twittivism

What are the contents?

update

AMERICAN MAJORITY

introduction

Fellow twittivist,

In the days leading up to the American Revolution, Committees of Correspondence formed to increase organization and communication between the colonies. Letters would be written and then disseminated throughout the colonies via horseback. Those who organized the committees of correspondence hoped that they might rally the citizens of the colonies to the common cause of American Independence. But it is important to note that the end goal of the committees was not merely to communicate ideas. It was to drive people to action, to act together to achieve that common goal of independence.

In the 21st century, communication no longer moves at the speed of a horse, or the speed of a ship. It moves literally at the speed of light. The internet has given us the ability to communicate almost instantaneously, something the Founding Fathers could never have imagined. The best part is that most of the amazing communication tools available to us on the internet are free: email, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and a host of other new media.

But are those who believe in limited government and the free market using the internet effectively to unite people to a common cause and then collective action? Statistics show that over 80% of those under 30 find their information online, a medium that is dominated 85-15% by those with left-leaning views. The trend of those finding their information online will only increase. However, those who believe in the free market and limited government can change the second statistic. What we are doing at American Majority is helping educate people on the power of new media and how to use it effectively to advance, and defend, those principles in which we believe.

The team at American Majority has worked very hard to develop an excellent Twittivism guide (Twitter + activism= Twittivism). This is the second edition of the manual, and due to the rapid advancement of the medium, we will work on providing future guides covering specific topics. We hope that you will take the time to read this guide and learn the power of Twitter. If those of us who believe in the free market and limited government can become effective online in communicating the truth of what is, and organizing for off-line collective action, we will win.

For Liberty,

@NedRyun
Ned Ryun
President
American Majority

more

DONT TREAD ON ME

Name: nedryun
Location: Virginia
Web: http://www.nedryun.com
Bio: An un-apologetic conservative. Married to an amazing woman. Three beautiful kids. Addicted to golf.

5,698	6,354	207
following	followers	listed

Tweets   1,194

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twitter vocabulary 101

Before we can begin defining Twitter, we need to make sure we are all on the same page in terms of vocabulary. As with many icons of pop culture, Twitter users have developed a very specific language to refer to common activities on Twitter. While the list is vast, and often humorous, we have tried to include the most important terms below in alphabetical order. Please take the time to acclimate yourself with some of the more popular terminology (or twerminology):

Avatar: the official name for the photo that represents your account on Twitter

Follow: to subscribe to a particular user's posts

DM or direct message: to send a private message to another twitter user

#Hashtag: Hashtags are phrases or keywords that can be used to monitor who is saying what about a particular topic. Hashtags will always be proceeded by a "#" symbol and will usually consist of one word (#Event) or multiple words without any spaces (#PoliticalEvent09). American Majority's hashtag is #majority.

Lists: Lists are a means of organizing users you follow into groups.

MT or **Modified Tweet:** A form of RT (see below), where you edit the tweet prior to reposting to shorten length, fix grammar or change #hashtags.

RT or **Retweet**: commonly used to describe the act of re-posting another user's message.

Trending: When a topic (distinguished by a #hashtag) is discussed by a high volume of users.

Tweeps: another term to describe Twitter users. Also used to describe users who follow you across social networks.

Tweet(ing): the act of posting to Twitter.

Tweets: the term used to define the individual posts on Twitter.

Twitter handle: The official term for your Twitter username.

Twittivist: a Twitter user who uses his/her profile to advocate a cause.

Twitosphere: the vast community that has sprung up around Twitter.

Unfollow: the act of unsubscribing from a particular users' twitter posts.

URL Shortener : Because Twitter only allows your posts to be 140 characters in length, every single character counts. URL Shorteners allow you to post weblinks more efficiently, with some even offering tracking capability.

***Almost any word can become common twerminology. In most cases, you simply take the first two letters of Twitter and combine it with your chosen word. ***
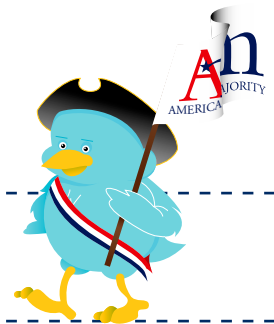
For further education in Twitter vocabulary, check out these great web resources:

Twictionary.com

4

Chapter One

twitter 101

AMERICAN MAJORITY

so, what is twitter?

