

## Welcome to Twitter!

It's great that you have decided to join the conversation on Twitter. Here are some tips to help you feel at home.

### 1. Setting up your profile

Before setting up a professional Twitter account, talk to your supervisor and to the Communications department. An account in the name of a programme must be created in collaboration with the Communications department.

A personal account of a staff member also needs to be in line with the social media guidelines, which can be found on the intranet. Use the "bio" field to inform readers that you work for the WCC but that comments and opinions you express on Twitter are your own and not the WCC's. (For example: "Work for @oikoumene. Opinions are my own.")

You can see your profile (in a similar way as other users will see it if they click on your username) by clicking on your profile image next to the tweet button, and then on "View profile" in the pop-up (1). The main component of this view is the Timeline (or Stream) of your tweets and tweets you have retweeted in chronological order.



You can click to "Likes" (2) to see the tweets that you have marked as likes. And you can click to "Lists" (3) to see the latest tweets from the people in your lists (read more on that in chapter 4).

In some versions of the Twitter app, you'll find your profile by clicking on the three-dot icon in the right corner:



## Tips:

- Do upload a profile picture. Even a photo of your coffee mug will be more attractive than the placeholder egg image that Twitter uses as a default. But: don't put a photo that is copyrighted by somebody else!
- You can use the "Likes" as a storage place for tweets that you would like to reply to or quote later.

## 2. Read tweets by people you follow

Below you see a screenshot of the "home" view. You can always return to it by clicking on the "Home" icon (1).

Its main component is the stream of tweets from the people you follow (2) in chronological order. It also contains tweets from other accounts that have been re-tweeted by people you follow (e.g. 3). At the top, you'll see whether new tweets are available (4) Click here to refresh your view.



The "trends" box at the left (5) contains words and hashtags that are used a lot on Twitter at this moment. If you click on one of them, you will see a list of tweets (by anyone) using that word / hashtag.

In addition to following other people, you can also follow lists. See chapter 4: "Following and adding to list, blocking or reporting for spam".

## 3. View interactions with your account

When you click on the bell icon (1) you can see who has been interacting with your account. You will see photo tweets that you have been tagged in (2), who has been re-tweeting your tweets (3), your new followers (4).

