TWITTER CHEAT SHEET
May 2014

What can be said in 140 characters or less?

- *Be the change you want to see in the world* – Mahatma Gandhi (62 characters)
- *Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that* – MLK (118 characters)
- *The care of human life & happiness & not their destruction, is the first & only legitimate object of good government* - Thomas Jefferson (138 characters)

Ideally, you'll get in the habit of being on Twitter periodically throughout the day or week. Tweet on a smartphone or tablet when you're in line waiting to check out at a store or on public transportation. Tweet from your home computer during the ads of your favorite television program. It is okay to just get on for a few minutes and then hop back off. Don't feel like you have to catch up to where you were last time.

TWITTER GLOSSARY

- *Handle* – this is your user name that starts with "@."Our handle is "@LWV." We recommend building a short handle that uses LWV and denotes the region and/or state your League represents.
- *Mentions* – you can use someone's handle in your tweet, and this will notify that user that you've mentioned them. If you start a tweet with an @mention, it'll only be seen by people who follow you and that user. If you want everyone who follows you to be able to see it, put a "." before the mention (for example: ".@LWV")
- *RT – Retweet*. You can retweet other people's tweets to share with your followers. You can also ask your followers to retweet or share your tweet with their followers. Sometimes a retweet is prefaced with RT, sometimes it isn't. Unfortunately, there's no uniform way, so you'll just have to keep an eye out to see how others do it. If you use the RT button directly from Twitter, RT will not be added. This helps keep the character count down. If you use a third party application you generally have the option to add "RT." Some people will do this and add their own thoughts at the beginning or end of the tweet.
- *MT – Modified Tweet*. Used in lieu of RT if the user has made some small edits to the original tweet. This is generally done when a user needs to delete a few characters from the tweet being retweeted to make room for commentary.
- *DM – Direct Message*. You can send private messages through Twitter by starting a tweet with "DM" or by clicking on the envelope icon. This is a good way to respond to questions or share information with journalists or other users you're engaged with on Twitter that you don't want shared publicly. In order to send a DM you and the other user must already be following one another.
- *Lists* – You can create lists to help you manage who you follow, for example you could start lists for members, state partners, news sources, local journalists, national organizations, etc. These lists can be public or private. You can follow other users' public lists, so that you don't have to

individually follow each user. We have a list of the state and local Leagues we know of on Twitter, and also a list for League staff and members.

WHAT TO TWEET

A great stat from a recent factsheet. An article on an issue you're working on (or better yet, quoted in). A noteworthy event that your president or another LWV representative is attending. A photo or press statement.

All of these are great fodder for Twitter! Write a sentence or find a quote that encapsulates what you're sharing and use it as a teaser alongside a link and relevant hashtags. By using 100-120 characters, you'll leave room for others to retweet you and add thoughts of their own.

You can also retweet other people's tweets that resonate with the League's messaging. This is a great way to acknowledge your members, partner organizations, journalists, bloggers, etc. And they've already done the work for you – getting a thought under 140 characters, while probably including a link and hashtags! This is a good place to start when you're new to Twitter and alongside original content provides good balance on your feed.

HASHTAGS

Hashtags are a way for your tweet to enter an ongoing conversation or to create a new one. Hashtags start with "#," are all one word, and can contain only alphanumeric characters – symbols like "!" or "&" will end a hashtag. When you click on a hashtag, Twitter pulls a list of all the tweets using that hashtag. That way, you don't have to follow all of the users tweeting about an event or issue, but instead can click on a hashtag to see everything that's being tweeted on the topic. You can click to "save a search" for a hashtag – such as #votingrights or #youthvote -- as a way to bookmark and easily access the conversation. Use Hashtags.org to research trending and relevant hashtags. When brainstorming your own, make sure to keep it short, so others can easily add it onto their tweets, and that it isn't already being used. Some hashtags you may frequently see include #tcot (top conservatives on Twitter) #p2 (progressives) #fem2 (feminists) and #sotu (state of the union).