So now that you know the lingo, perhaps we should discuss what Twitter is all about.

In a Nutshell

Twitter is an extremely powerful tool that allows you to connect with the world in real-time. You can join a global conversation and express opinions, share information, and meet like-minded individuals with the click of a button. This free social networking service enables the user to send and receive short messages, known as "tweets."

To make it easier, think of it like this:

<center>**blogging + text messaging = Twitter**</center>

Each "tweet" can only be up to 140 characters in length. This restriction forces the user to distill his/her thoughts down to the most important content. These tweets are then displayed on your personal webpage, called a profile page. Like Facebook, Twitter provides each user a custom URL tied to their handle. Your page can be found at www.twitter.com/yourhandle. For example, all of American Majority President @NedRyun's tweets can be found at www.twitter.com/nedryun.

Each tweet is also delivered to those who have subscribed to receive your messages via the homepage. These people are called "followers."

You can subscribe to, or follow, as many other members on Twitter as you would like. To combat spam accounts and obnoxious marketers, Twitter will allow you to follow up to 2,000 users. After that number, you are restricted to adding only a percentage of those who have chosen to follow you.

Currently, there are more than 175 million users. A staggering 100 million joined in 2010 alone. With such incredible numbers, the opportunity to collaborate and grow your contact list is phenomenal. At American Majority, we challenge you to see Twitter as more than a simple social space. Twitter is a tool for real activism. A mother from Georgia can now connect with events in Wisconsin. A handyman from Nebraska can now raise money for a political candidate in Florida.

And the numbers keep growing...

This technology isn't just for teenagers anymore. In a recent study from the PR giant Burson-Marsteller, it appears 54% of Fortune 100 companies maintain a Twitter presence. Compared to 32% that have a blog and 29% that have an active Facebook page, it is obvious that Twitter has become the most popular communication tool for corporations looking to make the biggest impact.

Even more convincing is the study found that out of the companies choosing to only use one of these new media tools, an overwhelming 76% chose Twitter.
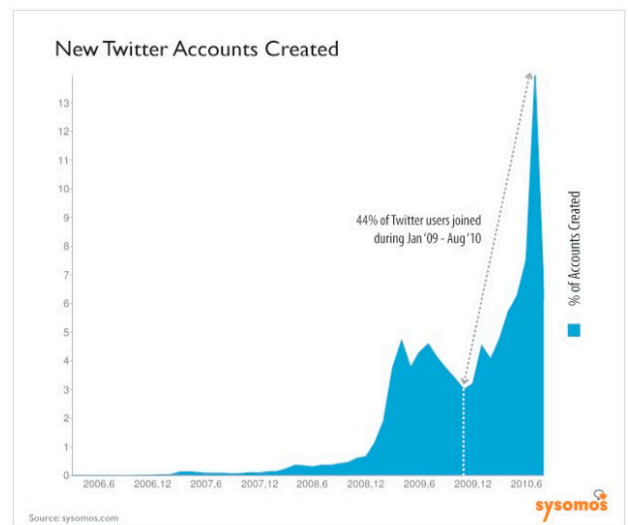
A word to the wise on social media: Regardless of the site, when engaging in social media, you want to do so with authenticity. One of the real advantages of the social web is that it has

allowed us to join an even larger conversation, one without geographic boundaries and time constraints. As such, you must remember that Twitter followers are a privilege, not a right. If you do not add any value to the conversation, or you are seen as less than authentic, you will never know the true potential of such a social system.

A Brief History

According to founder Jack Dorsey, Twitter was originally developed to simply keep track of what his friends were up to. When he brought the idea up to his colleagues, it was decided that a prototype should be built.

Twitter was funded initially by Obvious, a creative environment in San Francisco, CA. The first prototype was built in two weeks in March 2006 and launched publicly in August of 2006. The service grew popular very quickly and it soon made sense for Twitter to move outside of Obvious. In May 2007, Twitter Incorporated was founded.

Currently, Twitter is ranked as one of the 50 most popular websites worldwide by Alexa's web traffic analysis. Continuing to thrive on investments, Twitter has raised over $150 million from various venture capitalists to date.

