

Courthouse Libraries BC – Twitter Guide

Responding to the rise of social media

In October 2011, Twitter reported over 100 million users and nearly 250 million daily tweets¹ demonstrating how it has transcended casual social use to become an integral communication tool. Already indispensable to groups such as journalists, Twitter is still being explored by librarians and the legal profession to discover where it fits. Courthouse Libraries BC has joined the exploration, and we hope this Guide answers the question “How is the Library using Twitter?”

Experiments in legal information

Development of improved sources of legal information is a core purpose of BC Courthouse Libraries. As a library we are also expected to aggregate and synthesize resources for users. Of course, we inherited social networks and blogs in the condition they were handed down by the mainstream—not always ideal for the pragmatic needs of lawyers. While cognizant of the limitations and the evolving state of “Web 2.0” technologies, we allow the possibility that social networks and blogs can benefit practitioners and be exploited as a distribution mechanism for legal information.

Twitter in the Practice Portals

We placed Twitter boxes in the [Practice Portals](#) in September 2011 to give site visitors, including those new to Twitter, a glimpse of what sharing news, links comments and other practice-oriented information looks like using Twitter. The Twitter box in each Practice Portal draws in tweets based on the presence of *CLBC Hashtags* (described below). We encourage participation in this, so the next time you tweet on a legal topic, amplify your reach by adopting a CLBC Hashtag—your tweet will automatically appear on our site.



What is Twitter?

Twitter (www.twitter.com) is a social networking service that enables users to send and read short text-based posts (140 characters max). A Twitter post, known as a “tweet”, is a “one to many” broadcast, more akin to a blog post than an email, text message or other message where the sender selects recipients. Accordingly, posting through Twitter is often called *microblogging*.

Who uses Twitter and why?

Twitter is used by a wide range of groups, not just teens and celebrities. Government, journalists, and other professionals like lawyers are increasingly using Twitter to receive, disseminate and respond to news, and to provide commentary.

Interacting using Twitter

An account is needed to publish tweets, but not to view or search. Account holders “follow” other users to see their most recent tweets in a content stream or “timeline”, via PC or smartphone. Tweets often include comments about and links to web content, and interesting information is amplified by users “retweeting” posts to their network of followers.

¹ Source: <http://mashable.com/2011/10/17/twitter-costolo-stats/>

What is a Hashtag?

The “#” symbol in front of any character sequence (usually a keyword, phrase or abbreviation) marks a hashtag. Users coin hashtags to categorize a topic, conversation or piece of content. Hashtags form organically, and their meaning may be self-evident (e.g. #jazz or #MilesDavis), or obscure (e.g. #elxn41 refers to Canada’s 41st Federal Elections). Conferences often employ hashtags so attendees can share updates (e.g. #PLTC2011 or #clbcfam).

CLBC Hashtags

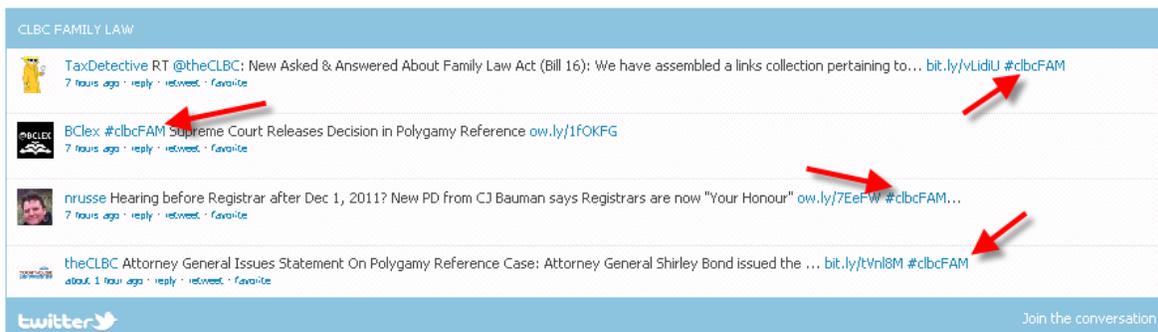
Courthouse Libraries BC has adopted hashtags for specific practice areas and topics. The following are endorsed for use in tweets as they pertain to the practice of law in BC in the following areas:

