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Twitter While You Travel



From Amsterdam to Venice by bike
2 adults, 3 children and a phone
140 characters at a time

by *Stuart Wickes & Kirstie Pelling*
[The Family Adventure Project](#)



including special feature
20 Ways to Twitter While You Travel

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Twitter while you Travel



Ijmuiden, Holland, 12th July 2009



Venice, Italy, 27th August 2009

Any regular Twitter user will be familiar with the benefits of this form of social networking. **Its' immediacy is unrivalled, it requires technology most of us already carry in our pockets,** and opens up the globe for anyone keen to expand their social circle, share their insights or interests, or experience the world through the eyes of others, in 140 characters or less.

Twitter and independent travel are good companions. While blogging is time consuming and **requires seeking out internet café's or lugging round heavy laptops, and postcards are often an** afterthought, recording your travels by Twitter provides a real time record of your trip and allows others to follow and participate in your journey from the comfort of their mobile phone or laptop.

Travel, particularly the more adventurous forms of it, is by its' nature unpredictable. It's not always possible to prebook hotels or attractions when you don't know where you'll be the next minute, let alone the next night. Despite the modern proliferation of tourist offices, maps, guide books and websites, finding information as and when you need it can be time consuming and frustrating. But develop the right community of Twitter followers and they can be your online guide. Build up a network of adventurous like-minded people and they can become part of your journey.

Last summer we took our family of five on a cycle tour across Europe, from Amsterdam to Venice, following some of the great rivers through Holland and Germany then crossing the Alps through Austria to reach Northern Italy. Before departing we built up a following on Twitter.

By the time we reached St Mark's Square this had swollen as fellow users retweeted our adventures to their communities inviting others to join the virtual fun that accompanied our journey in the real world. Not all of our followers contributed to the journey, but those who did became valuable companions. They advised on hotels and hostels, helped us make difficult decisions, made us laugh, and boosted morale at difficult times. They were our virtual back up team and the journey wouldn't have been the same without them.

This 'tweek' is a record of our journey. **We made a resolution to tweet every ten kilometres** and stuck to it wherever possible, often adding a Twitpic to create a digital travel scrapbook. **It encompasses the highs and the lows of travelling as a family. It's also a story of our developing** relationship with a band of armchair travellers. Some of it is us, some of it is them, and some of it is us replying to them. We thank every one of them for their contributions and hope to meet them virtually on our next voyage into the unknown.

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20 Ways to Twitter while you Travel

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8 Make a personal recommendation: Has that hotel owner gone out of their way to cater for your smelly backpack and muddy boots? If you've stayed somewhere special, had great service, or experienced hospitality you feel you probably don't deserve, then Tweet a plug for that business, or thank them by recommending them to others.

[Recommended](#)

[You tell us!](#)

9 Let Twitter decide: Should you stay or should you go? Unsure what to do? Want to let your Twitter followers influence your journey? Ask a question, pose a dilemma, set out some options and ask your followers what to do. Then let the replies influence what happens next. Go on, you can't be a control freak all your life.

10 Seek a recommendation: Is there anywhere in Cornwall that cooks up a decent squid? Can you catch some comedy in Vegas? Ask your followers for recommendations on what to eat, what to see, where to go, their favourite spots.

[Any ideas?](#)

11 Meet a local: Put a tweet out to see if there's anyone twittering in your area you could hook up with. They might be sitting next to you on the bus. But remember to look after your personal safety.

[What's this?](#)

12 Ask a question. Has the magalenic plover ever been seen in Equador? Seen a species you don't recognise? Stumbled across some ancient wall paintings you can't make head nor tail of? Why not see if any of your followers can help?

13 Break news: Obviously walking into a riot or uncovering the sordid secrets of a holidaying celebrity aren't a large part of your holiday plans. But if you do, then make your name with an international exclusive to the news networks.

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7.27pm Loading up

Saturday July 11th

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- 9.11am Adding things to my to do before we leave list faster than I am crossing them off.
- 9.36am Loading phrase books onto our mp3 players... Dutch, German, Italian, French .. maybe we should visit less countries and be understood more!
- 9.56am @Velomad Off on X Europe Twitter Tour with the kids. Amsterdam to Venice, start tomorrow....
- 10.18am Kids all gone out to be excited somewhere else. Ever noticed how noisy buttering toast is when there's noone else around?
- 12.31pm @Sparkle_Chi RT How truly noisy the sound of being alone is! --> Funny. It doesn't last for long in this house though... WEEE'RE BAAACKK
- 2.43pm Road trip tip: Get yr kid's a cheap digital camera. What they snap gives gr8 insight into their journey & what interest them! Food for talk.
- 3.38pm Road trip tip: Save weight & money; don't buy 6 new big \$\$\$ guides. Buy 2nd hand, cut out bits of interest, leave bulk behind.
- 6.52pm Time to load car for trip to ferry terminal in morning. Never mind will it fit on bikes, will it all fit in the car?? Or do we leave kids?
- 9.06pm <http://twitpic.com/a17mj> - Ta Da everything is aboard. Just crew to go.