Percentage of Fortune 100 using each Social Media Channel

Chart data: Twitter 54% (Twitter now platform of choice), Blog 32%, Facebook Fan Page (Active) 29%
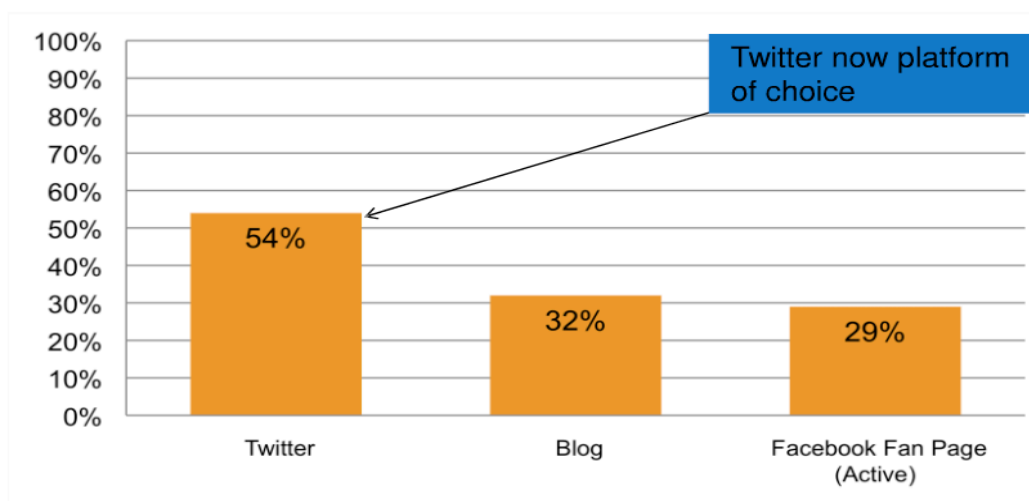
*Active - Regular postings and evidence the company interacts and/or posts content on the page.

getting started

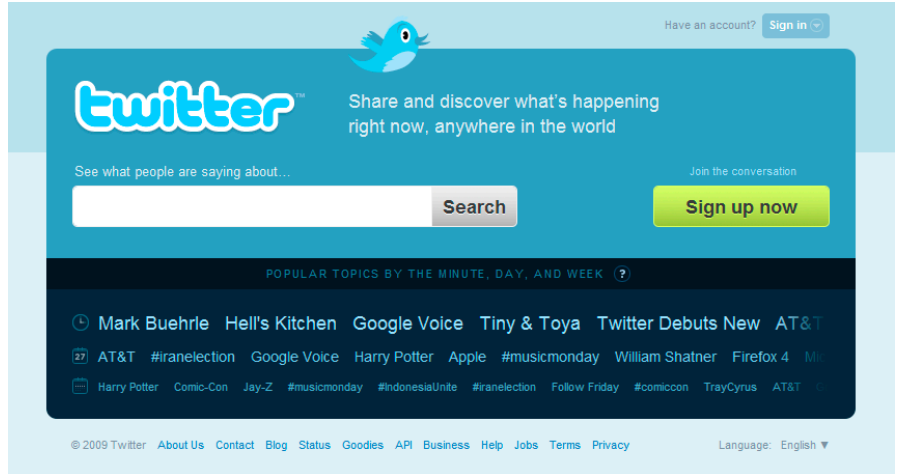## Creating your Twitter account

Getting started on Twitter is easy and free. Visit Twitter.com and click on the *Sign up now* button.

On the next page you will be given the option to choose your username and password:

Claiming Your Twitter Handle

This shouldn't be taken lightly. We all know that securing a proper web domain name is critical to your brand's success. With the incredible rise of Twitter, the proper username can be equally as important, if not more important, in properly communicating your personal brand.

What happens when you don't claim your Twitter handle?

There are many reasons to claim a proper username, but the most important is personal identity. There have been numerous cases of impersonations gone wrong. Kanye West, Ewan McGregor, Barrack Obama, Maya Angelou, Sarah Palin, Tony La Russa, Newt Gingrich, and Ben Stiller are just a few of the many names that have been subjected to hoax accounts.

Exxon Mobile had to undergo a series of reputation management projects to reclaim its image after an imposter began tweeting under the Exxon name. Just recently, at Elevation Burger, a seven-outlet food chain, a vendor found an unauthorized Twitter profile with tweets promoting their rival, Z Burger. Securing an easy to remember and personally representative username has become so important in fact, that there is now even an aftermarket for them at Tweexchange.com

Before you rush off and grab your Twitter handle, read through the following list of tips:

Consider using your real name. American Majority President, @NedRyun does it. So do most of our staff. If you hope to use Twitter as a networking tool for advocacy, it is important that people can trust you and feel comfortable connecting with you. If you are trying to raise awareness about the corrupt nature of your city council, securing the Twitter handle "FrodoBaggins3453" isn't the wisest choice. Consider being honest and transparent, your followers will appreciate it.

