How to use Twitter

A Mustang Minutes Extra

What is Twitter?

Twitter is an information network made up of 140-character messages called "tweets". You follow people who have things to share that you are interested in.

How do I join?

Go to www.twitter.com and fill in all the required information. A confirmation email will be sent to the account you register. Follow the directions and you've joined!

Now what?

After signing up choose some users to follow (could be friends, celebrities, musicians, businesses, etc.). This will customize a stream of information going to your home page.

I don't get the lingo!

- Tweet- a message posted on Twitter
- Retweet- forwarding another user's tweet to your followers
- Followers- users who have chosen to read your posts
- Following- you want to read another user's posts and therefore receive their tweets on your home page.
- @- used to call out a username in a tweet. It lets them know you are directing a tweet their way. When a username is preceded by the @ sign, it creates a link to their Twitter profile.
- Hashtag- the # symbol which is used to tag topics or keywords in a tweet. It's a way of categorizing tweets.

Privacy...

When you sign up to Twitter, you can choose to make your account public or protected. Public means anyone can see what you post whether they have a Twitter account or not. This is the default setting. If you change the setting to protected, you will have the ability to manually approve anyone who has access to your tweets, other users will not

be able to retweet your tweets, and your tweets will not show up in Twitter or a Google search.

What else can you do with Twitter?
You can post pictures, keep up on current events or news related to subjects that interest you, link to Facebook, Instagram, your own website, etc.

One of the easiest ways to use Twitter is to upload the app on a mobile device.

Because apps have become so popular here are some tips that apply to Facebook, Twitter, Instragram, and other social networking sites:

- It's safest to turn off location services and avoid checking in to locations via a mobile device. Do you really want people to know where you are at all times? If you enable this function, your profile can be updated automatically with your location.
- Some apps act as a link between other apps. For example, there was an app called Girls Around Me that linked Foursquare and Facebook, so if you checked into a location using Foursquare and someone else had the Girls Around Me app, it would show them your Facebook profile (if privacy was set to public). It allowed a stranger to find out a lot of information!
- Spend the time to set up your privacy settings for every account. Often the default is public and available for anyone to see.
- Do some research. A simple Google search using the keywords [facebook privacy settings] or [instagram basics] or [twitter how-to] or any combination of the above will give you all sorts of information to help you understand what these sites and apps are all about and how to be safe when using them. Each site also has their own how-to guide and will provide information about privacy and setting up your account.
- Keep up on what your kids are doing online by asking them to help you create your own account. Even if you do not use the account regularly, knowing how the site or app functions gives you insight into being safe online that you can pass along to your kids.