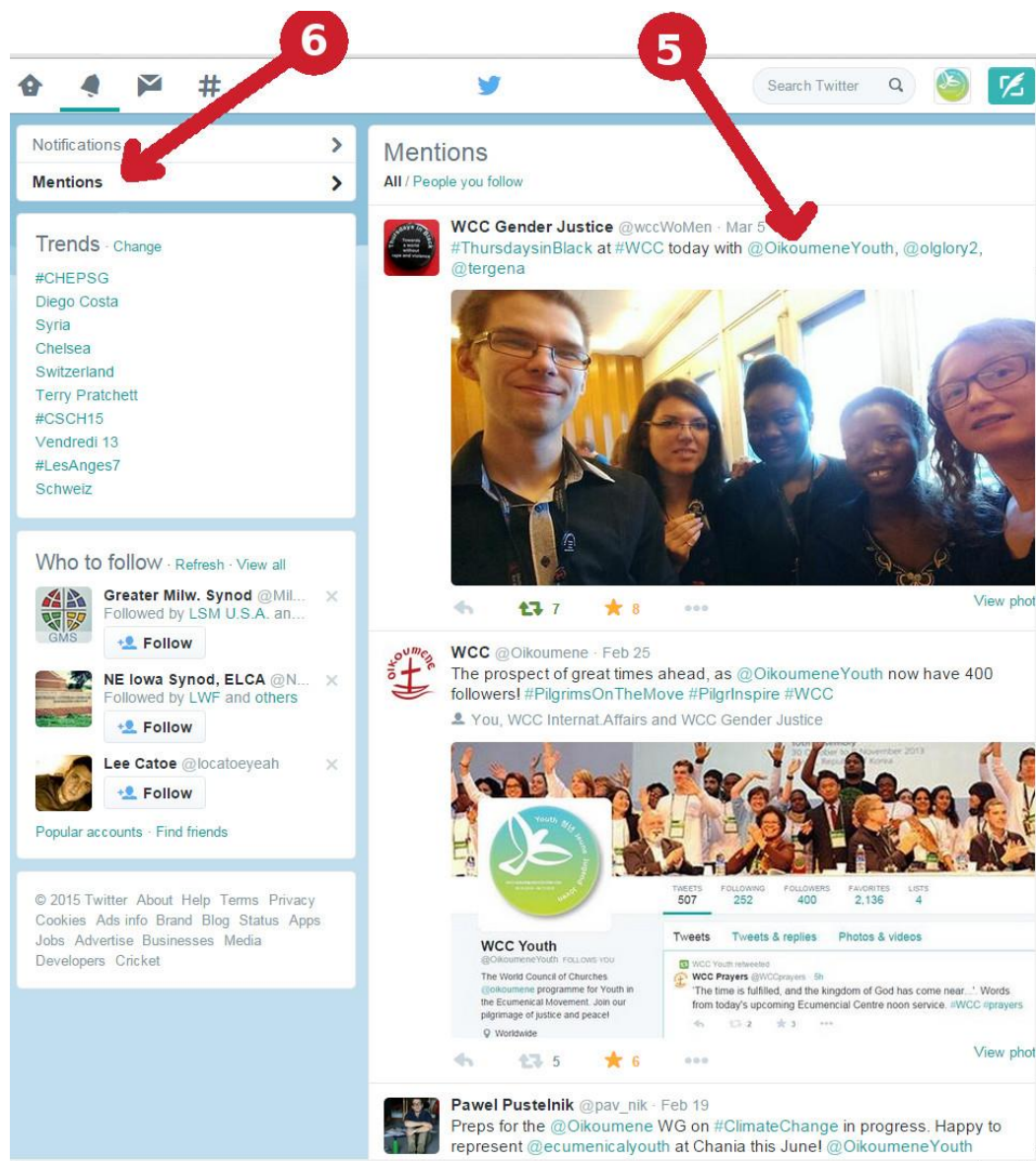


### Tip:

- You may want to follow some of these people – but first, do at least a superficial check of their profile/latest tweets (even though you don't need to feel responsible for everything that is being said by people you follow). Some people consider it polite to "follow back" but there is no obligation to do so.



In the same view, you may also see tweets that mention your twitter name (5). However, retweets are more frequent than mentions, so you may need to click on "Mentions" (6) to filter for them.



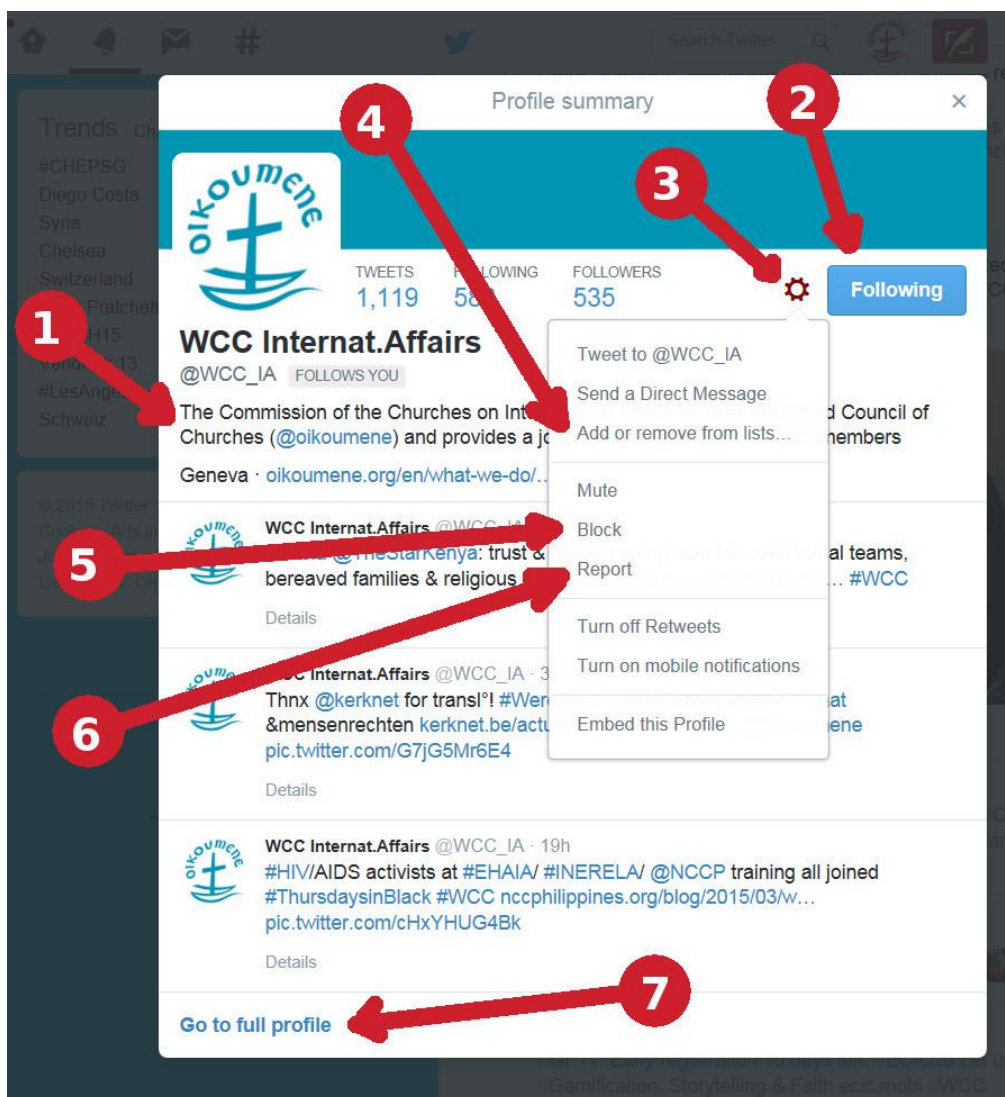
## Tips:

