

TWITTER FOR TEAMS

This time of year especially, we encourage teams to engage with and help promote the 2016 New York Tech Valley FIRST Robotics competition that will be held on the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute campus from March 17-19.

The primary social media account that we will be using to document the event is Twitter. Here are some ways you might consider getting involved in participating during competition weekend. We hope to have many voices cheering on teams that are participating in #NYTechValleyFRC!

Hashtags

#NYTechValleyFRC is the official event hashtag noting the New York Tech Valley FIRST Robotics competition. The posts with this hashtag will help to populate the event and team record of experiences from the days leading up to the event, and also while on the Rensselaer campus. alumni. Photos are encouraged.

#FIRSTstronghold can be used to identify this year's challenge. Also include **#omgrobots** whenever possible. Photos are encouraged.

Our Social Media Accounts

Accounts coordinating their efforts to cover various events and activities include @NYTVFRC and @RPInews.

In addition, it is always great to tag use the hashtag **#RPI** or tag **@RPInews** with any tweets or other social media posts, so that they can re-tweet and share your post.

If you want to be noticed by FIRST, consider including the tag **@FIRSTtweets**. They may also share your post on their social media site.

How to set up and use a Twitter account

1. Set up your Twitter account at <http://www.twitter.com>. See below for tips on picking your ID, also known as your handle.
2. Pick a person or two to manage tweets from your team. In remote situations, that would be someone with a smartphone for obvious reasons.
3. Come up with a plan. Use a google spreadsheet to plan out tweets. Note the date, the event, one or two hashtags to include, and what you want to say in it. Decide who will tweet so there's no repetition. Remember that it's possible to spam with Twitter too, and it's just as annoying to your users in Twitter as it is in email! You can pick an image to include if you like as well (see below).

Your Twitter ID

Your Twitter ID is part of your brand, plain and simple. Your first choice for a Twitter ID should be your team's name. There is nothing stronger for creating your team brand. If your team name is taken, find a way to keep it as close as possible. There are only 140 precious characters available in each Twitter post. The longer your Twitter ID, the more space it takes up, thus limiting your interactions. It's generally recommended that users avoid numbers in their IDs, but for FIRST teams our number is a strong part of our identity.

Leverage your ID. As social networks like Twitter continue to go mainstream, you'll want to be able to connect with new users. Here are a few opportunities to leverage your Twitter ID:

- Add under your team name when you comment on a blog
- Add it to your team's Facebook profile page

- Include a “follow us on Twitter” signature on your email communications and on your web site. If you publish a newsletter, put it there too!

Twitter lingo

- **DM** = Direct Message
- **@** = Use to reply and always include preceding a Twitter ID in a reply
- **RT** = Retweet
- **Tweet** = Sending a message on Twitter
- **Tw + any other word**. A fun practice on Twitter is to develop a new twist on old words. For example, Tworld = Twitter world, and Tweeples = Those who use Twitter. You get the picture.

Using hashtags

- People use the hashtag symbol **#** before a relevant keyword or phrase (no spaces) in their Tweet to categorize those Tweets and help them show more easily in Twitter Search.
- Clicking on a hashtagged word in any message shows you all other Tweets marked with that keyword.
- Hashtags can occur anywhere in the Tweet – at the beginning, middle, or end.
- Hashtagged words that become very popular are often Trending Topics.
- If you Tweet with a hashtag on a public account, anyone who does a search for that hashtag may find your Tweet
- Don't #spam #with #hashtags. Don't over-tag a single Tweet. Best practices recommend using no more than 2 hashtags per Tweet.
- Use hashtags only on Tweets relevant to the topic.

Retweet!

- A retweet (or RT) is defined as reposting a tweet made by another online user on Twitter. The retweet is indicated by the letters “RT” found at the start of the message. This should let online users know that the message is not your own but from someone else online.
- It is not officially a command on the website although users are advised to use it to acknowledge the original creator of the tweet, especially if you’re inserting a comment with the RT. Otherwise, you can simply click the “Retweet” function on the post itself and it will automatically show up on your timeline as a retweet.
- The general rule according to social media enthusiasts is to comment on all retweets. Since you will only be reposting a message created by someone, you become a second party to the conversation so it is important to provide a comment to start the conversation. Make use of the remaining space just as long as you comment.
- The retweet is one of the respectful practices on Twitter. It shows that you like someone’s message or post and also indicate that you interact well with other users. Retweeting means that you’re not simply stealing or claiming other people’s posts as your own. Retweeting should, however, be done sparingly.

Adding images to your tweets

- Click the blue Compose new Tweet button.
- Click or tap on the camera (“media”) icon.

- Select the image file you want to upload; if you're tweeting with a smartphone, you will also have the option to take a photo.
- Once a photo is selected, you will see a thumbnail image (or file name) appear as an attachment. Your Tweet's character count will update to include the pic.twitter.com URL for your photo.
- Type your message and select Tweet to post your message and photo.
- Your image file size can be up to 3MB.
- Twitter accepts GIF, JPEG, and PNG files.
- No BMP or TIFF files.
- Your photo will be automatically scaled for display in your expanded Tweet and in your user gallery.

Social Media Guidelines



Today, social media helps us to make meaningful connections around the globe. Social media platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, YouTube, and Pinterest make sharing highlights from the New York Tech Valley FIRST Robotics competition even more accessible.

Here are some helpful social media guidelines to consider that can help you to create and nurture relationships, share information, raise awareness, build support, participate in important conversations and collaborate on new ideas.

It's a conversation.

"Talk" on social media like you would talk to real people in professional situations. Avoid overly "composed" language. Consider content that's open-ended and invites interaction. Encourage comments.

It's your Responsibility.

What you write is your responsibility. Be respectful. Refrain from using profane, defamatory and slanderous language. Do not post inappropriate comments.

Say something of value.

Posts should be thought provoking and build a sense of community. If it helps raise awareness of your role or the team's role in the competition, then it's adding value.

Be respectful.

Some negative comments do not require a response, while others should be taken seriously and addressed. While discussing a negative experience or disagreeing with a concept or person, you are more likely to achieve your goals if you are constructive and polite.

Social media sites are public.

There's no such thing as a "private" social media site. Search engines can turn up posts years after the publication date. Comments can be forwarded or copied. Archival systems save information even if you delete a post. You are legally liable for what you post on your site and on the sites of others. Be sure that what you post today will not negatively affect you in the future.

Be accurate and willing to make changes when mistakes occur.

Make sure you have accurate facts before posting. It's always better to first verify information with a source than to have to post a correction or retraction later. Cite and link to your sources whenever possible. If you

make an error, correct it quickly and visibly. Mistakes happen, you're human. Be upfront and quick with your correction.

Link back.

You are encouraged to provide links whenever possible

Protect confidentiality.

Do not post confidential information.

No product endorsements.

Do not use Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute or the New York Tech Valley FIRST Robotics Competition tags to promote products, causes, or political party/candidates. We're all about highlighting the teams and of course the robots!

Be aware of the rules of the road for each social media platform.

Each social media platform has its own guidelines, rules and regulations. Please be aware of the rules and guidelines in the platform you are using, and stick to them.

Thank you in advance for considering ways you can add to the #NYTVFRC and #RPI conversation on social media! Please feel free to share this message with others that will be using using social media during the event.

We look forward to seeing you and the exciting #omgrobots you have created in the Twittersphere!