What if your real name is taken? Try telling us about your profession, your hobby, or some other defining characteristic. If you are a mother, tell us. If you are a mechanic, tell us. If you are a teacher, tell us. Using a defining quality in your Twitter handle can be just as good as a real name. It allows other tweeple to instantly recognize a similar quality. For instance, whenever I come across someone who has a variation of "Liberty" in their name, I follow them. I know that we will likely have something in common and that their messages will be of interest to me.

Differentiate Yourself. Jason43 and Jason83 might as well be the same person. Think creatively and try picking something that instantly tells us about you.

Don't come across as a spammer. Avoid choosing usernames like "Free_Tips" or "MarketingGuru." These will look suspiciously like spam accounts to the seasoned tweeter. It goes without saying, but please do not impersonate someone famous either. That is one of the quickest ways to isolate yourself.

Consider your overall message. How would you perceive someone with your username? Consider what your Twitter handle says about your beliefs and views. If you are trying to gather Conservatives, than identifying yourself would be wise. If you are trying to reform your local School Board, something with education will help set that frame of mind. Also consider how it will look if you join a group or coalition. Be considerate to the cause. Would it help a petition drive if the lead organizer was named SexyMama09? I don't think so.

Fortunately, at least for now, changing your username is as easy as editing your profile. So if down the road you form an organization, run for office or start a business, you'll be able to change your username to reflect so without losing any of your history or followers.

So, stop what you're doing right now and claim the Twitter handle for your full name, as well as any brands, companies, and/or organizations that you are involved in or represent. You can't truly hope to own your personal brand if you don't yet own your Twitter handle.

*** Go ahead and register one, we'll wait***

Okay, glad you are back. Now that you have registered the name you want, let's begin setting up your account.

Adding Your Photo

You do not want to use the default Twitter photo. This is the quickest way to go nowhere on Twitter. Add your own. Once logged in, simply click on **Profile** from the navigation bar up top. Once on the next page, click **Edit Your Profile,** then finally **Profile Picture**. Space is provided to upload a new image from your desktop. The best pictures should be square. For instance, if you have a great picture of you at the White House, you should crop it to 120 x 120 or 30 x 30. Twitter will resize it automatically and perfect squares will resize properly. Actually spend some time thinking about what you are going to put in that little space, as it will be taken as a representation of who you are and what your tweets will probably look like. Remember that this is your personal brand. If you want to rally others around your cause, you need them to take you seriously.

Filling Out Your Bio

This can be done by once again clicking **Profile** and then **Edit Your Profile.** Half-way down the page, you will find the field for *one-line bio*. This is the last critical piece to your Twitter identity. If your username is not specific, if your picture is a little vague, this is the space where you can finally define yourself. This is where potential followers will look to learn a little more about you and gauge whether you are worth following. A great example is American Majority President, Ned Ryun - *An un-apologetic conservative. Married to an amazing woman. Three beautiful kids. Addicted to golf.*

Your "More Information URL"

Directly above the *one-line bio* is a field available for you to place a single link. While this is pretty self-explanatory, we challenge you to think deeper about what it can be used for. Too many people simply place the link to their blog, but as a Twittivist you may want to do more. We challenge you to consider ways you can develop a strong "Twitter Landing Page." Whether you are promoting your blog, a petition, a website, an issue, or a politician, consider tailoring a landing page specifically for those visitors who are coming from Twitter.

Think about why people click the URL on your Twitter profile?

Most want to know more about the person behind the Tweets. They want to know who you are, what you are involved in and in some cases, how can they connect with you offline.

A well-built landing page can quickly answer these basic questions while also providing a strong call to action, something that should be the primary goal for any Twittivist.

Whether you place your page on a personal blog or organization's website is irrelevant. What is important is that you maintain branding and add to the user's experience. Here are some examples:

- A prominent picture – try to use a larger version of what you are using as your Twitter photo. The idea is to reinforce your brand and connect your profile with this new space. You can also include images of your organization or cause to reiterate the call to action.

