

Happy birthday Twitter!



By Louise Marsland

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Twitter turned 10 yesterday, 21 March, and the hashtag #LoveTwitter trended. Of course. Brands, celebs, football teams, news media and Twitter itself, reminisced on the good times since this social network revolutionised global communication and breaking news.



“ Starting in 📍📍📍📍 on 3/21 and moving across the 📍📍, we thank you for 10 incredible years.

Love, Twitter [#LoveTwitterhttps://t.co/pH4WWdgK6q](https://t.co/pH4WWdgK6q)— Twitter (@twitter) [March 20, 2016](#) ”

Twitter founder and current CEO Jack Dorsey sent his first tweet 10 years ago on 21 March 2006. Twitter is now a global force: loved by celebrities, used by bad guys and politicians alike. And in between there's the rest of us, reading the news, following people we respect or are interested in, rallying behind social causes, starting a revolution, tracking memes, outing the haters, standing up to the trolls, actively involved in the conversation or just following and lurking in the cyber shadows.

Twitter, which brings in \$500m every quarter, is the town hall of the olden days, office water cooler chitchat, a bar fight, gossip from the smokers' corner, coffee shop camaraderie, a global news network... all in 140 characters, or as American comedian [@MargaretCho](#) says, “Less than a sonnet, more than a soundbite”.

Twitter thanked all its fans and specific celebrity users for amplifying the social network. Users rallied around the hashtag #LoveTwitter to express their views on Twitter.

[Wired](#) had a great tweet history of Twitter, describing it thus: “People rightfully complain that the platform can be a hotbed for hostility. It also offers a loudspeaker for the disenfranchised, but swarms of voices also silence through harassment. It's a company, it's a platform, and it's the world's biggest cocktail party. That means sometimes it's a mess.”

From Dorsey's first tweet to the evolution of Twitter as a celeb stalking tool to breaking news service, the power of real-time events and an organising tool for revolutions, [Wired](#) charts the most famous milestones of Twitter.

Public space

The *New York Times* polled influential Twitter users to find out how Twitter has redefined the conversation.

#BlackLivesMatter activist Deray McKesson [@DeRay](#), said Twitter has redefined the concept of “public space”. Author [@JoyceCarolOates](#) said Twitter offers “a window... into other lives and perspectives”.

“ [@DeRay](#), a Black Lives Matter activist, said Twitter “galvanized the nation” <https://t.co/7xkRX6lhN5>
pic.twitter.com/R2ZDnRAutm— The New York Times (@nytimes) [March 21, 2016](#) ”

[Fast Company](#) hosted a virtual retrospective with early adopters of the social network, originally called ‘Twtr’. For many the reality of the power of Twitter hit home during breaking news when the news started coming from people on the ground instead of news outlets. That is when it changed and became the powerful tool it is for people in the media and anyone who wants to insert themselves into a story or conversation.

One of the best summaries of what Twitter has meant to many, the good and the bad, is summed up in the *New York Times* article, by activist Rachel Dolezal [@RachelaDolezal](#), whose relationship with her Twitter followers changed when she was publically shamed for allegedly lying about her race: “I would describe my first experiences with Twitter (before June 2015) as positive. It felt good to be able to have a platform for networking with others globally around shared goals, causes and interests. I saw Twitter as a tool for education, awareness and networking — a platform that could organize activism and positive change. My experience changed when my personal life and identity came under such fierce media scrutiny last summer. In the wake of negative press, my relationship with Twitter switched instantly from love to hate. What once was a casual and positive place to go online became a space where I was mocked, bullied and even threatened. Twitter is as good as the people who use it...”

Locally, [@JHBPRGirl](#) says Twitter is great for keeping your audience updated in a crisis; and helps you keep tabs on clients, competitors, media and influencers.

“ On Twitter’s 10th birthday, here’s another reason why I [#LoveTwitter](#) - helps you keep tabs on clients, competitors, media or influencers— JHB PR Girl (@JHBPRGirl) [March 21, 2016](#) ”

US brand [@DennysDiner](#) reminisced about the early days before trolls were a thing and brands got excited about Twitter as a ‘direct PR tool’. LOL!

“ lol @ when we were pure & naive [#LoveTwitter](#) <https://t.co/KygCMMPnQD>— Denny’s (@DennysDiner) [March 21, 2016](#) ”

Top tweets

[Newsweek](#) did a roundup of the top weirdest tweets sent in the last 10 years. They call it their ‘10 best tweets’, but that is doubtful as there are no nude Kim Kardashian selfies included to break the interwebs.

Or this one from actor [@Sethrogen](#) poking fun at Kim Kardashian and Kanye West in a pre-wedding photo shoot for *Vogue*, highlighted by Twitter in their ‘honour roll’ yesterday.

“ Thanks, [@sethrogen](#) for putting yourself out there and cracking us up. [#LoveTwitter](#) <https://t.co/VEM3WeqyOn>— Twitter (@twitter) [March 21, 2016](#) ”

The UK’s [Telegraph](#) newspaper compiled a list of its ‘100 greatest tweets of all time’ which is an #awesome #list #LOL.

Of course, the debate now moves to the next 10 years, with [AdWeek](#) asking how Twitter will capture the next generation. It concludes that its future is dependent on whether millennials and generation Z will show up to take part in the tweet storm.

Numbers game

The best Twitter listicle comes from [Campaign](#) magazine with great Twitter facts, like the fact that the Oscars 'selfie' tweeted out by Ellen DeGeneres [@TheEllenShow](#) is the most retweeted tweet of all times: 3.3 million. Or that the most retweeted hashtag tradition is #FF (follow Friday); and that the word "love" has been mentioned on Twitter 34.8 billion times!

More stats from blogs on Twitter:

- Number of people that use Twitter: 320 million
- Estimated number of registered users on Twitter: 1.3 billion
- Unique monthly visitors to Twitter.com (desktop and mobile): 120 million
- Daily active Twitter users: 100 million
- Average number of followers per Twitter user: 208
- Number of Twitter accounts that have ever sent a tweet: 550 million

- Percentage of active Twitter users that log onto it more than once a day: 34%

*Source: [DMR](#).

It's the celebrities of course who win with followers, not necessarily erudite content, in the top 10 most followed on Twitter:

1. Katy Perry [@katyperry](#): 84.8 million
2. Justin Bieber [@justinbieber](#): 77.4 million
3. Taylor Swift [@taylorswift13](#): 73.2 million
4. Barack Obama [@BarackObama](#): 71.4 million
5. YouTube [@YouTube](#): 60.6 million
6. Rihanna [@rihanna](#): 57.4 million
7. Lady Gaga [@ladygaga](#): 57.3 million
8. Ellen DeGeneres [@TheEllenShow](#): 55.9 million
9. Twitter [@twitter](#): 53.6 million

10. Justin Timberlake [@jtimberlake](#): 52.8 million

*Source: [FriendorFollow](#).

And when it comes down to the network, this is why Twitter is the greatest network, as summed up by this user [@karenmcgrane](#): "Twitter is for strangers you should be friends with". Well, some of them. The rest are just looney tunes.

“ I am reminded that:

Facebook is for old friends who are now strangers

Twitter is for strangers you should be friends with [#LoveTwitter](#)— Karen McGrane (@karenmcgrane) [March 21, 2016](#) ”

ABOUT LOUISE MARSLAND

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