

Lawyers: To Tweet or Not to Tweet - You decide.

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The [debate rages](#) over the value of [Twitter](#) to lawyers in their practice, marketing, and the business of law. On my blog, the Virtual Marketing Officer, I acknowledge Twitter as just one of the tools to fit into a holistic social media program; keeping in mind that offline or online; [every tool isn't for everyone](#), nor right for every objective or situation.

Twitter is a place where people gather. Wherever people gather there is exchange of words in the form of ideas, content, or people helping one another, for example. And, if you think about it, isn't that really how business is developed for most high involvement purchases like legal services. People learn more about you, your work, integrity and values through the ideas you share and the content you produce. Learning more about your work product and how you interact with others gives prospective clients a clearer picture of how you might collaborate and respond to them. If they get to [know, like and trust you](#), when a legal problem arises, they are more likely to engage you than if they had only read what is written in your law firm Web site bio.

If a lawyer is trying to decide whether or not Twitter fits into their online engagement, or if they are trying find a productive place in the Twitter stream; it might help to understand the original purpose of the tool and see how other lawyers are posting in 140 characters.

The Birth of Twitter

The birth of Twitter had humble and practical roots. According to [Shel Israel](#) in his new tome; [Twiterville](#), sometime around 2006, [Odeo](#), a Silicon Valley start up was struggling to round up their [software developers](#) for meetings. Developers work long hours, but those hours are rarely burned during traditional business hours; or in the traditional workplace. At Odeo, like many other software development enterprises, programmers work late at night or the wee hours of the morn from home, from coffee shops, on weekends and holidays.

Excerpt from *Twiterville*: "So, when an issue popped up and [sic] the head guys, [Biz Stone](#) and [Evan Williams](#), needed to call a few team

members together, it was difficult. It was also hard to figure out if the meeting was more important than the work that would be interrupted. Someone was always asking a tech team member, “What are you doing?”

[Jack Dorsey](#), the project’s [software](#) architect had a solution. He dusted off a little idea he’d been playing with since he was a teenager fascinated with dispatch routing issues – technology used by police, ambulance drivers, firefighters, cab drivers, and etc. After a few detours, his idea for Web based personal status updates got refined and eventually worked its way into solving Odeo’s challenge of getting programmers together. The rest of the story is history. I highly recommend Israel’s book, *Twitterville*. (My summary barely does justice to the whole story of why Twitter.)

How do I Tweet?

“What are you doing?” is still the cornerstone of Twitter. But the gathering has morphed the message into a broader conversation. There are a few basic types of Tweets you’ll find on Twitter.

- “What are you working on?”
- “What are you reading?”
- “Where are you?” “I’m here.” Let’s meet up”
- “What are you thinking?”
- “What are you seeing?”
- “Hey, can you help me?”

But really, as long as you can say it in 140 characters; anything goes. Here are a few examples of Tweets by lawyers that have appeared in my follow stream over the past few weeks.

[@jaredcorreia](#) Thanks for your RT, Jared. Glad you found the post useful.

10 minutes ago from TweetDeck in reply to [jaredcorreia](#)

Free e-book. Educate yourself to avoid the "Ten Fatal Mistakes that Business Owners Make."

 www.gfrlaw.net

16 minutes ago from TweetDeck

Can You Keep a [Trade] Secret? If you don't, your business is at risk.

 BiziBoom.com: Can You Keep a Secret?

17 minutes ago from TweetDeck

RT @ABAJournal: Lawyer Who Got JD to Represent Brother Wins \$10.7M in Wrongful Conviction Case

 Lawyer Who Got JD to Represent Brother Wins \$10.7M in Wrongful Conviction Case | ABA Journal – Law News Now

7:34 PM Sep 18th from Echofon


RT @akleinschmidt Ohio defines sust. ag as ag practices that are ecologically söund, economically viable, and socially responsible.

about 12 hours ago from web

@ltrc Looks like the court really only struck down 3 of 13 challeged Louisian rules – those explicitly governing technology-based advertisng

12:18 PM Aug 19th from web in reply to ltrc

Oh, lest we forget, IP job opportunity at

 Connecting International Patent Community – patent attorney, patent inventor, patent agent – Patent Buddy

– Paralegal – Nvidia, Santa Clara, CA.

Kappos' comment re: Mark Twain's take on a country without a working patent office "like a crab" sideways & or backwards movement.

9:22 AM Sep 14th from Echofon

Kappos: Optimistic – patents once considered arcane, drives our economy.

9:19 AM Sep 14th from Echofon

Pulse SmartPens will change client meetings forever. Greatest way ever to take notes in a client meeting

 Livescribe :: Never Miss A Word

2:46 PM Sep 18th from web

RT @georgerunner This is an important step. The state must get the federal court out of #caprisons healthcare.



1:45 PM Sep 17th from web

Plan Language and Design Make All the Difference in In re Citigroup ERISA Litigation:



3:37 PM Sep 15th from web

Make sense? Your practice focus and the resources you have to devote to promoting your practice and building new relationships, will make a difference in how you manage your Twitter activity. It's not going to be the silver bullet for everyone. Still, some lawyers have found it to be quite an effective tool for reputation building, relationship building and recommendation. I'm not suggesting you will get work as a direct result of your Tweeting, but I do believe you will meet new people and broaden your opportunities to become known, liked, and trusted. What's not to like?

Some additional links you might want to read to learn more about Twitter.

- [Twitter hits 1bn with new funding](http://telegraph.co.uk) (telegraph.co.uk)
- [Twitter CEO sees journalists as curators of tweets](http://reportr.net) (reportr.net)
- [Twitter Isn't Over-Hyped; It's Just Misunderstood](http://markevanstech.com) (markevanstech.com)
- [Biz Stone Talks Up the Future of Twitter](http://gigaom.com) (gigaom.com)