- A brief story about yourself, your organization, and/or your cause. This is a great place to expand upon the brief summary you gave on your Twitter profile. I would consider providing further background on why you have chosen to become a Twittivist.

- Introductions to my blogs - links to where people can read more of my content

- Ok, so they were interested enough in you and your cause to follow you through Twitter to your blog or website, now what? Well what is it you want them to do? Sign a petition?

Call their Congressman? Signup for email alerts? Meet at a tea party? Whatever it is, this is where you want to tell them. Tell them what they gain from the email list or signing the petition. Be transparent. (I would rather have 30 passionate, dedicated activists than 130 people who were tricked into signing up for a cause.)

• Links to other places you can be found on the web. Are you on Facebook? Do you have a Google Reader account? Share other places you can be found and let the user connect with you under different circumstances, perhaps learning more about you. Another advantage is that you will able to connect with that user in a different social sphere, expanding your reach and recruiting more members to your cause.

In addition to the items listed, be sure that you address the fact they have come from Twitter. Personalize it for that specific target. Visitors will appreciate the extra time you have taken to personalize a page for them, instead of throwing them into a website's homepage or blog front page in hopes that they can navigate for themselves.

Posting Your First Tweet

If you have gotten to this point, you are likely ready to start following others and joining the conversation. But, before you go out and start following the neighborhood, consider posting a few tweets first. You want to have a "body of work" before you "invite" others to your profile. One of the biggest misconceptions about Twitter is that you are expected to post tweets like, "I am driving to work," or "sitting down to dinner." Again, this is a tragic and fundamental misconception. In reality, Twitter is an extension of your personal brand. If you are extremely active in the Tea Party movement, your Twitter account should reflect that. If you have an interest in the Founding Fathers, your tweets should reflect that, if you have a blog on your state government, your posts should...well, you get the idea. By posting a few interesting tweets and a couple of non-spammy links, others will be more inclined to see you as a legitimate asset to the conversation and someone worth following.

To reply to someone's post, simply place "@" in front of their username or click the arrow to reply and type your response. For instance, if I were to ask, "How are you enjoying the Twittivism guide?" from the AM_National account, your reply might look like this:

@AM_National I love it. Truly amazing, I am learning so much about Twitter.

It's important to note that only your followers who also follow AM_National will see your response on their homepage. If you'd like all of your followers to see your response, common practice is to place a . before the @ when typing the username.

Begin Following Others

Nobody wants to tweet in a vacuum. You need to find interesting people to follow and engage with. When we give this training to activists around the country we always suggest starting with topics you are most interested in. If it is politics, then consider following a prominent figure you respect and are interested in. Also consider following the followers. For instance, if you were really interested in sports, you might choose to follow Shaq's tweets. To increase your community further, you would then likely follow other people who are also following Shaq. This
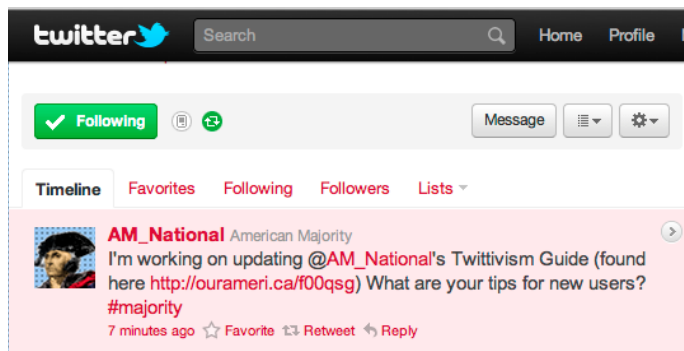
is a good way to ensure that you share a common interest.

Of course there are plenty of tools designed to help you find new tweeple to follow. One such tool is Twitter's own built-in search engine. You can find others who are talking about things you are interested in by simply typing in various keywords. Because it only searches at that specific moment, this tool isn't always the best way to find thought leaders or those who consistently tweet about a given topic. To increase your chances of finding someone interesting, try using their advanced search options. From there you can limit results to a specific location. As a Twittivist, finding local tweeple will help you build a stronger coalition that can meet offline. In addition, if you are going to be commenting on local politics or a local sports team, these users will find the information more relevant. There are also plenty third party applications to help you find tweeps by location. Check out TwellowHood and Localtweeps for alternative ways to build your local community.

