

Twitter is by far the biggest online hangout for software developers. I can say with certainty that my career would not be where it is without Twitter; it's helped me connect with US companies, and secure high-pay remote jobs.

That said, in my view, Twitter is a long-game kind of thing. Recruiters don't use it too much. It won't help you get your first job. As such, it's probably not as critical as LinkedIn.

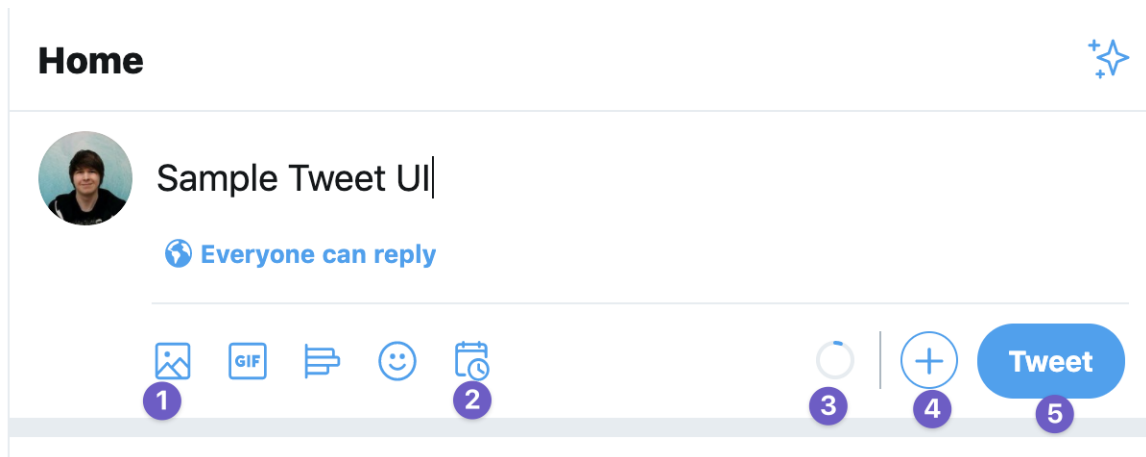
Twitter can open doors that would otherwise be closed, but it takes a couple years to build up a reputation and establish a network. Start early, so that those doors will be waiting for you when you get there!

How Twitter works

Twitter is similar to Facebook, with a few exceptions:

- By default, your Twitter profile is public (private accounts do exist, but I would advise against setting your account to private, as you'll lose all the benefits)
- Relationships are uni-directional. You can follow someone without them following you back (unlike Facebook friends or LinkedIn connections, which have to be mutual).
- A Twitter "tweet" is like a facebook post, except it's limited in length to 280 characters. You can attach up to 4 images, or a single video / animated GIF.
- You can string multiple Tweets together in a Thread.
- The Twitter home feed is a list of tweets from the accounts you follow. Twitter's algorithms do a lot of work, so they won't be in chronological order, and may include some things you wouldn't expect. *More on this later.*
- You can "retweet" a tweet, which will share that person's tweet with your followers. You can also "quote-tweet" a tweet, which is the same as a retweet except you can attach a comment to it:

Here's a quick screenshot of the Twitter web UI, with a legend for some of the things discussed:



1. Attach image (including animated GIF) or video
2. Schedule a tweet (can be useful if you think of a great tweet on Sunday night, defer it to Monday morning for more exposure)
3. This indicates how many characters you have left (up to 280 per tweet)
4. Create a thread (string multiple tweets together)
5. Publish the tweet

Picking a Twitter Handle

A person's Twitter handle is their username. Mine is @joshwcomeau.

I recommend using your name, but you can use whatever you want, so long as it isn't offensive. Twitter is a pretty casual place, but stay away from anything that could make other people uncomfortable.

Setting up your Twitter Profile

Twitter profiles are very minimal, compared to LinkedIn. Here are the fields you have control over:

- Profile picture
 - Use the same one you use on Github. Should be casual
- Background header image
 - Use the same one you use on LinkedIn
- Display name
 - Safest bet: "Firstname Lastname". Feel free to throw an emoji in, if you want.

- Location
 - Set it to Montreal, or leave it blank
- Bio

The bio is the most important field. It's limited to 160 characters. The bio should reflect your personality, and include information about your situation. As a current student, I might make it something like:

Aspiring Javascript developer. Student @concordia_btcmp, lifelong learner. Mother of 2.

Feel free to include personal details, and mix in some of your personality.

Building a network

For Twitter to be a useful tool in your career development, you need to form connections. This is done primarily by sharing helpful things / being a positive community member.

Many people use social networks like Twitter or Instagram to document their life: "Just had eggs at Mandy's – overcooked!". This kind of content isn't typically interesting to folks, and it's not going to help you in your careers!

