

Signing up for Twitter: a walkthrough (Jan 2011)

By Deanna Zandt, <http://deannazandt.com/>

So, you're ready to sign up for Twitter! Sometimes the signup process can be a bit daunting, so I created this short guide showing you what you need to know. Let's get started!

Go to <http://twitter.com/>, and you should see a screen like this. Click the yellow "Give it a try" button on the right.



STEP 1: Create your account

You'll be taken to a screen where you're asked to fill out your information. Fill in your real name, your username (what you'll use to log in, and how other Twitter users will refer to you), a password, and your email address. Along the way, Twitter will tell you if each of your entries is valid or not.

There's also a checkbox that reads "Let others find me by my email address." This means that if someone already knows your email address, they can use it to find and follow you. Twitter never reveals your email address to anyone who doesn't already have it, though.

I generally uncheck the "send me email updates" box, and then click "Create my account."




(Step 1: Creating your account)

Full name	<input type="text" value="Deanna Zandt"/>	✔ ok
Your full name will appear on your public profile		
Username	<input type="text" value="deannazandttest"/>	✔ ok
Your public profile: http://twitter.com/deannazandttest		
Password	<input type="password" value="••••••••"/>	✔ Good
Email	<input type="text" value="ers@deannazandt.com"/>	✔ ok
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Let others find me by my email address Note: Email will not be publicly displayed		
Terms of Service	<p>Terms of Service</p> <p>These Terms of Service ("Terms") govern your access to and use of the services and Twitter's websites (the "Services"), and any information, text, graphics, or other materials uploaded, downloaded or appearing on the Services. (collectively referred</p>	
Printable version		
By clicking on "Create my account" below, you are agreeing to the Terms of Service above and the Privacy Policy .		
<input type="button" value="Create my account"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/> I want the inside scoop—please send me email updates!		

Then Twitter needs to make sure that you're a human. You'll see a CAPTCHA box; type in the words that you see. Here's an example:

Are you human? ✕

Before we create your account, we need to make sure you're not a computer.