Another great way to increase find like-minded users to follow is to join a Twitter group. One very popular group is the Top Conservatives On Twitter. You may have seen them online. They use the #hashtag "#TCOT" to identify themselves and help others track their tweets. They have developed a nice site that catalogues active members of the group. This is a great place to find politically active tweeple to follow. Consider signing-up and joining the list.

Use Lists To Stay Organized

The Lists feature, available from the homepage, is a means of organizing the people you follow into groups. Lists not only organize users into a directory, but also combine their tweets into a stream that can be separate from your homepage. Lists can be accessed via a custom URL – twitter.com/username/list-name.

Lists can either be public, viewable to anyone and any user can follow this list, or private, viewable only to you.

For more information on creating and managing lists, check out this guide by Mashable.

Learn To Share – Everything

Once you have built a community around topics of interest, share! If you come across an interesting story at work – share. If you find another's post interesting – retweet it (we discuss retweeting in the next section). Constantly think of ways you can share with your Twitter community. This will add value to your account, increase your number of followers and add to the quality of the conversation.

staff tips

@NedRyun Twitter has been a great way for me to advertise my podcast series, The History of the Constitutional Convention at NedRyun.com. Each time I record a podcast, I simply tweet about it and fans of the podcast series know that fresh content is up. Try connecting Twitter with your online projects and watch your community grow.

becoming a
power tweeter

AMERICAN MAJORITY
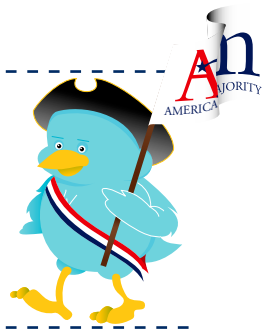
twitter best practices

Be Proactive

Despite all of the "marketing magic" that exists on the Internet, the best way to increase your followers is still through good, old-fashioned conversation.

One of the best ways to start this is by asking a question. The key with this approach is to be conversational about topics that will interest others. For interest, if your personal brand is politically charged, asking a question about health care reform will likely receive a nice response and invite several critics. Using existing #hastags (we'll get into those more later) can also aid in jumping into current conversations and adding your insights.

Leveraging Other Networks

Are you more active on other networks? Use it as a pathway to Twitter. If it's a blog, mention that you're using Twitter in a post and link to it from your profile and contact pages. If you're on Facebook, sync your tweets with your status updates or provide your Twitter handle to new people you meet. As Twitter has become more mainstream, adding your Twitter handle to your email signature and business card has become commonplace. Twitter also offers a great ice breaker, "You know I saw the best article about XYZ the other day on Twitter." Not only will you have something to talk about, but if the other person is on Twitter, they will likely ask to connect.

Tweet, Tweet - wait - Tweet

The more active you are on Twitter the more likely you are to be successful on Twitter. Every Tweet you do comes up on the Twitter Public Timeline - so upping your Tweet numbers will help you appear more often.

While it benefits to drive the conversation, remember to listen. Be careful not to send too many tweets without responding and listening to what other people are saying. You will be blocked if you flood Twitter with useless information. Remember, it is about a conversation. That requires you are on topic, interesting, and responsive.

Provide Value

Tweeting on a personal level is fun and for many that's as far as it goes - but if you're interested in growing your Twitter influence you need to provide your followers (and potential followers) with value. It's the same principle as growing a blog - if you help enhance people's lives in some way they are more likely to want to connect with you. As a result your conversations should 'matter' on some level. Sure you can throw in personal tweets and have some fun with it - but unless you're providing something useful to people (information, entertainment, news, education etc) they probably won't follow you for long.

Essentially, Twitter is a shorter and more viral form of blogging, so the same rules actually still apply, and by constantly writing or tweeting about your expertise on a specific topic, you'll become known for it and people will gravitate to you and follow you. If you already have a blog, then we recommend using Twitterfeed or Tweetlater, so you can syndicate your posts on Twitter automatically.

Running out of topics and relevant things to say? Sign –up for Google Alerts and Google will send you a list of recent web articles, posts, and content pertaining to whatever key words you like. If you want to be seen as a reliable source for Tennessee politics, then tell Google to push you any and all articles, videos, and blog posts that deals with that topic. The best thing about using Google Alerts is that can establish your brand around a certain topic, delivering pertinent content to your audience again and again.

Create a Google Alert

Enter the topic you wish to monitor.

Search terms:	
Type:	Comprehensive ▾
How often:	once a day ▾
Deliver to:	▾

Create Alert

Google will not sell or share your email address.

