# Twitterbot Assignment

# Comms 301: **Digital Communication** & Practice



comms301bot @comms301bot · Aug 13 Hello. This thing is ethan plaut's simple demonstration #Twitterbot made for COMMS 301 at @AucklandUni. How 'bout this randomly generated firmament?

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comms301bot @comms301bot · Aug 12 Kia ora. This is a #Twitterbot forged from the undulating sea of digital bits as a whimsical demo for COMMS 301 at Auckland University. PS: I think I see the #SkyTower...

## 2022



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comms301bot @comms301bot · Aug 12 Hi there! This right here is a Twitterbot designed as a simple demonstration for COMMS 301 at the University of Auckland. How 'bout this randomly generated weather?

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comms301bot @comms301bot · Aug 12

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What's up? You're reading a tweet generated with a simple demo Twitterbot made for the "Digital Communication and Practice" class at the University of Auckland. BONUS: random emoji sky!

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## April 2019 w/ Dr. Plaut

# On some level, this assignment is pretty straightforward:

- Make an awesome TWITTERBOT.
- Use a service called *Cheap Bots, Done Quick!* to handle most of the technical stuff so you can focus on the creative work of what your bot says and does.
- Write a single, eloquent paragraph about your bot and the process of making it.
- If your bot's Tweets and CBDQ code are made public, you can just submit a PDF incl. the paragraph + links to bot & code. If you prefer to keep Tweets or code private, that's 2 cool, just submit screenshots and anything else to help us understand your project!

Whether your bot is public or private, please don't make it "nasty" unless there's a TRULY compelling reason to do so. (It is honestly hard to even think of a compelling reason — probably best not to try).

Better still, consider whether your bot can somehow make a positive impact on society. Here's a solid primer on CBDQ that also addresses these questions:

• <u>https://programminghistorian.org/en/lessons/intro-to-twitterbots</u>

We hope some of these bots will be public so we can enjoy watching them in the world and you can freely share them around, but that has ZERO impact on your grade Se If you do make your bot public, it's worth considering whether or not you want your name associated to it. (We can also ask: If so, why? If not, why not?)

SIDE NOTE: Here's an interesting thread about ethical issues raised by courses that, unlike Comms 301, *require* that student writing be published:

• https://twitter.com/ProfSnarky/status/1029549182137393152

The nature of this assignment requires we use Twitter as a platform, but again, it's your choice how much of this work is public, and how clear you make the attribution.

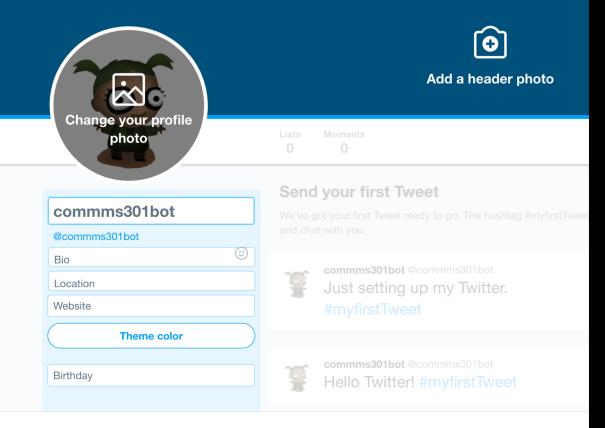
## Ok let's make a **BOT**.

First you need an email address. Any individual email address can only be used ONCE on Twitter, so you might want to consider creating an *extra* account just for this purpose. In this example, I've used Yahoo for that.

NOTE: You will presumably choose a Twitter handle that names or reflects in some way what your bot is or does! This is part of the overall *presentation* of your project.

