Comping Guide

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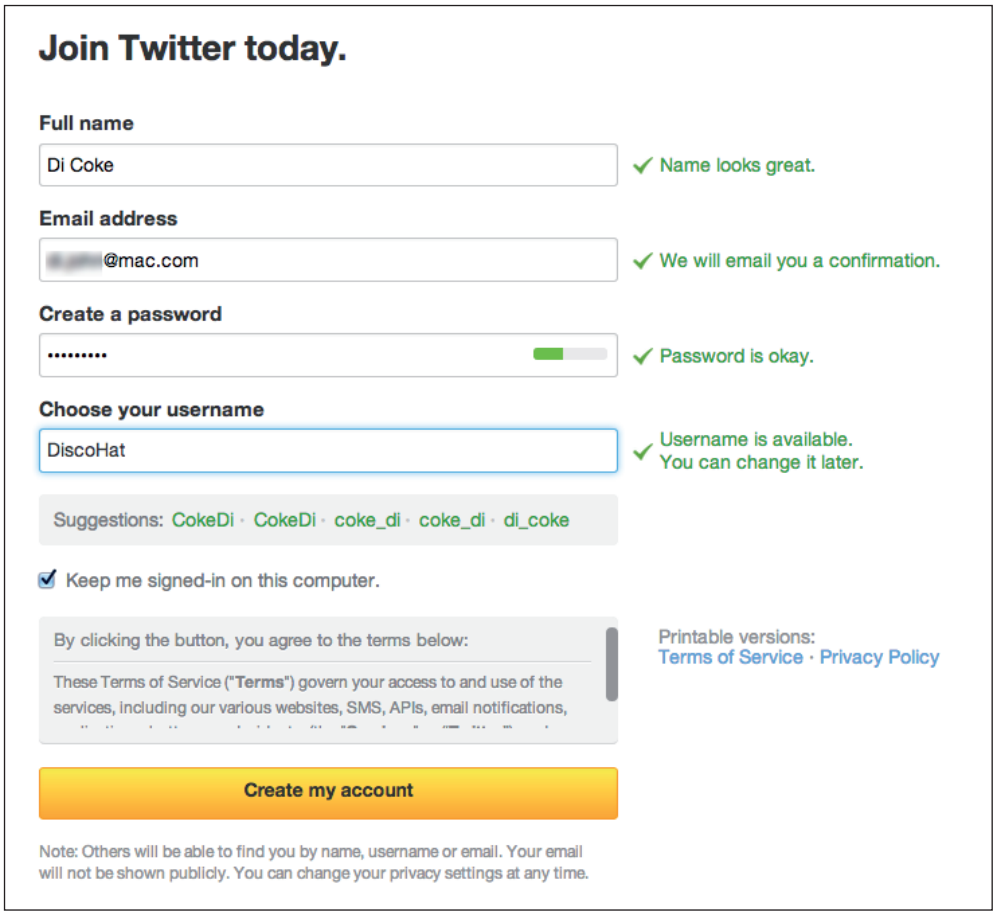
Twitter Basics

Although most brands concentrate their social media promotions on Facebook, Twitter is still gaining popularity, especially for short-lived promotions. For many online competitions - especially those hosted on blogs and via Rafflecopter - you can gain extra entries for tweeting a link so it's worth setting up an account even if it's just for comping. Twitter rules aren't as restrictive as Facebook and you don't need to share your real name if you don't want to - you're also allowed to use multiple accounts (make sure not to tweet the same thing from the different accounts though!) which is useful if you're worried about spamming your friends or work colleagues.

Signing up

Go to www.twitter.com and sign up for an account. You will need to give your name, email address, a password, and your choice of username. This can be anything you like but keep in mind most of the obvious ones have been taken! We recommend a short, easy to spell name - in this example we've set up an account called **DiscoHat** - the URL for this will be [www.twitter.com/discohat.](http://www.twitter.com/discohat)

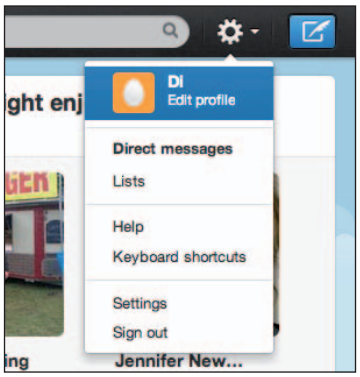


After clicking **Create my account** you're registered with Twitter, and will receive an email with a confirmation link. Click this in your inbox to confirm your address.

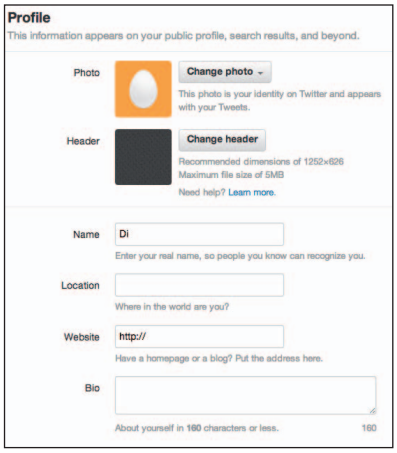
Step 1: Edit your profile

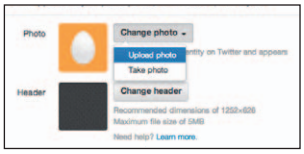
You can go ahead and start tweeting without adding any profile information – but it's a good idea to add a photo rather than leave the default Twitter egg, which is associated with spammers and newbies.

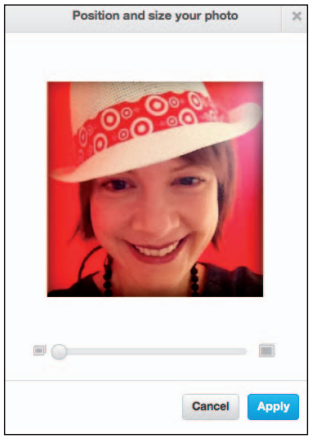
First, click the cog icon and choose 'Edit Profile'



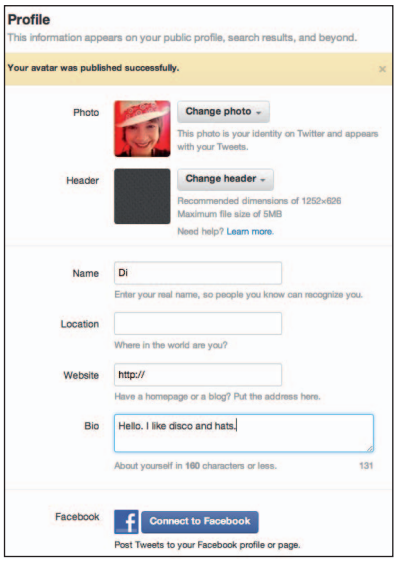
Now, upload a photo from your computer and resize it. If you like, you can add a large 'header photo' too.







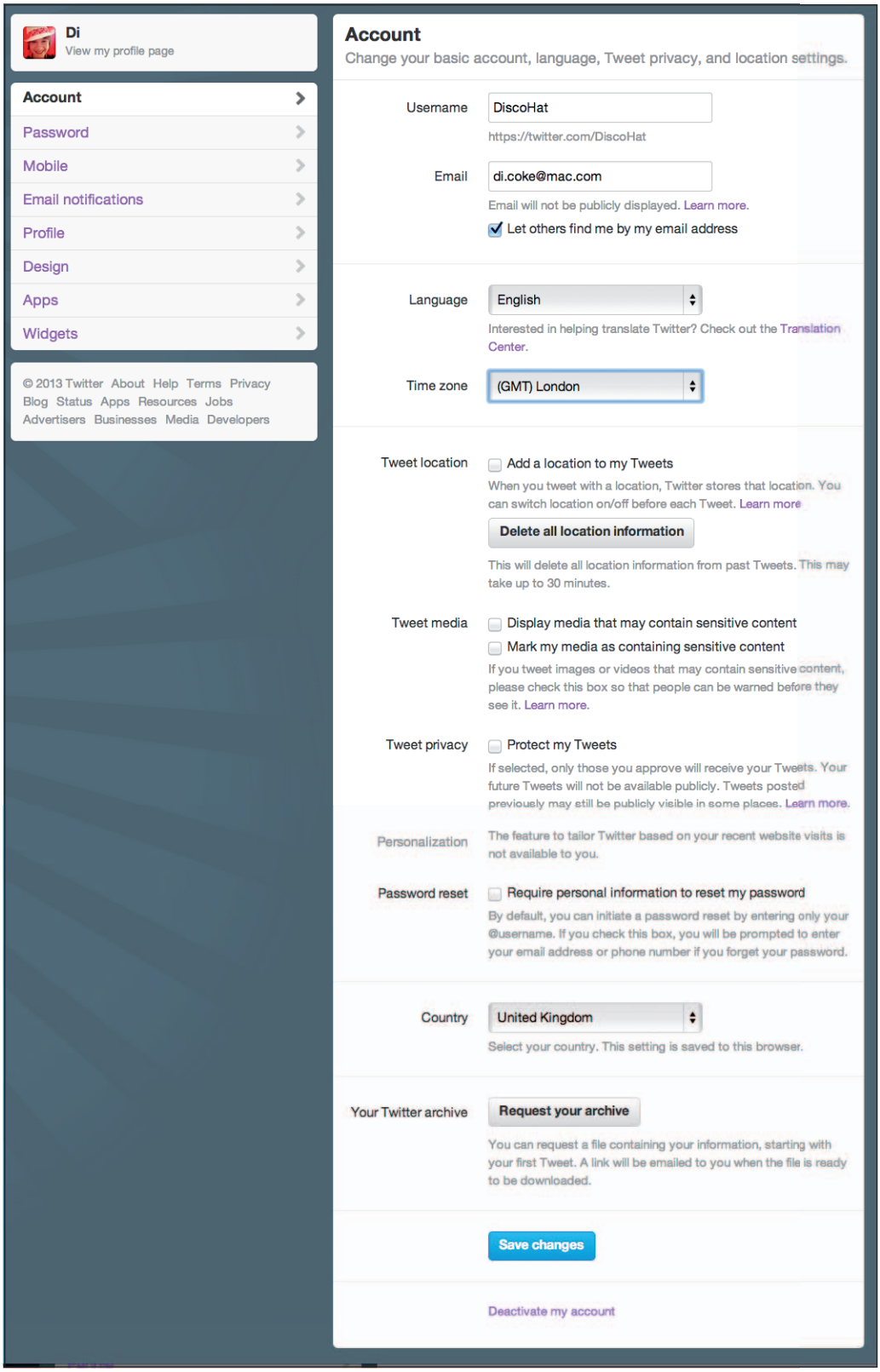
Add your location, website address (if relevant) and a few words for your 'bio' - these are optional but will make you more 'human'!



