

# Twitterbot Assignment

## Comms 301: Digital Communication & Practice



Aug 2020 w/ Dr. Plaut



**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?



**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...](#)



**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?



**comms301bot** @comms301bot · Aug 12

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!



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 **100** 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:

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

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 😎



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

@yahoo.com

[I'd rather use my own email address](#)

Password

+64

▼

204

~~12345678~~

April

▼

Day

Year

Gender (optional)

By clicking "Continue", you agree to the [Terms \(Updated\)](#) and [Privacy Policy \(Updated\)](#)

Continue

Already have an account? [Sign in](#)



# See what's happening in the world right now

Join Twitter today.

Sign Up

Log in

The Twitter signup process is pretty standard.

Home

Moments

Notifications

Messages

What's happening?

- Confirm your Twitter account, commms301bot.



Twitter <verify@twitter.com>  
To: commms301@yahoo.com



This message contains blocked images. [Show images](#) or [Always show images](#)



## Final Step...

Confirm your email address to complete your Twitter account @commms301bot. It's easy - just click the button below.

Confirm now

Next

Create your account

commms301bot

12/50

commms301@yahoo.com

Use phone instead



Add a header photo

Lists  
0

Moments  
0

commms301bot

@commms301bot

Bio

Location

Website

Theme color

Birthday

### Send your first Tweet

We've got your first Tweet ready to go. The hashtag #myfirstTweet and chat with you.



commms301bot @commms301bot  
Just setting up my Twitter.  
#myfirstTweet



commms301bot @commms301bot  
Hello Twitter! #myfirstTweet

## Introduce yourself

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!

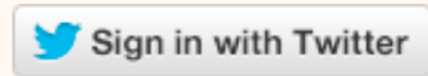
Now jump over to:

- <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 [vtwentyone@gmail.com](mailto:vtwentyone@gmail.com). You can support this site on [Patreon](#).



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

Some examples of twitterbots made with this site:

- [@softlandscapes](#) (source)
- [@hashfacade](#) (source)
- [@thinkpiecebot](#)
- [@infinitedeserts](#)
- [@gnuerror](#) (source)



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

You're about to authorize your first app! Sweet! [Learn more about apps→](#)

### Authorize Cheap Bots, Done Quick! to use your account?


Authorize appCancel

**This application will be able to:**

- Read Tweets from your timeline.
- See who you follow, and follow new people.
- Update your profile.
- Post Tweets for you.

**Will not be able to:**

- Access your direct messages.
- See your email address.
- See your Twitter password.



Cheap Bots, Done Quick!  
By v21  
cheapbotsdonequick.com  
Automatic Tracery-Powered Bots

# .... 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 ...> ... </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](mailto:vtwentyone@gmail.com)

- [Tracery tutorial](#)
- [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

```
{
  "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:

- <https://cheapbotsdonequick.com/source/comms301bot>
- [https://cheapbotsdonequick.com/source/infinite\\_scream](https://cheapbotsdonequick.com/source/infinite_scream)

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



**TWEET**

...and you'll need to decide how often the bot should Tweet:

✓ Never

Every 10 minutes

Every half hour

Every hour

Every 3 hours

Every 6 hours

Twice a day

Once a day

Once a week

Once a month

Once a year

post a tweet

ets sent to

ery source at c

The image shows a configuration interface for a bot. It features three main settings sections, each with a dropdown menu and a 'SAVE' button at the bottom.

- Reply:** A dropdown menu with 'Reply' (highlighted in blue) and '✓ Don't reply' (selected with a checkmark). Below it, a dashed box indicates a preview of the 'Don't reply' option.
- Don't share:** A dropdown menu with 'Don't share' selected. To its right, the text 'Tracery source' is visible.
- SAVE:** A large, light gray button with the word 'SAVE' in bold, black capital letters.

Partial text from the background interface includes 'to tweets sent to' and 'Tracery source'.

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 sfjhekf ekf kumara d fjbfnfjki

Response:

why you tweeting about kumara?

Have FUN with this one!!!