If you provide a service, then let people know. We have followed more than a few computer technicians and when we needed technical questions answered, we didn't call a 1-800 number, we went to Twitter. Users were able to help us through a variety of software issues. The more you tweet about the topic you want to be known for, the more people will remember you for it and when they need your expertise, they will contact you.

staff tips

@MatthewBRobbins Don't be afraid to use your Twitter handle offline. Try adding your Twitter handle to your business card or email signature. You will be surprised how many people are on Twitter and by providing them with such an option, you increase your accessibility. It also opens you up to social spheres you might not have entered.

AMERICAN MAJORITY

retweets

The retweet (or "RT") is Twitter's premiere way of re-sharing content that someone else has posted. Retweeting is an integral part of the Twitter experience. But, for beginners, it's not immediately obvious what retweets are, or what tools to use to make retweeting easier.

Let's start with the basics. If you see a tweet you find interesting or contains an interesting link, you might want to share that with your followers. First, copy and paste the tweet. Then, to give credit to the original person, add "RT" plus, the person's Twitter handle at the beginning of the tweet. Here's an example using our account, AM_National, we would tweet:

Please check out http://www.NewLeadersProject.org

You could retweet that to your followers by typing the following:

RT @AM_National Please check out http://www.NewLeadersProject.org #majority #tcot

Retweeting is a fantastic way to make contact with the person who originally posted the tweet and provides real value to your followers. They will appreciate that you are sharing information, even if it didn't originate with you. You can also use the RT to add relevant information, like this:

I've signed the pledge! Have you? RT @AM_National Please check out http://www.NewLeadersProject.org

You can also RT directly from the homepage by clicking "retweet" when you hover over a tweet.

Marketing researcher Dan Zarrella did some research on over 10 million tweets and retweets. The published findings were very interesting. We share some of them below:

Retweets Contain More Links

Retweets often contain a link. Zarrella explains that 56.69% of the retweets he studied contained a link, versus only 18.96% of a normal tweet. This data clearly tells us that retweets are an extremely common form of quickly sharing information across social spheres. So, if you would like to get retweeted, find an interesting link!

Link Occurrence in All Tweets

Links

No Links
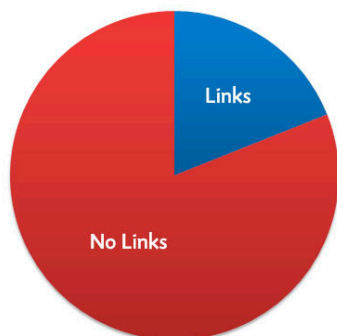
DanZarrella.com

Link Occurrence in ReTweets

No Links

Links
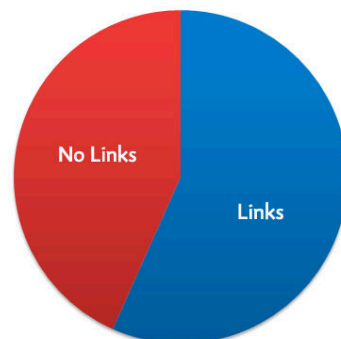
DanZarrella.com

hashtags

Hashtags tend to be one of the most confusing features of Twitter, for beginners and veterans alike. Simply put, these tags help create some order among the madness that is Twitter. When a group of people all agree to include that tag when discussing a certain topic, it then becomes much easier to search. For instance, at American Majority, we use the hashtag #Majority in all of our tweets. So, if anyone wanted to see what the American Majority staff was talking about at any given time, they could simply type "#majority" into any Twitter search service and receive a stream of our posts.

Hashtags are created by taking a short, descriptive term and placing a "#" sign in front of it. This pound sign helps Twitter distinguish between a tag and a word in the tweet.

Before you run out and create a hashtag, be sure that it adds value for yourself and your followers. They are best used to organize information. If you use a desktop application, using a hashtag will help you keep track of those talking about your topic, even if you do not follow them. Some good examples for hashtags are conferences, major events, brands, and popular topics.

If you do decide to create a hashtag, be sure and contextualize it. Most people won't actually know what your hashtag means, so give a quick explanation in one of your tweets. For wide adoption, it needs to be very clear what it means and why they need to associate with it.

Still confused?

The Twitter Fan Wiki also has some interesting reading material on hashtags if you're looking to further your hashtag education.