Step 2: Edit your account details

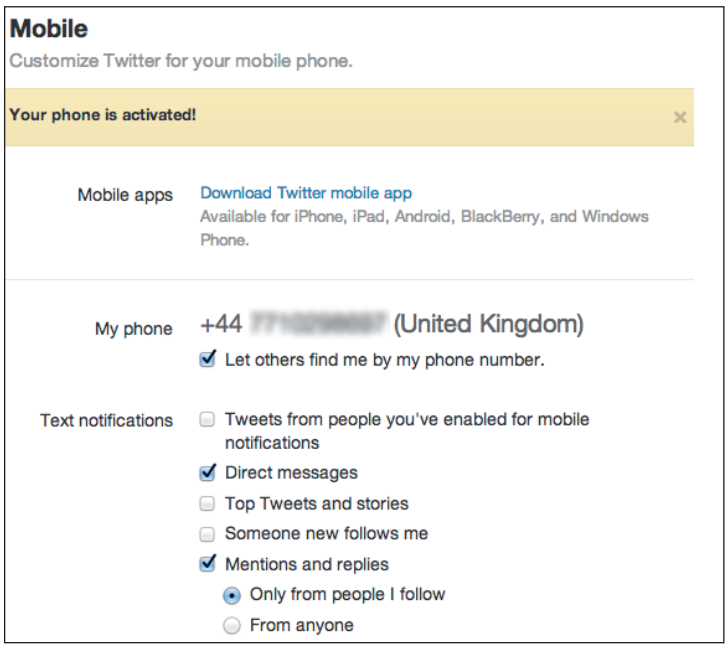
Now, from the left hand menu choose **Account**

- Ensure that your timezone is set to London
- Do NOT tick **Protect my Tweets** – this is a mistake that many new users make – all it does is means that your tweets can ONLY be seen by your followers, so promoters will not see your competition entries!

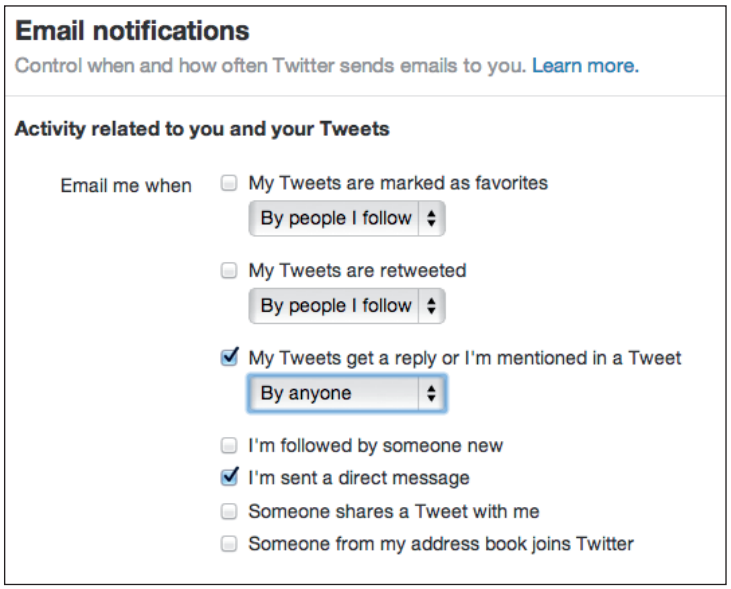


Step 3: Set your notifications

For security, you may want to link your mobile phone to your Twitter account. You can do this in the **Mobile** section. This will also bring up a list of options for notifications which you can customise.



Next, set up **Email notifications**. It's important that you don't miss a winning message or tweet, and the best way to ensure this is to get emails. You should tick **My Tweets get a reply or I'm mentioned in a Tweet** - and make sure the option is **By anyone.** It's also a good idea to get an email when you're sent a mesage – so tick **I'm sent a Direct Message** too. The rest of the email notifcations aren't essential for comping and you can untick them all.



You can access all these pages at any time by clicking the cog icon and selecting **Settings.**

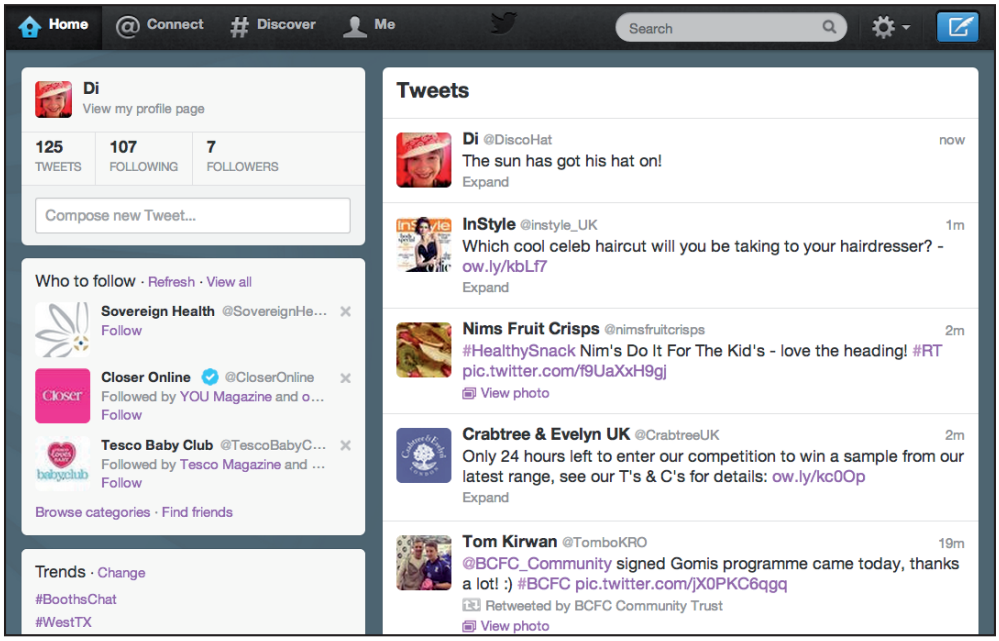
Now, you're all set to start tweeting!

Home

On your **Home** page you will see a timeline of tweets, with the latest at the top. It consists of:

- Your Tweets
- Tweets from people you follow
- Retweets from people you follow.

The Retweets can be confusing for new users as the retweet details are hidden underneath the tweet, so it appears you're following the original tweeter - see the example below, where I see a tweet from **@TomboKRO** in my timeline, even though I don't follow him. Underneath you can see it was 'retweeted' by **@BCFC_Community**, who I DO follow.

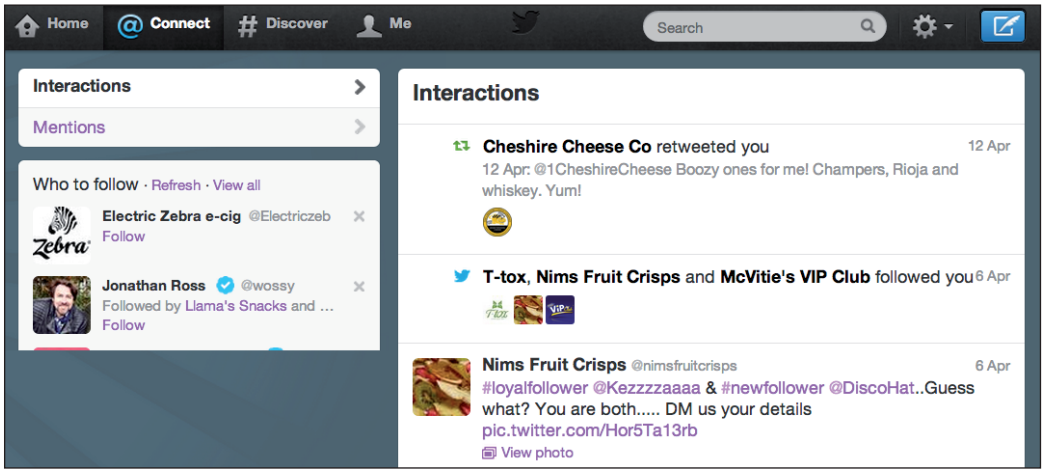


If you follow people but don't want to see their retweets (which can often be irrelevant or annoying - particularly when some companies retweet EVERY competition entry they get!) then click onto their home page and choose **Turn off Retweets**. This is also what compers should ask their non-comping friends to do, then their timeline won't be full of batches of your competition retweets!