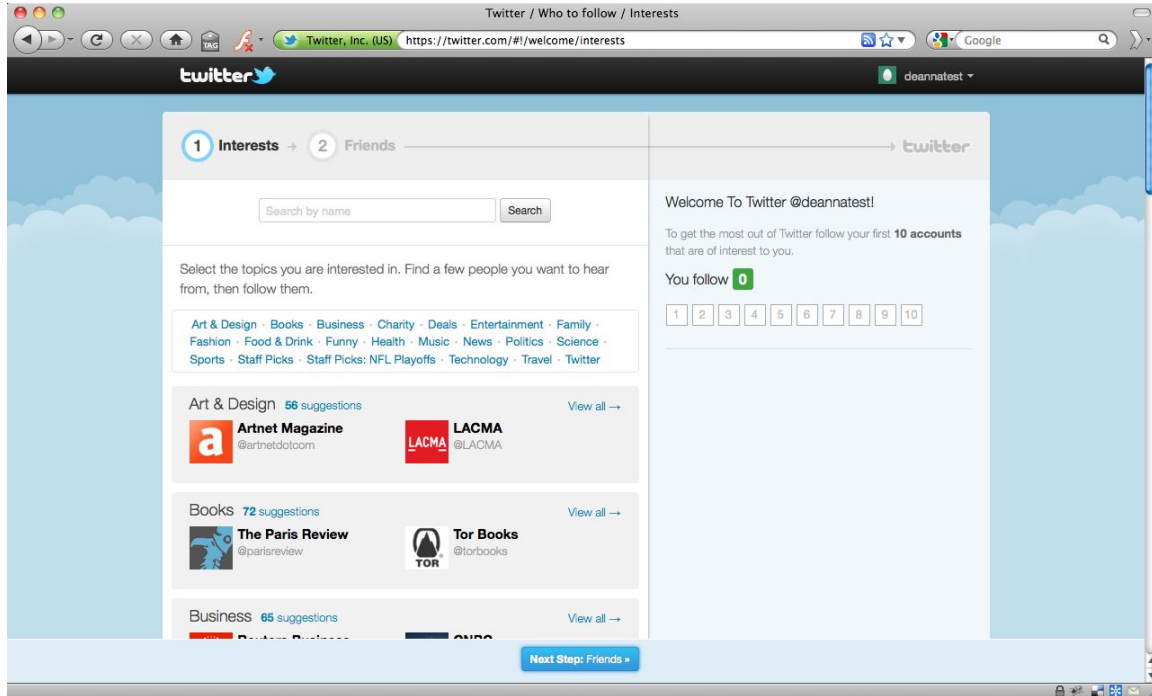


Type the words above

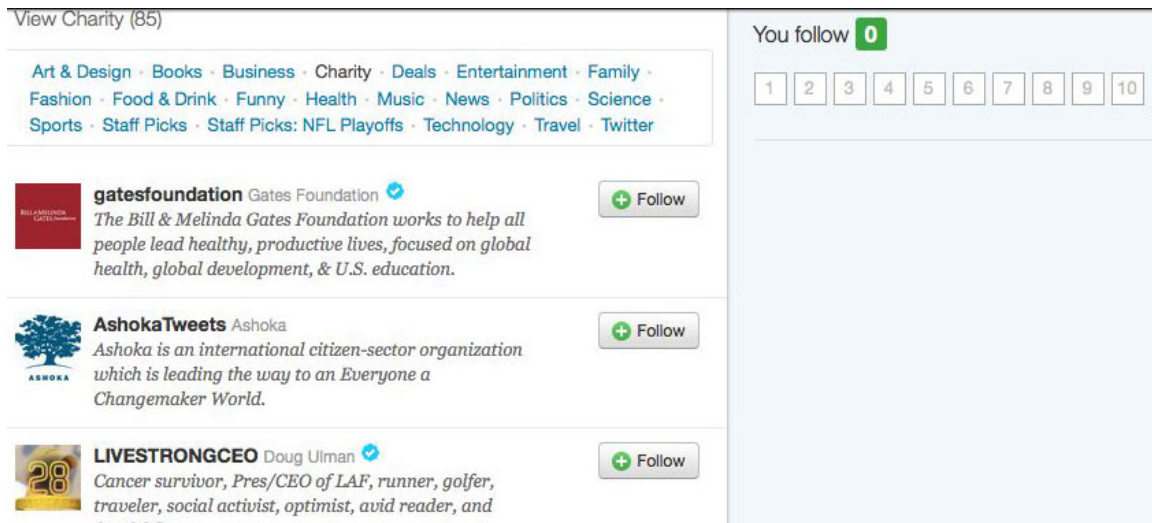
Can't read this?
[Get two new words](#)
[Hear a set of words](#)
Powered by reCAPTCHA.
[Help](#)

STEP 2: FINDING YOUR PEOPLE

Twitter helps you find people that you think are interesting—either because you like the topic that they tweet about most often, or because you know them.

