How I Use #EconTwitter*

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[†]Feel free to take photos of these slides and/or tweet about this presentation
and/or mention me on twitter

4 goals for today

1 **Learn about my twitter philosophy**

2 **Make a professional twitter account**
- How to create an account
- What to put in your profile

3 **Learn how to start engaging with #EconTwitter**
- Likes, retweets, replies, quote tweets, etc.

4 **Learn how to create your own tweets!**
- Original tweets, threads, polls, etc.

Starting point

- I am operating under the assumption that you are here today and/or reading these slides because you see the value in #EconTwitter

  - Consequently, I am not going to devote any resources to explaining why it would be beneficial for you to create a twitter account and/or interact with the collection of tweets and accounts that we call #EconTwitter

  - If you want to be convinced, see the "other resources" slide near the end

- I also decided that it would be a good idea for me to talk about things I know about, so today I'm focusing on how **I** use #EconTwitter

  - You and I are not the same person, so I'm not going to tell you how you should use twitter because I don't know your preferences or your constraints

Major disclaimers!

- **Lots of things in here are my opinions**
    - There's more than 1 way to use twitter
    - Reasonable people may disagree with some of my opinions and that's okay
    - My goal today is to share some things I've learned that have worked **for me**
    - That being said, some things in here are facts, like what icon lets you thread your tweets
        - You can disagree with me on that if you want, but you would be wrong

- **Your twitter is and should be a reflection of you!**
    - It's **your** twitter and it's **your** life

More major disclaimers!

- **I'm drawing on my experience as a grad student**

  - A lot of the advice in here is relevant for economists at all stages, but some of it may be more applicable to grad students

- **Feel free to disregard any and/or every piece of advice in these slides**

Some observations about twitter

1. Twitter is a tool

   - Therefore, it's neither inherently good or bad
   - It's all in how you use it–so use your powers for good, not evil!

2. As with any written communication, it's easy for your words to be misinterpreted

   - Words on a screen lack tone, facial expressions, delivery, body language, etc.

3. Twitter makes it **very easy** to fire off your hot takes

   - But just because you can fire off a hot take doesn't mean it's in your (or anybody else's) best interest to do so

My twitter philosophy (1/2)

1. I like to make my twitter be the best version of me

   - It's still me, but I try to be nicer on the margin, particularly because it's easier to misinterpret the meaning behind a tweet relative to a comment in a face-to-face conversation (see previous slide)

2. I try to give others the benefit of the doubt

   - I try to think of alternative meanings of a tweet
   - Sometimes I'll ask a clarifying question
   - Sometimes I'll just let it go
   - Dina Pomeranz (@DinaPomeranz) and Erin Hengel (@erinhengel) are great role models for giving people the benefit of the doubt

My twitter philosophy (2/2)

1. It's fine for your twitter to be a mix of the professional and the personal

   - My twitter evolution has been to start out more professional to build a reputation/build some credibility

     - Only recently have I started tweeting more about my non-economics life (e.g. #EconSkiTwitter)

   - That's what I felt comfortable doing, but you have to find your own optimal allocation of professional and personal tweets

2. Twitter is not real life

   - There's selection into what people post on twitter, and you can't necessarily observe what goes on behind the scenes

   - Corollary: you may not feel very good if you're always comparing yourself to other people/accounts on twitter

Let's start with the basics:

1. Create your own twitter account if you don't already have one

2. Update your username so you don't look like a bot

3. Update your profile to make it more "you" (and so others will know you're an economist!)

Step 1: create an account

1. Download and open the twitter app on your phone (if you have a phone that allows you to do that) or go on the internet to twitter.com

2. Follow the instructions to sign up
   - You'll need a name, phone number or email address, and a date of birth (to verify that's you're old enough to use twitter)

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Step 2: update your username!