Connect

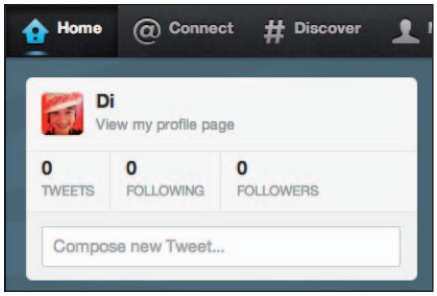
Click **Connect** at the top left of your Home Page to see:

- **Interactions** - tweets where others have mentioned you, your new followers, and people who have retweeted or favourited your Tweets)
- **Mentions** (just your @ mentions/replies)

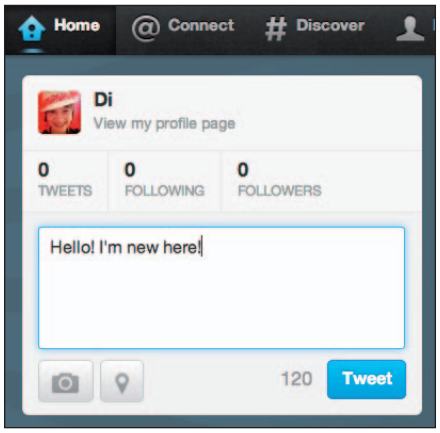


Tweeting

To compose a tweet, on your **Home** page start typing in the **Compose New Tweet....** box - or just click the icon top right of the screen, which will open a pop-up window for you to type in.

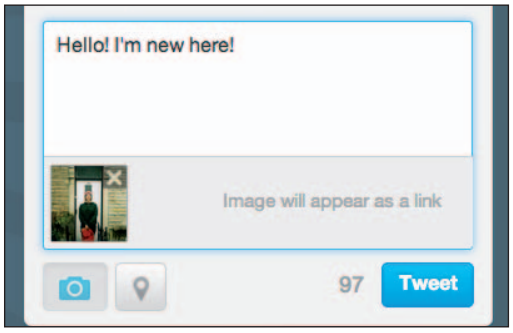


Start typing in the box, and you'll notice the number underneath decreases from 140. Your Tweet can be a maximum of 140 characters including spaces. When you're done, click **Tweet** to send it.



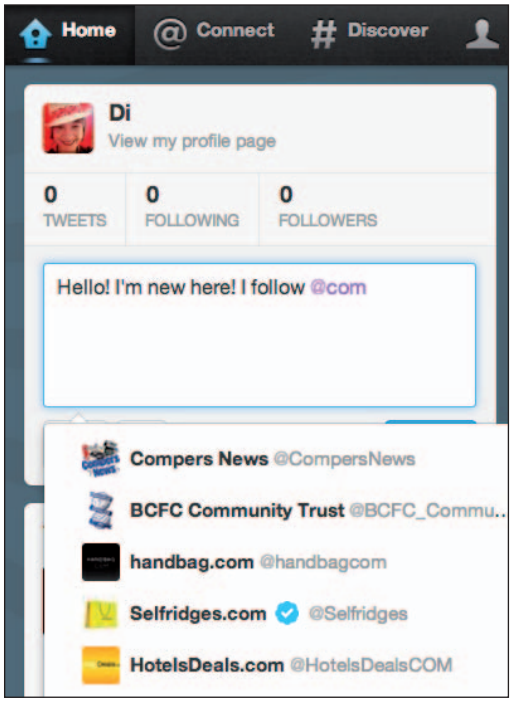
Photos

If you want to attach a photo to your tweet it will need to be saved on your computer. Click the camera icon and browse to find and upload your photo. You'll see a preview and the camera will turn blue - your photo will appear as a link when tweeted (keep this in mind as the link will use up a chunk of your character allowance!)



Mentions/tags

If you want to **mention** a friend or company (often referred to as **tagging**), simply type the @ symbol and start to type the name - you'll get a drop down list of names to choose from.



Mention someone in the **middle** of a tweet, and all your followers will see it on their timeline.

eg. Thanks to @CompersNews I won a book of stamps today!

Mention someone at the **start** of the tweet, and the person you mentioned will see it on their timeline PLUS any of your followers who also follow that person will see it. It will also be visible to anyone who visits your Twitter profile page.

eg. @CompersNews Thankyou for the stamps I received today!

You may see people put a full stop at the start of a tweet, before a name. This is because it's directed at a specific user, but they want all their followers to see the tweet!

eg. .@CompersNews Thankyou for the stamps I received today - what a great magazine!

Following

Use the search box at the top to look for people or brands to follow. In this example, we're searching for CompersNews.

Clicking the avatar in the search results takes us to the Compers News profile page. Click **Follow** - the button will change to a blue Following button.

You'll see a timeline of Tweets from that user in reverse order, with the most recent at the top.

There are five options under each tweet:

- **Reply** - click this and an empty box will pop up so you can send a message in reply to Compers News - your message will automatically start with @compersnews if you click this
- **Retweet** - Send the tweet to all your followers
- **Favorite** - this will mark the tweet and it will appear in your favorites list - useful for comps or links you want to look at later!
- **More** - this gives you the option of embedding the tweet (useful for bloggers)
- **Expand** - click to see the people who have Retweeted and the date/time of the tweet

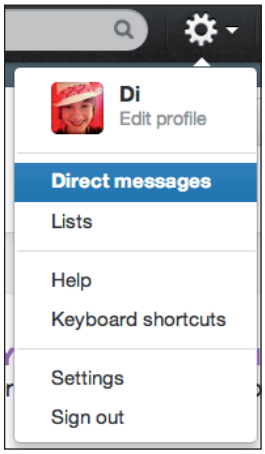
Click **Details** and the tweet will open in its own window - this is useful if you want to bookmark or send someone a link to that tweet (you can also do this by clicking the 'timestamp' to the right of the tweet - in this case **15 Apr**)

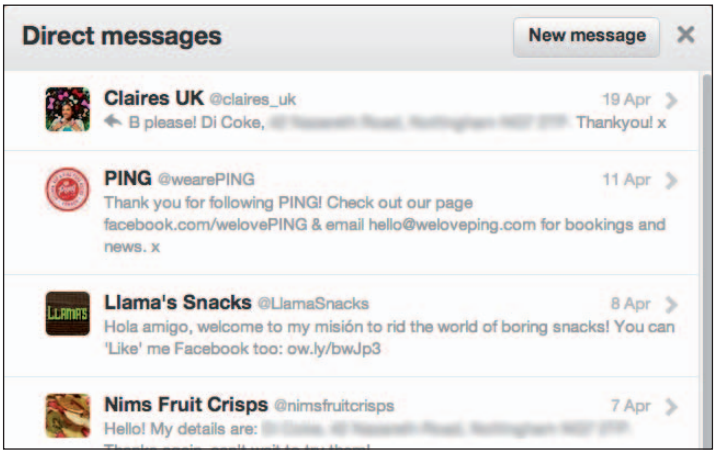
Me

Click **Me** on the top bar and you'll return to your own profile page, with a timeline of your own tweets and retweets.

Direct Messages

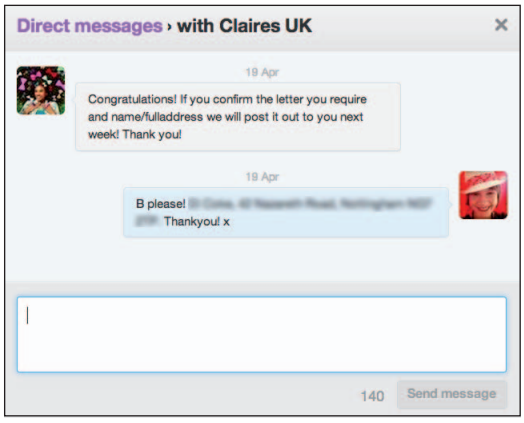
If you want to have a private conversation, you need to do it via **Direct Message**. You will only be able to Direct Message someone who you are following and who is following you back. To check your messages, click the 'cog' at the top right of your homepage, choose Direct Messages and a pop-up window will open.



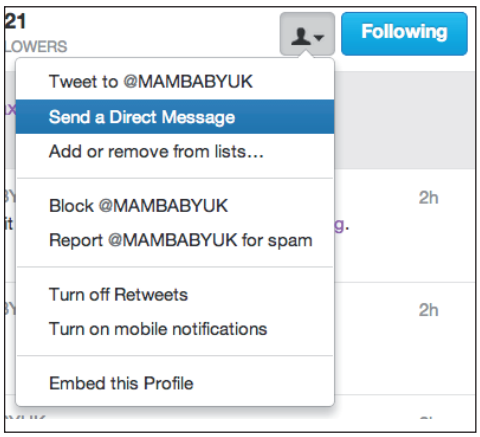


You'll see that several companies will automatically follow you back on Twitter and send an automatic DM to say hello.

Click the arrows at the right to open and view the entire conversation - type in the box to reply.

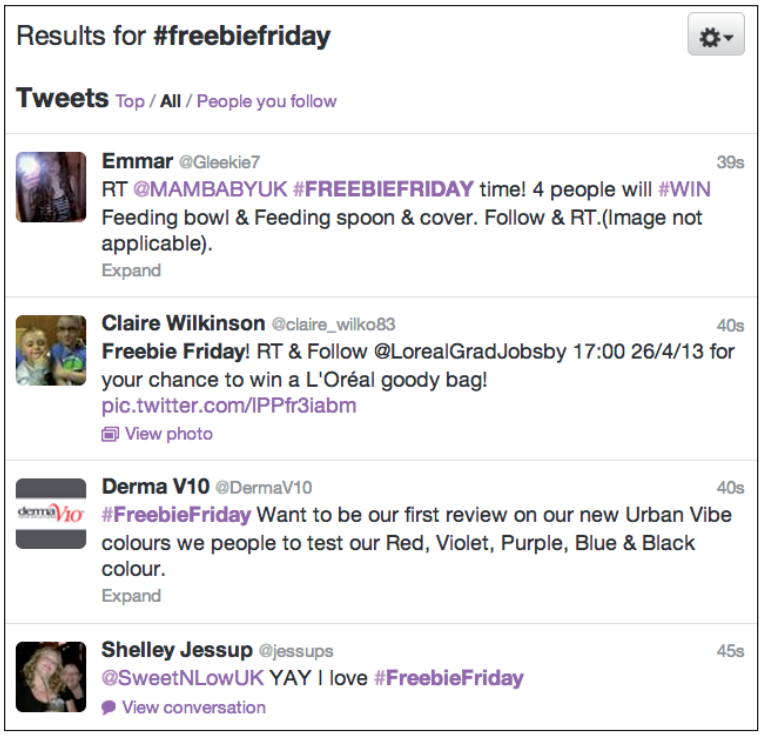


To send a message, either do it by clicking **New Message** in your message inbox - or you can do it from a user's profile page (you'll only see the option to do so if you're following them and they're following you!)