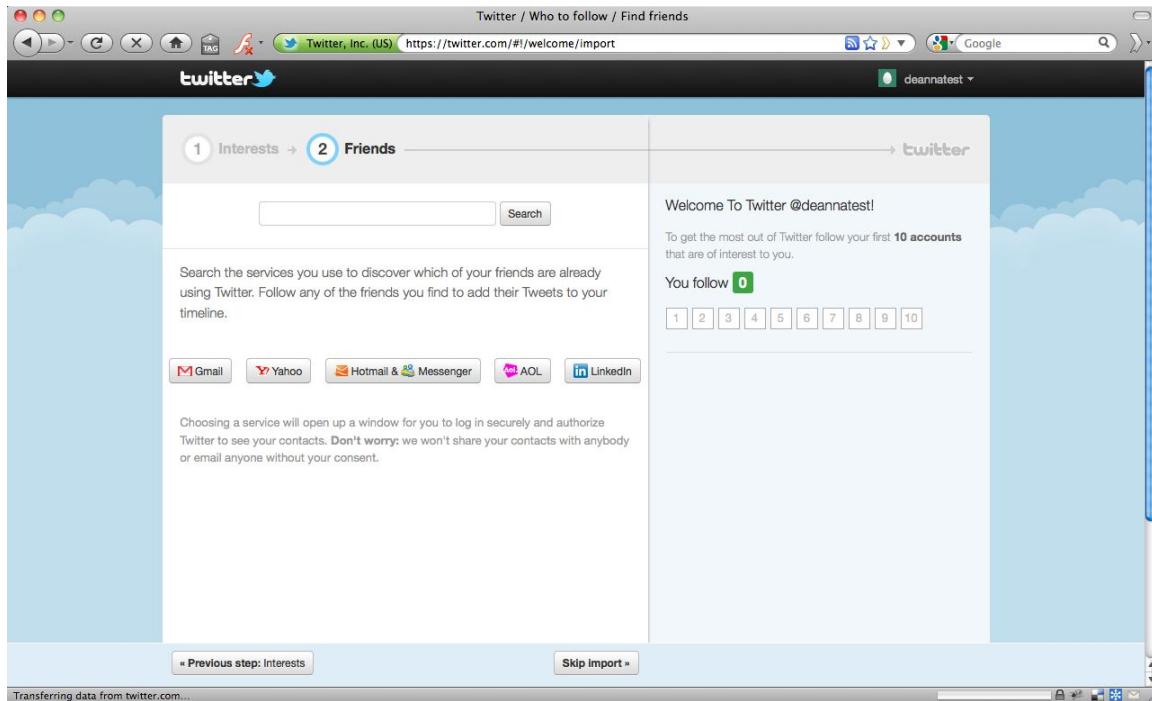


You're first shown a screen where you are offered a series of topics, and if you click on the topic, it'll show you people Twitter suggests for that topic. Click the "follow" button to the right to start following them.

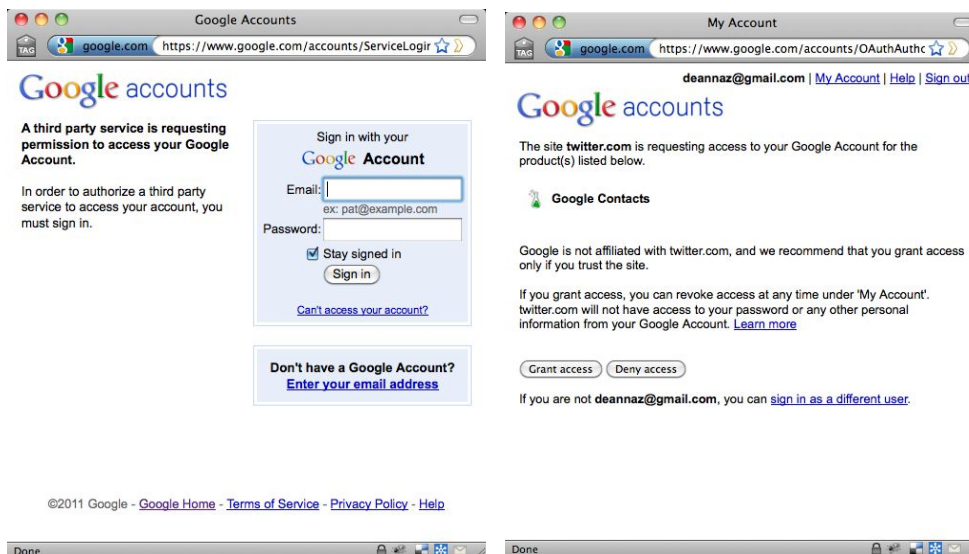


Note that *you don't have to follow* any of these people, and you can choose to stop following them at any time.

