Setting up a Twitter and adding a Twitter feed to your blog

A key component of establishing social and learning networks is to allow your contacts to be aware of your work and research based activities. Your contacts can be alerted to your activities and you can also immediately post news and action items to the web. One method of achieving this is via Twitter. It is quite easy to set up a Twitter account and to place a Twitter badge on your blog or web page. You can use your Twitter account to keep track of your contacts as well.

Launch a web browser application such as Internet Explorer, Firefox or Safari. Type the following address in the web address field.

http://www.twitter.com/

Click on the Get Started - Join link located on the Twitter window. The following window will appear.

Follow the instructions and create an account. When you are finished click on the Twitter name or Home link.
Twitter main page

As you can see in the example below I can directly enter news items or Twitter posts in the field at the top of the screen.

Beneath that my own Twitter posts and those of other contacts will be visible.
Settings in Twitter

Click on the **Settings** link at the top right of the Twitter window. The window below will appear.

![Twitter Settings](http://www.larkin.net.au/images/twitter_settings.png)

Take the time to explore all of the settings. They are self-explanatory. One of the more significant settings is to decide whether or not to protect your updates. By setting your updates to private you are only allowing people that you approve to follow your updates. If this is checked, you will not be on the public timeline. Updates posted previously may still be publicly visible in some places.
Badges

Let’s set up a Twitter badge on your blog. Type in the following url on your browser after you have logged into Twitter.

http://twitter.com/badges

The following page will appear. Choose the option that best suits your need. I shall select other for my Wordpress blog. If you are working with Blogger you will select Blogger of course.

If it is a Blogger blog the following page will appear.

Set the number of updates for your Twitter badge. I have set mine to 1 update. Click on the Insert into your Blog button located on the left. The following window will appear if you are currently signed into your Google account. Otherwise you will simply need to sign in.
Select a Blog from the drop down menu and give it a Title, as above. Click on the Add Widget button. The following gadget will appear on your blog’s page elements page.

The Twitter badge or widget has automatically been added. You can drag it to a new position among the page elements if you wish. Click on the View Blog link at the top of the window. The following window will appear.

As you can see the Twitter badge is visible in the margin on the right.

You should let your contacts know of your Twitter home page address so that they can keep in touch with your news and activities. They can subscribe to your feed and you can subscribe to them in turn.
Blocking followers

You can remove a follower from your page (and yourself from theirs) without protecting your updates and approving each and every friend request.

When you click on the Followers link on the right hand side of the screen you will see a list of those persons that are following you. Unfortunately spammers, marketers and other unsavoury characters may follow you from time to time.

You can block the persons that you do not wish to follow by clicking on the button at the right of the person’s details and select Block.

You can also block an unwanted follower this way.

1. Log in to Twitter.
2. Go to the profile page of the person you wish to block.
3. Click Block (at bottom right, in the sidebar.)
4. Click OKAY to confirm the block

When you completed these steps you will not appear on the blocked person’s profile page, friends time line, badge, or anywhere else. The person will not be notified that they've been blocked, and they will not be able to add you as friend.
Twitter Lists

Recently Twitter added Twitter Lists to its list of features. This is a most useful addition for educators. You can create lists of specific people that you follow. You can create categories according to research, faculty, friends, etc.

In the image on the left you can see that I have been added to 123 lists.

Further down there is a link to my own list of particular educators.

I can create a new list by clicking on the New List link. The window shown below will appear.

Give your list a name and a description. You can make it public or private.

Click on the listed link to see the Twitter lists to which you have been added.

Lists that you appear on will appear as follows.
Getting more out of Twitter

There are some tools and web sites that can help you get a lot more out of Twitter. Some of the best are listed below. There is a complete list at the Twitter Fan Wiki: http://twitter.pbwiki.com/Apps

Twhirl

This is an excellent software tool that allows you to keep up with Twitter without logging into a Twitter via a browser.

Twitterific is an excellent Macintosh application that will enable you to monitor and update Twitter.  
http://iconfactory.com/software/twitterific

Snitter is a neat app that works on both PCs and Macs. You can use it to monitor and update Twitter. 
http://snook.ca/snitter/

Tweetbar is a plug-in for the Firefox and Flock browsers.  
http://mikedemers.net/projects/tweetbar/

Twitty Tunes is a plug-in for the Firefox and Flock browsers.  

Tweetscan is a real time search for Twitter posts  
http://tweetscan.com/
Tweetdeck is what frequent Twitterers utilise. It has powerful search and grouping tools. Tweetdeck also has an excellent iPhone application.

http://www.tweetdeck.com/beta/

Tweetie

This app allows you to use Twitter on an iPhone.

http://www.atebits.com/tweetie-iphone/