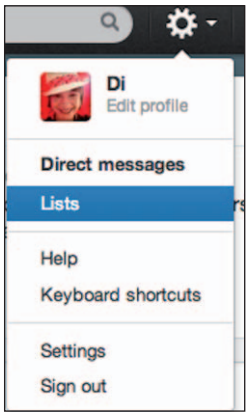
Hashtags

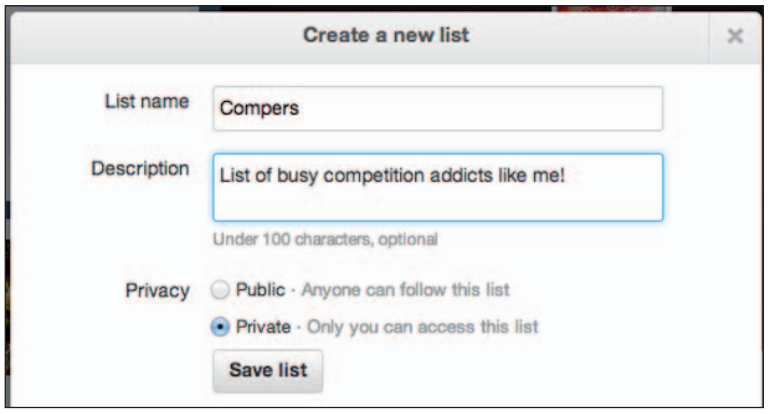
Hashtags are used regularly on Twitter to signify a topic people are tweeting about - you'll be able to see which hashtags are 'trending' on your Home page - they will generally be US-based themes as there are so many more Twitter users in America than in Europe. Click the hashtag to do a search on it - **#FreebieFriday** is a popular one for competitions!



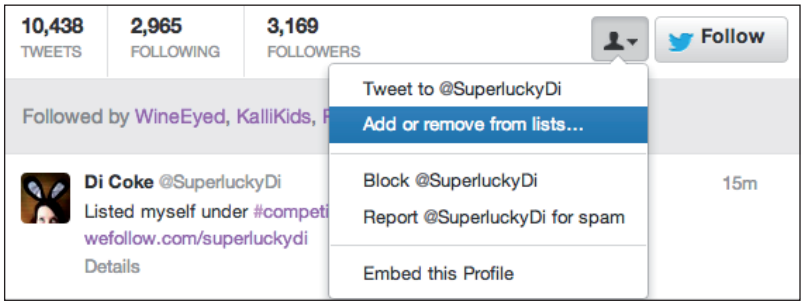
Lists

Lists can be a handy way to organise your interests and cut down on the number of people you're following if you're close to hitting your follow limit. To set up a List, choose **Lists** from the settings (cog) menu and then click **Create List.** In the Pop up window, name and describe your list and choose whether it will be private or public. If it's public, anyone can see your list and the Twitter users will know that you've added them to it!

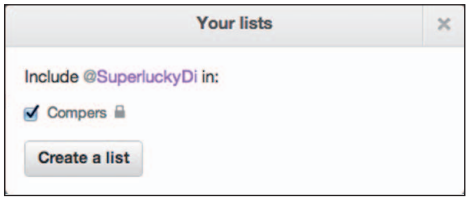




To add people to your list, go to their Twitter profile page/timeline and choose **Add or remove from lists....** from the drop-down menu.



Then, choose your list (in this case, we only have one list set up) or create a new one.



To view your list, choose Lists from the cog menu or go to **www.twitter.com/yourusername/yourlistname**

Note: Lists WILL NOT show Retweets!

Comping on Twitter

Comping on Twitter can be lots of fun, but also frustrating as often there are no Terms and Conditions or closing dates - and usually no fair way for a promoter to choose a winner for a random draw. People complain that the same names are winning all the time, but that's because they're established Twitter users, and are busy interacting and tweeting, with lots of followers, so Twitter tends to push their tweets to the top of search results. However there really aren't THAT many compers entering via Twitter, so even as a newbie it is possible to win, particularly smaller prizes – and on Fridays you'll find lots of giveaways!

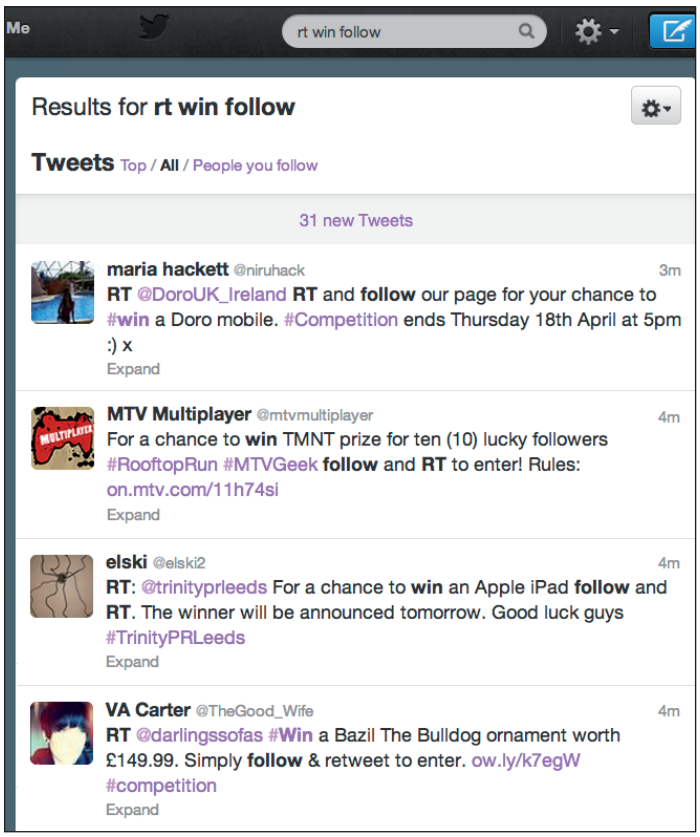
Follow comps

The easiest Twitter competitions simply ask you to follow the brand or promoter. They will choose randomly from all their followers.

Retweet comps

Most competition tweets will ask you to **RT and Follow to win** so a quick way to find lots of easy comps is to search for 'RT Win Follow'. Twitter will push sponsored and popular tweets to the top of your results, so click **All** (rather than **Top**) to see the most recent results - even as you scroll down, you'll see a message at the top of the page to let you know there are lots more new results! Note that if you're searching on a mobile phone, search results will only show top Tweets and Tweets from people you follow - there is no 'All' option. Don't presume that clicking **All** will show everything though - Twitter Help pages do say that they 'may not show every Tweet in search results', which explains why sometimes you can't even find your own entries in a search!

Scroll through the search results to find competitions that interest you. Some of your results will be manual ('copy and paste') retweets from compers entering the comps - only the MTV one in the example below is an original tweet from a company. This is where you need to be careful, as you need to Retweet the ORIGINAL tweet to enter - retweeting a manual retweet from a comper won't get you an entry into the draw, and is likely to annoy the comper!



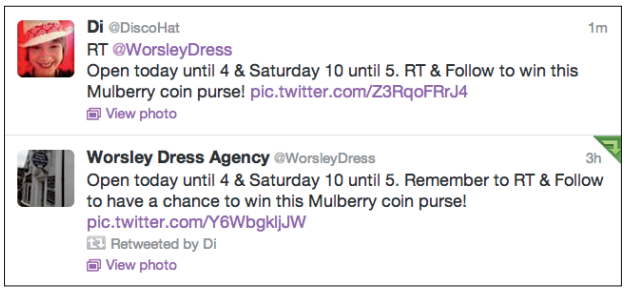
From your search results or your Timeline, click on the promoters' names (either the icons and black names, or the @ names if they're mentioned in a comper's tweet) and open their page in a new window. Scroll down to find the original competition tweet and check that the comp is still running (you may need to check the T&Cs via a link to a website). Then click **Retweet** under the tweet. Click **Follow** at the top if that's required too.

A Twitter search WILL NOT SHOW retweets generated from the RT button. Your best bet for finding lots of RT comps is to follow successful compers. You'll soon learn to recognise them as they will pop up regularly in your searches and you will see them announced as winners! Another good way to find compers is to look at who's been retweeting the competition tweets (click **Expand** to reveal them) - click the photos and if their feed is all comps, it might be worth following them. Follow as many compers as you like, most of them are a friendly bunch!

Twitter compers often wonder whether to use the Retweet button, or to copy the tweet text and manually add **RT** plus the promoter's name at the start before sending - it's fine to try both, although if it's one entry per person you risk disqualification. Below is an example - the top tweet is my 'copy and paste' manual tweet, the bottom one is a click of the Retweet button.

If you're entering comps from a comper's timeline, you CAN retweet the RTs that they've done using the RT button (in the example above, you could RT my bottom tweet and that would be a valid entry - Twitter would show this on your Timeline as if you'd retweeted directly from the SimplyBeUK feed).