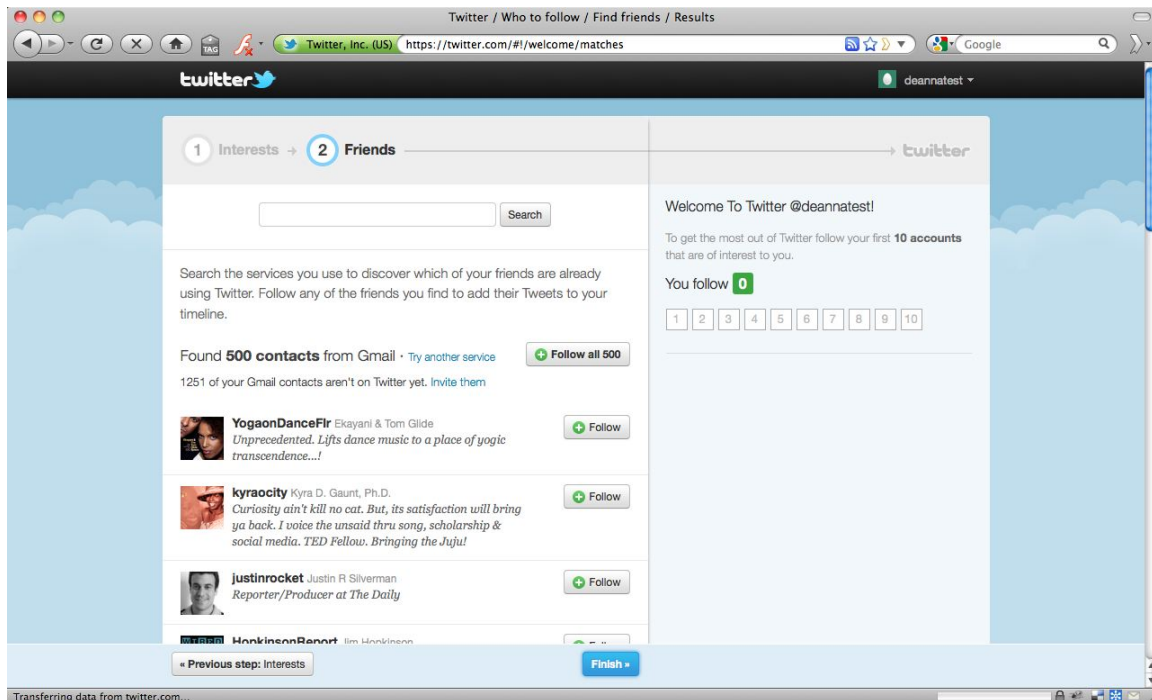
Click the blue “Next step: friends” button in the lower middle of the screen to move on. You’ll be taken to a screen asking you if you want to search any of your online contacts from Gmail, Yahoo or AOL. If you have an account with any of those services, and you use the address book there to store information, click on the service you belong to. (If not, click the blue “Skip import” button in the bottom middle.)



You’ll then follow the steps your email provider uses to connect with Twitter—I’m showing Gmail here. Twitter doesn’t store or save this information; it’s a one-time deal.



It then takes a few seconds for your contacts to load, and you're shown a screen that it's working on it. When it's done, it shows you a list of everyone in your address book *that are already on Twitter*.



You can click on “follow” next to the people that you want to appear in your feed. If they haven’t allowed themselves to be found via email, you’ll see a message that says so, and you can request to follow them. You’ll be notified if the request was approved.

When you’re all done, click the blue “Finish” button in the lower right. You’ll then be asked to send an invite to all the other people in your contact list who aren’t on Twitter. Skip this! Don’t do it.

You’re now shown your home screen, with all of the tweets from the people you’ve chosen to follow in reverse chronological order (newest on top). You’re also asked to confirm your email address; do this right away to get rid of that nagging message.

STEP 3: FAMILIARIZING YOURSELF WITH TWITTER’S FEATURES

Let’s take a quick tour of the home screen.



1. This is the main navigation for Twitter.
 - *Home*: brings you back to this screen
 - *Profile*: shows you a screen of your own tweets
 - *Messages*: Private messages sent only to you; also called Direct Messages or DMs. Only people that you follow are allowed to send you DMs.
 - *Who To Follow*: brings you to the stuff we covered in Step 2
 - Click on your username for additional items: *Settings, Help, Sign out*

2. Here's where you'll enter your status update, in 140 characters or less. There's a counter in the upper right of the box to tell you how many characters you have left.

