Michael Miller

Sams Teach Yourself TweetDeck in 10 Minutes

SAMS

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Introduction

Do you like to tweet? Or follow other people's tweets? Are you a heavy Facebook user? Do you like to follow your favorite entertainers on MySpace? Do you network with other business professionals on LinkedIn?

If you engage in one or more of these activities, you know how time consuming the whole social networking thing can be. This is especially true if you participate in more than one social network. Trying to keep track of your friends and posts on Twitter and Facebook and LinkedIn can be a real pain.

Unless, that is, you use TweetDeck, a program designed to consolidate all your social networking activities. TweetDeck is a godsend for heavy social networkers, letting you write a single message and post it to multiple networks. It even lets you track posts from friends on Twitter and Facebook and LinkedIn and the rest. One program for multiple social networks—what's not to like?

The problem with TweetDeck is that it's not always intuitive to use. There are lots of things it can do that you probably haven't figured out how to do, and there's no proper instruction manual or help file to help you learn. In short, TweetDeck is a great program—if you could figure out how to use it.

That's where this book comes in. *Sams Teach Yourself TweetDeck in 10 Minutes* is a quick-and-easy way to learn how to use TweetDeck to manage all your social network communications. Every lesson in this book is short and to the point, so you can learn everything you need to learn at your own pace, in your own time. Just follow the straightforward Sams Teach Yourself in 10 Minutes game plan: short, goal-oriented lessons that can make you productive with each topic in 10 minutes or less.

What You Need to Know Before You Use This Book

How much prior experience do you need before starting this book? I assume that you're already using one or more social networks and that you know how that social network works. So if you're a Twitter user, I assume you know how to tweet and retweet and use hashtags and things like that. If you're a Facebook user, I assume you know how to create status updates and read your wall and do other basic tasks.

Beyond these basic skills with your social networks of choice, no prior experience with TweetDeck is presumed. I'll take you from downloading and installation to advance use of the program in a step-by-step fashion, teaching you everything you need to know along the way.

About the Sams Teach Yourself in 10 Minutes Series

Sams Teach Yourself TweetDeck in 10 Minutes uses a series of short lessons that walk you through the various features of TweetDeck for Desktop and TweetDeck for iPhone. Each lesson is designed to take about 10 minutes, and each is limited to a particular operation or group of features. Most of the instruction is presented in easy-to-follow numbered steps, and there are plenty of examples and screenshots to show you what things look like along the way. By the time you finish this book, you should feel confident in using TweetDeck to read and create posts to Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and other social networks.

Special Sidebars

In addition to the normal text and figures, you'll find sidebars scattered throughout that highlight special kinds of information. These are intended to help you save time and to teach you important information fast.

> NOTE Notes present pertinent pieces of information related to the surrounding discussion.

LESSON 1

How TweetDeck Consolidates Your Social Networking

In this lesson, you learn what TweetDeck does and how it works.

What TweetDeck Is—And What It Does

If you're reading this book, chances are you're familiar with one or more of the popular social networks. Maybe you're a follower of others on Twitter, maybe you have lots of friends on Facebook or MySpace, or maybe you use LinkedIn for business networking. Or maybe, like many out there, you use more than one of these services.

As a social networker, you know the challenge of keeping up to date on all the posts and updates and tweets that your friends and colleagues make during the course of day. If you subscribe to more than one service, you also face the challenge of coordinating your posts across multiple networks. If you have lots of friends and are yourself a frequent poster, it can be a full-time job keeping everything in sync.

This is where TweetDeck comes in. TweetDeck is a program that manages communications across multiple social networks. With TweetDeck, you can write a single message and have it posted automatically to Twitter, Facebook, and the rest. You also can follow all of your friends' posts and tweets in one place, using a single unified interface.

That's right, TweetDeck consolidates communications from Twitter, Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn, and more. You don't have to log on to each of these services to stay up to date; TweetDeck serves as a focal point for posting and reading posts from all of these services.

As a nexus for all your social networking, TweetDeck makes it easy to manage all the posts you make and read. Instead of logging on to Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn separately, you can read posts from all these services in the TweetDeck application. The program's multicolumn interface helps you organize communications by service or topic so that you can quickly see who's saying what and where. You can search for people or topics across multiple social networks, and save those searches for future use.

TweetDeck also makes it easier to post to your favorite social networks. You can send a single post to multiple services and include photos, videos, and web links in your posts. TweetDeck even lets you make longer posts by linking together multiple tweets.

All this is accomplished via use of multiple columns within the TweetDeck interface. As you can see in Figure 1.1, TweetDeck uses different columns to show different things; each column is customizable. So, for example, you might have one column devoted to showing Twitter tweets, another for Facebook status updates, and a third for LinkedIn network updates. You can even split the people you follow into multiple groups and display each group's posts in a separate column.