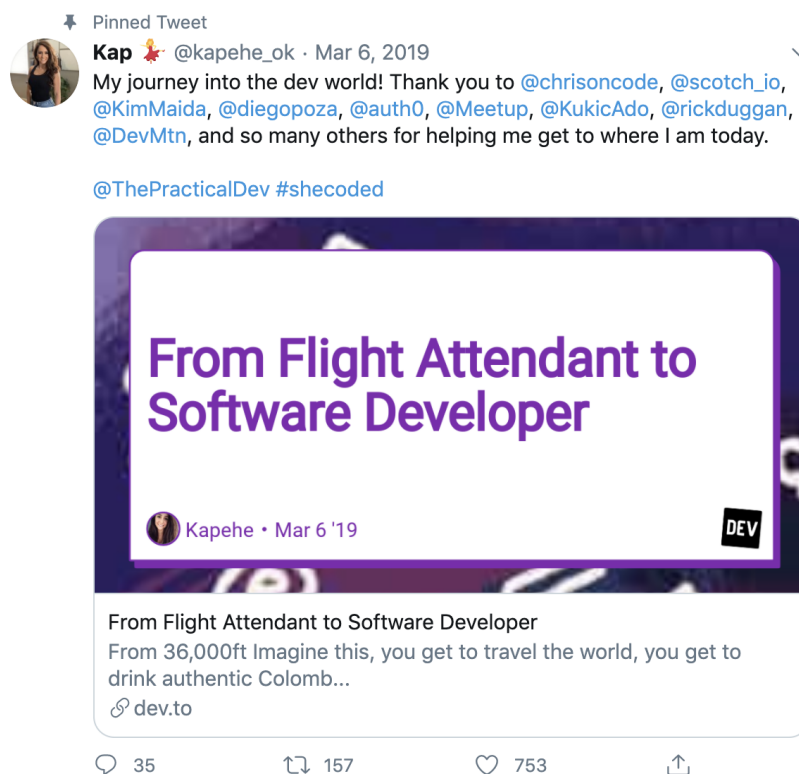
Here are some ideas for things you can share that will be interesting / helpful / inspiring to other developers on Twitter:

- Share something you learned!

- Share progress on your projects:

