

TITLE: Twitter

Twenty-six percent of teens consider Twitter their favorite social media and teens rate Instagram and Twitter as their most important social media sites. Older teens (15 to 17) are more likely to use Twitter than younger teens, with 42% in this age group using the site. 71% of teens use more than one social media site and most access social media with mobile devices. Teens average 150 followers on Twitter. Some commentators even propose that the microblogging service appeals more to grownups as a way of communicating. Andrea Forte, an assistant professor at Drexel University's College of Information Science and Technology, describes Twitter as being more adult in interaction compared to [Facebook](#) and other [social networks](#), in which users create profiles with details about themselves and their interests that foster a sense of belonging. "Your identity on Twitter is more your ability to take an interesting conversational turn, throw an interesting bit of conversation out there," she tells The New York Times. "Your identity isn't so much identified by the music you listen to and the quizzes you take."

Twitter as Promotion

Twitter is frequently used by celebrities such as Kim Kardashian to establish their brand and connect with fans. It is also commonly used by corporations and brands to promote their products, connect with customers, stay on top of trends, increase sales, receive free promotion, and compete in the marketplace. Most companies have a social media marketing division that focuses on reaching customers and promoting products through Twitter and other social media sites.

The 2016 Presidential Election

Over one billion tweets about the 2016 election were tweeted between the presidential debates in September 2016 and Election Day. Twitter's speed and immediacy caused it to play a crucial role in the election. In addition to its use by the general population, both candidates (Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump) relied on Twitter to gauge support for their views and to share their messages. Donald Trump also relied on Twitter for what has been characterized as attacks on news media, individuals, and other candidates. This was a new and unconventional campaign tactic. Previously many experts believed candidates needed a professional social media team to manage their message, but Trump's personal use of Twitter has led some experts to conclude that using Twitter directly and personally may be more effective and also less expensive and may change the way candidates use Twitter in the future, as well as how the President himself uses the medium. Traditionally presidents do not write their own social media messages, but rely on staff to get their message out. President Obama explained in an interview he can't text or take photos on the phone he was given. Experts predict President Trump may be advised to use a similar device, which would not allow him access to Twitter personally on his phone. Additionally, the reactions to Trump's use of Twitter is mixed, with some people believing he is an innovator and a straight forward person, while others find it inappropriate and even comical (so much it was portrayed on *Saturday Night Live*)

<https://www.wired.com/2016/07/clinton-team-silicon-valley-stars-trump-twitter/>

<http://www.npr.org/sections/alltechconsidered/2016/12/12/505311136/what-will-trumps-twitter-strategy-be-when-he-becomes-president>

<http://www.rollingstone.com/tv/news/see-snl-tease-donald-trump-over-twitter-habit-w453693>

<http://www.npr.org/2016/11/18/502306687/commander-in-tweet-trumps-social-media-use-and-presidential-media-avoidance>

Social Movements

Twitter has become an important tool for social movements seeking followers on a national or international level. In 2010, demonstrators in the Arab Spring uprising and in 2016 activists in the Black Lives Matter relied on Twitter to get their message out to the general public. Some analysts feel Twitter provides a platform for activists to stand up to perceived injustice. Twitter gives a voice to people at the center of social movement, and allows the message to be amplified by people who are not actually participating on the ground, but who support the movement or ideas. Twitter is also credited with making some charitable causes more visible and successful, such as the 2014 ALS ice bucket challenge which sought to raise money for Lou Gehrig's disease research by challenging people to dump buckets of ice on themselves on video or donate to the research fund. The challenge went viral on Twitter and other social media, expanding globally. Many people both dumped the ice and donated, raising over \$115 million.

Crises

Twitter provides a mechanism for government, weather, and other emergency updates through its Twitter alerts, so urgent information can be pushed out to users. It has also proven useful as a way for people in emergency situations (such as terrorist attacks or weather emergencies) to communicate with friends and family via one tweet. It allows news organizations to publish up to the minute updates, such as during the Paris terrorist attacks in 2015. Some people turn to Twitter to get breaking news updates since it is often the fastest way to access breaking news.

Problems with Twitter

Since tweets are limited to 140 characters, one tweet cannot convey an entire news story with all the nuances and details it contains and Twitter is criticized as providing incomplete information. Twitter is also blamed for the spread of fake news, when untruths are presented as if they were true to mislead people and then spread by readers who believe it as if they were accurate news stories. A fake news story on Twitter in 2010 about the death of Justin Bieber exemplified this and the "Pizzagate" shooting in December 2016 at a pizzeria occurred due to one person's exposure to and belief in fake news on Twitter (the news story was a false rumor on Twitter about a child pornography ring being run out of the pizzeria by Democrats). Some think celebrities provide too much information about their lives on Twitter, leading to safety concerns and may have in part led to the 2016 robbery of Kim Kardashian. Another often-cited problem with celebrity Twitter accounts is that they can be hacked and private photos belonging to the celebrities or things they would never say can be posted on their behalf. Critics point out that Twitter is a haven for unchecked hate speech. Twitter announced that it was experiencing financial difficulties in 2016 and laid off 350 employees (9 percent of the staff) in October 2016.

Nevertheless, some experts note that a growing number of teens are gravitating to Twitter precisely because many of their friends and family are not on it. "It removes the pressure to post on a Facebook wall where friends of friends may see it, not to mention Mom and Dad. In a sense, Twitter is the [privacy](#) from Facebook," [blogs](#) Hessie Jones, vice president of marketing at Jugnoo, a company specializing in [social media](#) and customer relations. For instance, not only can tweets be hidden from public view, Twitter users can create accounts under pseudonyms known only to a select few. "I love twitter, it's the only thing I have to myself ... cause my parents don't have one," declares seventeen-year-old Britteny Praznik of Wisconsin in a tweet. Observers also propose that there is less social pressure on the site, which is more about telegraphing thoughts, emotions, and ideas in short bursts than socializing and establishing connections, which requires more effort and obligations. Mary Madden, research associate at Pew [Internet](#) & American Life Project, states that young people do not worry about "friending everyone in your school or that friend of a friend you met at a football game" on Twitter. Supporting this trend, some statistics on its popularity among the age group are encouraging. A 2011 Pew survey indicates that its use among twelve- to seventeen-year-olds doubled to 16 percent that year from 8 percent in 2009.