



Your @Name

It's important to select a name that can be easily identified as an SCA entity but isn't so long that it further hampers your already limited space. Some groups might have a concise name great for Twitter, such as something like "Shire of the Black Wolf" (@shireblackwolf or @scablackwolf). Others might be either too complex to be easily spelled (particularly those with non-Latin characters) or very long. While "Barony of the Bridge Across the Frozen River" might be a great name for the branch in Springfield, @baronyofthebridgeacrossthefrozenriver takes up 38 characters (over ¼ of your message space!). @scaspringfield takes up less than half the space and also helps in letting people know where you're from.

Search and Speed is Key

There are numerous services that allow you to save searches for tweets that are relevant to your branch and these searches can provide great moments for proactive outreach. The service we use for Society-level social media is Hootsuite, a free app that has great tools to use for Twitter management (with paid pro features for those branches that want to dive deeper into Twitter). We have a set of common searches saved that update every time we open the app, allowing us to see when people are either talking about us or talking about subjects that might show interest in what we do.

For your branch, try searches that highlight people in your region that might be interested. Start with searches that directly spotlight you, such as "barony of the bridge" and "sca + springfield." You'll automatically receive notice of mentions you get on Twitter, so there's no need to search for your handle specifically. Searches like "swordfighting + springfield" or "medieval + springfield" may reveal someone who tweeted "I wish there was a place to study swordfighting in Springfield" which creates a perfect opportunity to reach out to them and introduce them to the SCA. If you hold activities in a public place, try searches that might reveal the people who've noticed you and are tweeting about you, like "swordfighting + edwards park" For kingdoms and principalities, the same principal applies on a larger level.

Twitter Terms to Know

Tweet – A short message around 140 characters

Retweet – Resharing a tweet to your followers

Mention – A tweet that includes your @name

Follow – receive their tweets in your home feed

Hashtag – a keyword with # before it, ex. #SCA

Pair search terms with the name of the state(s) you cover and major cities within your area. Search for Renaissance Faires in your area and keep an eye out for people who mention they want to learn more.

As you're tweeting, use hashtags to highlight key terms like "medieval" and "archery" to increase the likelihood of someone finding those terms in a search and discovering you.

For the best results, you'll want to check these searches at least a couple of times a week. Twitter is a quick-service platform that requires a degree of "in the moment" response. If you can catch someone

that tweeted something relevant and respond the same day, you'll have a much better chance of a further interaction with them than you will if you respond to them several days later.

Follow to be Followed

One of the key ways you become aware of people or organizations that share your interests on Twitter is through following. Whenever you follow a handle on Twitter, that account holder gets a notification that they have a new follower, and if you post content they are interested in, they may follow you back. Many people automatically refollow those that follow them out of habit. If you want to get your message out to people and organizations that ought to know about you, follow them first and there's a good chance they'll follow you back (see "Building a Base" below for the kinds of handles to follow as you get started with Twitter).

Should you refollow everyone that follows you? Social media experts are mixed, but the more people you follow, the more "cruft" (tweets that aren't relevant to us) you'll have to cloud up your follower stream. Refollow the people that are likely to tweet things you might want to read and retweet and every so often, unfollow the people who aren't posting anything of value.

Building a Base with the Right Blocks

Growing your followers on Twitter can be difficult at first, particularly for a local group. Twitter has a smaller user pool than its big brother networks, but the user pool is growing quickly, and it trends younger than its fellows. After you've rallied your local members who are on Twitter to follow you (and encouraged those who aren't to try it out), your next blocks should be organizations in your area that may spread the word about you. Local history, education, culture, and arts organizations often tweet and retweet about interesting happenings in their area (and those tweets often come via following the organizations like ours who are hosting those happenings). Follow every news organization that is close enough to report on your activities (following relevant media policies if Twitter opens a door for local coverage). Local schools and community groups may also have Twitter handles and refollows there might give you demo opportunities.

Of course, you should definitely follow @SCAsocial and any other nearby or relevant local groups, kingdoms, or events.

Don't Be Hesitant

The beauty of the Twitter platform is that it's designed for short, quick interaction with other people. If you were to post multiple status updates, links, etc. over a Facebook Page, people would quickly become annoyed or tune you out (or worse, unlike your page). On Twitter, however, you can tweet to a dozen different people every day and no one will bat an eye. Twitter serves more like an instant messaging platform that just happens to be more or less publicly broadcast. Tweet, retweet, and mention as often as you care to and engage with people, even those you don't know. Twitter is one giant global community where anyone can tweet to anyone.