9.06pm: <http://twitpic.com/a17mj>
Ta Da everything is aboard. Just crew to go.

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10.08am: <http://twitpic.com/a7ngg>
Last beach before the Med. So empty.



11.28am: Bikes all ready. Let's go

Monday July 13th

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- reply from @monicasalazar:* it'd be great to meet you. If we leave for a world trip, we could meet somewhere :)
- 7:44am Woken by my mobile texting me to say welcome to Holland. Isn't that sweet! Let the continental adventure begin... with a croissant in bed.
- 8:29am Wondering where 2 extra large balloon animals and giant posters the ship pirate gave us will go on the bikes.
- reply from @vsmith1:* You're not on the ferry MSS Spinal Tap are you?
- reply from @sashabubble:* good luck you guys, you could tie the balloons to the trailer or if you were feeling mean, let them fly to the moon!
- 9:03am 4 km Ijmuden Welcome to Continental Europe
- 10.08am <http://twitpic.com/a7ngg> - Last beach before the Med. So empty.
- reply from @peterfrancon:* Beautiful report. Keep up the #cadence. Let's hear it for #cyclists!
- reply from @vsmith1:* I never realised that Holland had such steeply sloping beaches!
- 10:53am 10km Bright, sunny and windy here amongst the dunes of Kennemer.
- reply from @chriscdn:* You guys arrived just in time. Until today the last week was very wet in Holland.
- 11.57am 20km Haarlem. Laughed more as a family in the last hour than in 3 weeks at home. Is our home life that boring?
- reply from @phillconnell:* No, but a change is as good (if not much better) than a rest as they say...
- 1.50pm Road trip tip: Send travel tweets on your mobile via Twittermail. It's uses least data so helps keeps roaming costs down.
- 6:07pm 30km A little bit lost but in heaven. Everyone is on bikes here. Punks, grans, emos, babes, kids, mums.
- 6:08pm 40km. Lost again at Schipol airport. Don't ask why. It's plane stupid.
- reply from @slippery_snake:* what distance do you usually cover in one day?
- 6:14pm @slippery_snake Distance per day? Anywhere between 30 and 70 km. We need to average 40 to make Venice in time to get home for school!
- 6:20pm @vsmith1 If there is a hill we will find it. Or make it look like we have!
- reply from @chriscdn:* I'll keep an eye out for you. I'm on a black Trek with blue front and rear panniers. Safe travels
- 7:52pm Watching the kids play. They seem not to notice language differences. Perhaps play is a universal language.
- reply from @bubblestoyou:* Sounds like ur adventure is going great. Family is an inspiration..Keep on the trail!!!
- 9:24pm Learning some German phrases in a little cabin. We have 3 days to get a grip. Ya drei. Hilfe!
- reply from @zeldw:* try google translator when all else fails :)

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8.20am Rain, rain will not go away



10:56am: <http://twitpic.com/amrbs>
200km Passing the giant Sluis Weurt near Nijmegen

Friday July 17th

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- 8:26am Rain, rain, go away, come back another day. Thunderstorm's too. Waterproofs on everyone.
- 8:45am Rain does NOT stop play. Kids keep bouncing like raindrops on the camp trampoline. Do we have to go?
reply from @chriscdn: Unfortunately we're expecting rain in these parts for the next four days. :(
- 10:56am <http://twitpic.com/amrbs> - 200km Passing the giant Sluis Weurt near Nijmegen
- 11:55am German lessons continue. Soon to be put to the test. Wish us luck as it doesn't sound pretty.
reply from @Cellae: Don't worry. German never sounds pretty ;-) (and that's coming from a Flemish person lol)
- 1:29pm Nijmegen nightmare. Whole town gripped by preparations for some sprawling festival. All parks closed or turned into festival venues. Now what?
reply from @peterfrancon: Our dad used to take us to Yarmouth as kids for hols. How's your ride going?
- 2:25pm 210km Heading up the Waal to meet the Rhine.
- 3:36pm 220km Heading for the border sooner than we thought. It maybe goodbye Holland and its' goats before the day is out.
- 5:21pm 230km Crossed into Germany. So uneventful. Borders are not what they used to be. No passport or customs or police. Not even a line in road.
reply from @BettyButty: Lol! I remember thinking that about the Borders, think I wanted a fanfare ;) Enjoy your time travelling down the Rhine!
- 7:24pm 240km Kleve is in party mood. No place for us. Have to push on and look for somewhere to stay.
- 7:58pm Anyone recommend a campsite or hostel near Kalkar, N Rhineland?
reply from @wayway8: i used to ski there when i was a kid!
reply from @chriscdn: The only campsites near you that I see on my map are at Obermormter & Husen, 9km E of Kalkar. Good luck!