3. This area shows you information about yourself. Click on any of the numbers next to followers, following, favorites and lists for detailed information about each.

4. Here's your list of tweets from the people you're following. This is called the Timeline. (Some people also refer to this as their Feed.)

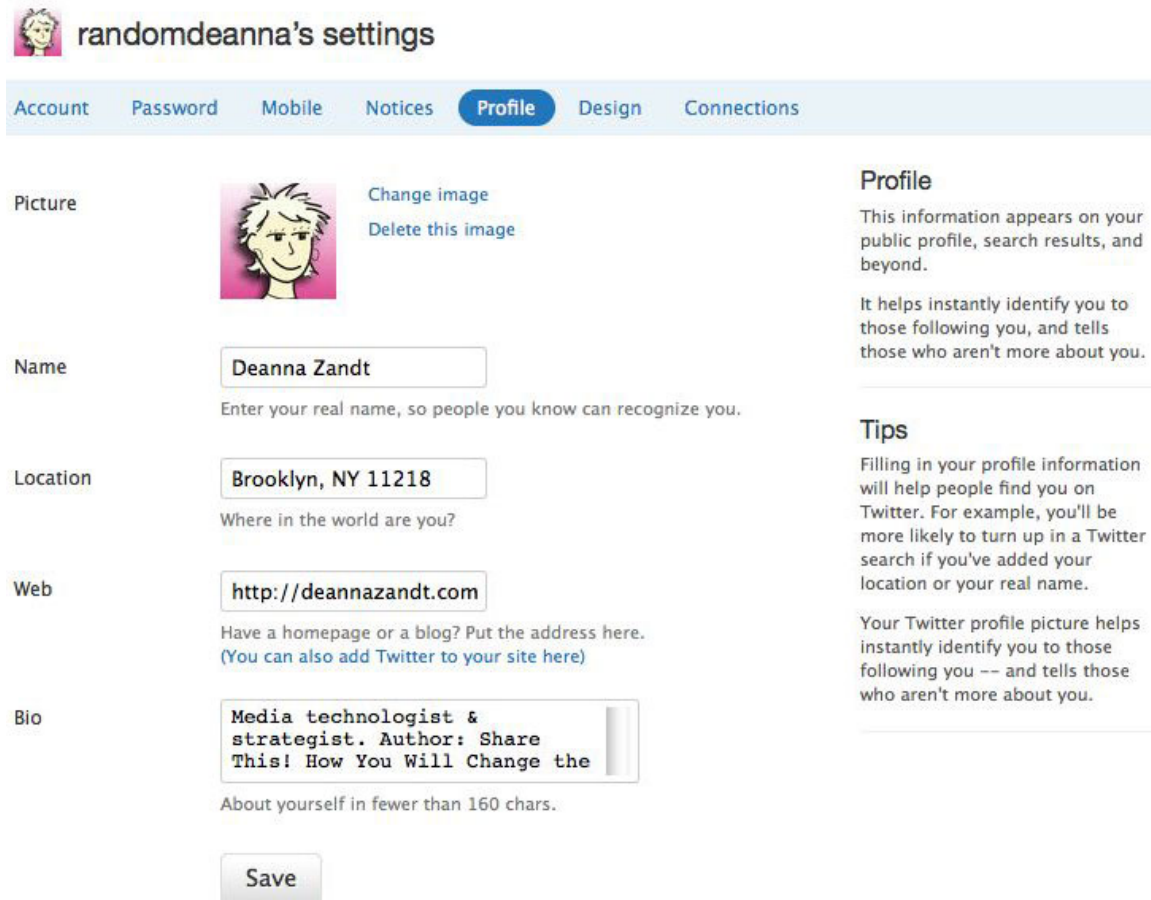
5. This section is where you can look at how you're interacting with the rest of the world.
 - *@Mentions*. Click here to see if people have mentioned you.
 - *Retweets*. Click here to see tweets that have been passed along by others in your timeline. You can also see which of your tweets have been retweeted by others.