- Like and/or retweet tweets that mention you in a positive way.
- Critical questions from reasonable people can be an opportunity to clarify your ideas. Keep a stock of good, short answers to questions that come back regularly. The Communications department can assist with formulating these if needed.
- If you made a mistake, be open about it. Admit and correct the mistake. It will increase your credibility.
- Do not react to hate speech; block the author instead (see below)

- Block and report spammers (see below). Typically their tweets are very repetitive and always contain the same kind of link.
- Do not discuss with trolls who come back with the same false accusations etc again and again. You don't want to raise their profile by interacting with them.

## 4. Following and adding to list, blocking or reporting for spam

When you click on any Twitter username, for example one that is mentioned in a tweet, you'll see a pop-up window with a profile summary of that user, including one or two of his/her latest Tweets and the information they have put in their profile (1):



You can now click on the "Follow" button (2), or on the one next to it which opens a menu with additional options (3): if his/her tweets are especially important to you, you can add the person to a list (4); if you do not wish to see any of their tweets you can block them (5), if the account is tweeting spam or using hate speech you should report it (6).

## Tips:

- Lists can be helpful when you are following many people whose tweets are less relevant to you (because of language or diversity of interests)
- You can follow public lists created by others as well. Follow <https://twitter.com/Oikoumene/wccmembers>, <https://twitter.com/Oikoumene/central-committee> and <https://twitter.com/Oikoumene/wccprogrammes-partners>
- If you want to stay updated what certain people say on Twitter but you do not want to strengthen their visibility by following them (for example because some of their tweets are inappropriate), add them to a private list instead.

## 5. Interact with tweets

At the bottom of each tweet, there are some buttons that allow you to interact. In the Twitter app, these show up after you have clicked on the tweet.



By clicking "Like" (1) you give positive feedback to the author of the tweet; in addition the tweet will be visible to visitors to your profile on Twitter under "likes" (see <https://twitter.com/Oikoumene/likes> for example).

By clicking "Retweet" (2) you are re-distributing the tweet to your own followers. After clicking on this button, you will have the option to "Add a comment" to the tweet (in some versions of the Twitter app, this is called "Quote Tweet") or to simply retweet (that means to forward it to your own followers without adding anything).

By clicking "Reply" (3) you can write a tweet in response. The author of the original tweet will be alerted, but it will also go out to your followers. They will be able to see the whole conversation when they click on the tweet:



