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# How To Get More Done As A Freelance Web Designer

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There are a lot of daily tasks a freelance web designer will go through:

- Going through emails
- Sending website planners to potential clients
- Reading and replying to returned website planners
- Quoting people for services
- Sending proposals
- Replying to current clients about different enquiries
- Going through new Twitter followers
- Tweeting
- Approving blog comments
- Replying to friends
- Writing blog posts
- etc.

After going through all these daily tasks, it can be very easy to see your day come and go without getting any 'real' work done.

When I finished University and started freelancing full time **I found myself getting caught up with these daily tasks** so I went about making some changes and trying to find a more effective way of dealing with them. **Here are several techniques I use for getting more done.**

## Email

### Cancel blog comment alerts

E-mail me whenever	<input type="checkbox"/> Anyone posts a comment
	<input type="checkbox"/> A comment is held for moderation

Cancel any automatic email alerts from your various blogs. This means you're not notified of any new comments or any comments waiting approval.

Instead, **put these on a 'To-Check' list so when you have 5 minutes free in the morning/evening, you can check these sites for comments.** This saves you being concerned with checking throughout the day.

### Unsubscribe to newsletters

You probably get a lot of newsletters through to your email, most of which you have no interest in. It can be easy to delete/ignore them but instead make an effort to unsubscribe to any that are no use. This way they don't clutter up your inbox at all.

### Check email twice a day

This is a hard one and I'm still getting used to it. **Ideally you should only check your emails twice per day.** The ideal times are **12pm and 4pm** (unless you're expecting an important email/reply).

This **gives you time in the morning to concentrate on work already planned** and also lets you correspond with anyone between 12 & 4. No in-between wasting time. **Every time you check your email it takes up a few seconds or even minutes so it's good practice to batch process this.**

The best way to accomplish this is to **keep your mail app, Gmail etc. closed.**

### Use templates

As a freelance web designer I get a lot of requests for quotes or to see if I'm interested in taking on a project. To let me find out more about a project I will send out a website planner to gather requirements.

**Rather than writing the same email everytime you receive an enquiry, have a template that you can use.** This way you can copy and paste the template into the reply, and simply add the senders name at the start to personalise it.

Some email templates you should have to hand (as a freelance web designer):

- I'd like to find out more, please complete this website planner
- Sorry but I'm busy until...
- Proposal and estimate attached

And of course **have Word (or similar) templates ready for your proposals, contracts, invoices** etc. Any document that you're going to need more than once.

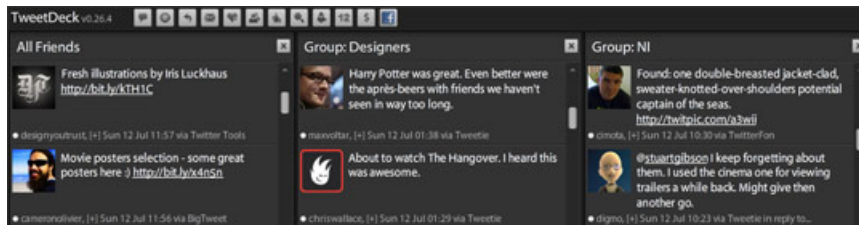
## Twitter

### Tweet in advance

I like to share interesting links and articles with my followers and usually I'll find these links while going through my RSS reader. But if I'm checking my feeds first thing in the morning, it's a bit of a waste to tweet all the interesting links at once that early. So how do I spread out my tweets? I use Tweet Later.

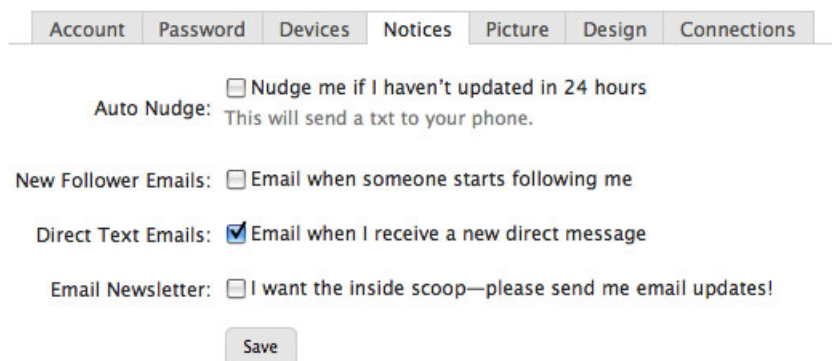
[Tweet Later](#) is a useful service that lets you set a time to publish your tweet. Very handy for spreading out all those useful tweets throughout the day. [RTweeter](#) is another new Twitter app that lets you schedule tweets.

### Use Tweetdeck to filter your Twitter friends and replies



It's hard to keep track of what everyone is doing on Twitter if you follow more than 100 people. Using [Tweetdeck](#) you can **setup filters which will group particular users into 1 column**. This way you can keep track of the **designers you're interested in or keep track of local tweets, keywords or business related words** that you're interested in.

### Cancel Twitter follower alerts



This also comes down under email distractions. **Turn off automatic emails for new followers but make a point of checking your new followers at 1 point during the day.** Again an example of batch processing a task.

## Blogs

### Read blog posts for 1 hour in the morning/night

It's crazy how many interesting blog posts there are out there and it takes forever to go through them. **Go through your RSS reader for 1 hour in the morning instead of receiving alerts throughout the day.**

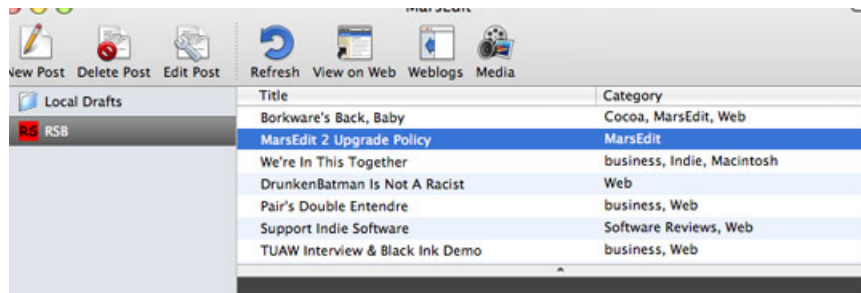
But what about all the interesting links appearing on Twitter during the day? Usually all these posts may appear in your reader too but if there's a particularly interesting one **drag it into a 'To read' folder saved in your browser favourites.**

Only check analytics once a week

It's very easy to get drawn into checking analytics multiple times a day. It's always good to see your visitor count go up.

But instead of wasting your time checking all your websites stats daily, **its much more useful to check at the end of every week and every month as this gives you a better bulk overview of your true stats.**

Use a desktop blogging app to continuously write notes for blog posts



Using [MarsEdit](#) you can continuously take notes for different blog posts throughout the week, then when you have time take a look at all of the blog post ideas you've jotted down and finish one before publishing it. This works a lot better than sitting down to a blank canvas and MarsEdit saves you having to open up your Wordpress admin area each time.

### How do you get things done?

These are some of the techniques I have introduced to getting things done.

*Are there any special tips or techniques you will use to get things done?* I would still like to get more work done during the day so it would be great if you could contribute some suggestions.

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