18 Favorite Tools of Twitter Rock Stars

By Kimberly Smith – from the library of www.MarketingProfs.com

You can immensely improve your Twitter experience and micro-blogging effectiveness with Twitter-related tools, apps, and services. But it can be difficult to figure out which among the more than 1,300 and counting of those tools to use.

Here, we cover the "tried and true" favorites of some of the industry's most expert users.

Far and away the most popular tool among our Rock Stars is **TweetDeck**, a desktop control panel that simplifies many of Twitter's functionalities so that you can optimize your time:

- Guy Kawasaki @GuyKawasaki "Cleanest interface, love that I can set a default response account as well as favorite/unfavorite tweets."

- Mack Collier @MackCollier "TweetDeck helps me keep track of the people I am following. I can create multiple groups...based on common interests, location, clients, etc. And it's also very easy to keep up with Twitter chats by creating a new column for a particular search term...Then I just follow the [term's] tweets in the new column! Very easy and efficient. And they've now added the ability to follow and unfollow anyone straight from the client, as well as favorite their tweet, send updates to Facebook, etc."

- Beth Kanter @kanter "I use TweetDeck on my laptop and home computer because of the groups function. I like to look at tweets by groups of friends from different perspectives. This helps me get a sense of what's happening across my network."

- C.C. Chapman @cc_chapman "Tweetdeck is a tool I can't live without. The group feature allows me to focus on the people I really must pay attention to online...it is what makes Twitter useful for me. When I'm at a conference I love it because of the search capability that allows me to get everything tagged with the conference hashtag in one column that I can check in on whenever needed. I also have Tweetdeck on my iPhone and that works great when I need to read what my friends are up to. The groups sync between computers and the iPhone so it is the same no matter where I am."

- Amber Naslund @AmberCadabra "I do most of my responding from TweetDeck, and I'm often conducting several different searches at a time to tap into particular conversations and see what's going on around the Twittersphere."

CoTweet is the preferred choice for those with multiple users or accounts. It allows you to schedule future tweets, assign tweets for follow-up, track links, and monitor trends.

- Darren Rowse @ProBlogger "A Web-based client that I've found more and more useful the more active I am on Twitter with multiple accounts. I also love the advanced scheduling of Tweets that it allows."

- David Armano @Armano "The way it allows you to manage accounts and assign tasks is effective and fairly straightforward given how complex it could potentially be."

- Beth Kanter @kanter "I use CoTweet when I'm in the office and on the IT system. The main reason is that it doesn't require installing a client and that keeps IT happy! And while I use it for just my account, I love the feature where I can make annotations about the folks I'm talking to on Twitter."

Another desktop client used by both Laura Fitton @Pistachio and Mari Smith @MariSmith is **Twhirl**, which is based on Adobe AIR and incorporates many features, including search, multimedia posts, and multiple account management. "I love the small amount of real estate it takes up on my desktop, the ease of looking up users, saved searches, and I especially love that users' real name are displayed," said Smith.

For those who want search capabilities without any downloads, there's **Twitter Search**, which in addition to search allows you to subscribe to an RSS feed for any query.

- Ann Handley @MarketingProfs "Twitter Search helps me monitor for mentions of "MarketingProfs" or "Marketing Profs" (with a space between the words). It's important for brands to monitor alternative spellings of their name. Twitter Search aggregates responses to or about MarketingProfs, so I can respond when anyone is talking to me or about me or about MarketingProfs. It's easy to use, I can access it anywhere, and I don't have to download anything cumbersome."

- Amber Naslund @AmberCadabra Search is "by far...the most powerful bit about Twitter for those serious about using it for community building. I love that [search] is built into TweetDeck, but I often jump over to Twitter Search to do a quick lookup for fast-moving hashtags or other thoughts I'm seeing pop up in the stream."

Guy Kawasaki @GuyKawasaki uses **Twitterfeed**, a tool for promoting blog posts and sending RSS feeds to Twitter, to incorporate RSS feeds into his tweets. "Everyone can use a little help to be interesting 24 x 7 x 365," he explained.

TwitPic is the favorite for sharing photos on Twitter. It allows you to post from its site, or from your own Twitter account or a mobile phone, by sending an email to a customized TwitPic address and including your tweet text in the subject line.