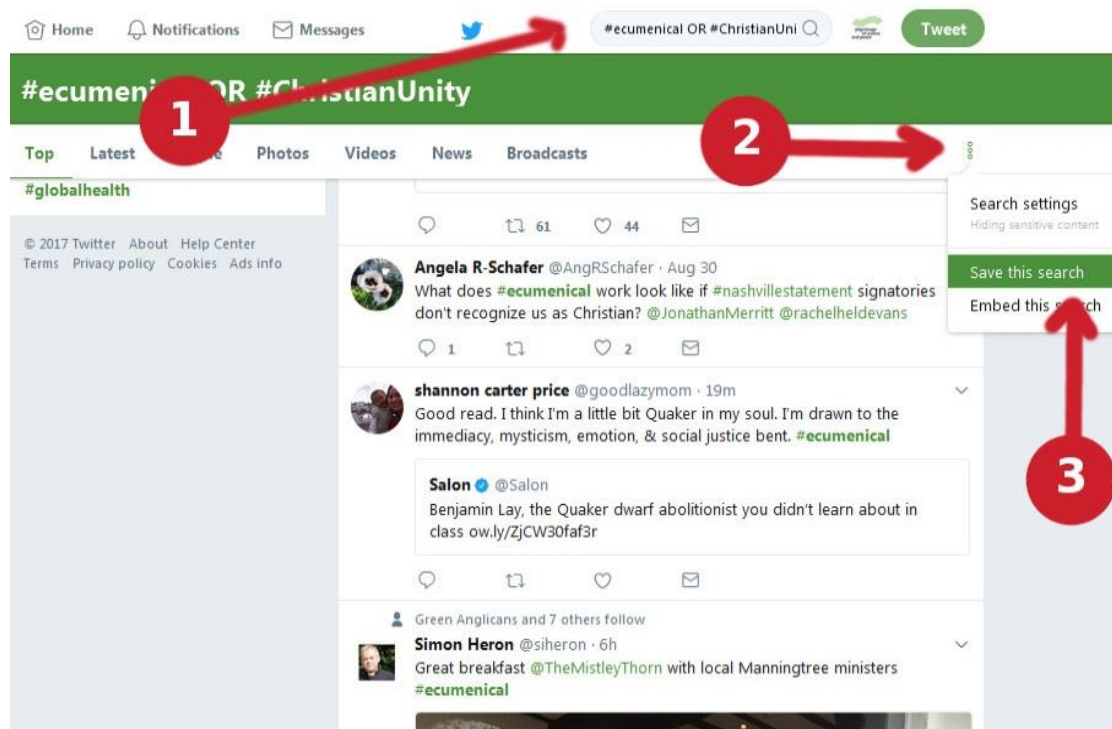
## Tips:

- Be generous with likes. They encourage interaction.
- Make sure you don't re-tweet too fast (don't do several retweets per minute). Your followers don't necessarily like it when their timeline is filled up that way, and Twitter will see your account as more valuable if you produce also some tweets of your own.
- Whenever you have time, add a comment to your retweets: that way, your own voice is strengthened, while adding to the viral reach of the original tweet at the same time.
- Use replies to engage influential twitter users. If yours is the first reply to a tweet with a wide reach, it will also be seen widely.
- Do not interact with tweets from people whose profile you do not want to promote.



## 6. Search for interesting content

Use the search window (1) to look for users with a certain name or for tweets with specific words or a hashtag. You can combine search terms with the operator OR (for example: #ecumenical OR #ChristianUnity), or you can search for exact expressions by using quotation marks (for example: "World Council of Churches")




By clicking on the three dots (2) and then on “Save this search” you can save your search formula. Whenever you click into the search window, Twitter will suggest your saved searches.

### Tips:

- Use saved searches to find content you would want to interact with.
- Regularly have a look at results for #WCC



## 7. My first tweet

Tweeting is easy! Just click on the "Tweet" button and give it a try! If you are using the Twitter app on your phone, the Tweet button will probably look like this: 

Don't be afraid that your tweet isn't perfect. It doesn't need to be. There are good tweets and better tweets, but you won't get there until you get started.

### Tips:

- You have only 140 characters, but you can include a link to a news article or other online texts to share more complex thoughts.
- You can "reply" to your own tweets to make sure that several of your tweets are read together
- It is common to use abbreviations on Twitter, but not everybody likes it. Don't overdo it.
- Include 1-2 hashtags (see below)
- Include images whenever possible (see below)
- Don't overdo it. Keep in mind that any new tweet (or retweet) is pushing earlier ones out of sight of your followers, so it's better to space out your tweets (ideally, leave 5-30 min between tweets).
- If you tweet only rarely, make sure that your last tweet of the day is very meaningful to you. Otherwise people who check out your profile will get the wrong impression.