## Sign up eeef commms commms301 @vahoo.com I'd rather use my own email address Password 204 +64April Year Dav Gender (optional) By clicking "Continue", you agree to the Terms (Updated) and Privacy Policy (Updated) Continue Already have an account? Sign in

The Twitter signup process is pretty standard. See what's happening in the world right now 🛈 🗊 🔒 https://twitter.com Confirm your email address to access all of Twitter's features. A confirmation message was sent to Join Twitter today. comms301@yahoo.com. Sign Up  $\triangle$  Notifications **D** Home **Woments** Messages Log in 0 What's happening? Confirm your Twitter account, comms301bot. witter LUYIII Twitter <verify@twitter.com> To: comms301@yahoo.com Next This message contains blocked images. Show images or Always show images **Create your account** Final Step... comms301bot 12/50 Confirm your email address to complete your commms301@yahoo.com Twitter account @commms301bot. It's easy just click the button below. Use phone instead **Confirm now** 



## Introduce yourself

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Describe who you are and what you're into.

You'll want to choose an avatar, write a little bio, and customize the profile in other ways. These decisions are critical elements of the *creative presentation* of this assignment!

But you can do that work at any time, and it might be best to wait and do that later, after you've coded some more personality into your bot!

## Now jump over to:

https://cheapbotsdonequick.com

Cheap Bots, Done Quick!

This site will help you make a Twitterbot! They're easy to make and free to run.

To use it, create a Twitter account for your bot to run under and then sign in below. The bots are written in Tracery, a tool for writing generative grammars developed by Kate Compton. This site is run by George Buckenham - they can be contacted at <a href="https://www.vtwentyone@gmail.com">writing generative grammars developed by Kate Compton</a>. This site is run by George Buckenham - they can be contacted at <a href="https://www.vtwentyone@gmail.com">writing generative grammars developed by Kate Compton</a>. This site is run by George Buckenham - they can be contacted at <a href="https://www.vtwentyone@gmail.com">writing generative grammars developed by Kate Compton</a>. This site is run by George Buckenham - they can be contacted at <a href="https://www.vtwentyone@gmail.com">writing generative grammars developed by Kate Compton</a>. This site is run by George Buckenham - they can be contacted at <a href="https://www.vtwentyone@gmail.com">writing generative grammars developed by Kate Compton</a>. This site on Patreon

Sign in with Twitter

Some examples of twitterbots made with this site:

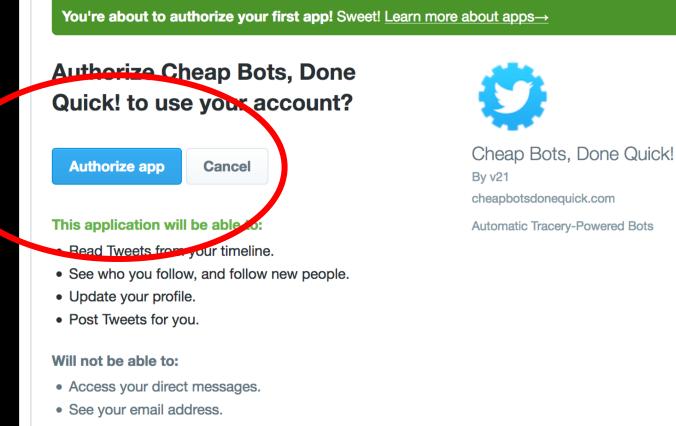
- and examples of twitter bots made with t
  - @softlandscapes (source)
  - @hashfacade (source)
- @thinkpiecebot
- @infinitedeserts
- @gnuerror (source)

This BUTTON will log you into *CBDQ* using your Twitter account. Q Sea

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## This one gives permission for *CBDQ* to Tweet for you...



• See your Twitter password.

🛧 Cheap Bots, Done Quick! 🛛 🗙 🕂

# and finally you're IN !!!! Cheap Bots, Done Quick!

Bots are written in Tracery, a generative grammar specified as a JSON string. This site will automatically expand your text, starting from the "origin" node, and then tweet it on a fixed schedule. If it generates a duplicate tweet, or a tweet over 280 characters, it will retry up to 5 times. Line breaks can be entered with the special sequence \n, and hashtags with \\#.