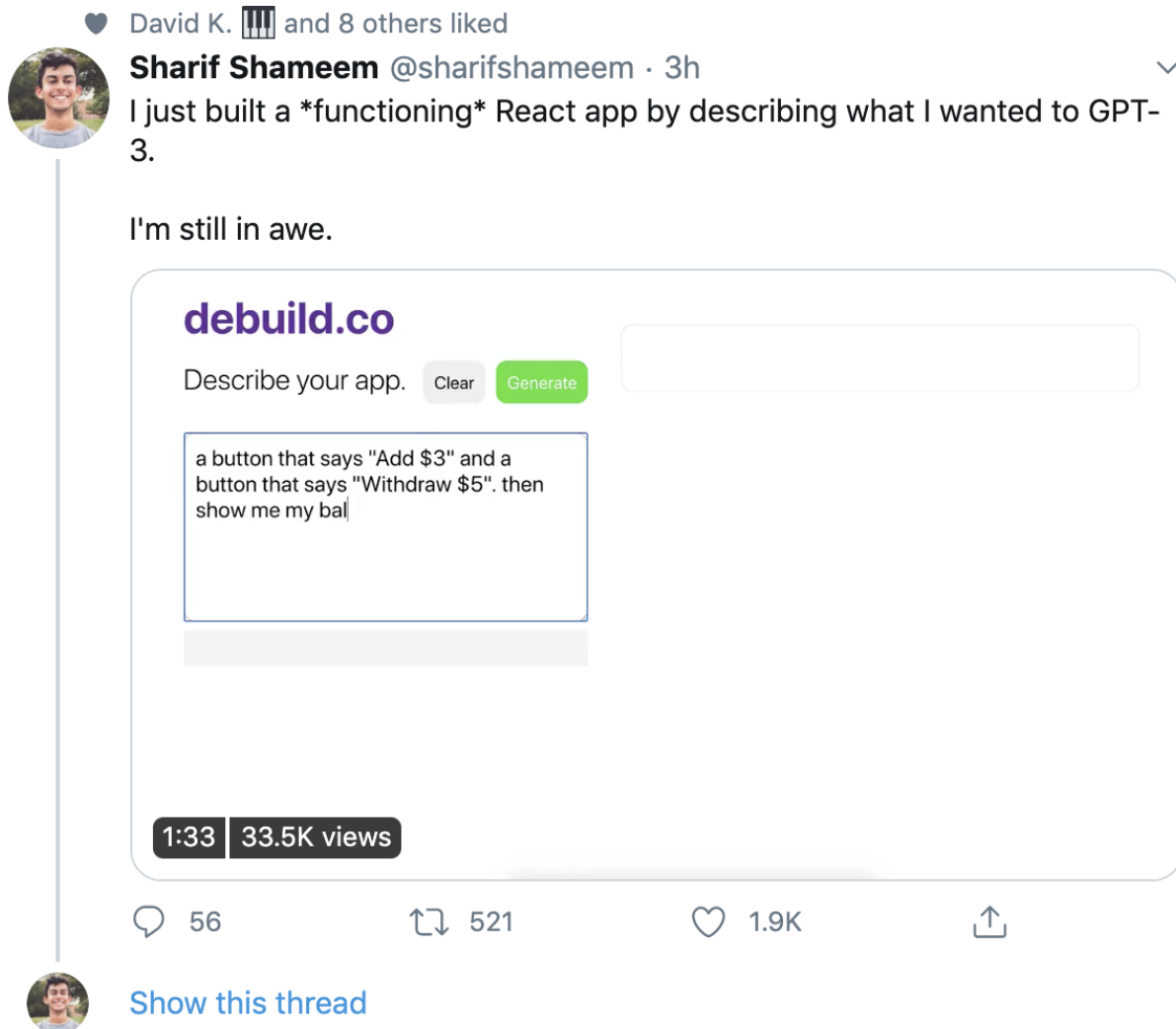


- Tweet inspirational things about your journey:



- When someone asks a question or solicits feedback, reply! All discussions on Twitter are public, feel free to jump in. Especially if you don't see the perspective you bring already in the existing replies.

If you create a tweet that someone likes, they may retweet it, which will expose it to a much wider network than your own followers. Additionally, Twitter has begun sharing tweets that get a lot of "likes" from people in your network:



I don't follow Sharif, but I'm seeing their tweets because 9 people I follow liked it.

Twitter etiquette

Twitter is a casual hangout. Speak naturally, don't use a bunch of corporate-speak.

Twitter is a political place, and Tech Twitter skews left. It's worth "reading the room"; for example, there was a couple weeks where most of the community stopped talking about tech, because attention was focused on police brutality and the Black Lives Matter movement.

Feel free to reply to open questions, even if you don't know the person asking. You don't have to introduce yourself, just focus on the content. For example, if I see a tweet like:

Having one of those days where I just can't seem to focus. What do y'all do when you aren't able to be productive?

I might reply to this with something like:

Personally I find that taking a short walk and getting some distance helps. Maybe indulging in a snack. Really helps clear my head!

It may feel weird to start talking to someone you don't know, but people generally don't mind / this is how you form connections!

Twitter has a DM feature (direct messages, private communication). Generally, you shouldn't DM people unless you've already spoken with them, or they ask for DMs, or they follow you. I'd start by trying to get to know someone publicly, and move to DM if they respond well.

If you have something you want to ask someone, be direct. Don't message them "Hi" and wait for a response; send a single message with your request, in as few words as possible. For example:

Hi _____,

I recently saw that you shared a blog post about your experience with React. I had a similar issue with React, were you able to find a solution?

Thanks!

Whatever you do, **do not flirt with strangers**. People aren't on Twitter to hook up or get a date. Be professional. Especially if you're a cis straight guy, please try and make sure that nothing you say could be construed as harassment. You probably won't intend to harass someone, but comments like "you look really cute in that photo" can make people feel uncomfortable. Rule of thumb: if you're about to say something to a girl that you wouldn't say to a guy, don't say it.

Last, but definitely not least, abide by the [Recurse Center's "Social Rules"](#):

- No "Well actually"s
- No feigning surprise
- No backseat driving (this one can be alright in some contexts on Twitter, since many conversations are meant to be public. But if two people are having an extended personal dialogue, maybe don't interject)
- No subtle-isms (AKA microaggressions)

Using Twitter in a job hunt

As mentioned, Twitter is a long-game tool. As the months/years pass, you'll make friends.

Many developers share their current employer in their bio. You can browse through the people you follow (or the people that follow you), and see where they work. If you find a company that seems interesting, you can reach out to that person via DM and learn more about whether they're hiring, what skills they're interested in, which technologies they use, etc.

If they're a total stranger, don't expect miracles. They might not reply, or they might give you a generic response. The more you've spoken with a person, the more likely they are to help you out.

The best case scenario is that they submit an internal referral. Internal referrals will allow you to stand out from the crowd. It doesn't mean that a company will send you an offer right away, but it increases the odds that you'll be scheduled for an interview, and it predisposes them towards liking you (of course, you'll need to live up to that impression!)

In order for them to feel comfortable submitting an internal referral, they'll need to feel like they know something about you and your work. Sharing stuff you're working on,

writing blog posts, tweeting developer tips... all this stuff builds your credibility, and makes it more likely to get a referral.