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Key features of your profile (for step 3)

Step 3.1: choose a profile photo

Characteristics of a good (recognizable) profile photo:

1. Has your face in it

2. Is a reasonably accurate depiction of you

3. Mostly consists of your face, maybe your shoulders and a neutral and/or scenic background

4. Is reasonably professional (if you're on the job market you may want to make your profile photo be you in a suit)

5. Note: the ubiquitous econ hiking photos are nice but the twitter profile photo is so small that a zoomed-out shot of you makes you harder to recognize

Step 3.2: choose a background photo (optional)

- The default background photo is the twitter blue color FYI

- If you're not sure what to put here, landscapes or cityscapes make nice background photos

Step 3.3: write out your bio

Characteristics of a good bio:

1. Not optional: somehow signaling that you are an economist
   - 1 way: list your institutional affiliation and your title (undergrad, Ph.D. student, job market candidate, assistant professor, senior economist, etc.)
   - Complementary way: list your fields/broad research interests (health, econometrics, econ of crime, macro, finance, labor, etc.)
   - FYI (h/t @dwasser2): linking to your affiliation (e.g. @CornellEcon) or adding hashtags to your bio moves you up in the search results when people search for those

2. Optional: prior affiliations (where you got your Ph.D. from, where you worked before, where you went to undergrad, etc.)

3. Optional: your preferred pronouns

4. Optional: personal details
   - Some people like to mention that they're a parent, partner, dog enthusiast, soccer fan, etc.

Step 3.4: link to your econ website

- Don't have an econ website yet?
    - My former colleague Marisa Carlos has an amazing tutorial on how to build a simple academic website using GitHub
        - https://marisacarlos.com/pages/create-simple-academic-website
        - It's free to design your own website on GitHub
        - But if you want to customize your domain name you will need to pay (not through GitHub; through a domain service such as Google Domains)
    - There are other website builders, some of which are free and some of which cost varying amounts of money

The very basics

First up: likes vs. retweets vs. quote tweets vs. replies vs. DMs

Likes

- Note: unless your tweets are protected (you have a lock symbol next to your name), everybody else on twitter can see what you've "liked"
  - No need to overanalyze what to like and not to like, but just keep that in mind, especially if you don't want other economists to know what you "like"
    - Personally, I am okay with everybody knowing that I love the dogs on WeRateDogs, but maybe for whatever reason you don't want to reveal that you are also a fan of dogs

- My philosophy: I'm pretty liberal with my "likes"–I don't see a need to use them sparingly
  - Most people like it when you "like" their tweets, so why not brighten somebody's day a little bit?

Note: you can tell that I've liked this tweet because the heart icon (highlighted in the white circle) is red

Retweets

- A retweet essentially shows that tweet to all of your followers

- My philosophy: I like to think before I retweet (I "like" way more tweets than I retweet)
    - I tend to retweet tweets that for whatever reason I think should get more visibility
    - e.g. somebody made a really good point, somebody is advertising a deadline for a conference, and/or somebody provided a valuable public good

- **If you're new to twitter, retweets are a great low-cost way to start being more active (less scary than writing out your own tweet)**

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Note: you can tell that I've retweeted this tweet because the retweet icon (the one with the arrows that's highlighted in the white circle) is green

Quote Tweets

- A quote tweet is more or less a retweet that you add a caption to

- My philosophy: I'll quote tweet something if I want to add my perspective, my experience, and/or more information to the original tweet

    - I try to be pretty conservative with the quote tweets, and I'll only quote tweet something if I feel like I have something useful to say

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Note: here I've quote tweeted a tweet about RA opportunities at the Federal Reserve Board and the Brookings Institution

How to retweet or quote tweet

Replies

- A reply is essentially the same as a reply in a conversation

- Examples of common replies:
  - Offering advice when somebody explicitly asks for advice
  - Asking a clarifying question
  - Saying thank you when somebody says something nice about you
  - Saying congratulations when somebody shares good news

- My philosophy:
  - On the advice threads, I usually read the other replies before sending my advice, to know whether I'm the 1st or 10th person saying something
  - I try to be pretty liberal with the thank yous and the congratulations

- **Note: if you're new to twitter, replying is another great low-cost way to engage more**