STEP 4: ADJUSTING YOUR SETTINGS

Click on the Settings link in the main navigation. The first screen you're taken to has things like your email address and time zone; adjust these if needed. Click on the "Profile" link in the Settings' navigation, just below where it says, "yourusername's settings."

You're taken to a screen where you can update how you appear to other Twitter users.



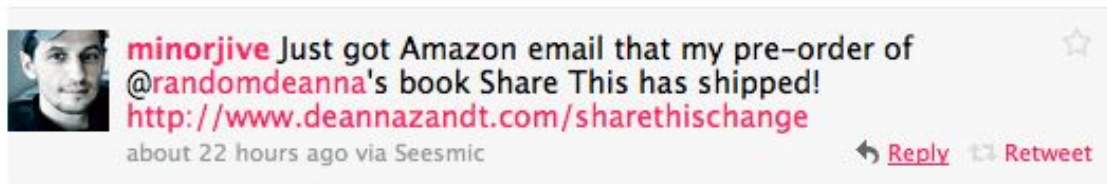
The screenshot shows the 'randomdeanna's settings' page. At the top, there's a navigation bar with tabs: Account, Password, Mobile, Notices, Profile (selected), Design, and Connections. Below this, the 'Picture' section shows a cartoon avatar with options to 'Change image' and 'Delete this image'. The 'Name' field contains 'Deanna Zandt' with a note: 'Enter your real name, so people you know can recognize you.' The 'Location' field contains 'Brooklyn, NY 11218' with a note: 'Where in the world are you?'. The 'Web' field contains 'http://deannazandt.com' with a note: 'Have a homepage or a blog? Put the address here. (You can also add Twitter to your site here)'. The 'Bio' field contains 'Media technologist & strategist. Author: Share This! How You Will Change the' with a note: 'About yourself in fewer than 160 chars.' A 'Save' button is at the bottom. On the right, there's a 'Profile' section explaining that this information appears on the public profile and helps identify you to followers. Below that is a 'Tips' section with advice on filling in profile information and using a profile picture.

It's important to fill these out as accurately (and un-ironically/un-sarcastically) as you feel comfortable with, so that other users who are either searching for you or who discover you will see quickly who you are, and what you're about. You should also use a picture that's you, a close approximation of you, or is otherwise distinctly recognizable as you. (I don't recommend those avatar generators, for example; they produce generic looking cartoons that make it hard for people to distinguish one from the other.)

Let's go back to the Home screen and have a look at two important conversation features.

STEP 5: LOOK WHO'S TALKING (WITH YOU)

At the top of the timeline, click the @Mentions link (in section 5 from step 3). This shows you a screen of everyone who's mentioned your username, with the newest on top. It's important to check these "mentions" regularly and respond accordingly. If you hover over any tweet, two links appear: "reply," and "retweet."

