

3.4.17: Twitter

Learning Objectives

Describe the primary use of Twitter

For the ability to quickly and concisely reach an audience, Twitter is arguably the best social media option, perhaps even better than Facebook. While Twitter started with very limited features—essentially just the ability to post a 140-character message—it has grown as a platform as its use demanded more features. Messages are still limited in length (now 280 characters instead of the 140), but there are ways to get around this limitation, including the use of threads (which string multiple tweets together) and moments (which allow you to connect tweets together after they’ve been posted). Additionally, you can include images and videos in your tweets, which allows for a much wider variety in the messages you can communicate via Twitter.

JetBlue Airways

JetBlue Airways has a Twitter presence that finds its niche between a corporate brand and a personal presence. If you scroll through JetBlue’s Twitter feed, you’ll find promotions for their events and sales. Perhaps JetBlue’s biggest strength is their consistent and professional tone across all of their tweets.

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— JetBlue (@JetBlue) June 27, 2018

Not only does JetBlue have a consistent tone across their tweets, but they also have consistent (and on-brand) color palette. Consistent coloring can make your company presence and messaging more stable and recognizable. As you may have guessed, JetBlue has chosen blue as their primary color. As you scroll through their Twitter feed, you can see that almost every image has a predominantly blue color scheme.

Perhaps Twitter’s largest strength is the way it allows users to quickly and concisely reach their audience. Despite the increase to 280 characters, tweets are still limited in their length and encourage users to send a focused message.

While the use of hashtags has transferred over to other social media platforms (primarily Instagram), hashtagging originated on Twitter, and it represents one of its key contributions to the social media world. By tagging your posts, you increase your potential audience because even individuals who don’t follow you directly can follow the hashtag and see your tweet within it.

As is the case with Instagram, much of Twitter consists of personal accounts where people can accumulate several thousand—or even a million or more—followers. Despite the massive personal use of Twitter, the platform was originally created as a business tool. Thus, it’s no surprise that companies also use Twitter. The largest organizational (non-individual) following is, ironically, YouTube, which uses its account to generate traffic back to YouTube. Twitter’s own account, @twitter, is the second largest account, and CNN is third. Out of the top 20 accounts, these are the only three non-individual accounts. In many ways, Twitter and Instagram are similar: most content is simple promotional messaging designed to drive interest in a particular personal brand.

If you’re unfamiliar with how to use Twitter, you can check out this [Twitter onboarding guide on Wired](#). Perhaps the most important thing called out in the article is the importance of building a community. While making one’s own tweets is probably the core activity on Twitter, following, retweeting, and hashtagging already-developed streams and ideas are equally important. For your business use, you should support and call out others’ content as often as you post your own. This demonstrates support and balance and shows a genuine contribution to a body of ideas or streams of thought.

Learn More

Check out this article from Lifewire, [Retweet With a Comment on Twitter](#), which encourages manual retweeting, as doing so allows you to add your own content and voice while passing along the material of the original tweet.

When assessing the usefulness of Twitter, you should keep the pros and cons listed in Table 1 in mind:

Table 1. Pros and Cons of Twitter as a Social Media Platform

Pros	Cons
Simple and easy to use	Largely centered on personal brand promotion
Relatively large usage	More manual work to integrate with other social media platforms
Ability to link by theme with hashtags	Has so much content your message may get lost

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