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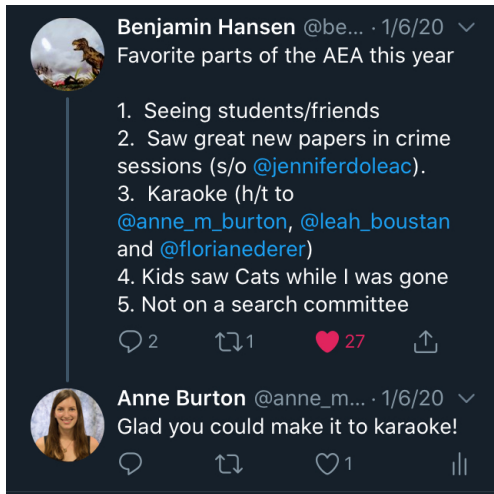
Note: here I've replied to a tweet about some of the highlights of the 2020 AEAs/ASSAs in San Diego

DMs (Direct Messages)

- A private (as much as anything on the internet can be private) method of communication between 2 or more accounts

- My philosphy:
  - If you're friends in real life, DM away (I'll often DM my friends interesting/relevant tweets)
  - If somebody requested that you DM them, then that's also okay
  - If you don't know them, think twice about DMing them
    - Note: if you've DM'ed me with conference info after Barton and I put out the conference list each year, that's totally fine and not at all what I'm talking about here
    - See the next slide for an example of what I mean by "think twice"

An example of a DM you should never send (unless you're joking and everybody involved is 100% in on it)

Direct Message.

Hello beautiful are you interested in being my sugar baby and get paid weekly I'm not asking you for nudes or dirty talks just got you to keep my company but I really appreciate this you're a wonderful and beautiful woman I'll treat you good 💕

Reply

Note: yes, I actually received this direct message. This person was most likely not an economist. I'm not really sure why he thought hitting send was a good idea, but what do I know

Next up: bookmarking (saving tweets so you can easily find them later) and sharing tweets

Notes: the quill and + symbol in the white rounded square is the "create a new tweet" symbol. I'll go over tweeting in a bit but wanted to flag that now

If you click on the arrow symbol in the white circle, you will find various ways to share the tweet in question (shown on next slide)
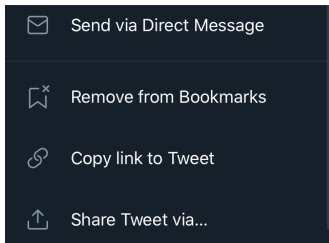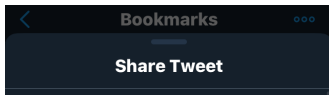
Note: the empty space between the 2 images is where twitter suggests accounts to share the tweet with, but I'm not sharing who my twitter bff's are with y'all!

Now: how to see more of what you want on twitter

"Home" vs. latest tweets

Note: twitter's default is to use "home", which shows you the "top tweets" as defined by twitter. If you want to switch to "latest tweets" (chronological order), then click on the stars icon, which is highlighted in the white circle (top right corner of twitter)

"Home" vs. latest tweets
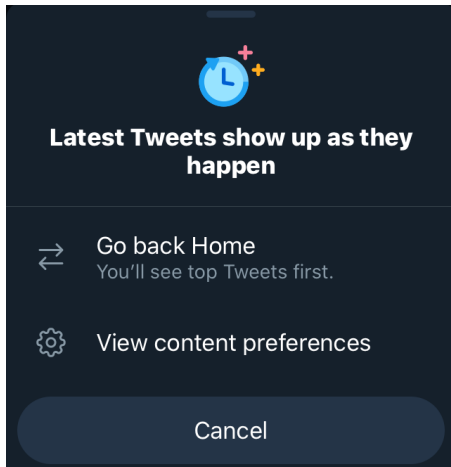
Note: when you click on the stars icon (the one that was highlighted on the previous slide), you'll be able to choose whether to see the tweets that twitter wants you to see or the most recent tweets

How to turn off retweets from accounts

- Suppose you don't want to see retweets from a particular account for whatever reason

- Go to their profile and click on the icon that looks like an ellipsis (...) in the top right corner

- The first option is to turn off retweets from them

- From here you can also mute, block, or report them if you feel so inclined and, for the 3rd option, have a valid reason

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↰↱ Turn off Retweets

🗨 View Topics

🗐 Add/remove from Lists

🗐 View Lists

⚡ View Moments

⬆ Share @Cornell_DICE via...