If you decide to copy the tweet and manually add **RT @promotername** at the start, this will sometimes take you over the character limit and you'll have to edit out some of the tweet content. Again, the example below shows the manual (top) and auto (bottom) methods of retweet competition entry. In the top tweet, we've edited out a few words from the original tweet to fit within our 140 character limit.



Some promoters will choose a winner from their Retweet notifications, in which case only Tweets using the Retweet button will count, but other promoters choose from their @ Mentions, so will only see the copy and paste style of Retweet (regardless of whether it contains the full content of their original tweet) Some compers use both methods, but if it's one entry per person you risk disqualification.

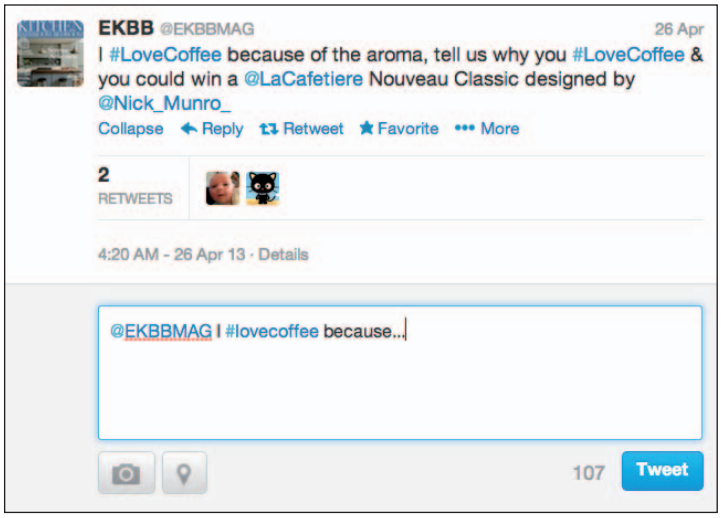
Hashtags (#)

Promoters might often ask you to include a **Hashtag** such as '#WinHamper' in your tweet. When it comes to choosing the winner, they will search for all Tweets using that hashtag. In the **#luckylondoner** example below, they've not had space to mention the prize - so you would need to check their timeline for a tweet about that!

Reply comps

Reply to enter competitions are used when promoters want to engage with their fans, so they ask them to do something more than just click the Retweet button. You'll usually need to follow the promoter and then send them a tweet in reply to theirs. Here's an example of a Reply comp which also uses a hashtag:

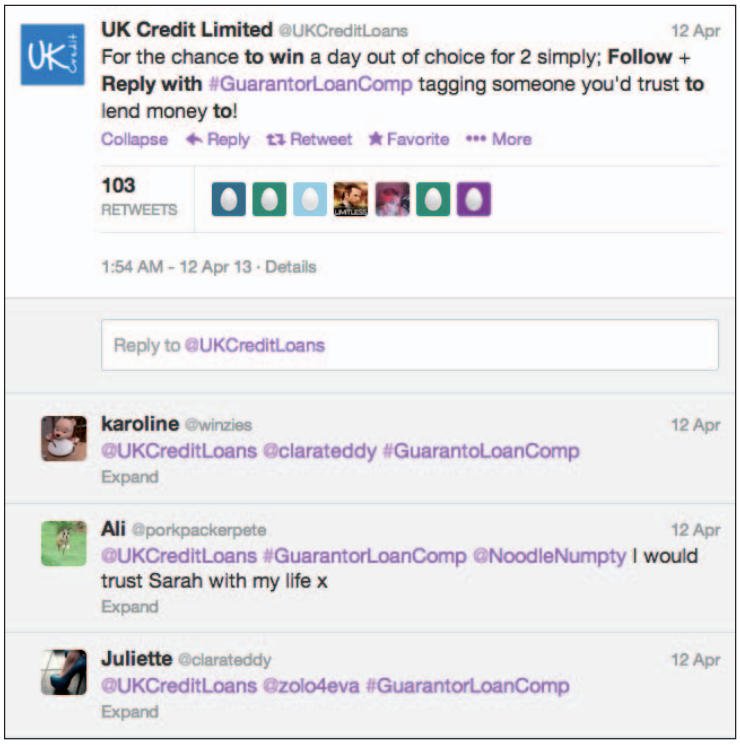
Click **Expand** (or hover your mouse over the tweet) then click **Reply.** The box will automatically have the user's name at the start of the reply – as there are actually three tagged users in this example Tweet, Twitter also added @LaCafetiere and @Nick_Munro in the reply box, but as we're short on space we removed them. If there's a hashtag in the original competition tweet, be sure to include it in your reply!



Tagging comps

Some promoters ask you to 'tag' your friend in a tweet in order to enter - this is so they can spread the word about the competition! See this example:

Click Expand and you'll see some of the replies that people have tweeted - they have each tagged a friend's name in the tweet – it's up to you whether you add more text in this case (see Ali's entry below), or whether you simply stick to tagging their name. In this example, you'll see that Karoline has mistyped the hashtag and left an 'r' out - if the promoter searches on the hashtag to choose their winner (rather than choosing from the replies or mentions list), Karoline's entry won't be seen!



When tagged, your friend will see that mention on their **Connect** tab, and is likely to enter the comp themselves. For some competitions, the entrant and the tagged friend will both win a prize - sometimes the promoter will ask you to nominate a friend along with a reason for the nomination, so you'll have to squeeze your answer into 140 characters.

Photo comps

Many promoters run photo comps on Twitter - you can upload a photo from your computer (see page 9), or if you're out and about you can take one with your smartphone and tweet directly from your phone photo gallery or Twitter App.

For the example below, you need to tweet your photo with the hashtag #CelebrateTheSun - although it's not mentioned in this case, it's probably worth tagging the promoter in your tweet too, to ensure they have your entry on their **Mentions** list.

For a hashtag competition, click the hashtag, then **All** on your search results to see the entries - you can click to **Show** the photos and check out the other entries before you enter your own!

Other comps involving tweets

- **Rafflecopter** promotions will usually give you bonus entries for following on Twitter or for Tweeting. Once you've tweeted, you will need to add the URL of your tweet in the Rafflecopter widget (see page 10 for how to click on the 'timestamp' to get the direct link to your tweet)
- Several magazines (eg. Woman's Own) run **Share and Gain** competitions where you get bonus entries for sharing on Facebook, Twitter or by email. After entering, there's an option to Tweet your unique link, which the magazine will use to track your friend referrals.

Informing winners

If you've won a competition, promoters will contact you either by

- tweeting a public **@Mention**, which will appear when you view your **Connect** tab
- sending a **Direct Message**

Often a promoter will announce you as a winner with an @ Mention, asking you to send them your address details by DM. You will only be able to Direct Message someone who you are following and who is following you back - compers regularly have to tweet promoters reminding them *'I can't DM you my address as you're not following me'!*

See page 5 for instructions on how to set up email notifications for when you get a mention or a message - if you don't use Twitter regularly it's worth activating these so you don't miss a win!

Twitter limits

If you start comping regularly on Twitter, you'll soon hear people complaining that the're in Twitter jail. Twitter has restrictions on the number of times you can Tweet in a day - and if you go over that, you'll get a short ban.

You're allowed to tweet 1,000 times a day, and this is broken down into smaller limits for half-hourly intervals - this is where compers get into jail, for doing too many Tweets and Retweets in a short comping session - it's currently 100 Tweets in an hour. You'll usually be able to tweet again after a few hours.

Once an account is following 2,000 other users, you can't follow more until you get more than 2,000 followers. The number of accounts you can follow then increases in line with your own follower count. If you get to a point where you can't follow any more, you could try unfollowing some compers (try using www.manageflitter.com) and adding them to 'Lists' instead (see page 12)

Tips

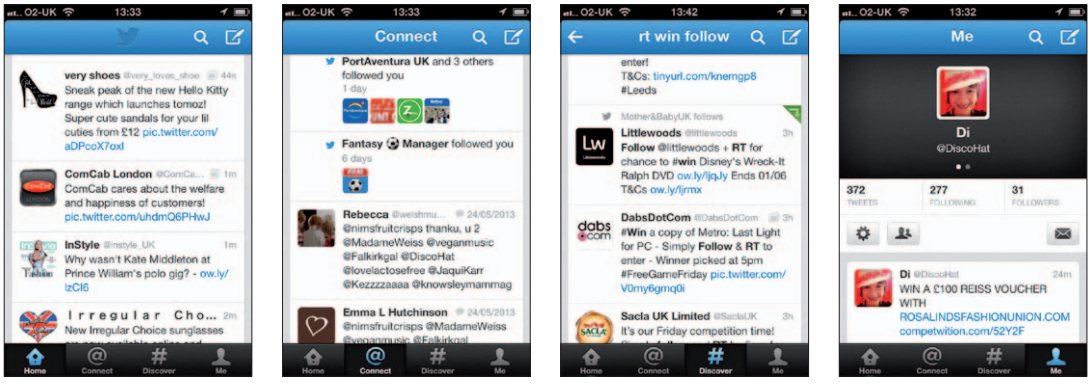
- For Compers News subscribers, find a list of Chatterboxer Twitter usernames on the forum at http://bit.ly/CBTweeters
- Keep in mind that smiley and brightly coloured profile photos may be more likely to attract attention and be chosen as winners
- Check the T&Cs before retweeting - the competition may have closed already, or only be open to US entries!
- Retweet near the end of the competition if you can - some promoters will only choose from the retweets they can actually see when the competition closes, which will only be the last few.
- Before you reply to a company to ask for more information on a comp, check their timeline - often the terms, conditions and important details are split over several tweets
- Make sure you do more than just competition tweets - reply to promoters, add a few comping friends to converse with, and post a few of your own tweets to make your timeline more natural. Twitter filters you out of search results if they you're spamming, so if your timeline is all Retweets your entries might not even show up when the promoter picks a winner!
- Tweet to say thankyou when a prize arrives- it's good manners, and also gives you original content for your timeline
- Avoid referencing comping in your name or bio - some promoters avoid compers at all costs!
- If you can, tweet to win on a Friday - its when most of the comps happen, often with a #FreebieFriday hashtag

Twitter on a Smartphone/Tablet

To download **Twitter** for your iPhone, Android or iPad search for it in the app store. Once the app is installed, you can sign in with an existing account or sign up for a new account directly from the app. If you have multiple Twitter accounts, you can use them all from the app.