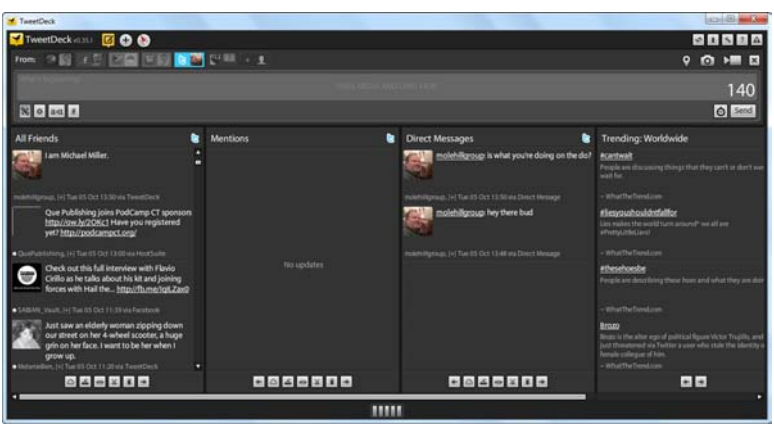

FIGURE 1.1 TweetDeck's multiple-column interface.

> **NOTE: Adobe AIR**
> TweetDeck was developed using the Adobe AIR runtime environment. A copy of AIR is installed on your computer when you install TweetDeck.

Connecting to Multiple Social Networks

TweetDeck originally was designed for Twitter users only, connecting to Twitter via the Twitter API. In April 2009, Twitter was expanded to add support for Facebook; support for additional social networks soon followed.

> **NOTE: Twitter API**
> The Twitter application programming interface (API) is used to connect third-party applications with Twitter's data feed, in real time.

As of the fall of 2010, TweetDeck enables users to connect to the following social networks:

- Facebook
- Foursquare
- Google Buzz
- LinkedIn
- MySpace
- Twitter

The TweetDeck for Desktop application supports all of these networks; mobile versions of TweetDeck support some of them.

Who Uses TweetDeck—and Why

TweetDeck can be used by anyone using any of the supported social networks. For most social networks, TweetDeck provides an interface that many find superior to the network's native interface; that is, it's easier to

post and follow friends on TweetDeck than it is on the social networks themselves.

Where TweetDeck really shines, however, is its capability to integrate access to multiple social networks. This makes TweetDeck the ideal gateway for users who connect to both Twitter and Facebook, for example, or Facebook and LinkedIn. TweetDeck lets you follow all your friends—no matter which social network they use—and all in one place.

The capability to follow posts from multiple social networks had made TweetDeck the program of choice for journalists around the world. When you need to keep up-to-date on what's happening, no matter where it's happening, TweetDeck delivers.

In addition, TweetDeck is especially popular with businesses and web marketers who maintain accounts on all major social networks. A business can make one post via TweetDeck and have that promotional message appear on all major social networks simultaneously.

As such, TweetDeck is the most popular Twitter application, with a 19% market share. The desktop application has been downloaded more than 15 million times, whereas the iPhone version has seen more than 2.5 million downloads. TweetDeck users make more than 4 million tweets, posts, and status updates every day.

Exploring Different Versions of TweetDeck

There are several different versions of TweetDeck for different types of computers and devices. As of the fall of 2010, the following versions are available:

- TweetDeck for Desktop (Windows). Compatible with Windows 7, Windows Vista, Windows XP, Windows 2000, and Windows 98.
- TweetDeck for Desktop (Mac). Compatible with Mac OS X 10.5 or later.
- TweetDeck for iPhone and iPod touch
- TweetDeck for iPad
- TweetDeck for Android

> **NOTE: TweetDeck User Streams**
>
> TweetDeck is testing a version of its program that is compatible with Twitter's User Streams API. This version updates all Twitter-based columns in true real time, instead of waiting for Twitter's normal batched updates.

The Desktop versions of TweetDeck are designed for use on desktop and notebook computers. The other versions are designed for mobile use, keeping you connected to Twitter, Facebook, and so on while you're on the move. You can use TweetDeck for iPhone/iPad/Android to read and write posts from your mobile phone, anywhere you have an Internet connection.

That last point is worth noting. TweetDeck is a real-time social network interface. As such, your computer or mobile device needs to be connected to the Internet for TweetDeck to function. If you're not connected, TweetDeck can't access Twitter and the other social networks to retrieve new posts.

> **NOTE: TweetDeck Version**
>
> TweetDeck is continuously updating its software. This book is written on TweetDeck for Desktop, Windows version 0.35.3. If you have a later version, it may differ somewhat from the version discussed in this book.

Summary

In this lesson, you learned what Twitter is and what it does. In the next lesson, you learn how to download and install Twitter for Desktop on your computer.