🔇 Mute @Cornell_DICE

🚫 Block @Cornell_DICE

🏳 Report @Cornell_DICE

Now it's time to learn how to create a "thread" (a group of tweets that are linked sequentially) and how to add pictures, gifs, and/or polls to your tweets!
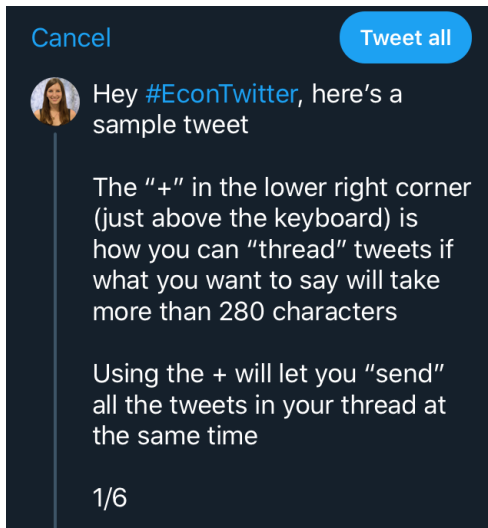
Notes: when you're 100% sure you're ready to share your tweet with the world, hit "Tweet all" in the top right corner (you can delete tweets but you can't edit them)

The thread "+" symbol is highlighted with a white oval in the tweet on the next slide

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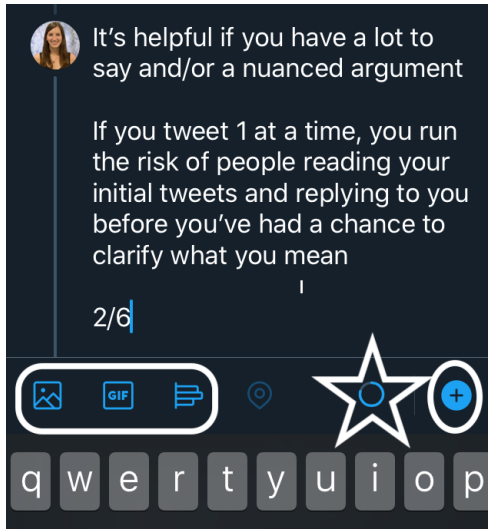
Notes: the hollow blue almost-circle shape inside the white star is the character countdown symbol, which is described in the tweet on the next slide

I'll explain what the 3 icons in the rounded square are in the next few slides

Just to the left of the "+" is a character countdown

The gray circle border turns blue as you use more characters

When you have fewer than 20 characters left, it shows you the exact number

3/6

Notes: I like to index my tweets in a thread with numbers (3/6 in this case, highlighted by the white oval)

Other ways to number tweets: 3/n at the end, 3) or 3/ or 3/n or 3/6 at the beginning

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My personal favorite gifs to add to tweets are Mean Girls gifs, which if you know me in real life should come as no surprise

2nd icon from the left (it says GIF)

Here's a Mean Girls gif for you, featuring the one and only Kevin G

5/6

DGIFt let the haters stop you from doing your thang.

via GIF Tenor

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Last up in this intro tweetorial is the poll option

3rd from the left—horizontal bar chart icon

This sample poll is asking which tweet in the thread was your favorite

Unfortunately 4 options is the max number of options

6/6

Meta picture

Mean Girls GIF

Poll

None of the above

Poll length　　　1 day ⌄

When and how to post an "original" tweet

- Short answer: when you feel like you have a contribution to make/something to say

- Longer answer:
  - Some day, if nothing else, at the very least you'll have some new research to tweet about
  - It's fine if you don't feel like you have anything to say right now
  - I didn't start tweeting right when I joined twitter either!

Non-exhaustive list of topics you could tweet about

1. Thread about your new working paper

2. Thread about somebody else's new working paper that you thought was cool/insightful/whatever

3. Thread/tweet about a seminar or conference presentation
   - Ask permission before tweeting about somebody else's preliminary work though

4. Thread/tweet about some aspect of diversity/equity/inclusion in the economics profession

5. These slides

6. An exciting development in your professional life (an award, a new job, a paper accepted, a nice referee report, a good seminar, etc.)

7. An exciting development in your personal life (you made it to all 50 states, you got to go skiing with your 90-year-old grandpa, you got a dog, you had a baby, you got married, etc.)