Using Twitter on a phone or tablet will initially seem very different to tweeting from your computer, as everything is in a different place. However, it's a great way to comp while you're out and about as Twitter comps are so easy to enter and involve less typing, more swiping!

Here are the four main screens:



Home

- Pull down to refresh your news feed.

Connect

- As with web Twitter, the Connect screen shows who is following you, who's mentioned you and who's favorited your tweets.
- When the Connect tab has a blue glow under it, you have new interactions/mentions

Discover

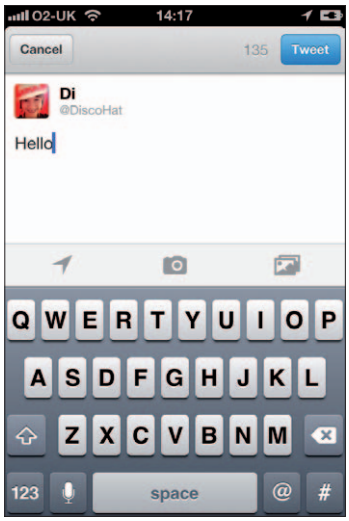
- This shows your last search results - pull down to refresh the results.

Me

- Swipe at the top of the screen to move from photo to bio.
- Click the cog icon to access your settings
- Click the double silhouette icon to change between your different Twitter accounts
- Click the envelope to send or read a direct message
- When the Me tab has a blue glow under it, you have a new direct message

Compose a tweet

Click the **Compose** icon to send a tweet. You can add a location by tapping the arrow, take a photo by tapping the camera icon or choose from your phone/tablet photo gallery by tapping the stacked photos icon.

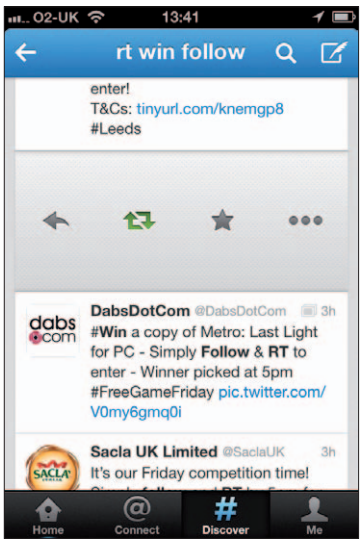


Add a photo

Adding a photo via the Twitter app on a phone or tablet will give you the option to crop and add Instagram-style effects, which can make it stand out from the crowd and add a bit of magic to your shot. To do this, click on the magic wand and circles icons below the photo – and experiment!

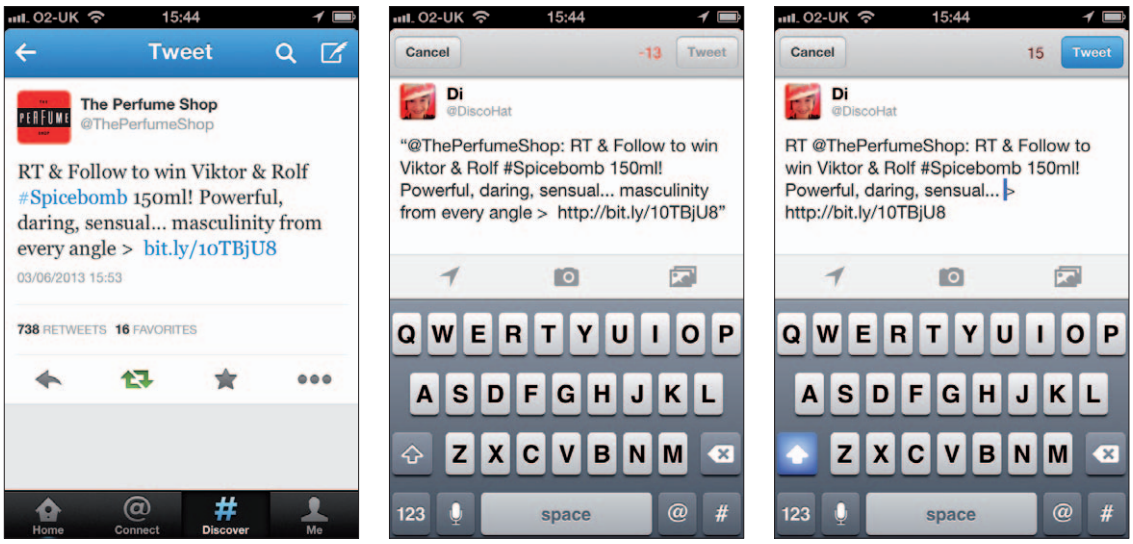
How to reply, retweet and favorite

- From your **Home** feed or **Discover** search results, tap a tweet to see more details, or swipe a tweet to see shortcuts to reply/retweet/favorite.



- Tap the tweet, then the icon to Follow - it will change to a blue tick.
- If you don't see the Follow icon, that's because you already follow that user.
- Tap the double arrows to Retweet - you'll get an option to Retweet automatically, or to Quote Tweet.

- Tap **Retweet,** you will send an auto retweet and the arrows will go green (in your Home feed you'll also see the green icon top right of any tweets you've retweeted)
- Tap **Quote Tweet** and the entire text will pop up in a new box for you to edit and send as a manual retweet. First, delete the quote marks and add RT at the start - in the example below I had to edit out some text to get it under 140 characters.



Tips

- You may want to set notifications when you're mentioned or sent a Direct Message. To do this, you will need to go to your main phone or tablet settings and edit the notifications you receive from Twitter.
- Scroll to the bottom of your **Me** screen to find your Favorites, Lists, etc.
- If you have spare time while out and about then Twitter is an easy way to enter lots of comps on your phone, because if you stick to easy RTs you hardly have to do any fiddly typing
- Twitter search is a quick way to find and bookmark lots of new competitions - **Favorite** tweets on your phone, then look at them in more detail on web Twitter or your Tweetdeck column when you get home.

Tweetdeck.com

If you plan to use Twitter regularly at home, it's worth downloading the Tweetdeck software for your desktop PC or Mac from **www.tweetdeck.com** - it's free and very useful, as you can view multiple columns at once - your home news feed, your mentions, direct messages, favourite tweets, a favourite search, a list, etc. It's information overload, but it will really help you get organised! If you use Twitter for work, Tweetdeck is brilliant as you can use it to manage multiple Twitter accounts at once.

You can also log in and use Tweetdeck via the web at **http://web.tweetdeck.com**

To get started, download the software at www.tweetdeck.com. You'll need to enter your Twitter username and password and verify your details to connect your Twitter account(s) to TweetDeck.

Columns

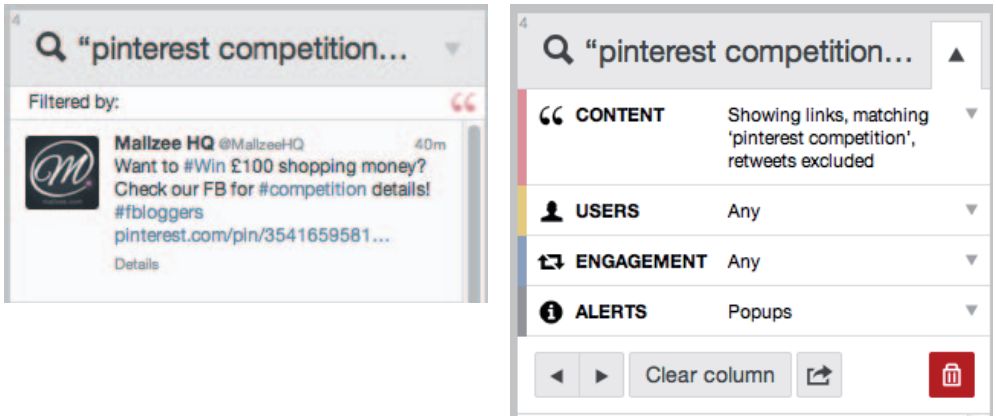
Tweetdeck shows your Twitter activity in vertical columns which will automatically update as new tweets come in. You can add, remove, resize and move columns until you have a layout you're happy with - this is easily done on the left hand vertical menu . This menu can be expanded to show the titles of columns, or just kept as icons.

Your columns can show your **Home** feed, **Mentions**, **Messages**, **Favorites** - plus other users, lists and searches. It can seem rather hectic - but when you get into the swing of it, it works very well for finding new competitions!

Alerts

You can set Tweetdeck to alert you with a pop-up and sound whenever a certain columns is updated.

