if you talk about the upcoming PASS Summit, use #PASS in your tweet to make searching easier. *less than 5 seconds ago from web*

Hash Tags (#)

Hash tags or pound signs (#) help to designate topics that people might search for. You can search Twitter posts via search.twitter.com. Hash tags help users who want to set up a dedicated RSS feed for what's going on with a particular event.

In the example above, BrentO (me) tweeted about a conference in Seattle. Anytime someone uses the phrase #PASS in their tweet, it will be much easier to find in search.twitter.com than if you just searched for PASS, because the word PASS will match all kinds of stuff like football passes or people saying they'll take a pass.

The best part: at search.twitter.com, you can set up an RSS feed for any given search phrase. If you're going to PASS, for example, just subscribe to this RSS feed, and you'll get updates whenever anybody uses the #PASS tag in their tweet. This will help you meet other database administrators going to the conference even if you don't subscribe to their tweets.

This is slang, not a system function. Twitter doesn't do anything special if you put in a # phrase.

#TCOT - Top Conservatives On Twitter

Tweets that have #TCOT in them are politically conservative. The #TCOT Report is a web site styled to look like the conservative pundit Drudge Report site, but it's driven by people who tweet with #TCOT.

Twitter Links From TinyURL.com, Bit.ly, Ping.FM, BKite.com, etc



alexknowshtml Anthillz upcoming features, including trusted colleagues and testimonials. <http://bit.ly/Sx8K6> This is where stuff gets interesting! *7 minutes ago from twitterrific*



Short Link

Twitter posts can only be 140 characters long, and sometimes we want to post longer URLs or post URLs along with a long description. You can shorten long URLs with a service like TinyURL.com or Bit.ly.

People aren't trying to hide or obfuscate their links (usually, anyway) - they're just trying to cram more info into 140 characters.

When posting links with these services, please be polite and include a description along with your tweet. Your followers may get hundreds of tweets per day, and before they click on a link, they want more information than just "Check this out!" or "Wowsers!"

In the example above, alexknowshtml is telling his followers about some improvements to Anthillz. He did a great job of explaining what he's linking to and why he's linking to it - plus the link - all in 140 characters or less.

"I'm at" Posts From BKite.com



jeremy I'm at Sugar Land, TX, USA - <http://bkite.com/01ieL5> 5 minutes ago from Brightkite ☆ ↻

BrightKite Location Post

BrightKite is a location-based social networking site where you can "check in" at a physical location, see who else has been there, and get alerts when other users check in.

In the example above, Jeremy is checking in outside of Houston. When you see something like this, you can click on the bkite.com link to see a map of where he's at and what else is going on near him.

To use this integration, you have to sign up for a free BrightKite account and set it up to post to Twitter.

Looking for good people to follow?

On the Twitter.com web site, click on the name of a person whose updates you find interesting. You'll be taken to their Twitter page, and on the right hand side, you can click on "Following". That gives you the list of people THEY follow. Sometimes (but definitely not always) you'll find them interesting too.

Want more Twitter Slang Answers? Check out the Twitter Slang FAQ, or ask me on Twitter!