Example tweet: public good alert

Anne M. Burton
@anne_m_burton

Hi #EconTwitter!

Just in time for the start of the semester, @bartonwillage and I wanted to announce that our 2020 list of economics conferences is available.

See bartonwillage.com (Conference List) and annemburton.com (Economics Conferences)

1/4

Example tweet: public good alert

Anne Byrne
@EconAnne

I've compiled many of these into a publicly available google doc. Commenting is turned on, so if you have amendments or additions, please comment them!

Doc is here: docs.google.com/ spreadsheets/d...

Anne Byrne @EconAnne · 9/25/19
#EconTwitter what are good small grants (under ~$25K) that are good "first grants" for grad students to apply for? Hoping to compile a good list.

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Example tweet: thread about your new paper

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Example tweet: tweet about a social event at an upcoming conference

Example tweet: tweet about a conference

Example tweet: thread about your job market paper

Example tweet: tweet about these slides

Example tweet: an exciting development in your professional life

Example tweet: an exciting development in your personal life

What if you are too scared/nervous to tweet?

- It's okay if you feel a little nervous about tweeting
    - I was nervous too!
    - Sometimes I still get nervous
    - But it gets easier the more you tweet

- So if you start practicing in a low-stakes environment (see examples on previous slides), you'll feel more confident when you're in a high-stakes environment!
    - e.g. doing a thread on your job market paper when you're on the job market

- It's also okay if you just want to read what's on twitter and maybe like or retweet some tweets

Proofreading and editing (before posting) are your friends!

- I read and reread my tweets before sending them out into the twitterverse
  - I think about ways in which others could interpret what I've written
  - If there's obvious ambiguity, I rewrite to make it clearer
  - If I'm joking or being sarcastic, I'll often add an emoji or clearly state that I'm being sarcastic so others don't take my words at face value

How often do I check twitter? (1/2)

- It 100% depends on the perceived opportunity cost of my time and the salience of twitter

    - If I'm traveling, at a conference, really busy with research, etc., I'm not checking twitter very often relative to how active I usually am (maybe up to 15 minutes a day)

- Generally I think checking a few times a day for 10 minutes, or once a day for 20-30 minutes is enough to feel like you know what's going on

- If you want the "highlights" of twitter (however twitter defines them), then you can change your settings to see the "top tweets" first

How often do I check twitter? (2/2)

- I view checking twitter as part work and part leisure
  - Sometimes I find out about research that's relevant to my research or I see something that sparks an idea
  - I also like seeing what's going on in the profession
  - I also find parts of twitter/#EconTwitter entertaining

- If you want to spend over an hour a day on twitter and if you are getting your other work done (and your other obligations) then go for it–you're an adult so I'm not going to tell you how to allocate your time

- If you feel like you're spending too much time on twitter, you can set time limits for your phone and/or computer

Other guides to #EconTwitter

- Matt Clancy's beginner's guide to EconTwitter:

http://matt-clancy.com/a-beginners-guide-to-econtwitter-preliminary-version/

- Joshua Goodman's twitter tips for Ph.D. students:

https://www.dropbox.com/s/3h6npr0gwsus8i8/Twitter%20tips%20for%20young%20researchers.pptx

- Sarah Jacobsen's guide to using twitter professionally:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1cUoW_4SUl5u5NUydKZnNH2oPo08kEEP_/view

- Justin Wolfers's twitter for economists:

http://users.nber.org/ jwolfers/papers/Comments/TwitterforEconomists.pdf

- CSWEP/CSMGEP Twitter tips for success (video):

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fIaozKSaIYI&feature=youtu.be

- CSWEP compilation of twitter/other media advice:

https://www.aeaweb.org/about-aea/committees/cswep/programs/resources/audience

That's all I got!

I hope you found these slides useful!

Anne M. Burton

Ph.D. Candidate in Economics, Cornell University*

twitter: @anne_m_burton

website: https://annemburton.com

link to these slides: https://annemburton.com/econtwitter

*If you're a fan of the provision of public goods and hiring an economist who does health/public/crime/applied micro next year, I will be available for interviews at the 2021 AEAs/ASSAs in Chicago