

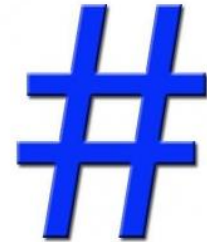
# Twitter Hashtags - What Are They And How Do You Use Them?

## What Are All Those # Symbols Doing In Tweets?

Source: <http://www.squidoo.com/Social-Marketing-3>

For those Twitterers who are not familiar with Hashtags, this is a short introductory article about what Hashtags are and what they can do for you on Twitter.

Hashtags are essentially non-hierarchical keywords or terms assigned to a piece of information. This kind of metadata helps describe an item and allows it to be found again through searching. Tags are chosen informally and personally by the item's creator or by its viewer.



On Twitter, Hashtags are used to add additional context and metadata to the Tweet. This is done very easily by placing the symbol: # in front of the keyword. What this all amounts to is that adding the Hashtag helps to organize and share our Tweet with others. When you add a Hashtag to one of your Tweets, you group it together with other Tweets that have the same tag and this helps bring some order to all of the published Tweets, which makes it easier for others to follow a particular topic of interest.

You can have your Hashtags tracked by opting in and following @hashtags but following @hashtags is no longer required since Twitter now offers its own search service.

You will most likely find it helpful to do some researching first to find out if a certain topic you wish to Tweet about already has a Hashtag established. Searching allows you to track other Tweets that pertain to the subjects that you are interested in and once you find these topics, you just look for the Hashtags and then use the same ones that have been previously established. However, you can create a Hashtag simply by adding a hash symbol: # in front of the keyword for your Tweet. Others that search particular topics will then find Tweets based on the Hashtags assigned to the Tweets. Furthermore, all Twitter updates that include a valid Hashtag will be tracked and indexed at Hashtags.org. Anyone who then goes to [www.hashtags.org](http://www.hashtags.org) can then follow these conversations, whether they are a Twitter member or not.

Keep in mind that there are also some unwritten rules about Hashtags that touch on the topics of courtesy and etiquette. Although Hashtags can be very useful and can help items to be found more easily, if used too often, they can actually become a nuisance, cause confusion and lead your followers to skip over reading your Tweet altogether, or even worse, cause them to unfollow you. Simply use some common sense and use a Hashtag only when you know that it is going to add value to what you are Tweeting about. If every other word in your Tweet has a # character in front of it, your Tweets will become too tedious to even bother to read. Hashtags should be the exception and not the norm in most cases so try to add Hashtags only when you feel that it will add significant value to the conversation.