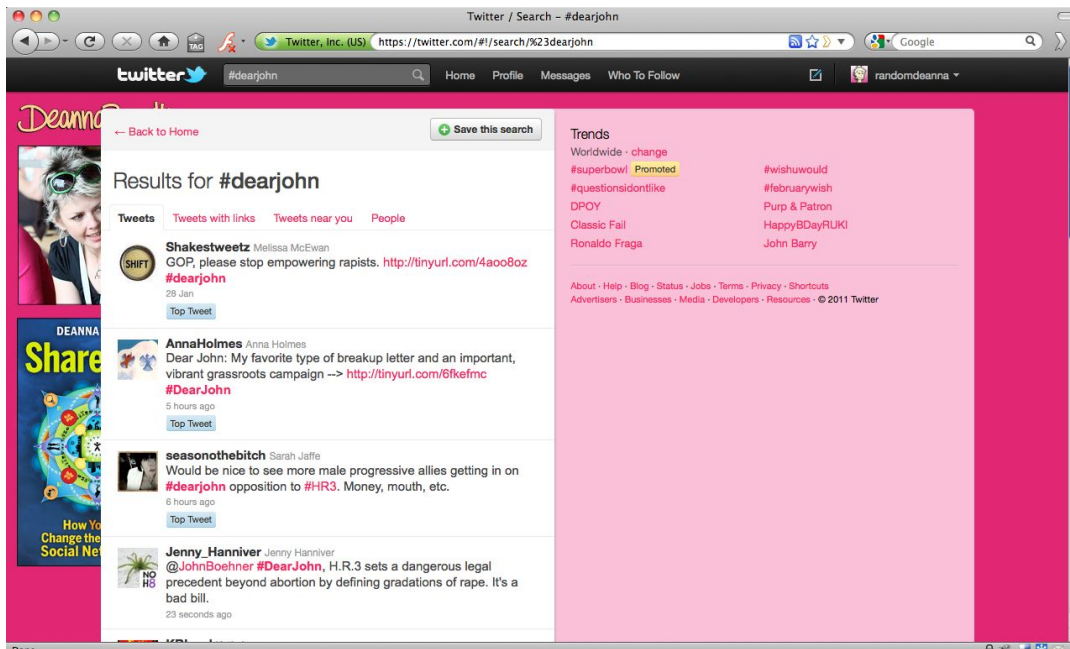


Click on "reply" to respond to the person; click on "Retweet" to share the content of that tweet with whomever is following you.

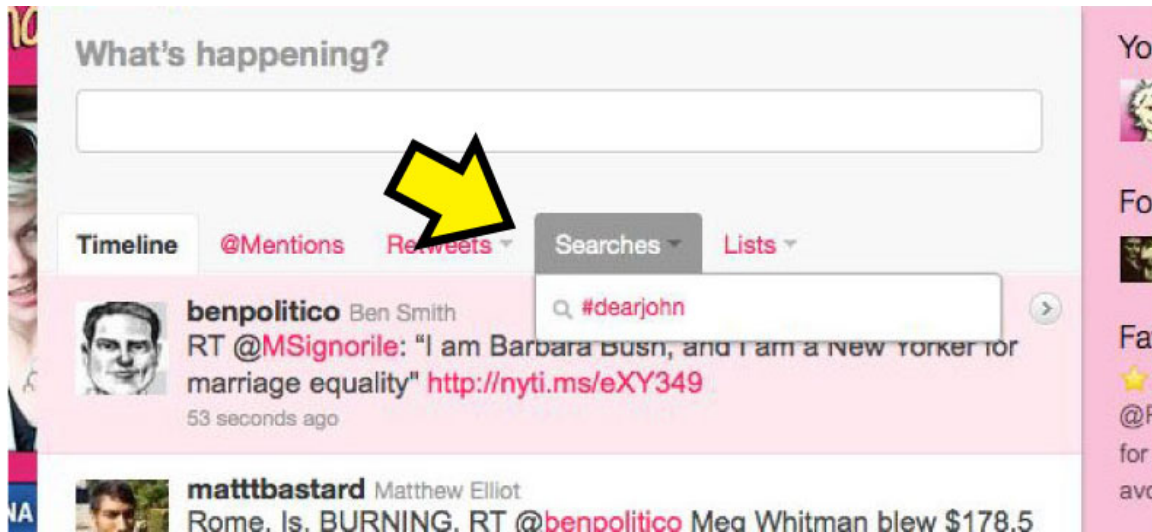
STEP 6: SEARCHING AND SAVING

If there's a particular topic you're interested in, Twitter allows you to search for that word (or words), and save the searches to your account. This is a good way to monitor tweets mentioning your organization's name, topics in the kind of work that you do, or other things that interest you.

Way up top, there's a grey box with a magnifying glass next to it. Enter the term you're searching for, and click the magnifying glass. You'll be given a screen of search results:



You can then save the search to your account, so you don't have to keep reentering it every time you want to look, by clicking the "Save this search" button at the top of the search results. Then, to find it again, look at the top of your Timeline for the "Searches" link. Click on it, and you'll be shown a list of your saved searches.



That's pretty much it for the basics! Feel free to visit me at <http://deannazandt.com/twitter-guides> for more information.