- **#clbcFAM** for family law topics
- **#clbcLIT** for civil litigation topics
- **#clbcPI** for personal injury topics
- **#clbcPM** for practice management topics
- **#clbcWE** for wills and estates topics

Each CLBC Hashtag corresponds to a [Practice Portal](#) on the Library website. When the CLBC Hashtag for Family Law is incorporated into the text of a tweet, the Twitter box in the Family Law Practice Portal automatically includes that tweet among the ones it scrolls through. As we add more Practice Portals, we plan to adopt more CLBC Hashtags.

Using CLBC Hashtags to post to Practice Portals

Below is an example of different Twitter accounts tweeting with the #clbcFAM hashtag. As long as the tweet contains the hashtag somewhere within it, the tweet will appear in the Twitter box of the corresponding Practice Portal, in this case Family Law.



Twitter profiles: @theCLBC & @BClex

Courthouse Libraries BC’s primary Twitter account is [@theCLBC](#), which actively engages the legal profession with posts on legal news, CPD opportunities, internal activities, etc. It is an institutional voice, but administered by humans who answer questions and engage others. The Library also administers [@BClex](#), an automated “news feed” account that mostly tweets notifications about external legal blogs of relevance to local lawyers. @BClex is one example of using CLBC Hashtags to cause tweets to appear in Practice Portals.



[@theCLBC](#) Courthouse Library BC’s primary Twitter account used to engage with clients and other legal organizations.



[@BClex](#) An automated news feed using CLBC Hashtags and producing tweets based on new law blog content and other sources on the internet.

Twitter Lists

Courthouse Libraries BC curates a number of Twitter lists to make it easier to follow particular practice areas or law-related interests. These lists are connected to @theCLBC (see <http://twitter.com/#!/theCLBC/lists>) for full selection of lists). We are continuously adding Twitter users (mostly lawyers and legal organizations) to @theCLBC lists. The following lists correspond to practice areas currently supported through our [Practice Portals](#):

What are *Twitter Lists*?

Twitter lets you organize people you follow into lists. You can also follow lists others have curated. Lists allow you to pay attention to people and topics that interest you without having to scroll through an unsorted timeline of hundreds or thousands of tweets from everyone you follow. You can see lists of another Twitter user by adding "/lists" after the URL of their profile page. (e.g. <http://twitter.com/#!/theCLBC/lists>)

- [@theCLBC/clbcwe](#) people posting on wills & estates related legal issues in BC.
- [@theCLBC/clbcfam](#) people posting on BC family law issues.
- [@theCLBC/clbclit](#) profiles relevant to civil litigation in BC.
- [@theCLBC/clbcpm](#) profiles relevant to practice management and technology.
- [@theCLBC/clbcpi](#) profiles and sources relevant to personal injury law in BC.

Snapshot of Twitter lists maintained by @theCLBC

If you are a BC lawyer who frequently posts timely and practice-relevant content to Twitter and would like us to consider adding you to one of our lists, please reply to @theCLBC.

	@theCLBC/cdn-legal-info-people <i>@theCLBC's list of the people behind the law publishing, library and information organizations.</i>	 
	@theCLBC/cdn-legal-publications <i>@theCLBC's list of legal publications posting on Twitter.</i>	 
	@theCLBC/clbcwe <i>@theCLBC's list of people posting on wills & estates related legal issues in BC (Hashtag #clbcWE).</i>	 
	@theCLBC/bc-public-interest-law <i>@theCLBC's list of lawyers and organizations posting about public interest legal issues in BC.</i>	 
	@theCLBC/clbcfam <i>@theCLBC's "clbcFAM" list of people posting on BC family law issues (Hashtag #clbcFAM).</i>	 
	@theCLBC/bc-legal-institutions <i>@theCLBC's list of legal institutions and organizations in BC.</i>	 
	@theCLBC/clbcip <i>Canadian copyright, privacy and intellectual privacy law</i>	 