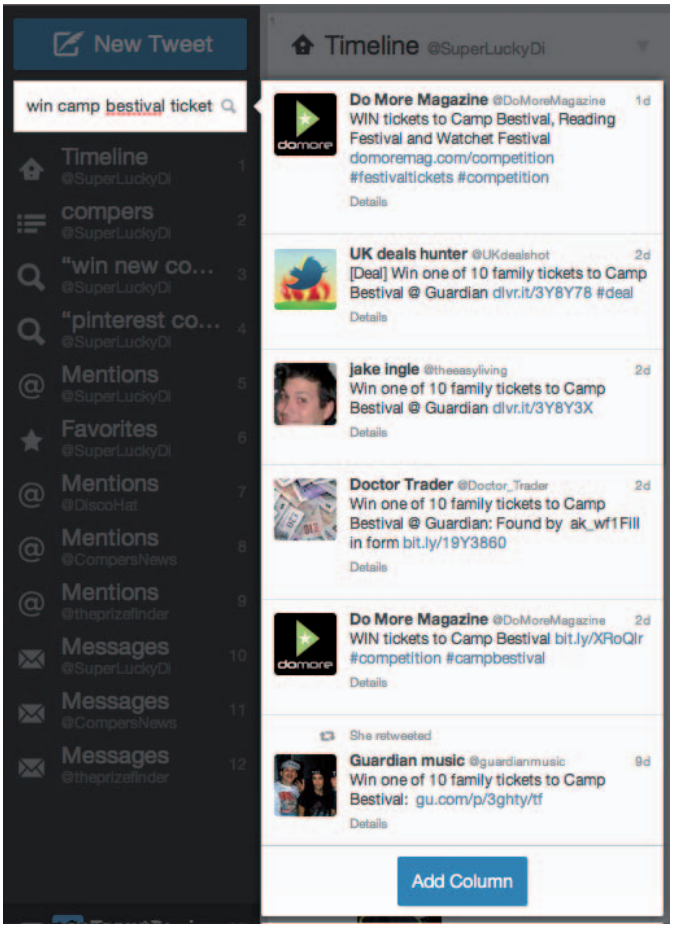
To change your alerts, click the arrow at the top right of a column to see a drop down box with options - you can choose whether to receive sound alerts, Popups or none at all for that column.



Columns

Drag the icons on the left of your Tweetdeck window up and down to change column order.

Custom Searches



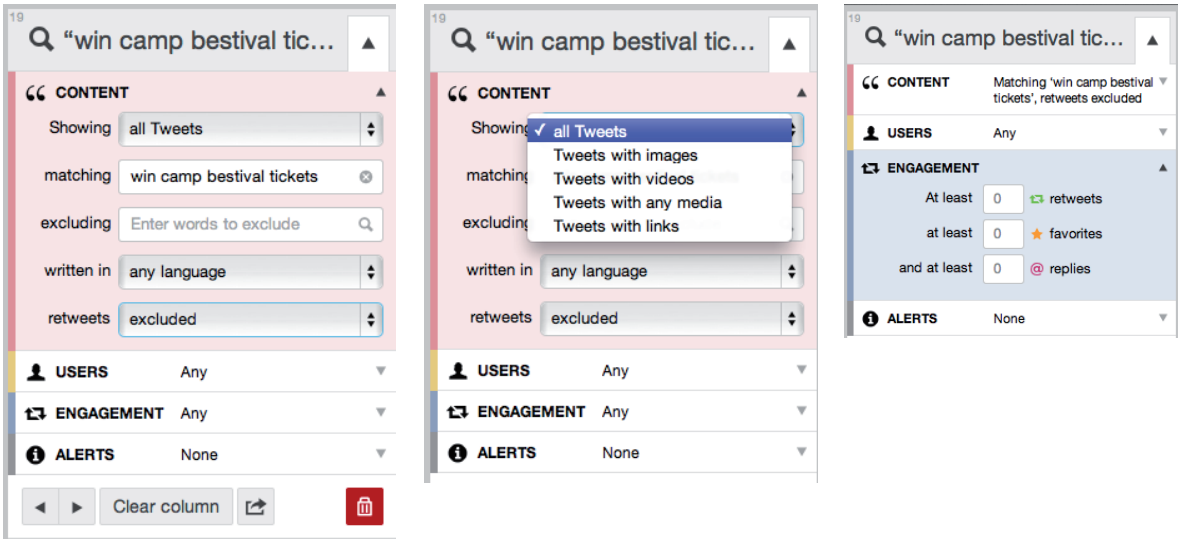
In Tweetdeck, you can set up a custom **search** as a new column, which will refresh with new search results - you can use this to find certain types of competition, eg *"photo competition"* or *"blog giveaway"*.or to look for certain prizes, eg. *"Win Good Food tickets"*.

To search, simply type in the search box at the top left of Tweetdeck and press Enter. Click **Add Column** to save this search as a permanent column.

*Note: Tweetdeck and Twitter on a Smartphone/Tablet will only show the **Top** results - if you want to see **All** results you will need to use web-based Twitter at www.twitter.com/search*

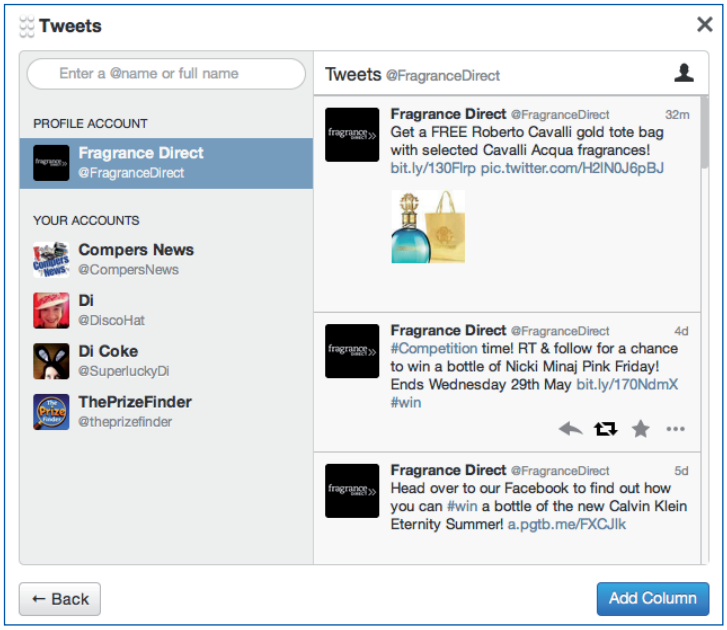
Once you have a search column, click the arrow at the top to edit your results. If you're searching for new competitions, then it's a good idea to exclude retweets - otherwise you'll see repeated content in your column. You can change **all tweets** to only show tweets with a link, an image or a video - if you're looking for non-Twitter competitions, then just opt to see tweets with an external link.

In the 'engagement' section you can choose to filter your serach results so that ony the most popular tweets show - although this isn't much help for finding low entry comps!



When clicking on a Twitter username from a column, you'll get a pop-up window for that user. From here you can **Follow**, or click **Tweets** on the left to see their timeline.

Look for the relevant competition tweet on their timeline, then hover over it and (if it's a RT comp) click the **retweet** icon.

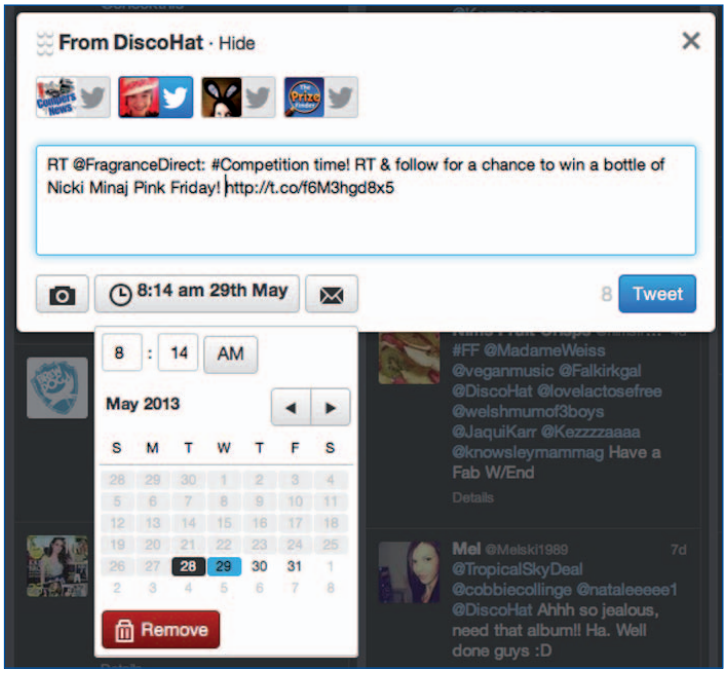


Rather than doing an automatic retweet, Tweetdeck gives you a pop up window where you can choose to do an automatic one (click the blue Retweet button) or Edit & RT (see page 14 for more on manual 'copy and paste' retweets).

This is handy if you need to RT and add your own answer to the Tweet. Remember if you start editing, keep an eye on your 140 character limit!

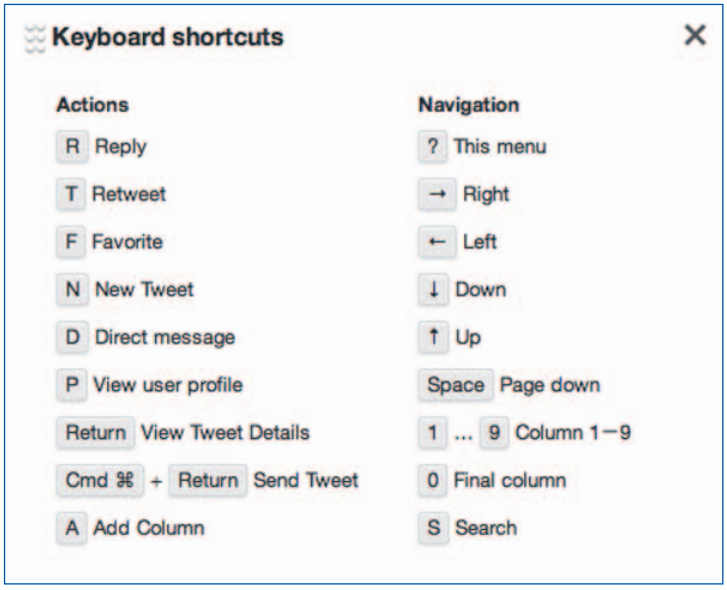
Schedule Tweets

As we covered earlier in the guide, the time of your competition entry may play a part in whether you're successful. Tweetdeck can schedule tweets for any time - so you can set up your competition RT and send it right before the competition closes! To do this, simply click the clock icon under your new tweet, and choose the date and time.