From Amsterdam to Venice by bike
Riding Day 5
Arrive Germany

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11.06am Goulash Soup



2.26pm Bronbach

Sunday August 2nd

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- 7:21am 850km Almost at Wertheim where we leave the Main to follow the Tauber valley and pick up the Romantic Road. Phase 3 begins!
- 7:23am Our 21st day of riding today. A family tour de France! Well in days but not in speed or distance. Another 21 and we should be in Italy.
- 7:41am The rain is back. And we've had a mysterious flood in the tent. Oh happy morning.
- 8:19am Tent flood is suspected pee. Some gear wet too. Now pouring outside. And kids want us to honour our promise to go swimming. Should we laugh or cry?
- 8:26am And now little green guy, our pet grasshopper has escaped. Part of me thinks lucky him!
reply from @daysoutinfo: looks like your having a great start to the day. Happy cycling.
- 9:45am Stuck for something to do on a rainy day, Captain Matt takes us to the outdoor pool. It's surprisingly good fun. And EMPTY!
- 9:50am Now pool is shut due to bad weather! Spoilsports. We'll have to go cycling in the rain instead.
- 10:20am Our waterproofs weigh 5kg a weight we curse on hot days. Then on days like today they are our saving grace and we'd gladly carry 10kg if it would keep us dry!
- 10:58am What luck! It's autofrei sonntag in the whole Tauber valley. Lots of soggy cyclists reclaiming the roads. FANTASTIC!
- 11:03am And in-line skaters too. It's so still and quiet without the cars, in the mist, just Sunday bells the click of gears and the pitter, patter of rain.
- 11:04am Ponchos too: pink, green, red and blue.
- 11:54am 860km There are thousands of cyclists out in the Tauber valley today for car free Sunday.
reply from @Doc__Brown: Roads? Where we're going we don't need roads.

From Amsterdam to Venice by bike
Riding Day 21
Auto Frei Sonntag

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9.30am: Leaving Harburg



3.07pm: Milestone on Via Claudia Augusta

Saturday August 8th

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- 7:23am [New Blog Entry: Finding Romance on the Romantic Road](http://bit.ly/3tIXqw) <http://bit.ly/3tIXqw>
- 8:53am Some big decisions to make over the next few days. Like whether we stand any realistic chance of getting to Venice.
- 10:25am 1120km On our way to Donauwörth, confluence of Danube and Wörnitz.
- 11:05am Donauwörth: suddenly swarming with cyclists. The Danube cycle path passes through here. Should we drop the Alps to follow that dreamy blue flat route?!
- 11:25am Studying the map for Via Claudia Augusta. The next downhill looks to be 187.5km away. Cheery thought for a Saturday morning.
- 1:09pm Picnic by the Danube. It's not blue! Nice to be with a big noisy river again, even if just for an hour or so.
- 3:38pm 1130km we're riding towards Augsburg. We really need to make it there tonight to stay in the game. It's about 50km more.
- 3:40pm 1140km On the old Roman trail that crossed the Alps. We hope it's not as rough as it was 2000 years ago.
*reply from@ObseloV: Is that the trail that Hannibal used? Hoping *fingers crossed**
@ObselloV Is it Hannibal trail? Not sure. Could someone look it up? It will be our Hannah's trail!
- 4:25pm Hannah, 3, is stoking. Wait, I've lost the milometer a minute ago. We ride back 10 mins. Then find it in her saddle bag! Arghh
- 6:14pm 1160km Accident stop. Matt caught his fingers in moving chain. Nasty, nasty, nasty. Thank goodness for first aid. Very brave boy. Shocked parents.
reply from@balmeras: Poor Matt!! Sending good vibes! Owwwwwww
reply from@ObseloV: Sounds serious and unusual... why would he try and put his fingers there?
@balmeras @ObseloV Hand slipped off bars into kiddy crank chain. Thanks 4 concern. Looks ok. Will get checked in morning.
- 7:14pm 1170km Almost in Augsburg. Lots of people playing in the shingly banks of the Lech.

From Amsterdam to Venice by bike
Riding Day 27
Pick up Via Claudia Augusta

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is a publication from
The Family Adventure Project
a family run venture
promoting active, independent
family adventure travel

As Helen Keller put it
"Life is a daring adventure or nothing at all.."
What will yours be?

Find out more at
www.familyadventureproject.org

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