- Mari Smith @MariSmith "Though there are other photo apps for Twitter, this one gets the most click-throughs, and I love to use it with my iPhone and computer for sharing fun pics."

- David Armano @Armano It "provides one of the cleaner landing pages that a user comes to after you've uploaded a pic. Mobile support on most iPhone apps is fairly solid."

Armano also uses **Posterous** for multimedia posts. "I have Posterous synced with Twitter so whenever I upload photos, videos, posts etc., Twitter sends traffic there automatically through a Tweet. As a destination, Posterous is clean, effective, and easy to navigate around," he said. "Having approximately 20k followers, I usually get hundreds of visits to a specific upload on Posterous, which keeps track and even allows users to favorite or comment via their Twitter profile."

For posting video snippets, Laura Fitton @Pistachio said she prefers **Seesmic** and **Qik**.

And for audio voice messages, Mari Smith @MariSmith uses **Utterli**. "A quick phone call to Utterli, and it posts as a tweet. Love this for mixing up regular tweets!" she said.

The favorite URL shortener is **Bit.ly**, which helps conserve post space by condensing any link down to about 20 characters. It also keeps track of those links in real time and provides analytics on number of clicks, retweets, etc.

- Charlene Li @CharleneLi "I use...Bit.ly to track all of my URL tweets—it's doubly nice that it's built into TweetDeck."

- Ann Handley @MarketingProfs "It's really helpful in showing me which links resonate with my audience, and which don't."

- Laura Fitton @Pistachio particularly likes Bit.ly's bit.info bookmarklet for quick and easy access.

For "keeping score" on all posted links, Guy Kawasaki @GuyKawasaki uses **Tweetmeme**, an aggregator that ranks the most popular links posted on the network. "Love that it resolves links no matter which shortener, the de-facto way to measure the quality of a Web page," he said. Note that Kawasaki is also an adviser to the service.

To return the favor of a follow in a timely fashion, heavily followed users turn to **SocialToo**.

- Ann Handley @MarketingProfs "There comes a point where it's overwhelming to research and follow everyone back individually, so I use an auto-follow tool. I can't say it's perfect, but since I believe that reciprocity is, in part, in the spirit of Twitter, I needed an auto-solution."

- Mari Smith @MariSmith "I auto-follow followers back using this platform,

though I keep a watchful eye on who I'm following and sometimes turn this feature off then go back and catch up!"

Among iPhone users, **Tweetie** is the preferred application for tweeting on the go.

- Ann Handley @MarketingProfs "I've downloaded tons of Twitter apps on the iPhone, and Tweetie is by far the most reliable and user-friendly for me. It has a nice built-in retweet feature, makes it easy to share tweets via email, and does a decent job of catching most responses. Not perfect… but it's the closest I can find to it in a Twitter iPhone app."

- David Armano @Armano "I especially like how the interface supports direct messages. I've never sent an accidental 'DM' that went public using this app. I also use the save-search-term functionality regularly, which is easy to add and delete. Favoriting tweets is also a breeze as is integration with Twitpic for photos, which I use regularly. I'm a heavy mobile Twitter user, and Tweetie meets my needs without overcomplicating."

- C.C. Chapman @cc_chapman "I love the simple, clean UI of it all, and it has never crashed on me."

- Guy Kawasaki @GuyKawasaki "For the life of me, I cannot figure out how it's so fast."

Blackberry users Charlene Li @charleneli and Laura Fitton @Pistachio prefer **TwitterBerry** and **UberTwitter**, respectively.

Other popular mobile applications include the following:

- **Social Scope**, which Mack Collier @MackCollier loves because "it has separate tabs for all tweets, replies, DMs, and one for Facebook updates. And I can go in and add a new tab for any search term.... This is especially beneficial when I am at a conference and am on the go and want to keep up with the chatter about the event, or see where everyone is headed."

- **Twinkle**, which Ann Handley @MarketingProfs uses "for its 'near me' feature that can show you tweets from people within xx miles of you. That's kinda cool when you are traveling… or looking to organize a Tweetup."

For a database of these tools and many more, check out oneforty.