Keyboard Shortcuts

Click **Settings** on the bottom left of Tweetdeck and you can open up a Keyboard Shortcuts box - if you're going to use Tweetdeck a lot these are really handy to know.



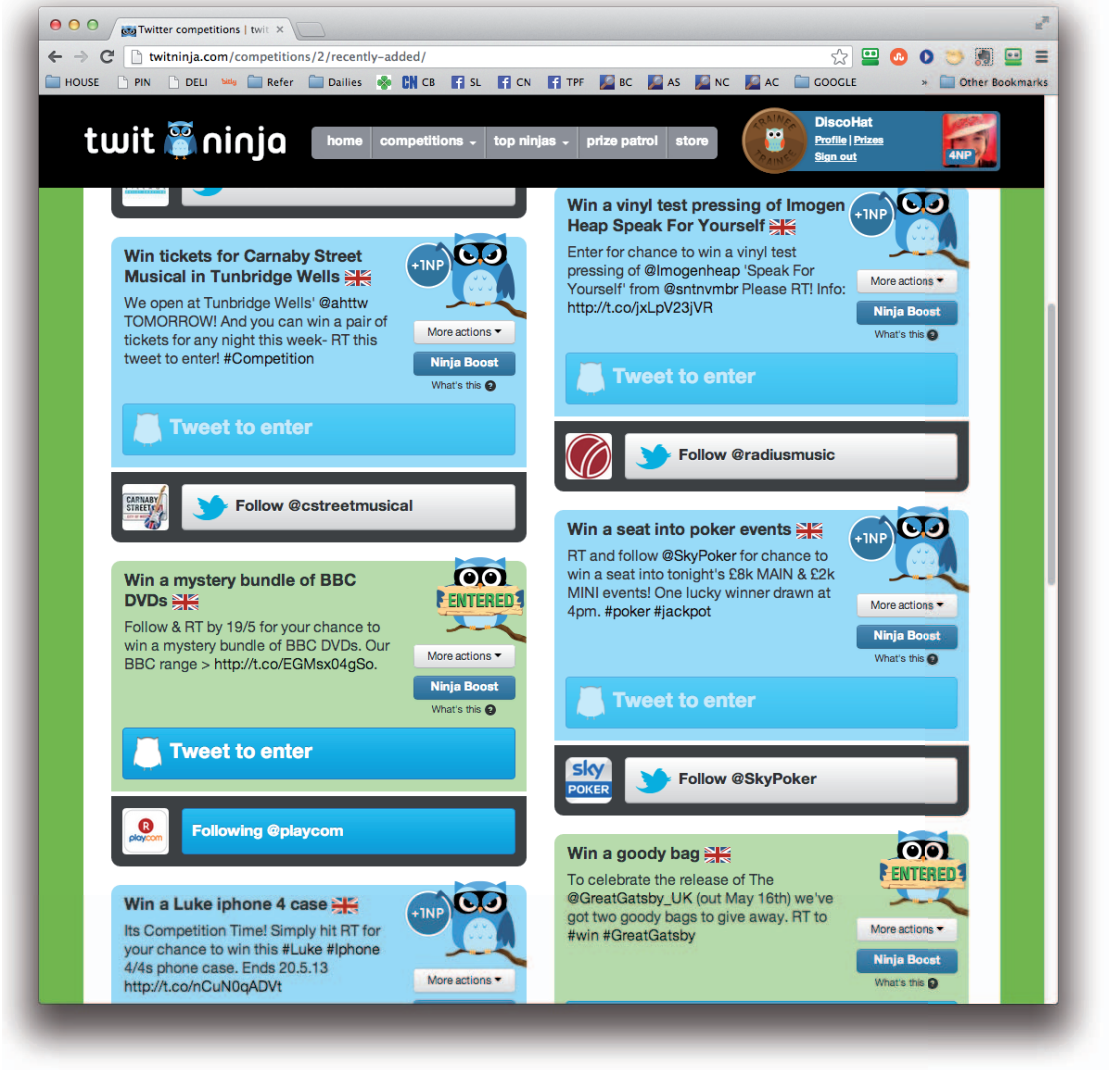
Twitninja

www.twitninja.co.uk is a smartly designed and easy to use website which makes it simple for compers to enter Twitter comps. To use Twitninja, sign in using your Twitter details and authorise Twitninja to send from your account.

You can then look through the competitions listed and click **Tweet to Enter** on each one - you'll need to ensure you're following the promoter for most of them, so click **Follow** first. There's also the option of a **Ninja Boost** button which will send a manual 'copy and paste' tweet. You get Ninja points for each entry and for submitting new comps too - the three members with the most points each month win Amazon vouchers.

Depending on how new your Twitter account is, Twitninja restricts you to a certain amount of Tweets in a 15 minute period to combat spam and try to stop you ending up in Twitter jail.

You can follow Twitninja at **www.twitter.com/TwitNinjaCom**.



Twitaculous

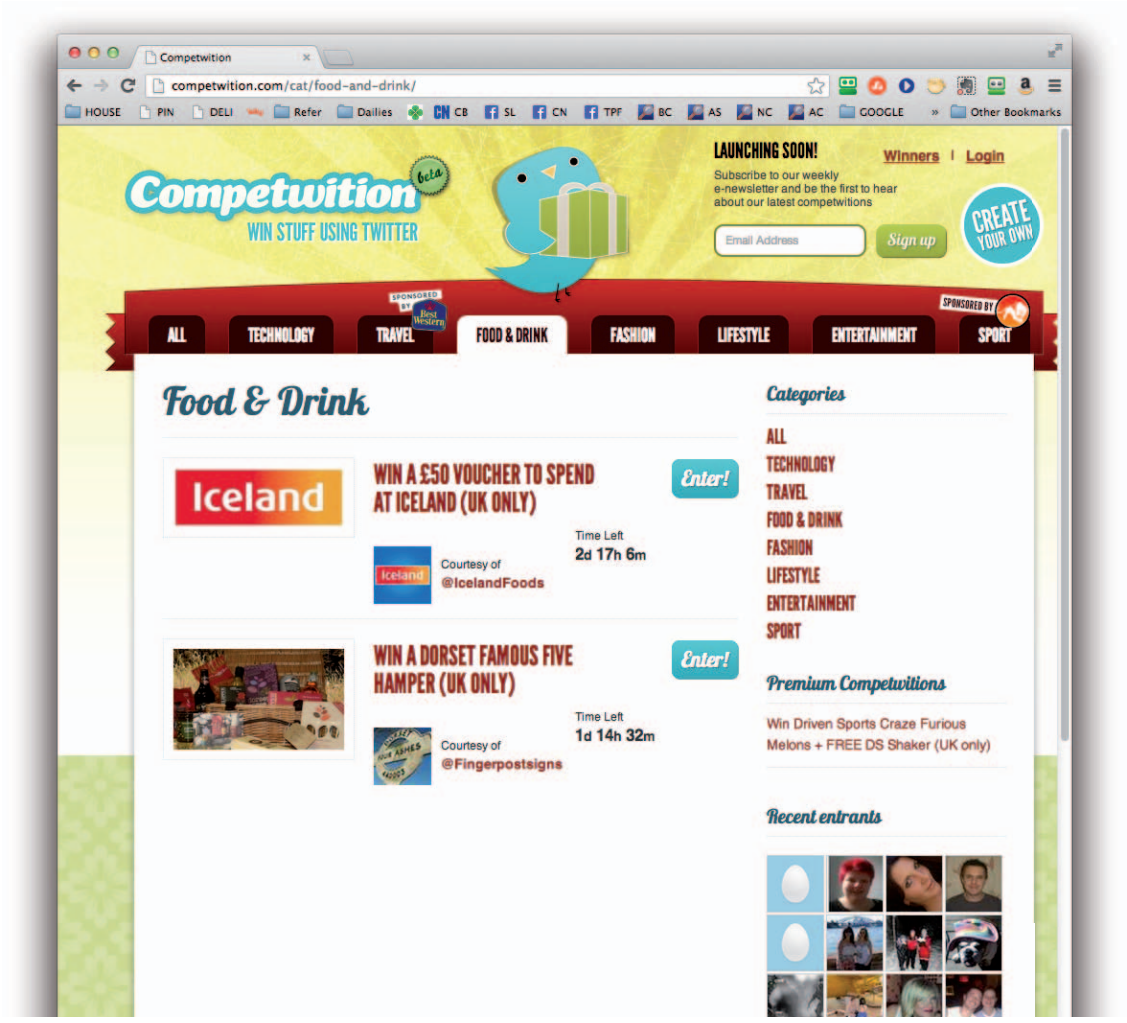
www.twitaculous.com is similar to Twitninja, but with a less user-friendly interface and design. Lots of UK Twitter comps are listed and to enter, you log in and simply click the Retweet button - Twitaculous will automatically follow the relevant Twitter account for you.

Like with Twitninja, don't enter too many at once as you'll end up in Twitter jail - you can see a bar at the top of your browser showing when you're close to your tweet limit!

You can follow Twitaculous at **www.twitter.com/Twitaculous.**

Competwition

www.competwition.com is a a free website for companies who wish to run prize draws through Twitter. Companies add details of their prize and closing date, and the competition is run on the Competwition site. The advantage of Competwition is that because they host all the competitions, they are able to choose a random winner fairly from all entries - so you don't need to worry about whether promoters are choosing winners from the latest entries, or from their mentions rather than retweets!

To enter the comps, go to **www.competwition.com** - you will need to allow access to your Twitter account - when you enter you'll automatically follow **@competwition** and the competition promoter, and tweet the competition details.

Competwition tells you how many people have entered - look out for country restrictions too, not all comps are open to the UK.