You can also include images in your tweets. The simplest way to do this is to specify a URL, like so {img https://placeimg.com/640/480/animals/image.jpg}. Alternatively, to generate an image within CBDQ, you can use SVGs. A good simple example to start from is the source of @hashfacade. The syntax looks like this: {svg <...> ... </svg>}. SVGs will need to specify a width and height attribute. Note that "s within SVG files need to be escaped as \", as does #s(\\#). { s and } s can be escaped as \\{ and \\}.

If you create a bot I deem abusive or otherwise unpleasant (for example, @mentioning people who have not consented, posting insults or using slurs) I will take it down. If you have any questions, bug reports or comments then you can reach me at @v21 or at vtwentyone@gmail.com

• Tracery tutorial

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- Interactive tutorial
- Tracery visual editor
- Useful word collections
- Example of a self-hosted bot running on Tracery

If you would like to help pay for server costs, maintenance and further development of this service, you can do so by supporting Cheap Bots, Done Quick! on Patreon. Happy botting!

#### **Tracery JSON**

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- "origin": ["this could be a tweet", "this is #alternatives# tweet", "#completely different#"],
- "alternatives" : ["an example", "a different", "another", "a possible", "a generated", "your next"],
- "completely different" : ["and now for something completely different", "so long and thanks for all the fish", "or, maybe, #alternatives# badger"]

## Instructions on writing the bot are right there on the page!

You can also look at this guide, mentioned earlier:

https://programminghistorian.org/en/lessons/intro-to-twitterbots

Here are some links to Tracery code we already discussed in class if you want additional models to consider — and tinker with! You can alter a copy of the code right there on the page and see what changes:

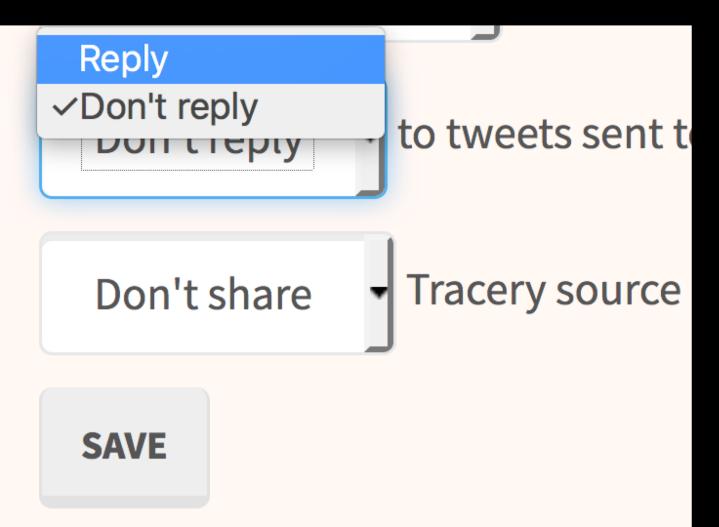
- <u>https://cheapbotsdonequick.com/source/comms301bot</u>
  <u>https://cheapbotsdonequick.com/source/infinite\_scream</u>

## You'll want to test what your Tweets sound like using this button: and the little display (Guess what the 'Tweet' button does!)

this is a possible tweet



and you'll need to decide how often the bot should Tweet:	✓Never	post a tweet
	Every 10 minutes	
	Every half hour	
	Every hour	
	Every 3 hours	eets sent to
	Every 6 hours	
	Twice a day	
	Once a day	ery source at o
	Once a week	
	Once a month	
	Once a year	



Once you have a bot running, you can make additional decisions about whether you want to (A) make your bot reply when other accounts tweet @ it and (B) share your Tracery code with the public.

These are both *optional*, and again, sharing your code with the public will NOT affect your grade in any way.

The code for replies is VERY similar but can detect the presence of certain words in other accounts' Tweets and respond accordingly!

Here the code looks for the word (or substring) "kumara", finds it in the tweet directed @ the bot, and sends an appropriate response:

"kumara":" why you tweeting about kumara?", : . "why aren't you tweeting about kumara?" Test mention: @commms301bot sfjhekfekf kumara d) fjbnfjfkj **Response:** why you tweeting about kumara?

Have FUN with this one!!!