Using the right hashtags is a great way for partner organizations, key opinion leaders, policymakers and journalists to see your tweets (and resources) and see that your League is active on these issues. This can also help bring in new followers who see that your League is engaged on issues they're following.

#FF – Follow Friday. This is a hashtag used to recommend or thank others on Twitter every Friday. We don't use it every week, but do use it to thank our Tweet Chat or coalition partners on weeks where we've had big events or increased engagement. You can also use it to elevate your members or to highlight bloggers, journalists or other organizations that you think are doing good work. It can be a good way to initiate engagement with users you want to interact with or start following you.

SHORTENED LANGUAGE

Learning to understand tweets takes time because tweets use shortened language, sometimes using questionable grammar and spelling in order to get their messages under 140 characters. Some abbreviations are easy to understand, such as "b/c" for "because," "abt" for "about," or numbers and letters like "r," "u," "2," or "4" in lieu of the words they represent. Others that you may see include

"ICYMI" for "in case you missed it" or "h/t" for "hat tip," which is a way to recognize or thank someone. If you need help deciphering this language, a quick Google search will usually provide an answer.

You don't need to partake in this type of communication, but you may find it at times helpful to use this type of shorthand.

WHO TO FOLLOW

Following other Twitter accounts helps gain visibility and attract your own followers. Follow the journalists and bloggers – especially those of whom are local – who cover your events and issues. Follow your partner organizations and their staff. Send them a tweet to let them know you've joined Twitter and ask them to follow you back. You can ask organizations to welcome you to Twitter on their feeds and to ask their supporters to follow you. For those who help you out, make sure to repay the favor – give them some love on #FF and tell your supporters what great work they do! You can also look at a hashtag that you know you'll be using a lot to see who is tweeting on your issues and follow them. It can be hit and miss and not everyone you follow will follow you back, but over time you should see your numbers tick up.

When you're near a big number, ask your followers to help you get there. ("We're at 92 followers. RT this and help us get to 100 by the end of the day!") And, of course, thank those who help you reach your goal, either by starting to follow you or by tagging and retweeting you.

SHORT URLS

Twitter will automatically shorten all links sent via tweets, thereby allowing you to use more characters in your tweets. But external link shortening tools can provide you with stats on your tweets, including the number of clicks each of your links get, as another way to measure your success. Bit.ly, a free tool, offers the most comprehensive report and can connect directly to your Twitter account or any third party application used to manage your Twitter account. These tools generally shorten URLs to 20 characters or less.

THIRD-PARTY APPLICATIONS

Third-party tools like TweetDeck or Hootsuite allow you to easily manage your Twitter account. These tools help you schedule tweets and track multiple searches, hashtags and users at the same time. Hootsuite has its own short URL, but also allows you to use a short URL from an outside service, like bit.ly. TweetDeck allows you to connect your bit.ly account directly through its platform. Both applications can be used to manage multiple social media accounts, including your Facebook account as well.

ANALYTICS

Tracking Twitter analytics can be tricky. We use and recommend Crowdbooster, which can track both your Twitter and Facebook accounts. Crowdbooster keeps track of your mentions, retweets, new followers, etc. In addition, it can provide you with feedback and tips on how to better engage, including best times to post.

DIAGRAMED TWEETS

LWV **LWV of the US**
@LWV — our handle

STATEMENT: Right to Vote Under Attack
short URL, we used bit.ly → bit.ly/Jz6nFe #voters #election #voterID
#votingrights #photoID

hashtags - 5 total in this tweet

↩ Reply 🗑 Delete ★ Favorite

LWV **LWV of the US**
@LWV

mention - we've "tagged" another user by using their handle

TAKE ACTION - Join the million other voices in asking @EPAgov to adopt strong carbon standards! bit.ly/IoOhG2 #cleanair4kids

↩ Reply 🗑 Delete ★ Favorite

QUESTIONS? CONTACT STEPHANIE DRAHAN – sdrahan@lwv.org