## 8. Hashtags

Whenever you type # followed by a combination of letters and/or numbers in a tweet, you create a hashtag. It links to all other public tweets using the same hashtag (even if they were written by people you don't know). The hashtag stops at any space or punctuation mark, so it is not possible to use dashes within a hashtag.

### Tips:

- Check who else is using the hashtag before you use it. If it is commonly used for a different topic, think again.
- Be specific: A vague or generic hashtag like #peace or #women is being used so frequently and in so many different contexts that it doesn't add any value for your readers and it won't give extra visibility to your tweet.
- #WCC is often used to mark tweets about the WCC but it's also used by others (especially in the US West Coast and in Wellington) for other topics (mostly sports). Help us make #WCC stand for World Council of Churches by using it appropriately and by retweeting and liking relevant tweets.

- For tweets in German, use #Ökumene, in Spanish #ecumenismo, and in French #oecumenisme. Don't use #CMI or #COE as these are almost exclusively used for other topics.
- If you use too many hashtags in one tweet it gets hard to read. Also, Twitter will rank your tweet lower in search results (for each of the hashtags).
- Before creating a specific hashtag for an event or campaign it's best to consult with the Communications team and with co-organizers. Not every event needs its own hashtag, you'll often reach more users with a well-established hashtag such as #WCC.
- The ideal hashtag should be short, unequivocal (this rules out most 3- or 4-letter accronyms) and easy to remember & type (this rules out most other accronyms).

## Common hashtags:

**#FF:** "Follow Friday" – used to give tips about whom to follow. Often #FF goes with a thematic list of Twitter accounts.

**#TBT:** "Throw-back Thursday" – on Thursdays, many users like to share fond memories of the past, marking them with this hashtag.

**#TiH:** "Today in History" – used to speak about historical events that happened on the same date in previous years.

## Ecumenical hashtags:

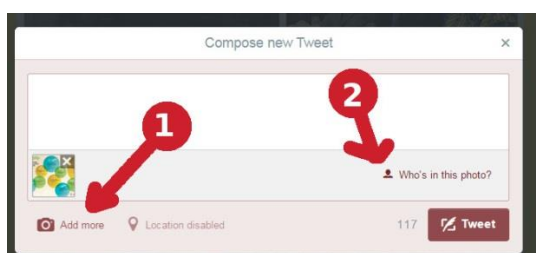
**#ThursdaysinBlack** is a WCC campaign against violence and rape. Please support it by posting photos of yourself/your groups wearing black on Thursdays.

**#WhatIsAPilgrimage / #JusticeandPeace / #WhyPilgrimage / #PilgrInspire / #FellowPilgrims / #PilgrimFocus / #WhereWillYouGo/ #PilgrimsOnTheMove / #transformed:** used in the context of the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace to stimulate discussion on the reflection steps suggested at [www.wccpilgrimage.org](http://www.wccpilgrimage.org)

But also: **#FaithAndOrder, #CWME, #TogetherTwdsLife, #ChristianUnity, #SeasonOfCreation, #Faith2EndAIDS, #PanAfricanWomen, #7weeks4water, #TogetherinHope, #WPCU ...**

## 9. Images

You can add up to 4 images to a tweet by clicking on the camera button (1):



You can tag other users in the photo by clicking on “Who’s in this photo?” (2) and starting to type their user name (short version or long version or both); you’ll start seeing a list of suggestions. Click on the correct one. If you click on the name again after it has been selected, it will be removed again. The users you have tagged will be notified (in most cases).

**Tips:**

- Include images whenever possible. Tweets with images usually get more interaction and rank higher in search results.
- Tag generously (those present in the photo & institutions they represent, the photographer, possibly also co-organizers of an event or those mentioned in a story that’s linked from the tweet).

## **10. Useful apps**

Apart from the official Twitter app, there are various apps developed by other companies that you can use to update your Twitter accounts.

Advantage: Some of these apps allow you to schedule tweets in advance.

Disadvantage: So far, these apps don’t support photo-tagging and won’t notify you when you are tagged in someone else’s photo.

**Tips:**

- If you are using a personal account and in charge of updating a programme account, use the official Twitter app for your personal use and another one (for example Tweetcaster or HootSuite) for the professional account.
- When you are tweeting from a laptop or desktop computer, you can use <https://tweetdeck.twitter.com/#> to control several accounts at the same time and to collaborate with others in administrating shared accounts in a secure way, without sharing passwords.

*By Annegret Kapp, WCC web coordinator, September 2017*

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