To help you get started, we have included a list of the most popular hashtags. Try visiting http://search.twitter.com/ and typing in one of the hashtags listed below. This is also a great way to find targeted followers.

Hashtag	Meaning
#majority	Tweets pertaining to the American Majority
#TCOT	Tweets pertaining to top Conservatives on Twitter
#TLOT	Tweets pertaining to top Libertarians on Twitter
#912	Tweets pertaining to the 9.12 Project
#teaparty	Tweets pertaining to the Tea Party movement

Identifying and Defining Hashtags

Twitter is a very quick and often fickle tool. Hashtags can begin trending (becoming popular) out of nowhere, leaving you scratching your head as to what it means and why it is so popular.

So, to help you stay abreast of the latest Twitter trends, we have provided three fantastic services to help you stay afloat in the ocean of tags.

Twitter is a very quick and often fickle tool. Hashtags can begin trending (becoming popular) out

17

of nowhere, leaving you scratching your head as to what it means and why it is so popular.

So, to help you stay abreast of the latest Twitter trends, we have provided three fantastic services to help you stay afloat in the ocean of tags.

Twubs: Twubs (funny name, cool service) aggregates tweets and imports pictures to help you understand the topic being discussed.

Tagalus: Tagalus is one of our favorites. Simply, it is a dictionary of sorts for hashtags. Don't find your hashtag on their list? Add one. Simply tweet the Tagalus Twitter account and your tag will be added.

What the Trend?: If you notice something trending, simply visit this site and *What the Trend?* will provide a quick blurb on what's going on.

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uploading images

If a picture is worth a thousand words, then we are going to show you how to say a lot with only 140 characters. Unfortunately, Twitter does not provide a built-in way to attach images to your tweets. So, like many of the unique and fun features you see on Twitter, we have to turn to third party applications. There are a whole host of applications that make it easy to share pictures with the Twitosphere. But, we are only going to focus on our runaway favorite, **Twitpic.**

Twitpic is currently the largest and most popular image sharing service for Twitter. Twitpic has long been a favorite among celebrities and has received a lot of attention as a source for images of breaking news. Services like Twitpic at a new level of personalization to your tweets. American Majority has long used its Twitpic account to bring coverage of our trainings and Tea Party protests.

One of the best things about Twitpic is that once you start an account, you are provided with an email address. This means that you no longer bound to your computer. Simply take a picture with your smartphone and send to the email provided by Twitpic. Whatever you type in the subject line will be posted to your Twitter account, as well as a link to your image. If you are using a #hashtag, remember to include that in the subject line as well.

All of your Twitpic images will be stored online at your Twitpic account, so you can reference them in a blog post or share them with friends when you get back to a computer. As a Twittivist, photographic evidence can be a powerful tool to inspire action. At American Majority, we insist that our staff use Twitpic as much as possible. Photo sharing has become wildly popular on the web and good activists know how how to utilize the mediums of their day. Documenting your efforts through Twitpic both inspires and teaches others.

Flickr Comes to Twitter

Most of you likely already know about Flickr, the web's most popular photo sharing site. But what you might not know is that Flickr has recently decided to jump into the Twitosphere. Similar to Twitpic, Flickr offers a special email address designed for your account. With Flickr, you can befriend other users and even create special groups to share your photos.

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sharing videos

Twitvid.com
So pictures are nice, but maybe you really want to make a statement with video? Well, at American Majority we are beginning to play around with a great video sharing service called Twitvid.com. Much like Twitpic – discussed above – Twitvid allows you to create a free account to share your videos on Twitter. Not only can you upload videos from your computer, but Twitvid also provides you with a free email account so you can send videos via your smartphone or pocket camcorder.

In addition to Twitter, Twitvid.com will send your video to YouTube and your Facebook page. Twitvid is yet another powerful way to share your experiences with thousands of people with the click of a button.

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twibbon

Twibbon is a different kind of petition site. Rather than just getting people to tweet their support, Twibbon asks them to do more – wear it. After uploading an image to Twibbon's website and writing a brief description of your cause, you are ready to go. Simply begin asking people to visit your cause on Twibbon and by showing their support Twibbon will automatically overlay your image on their avatar. Be sure to keep your image small and in one of the corners. Nobody will want to support a cause that covers their entire avatar.

This might sound a little funny, but consider that a recent Twibbon campaign, **encouraging the death of IE6,** recently took off and has now attracted over 9,000 supporters.
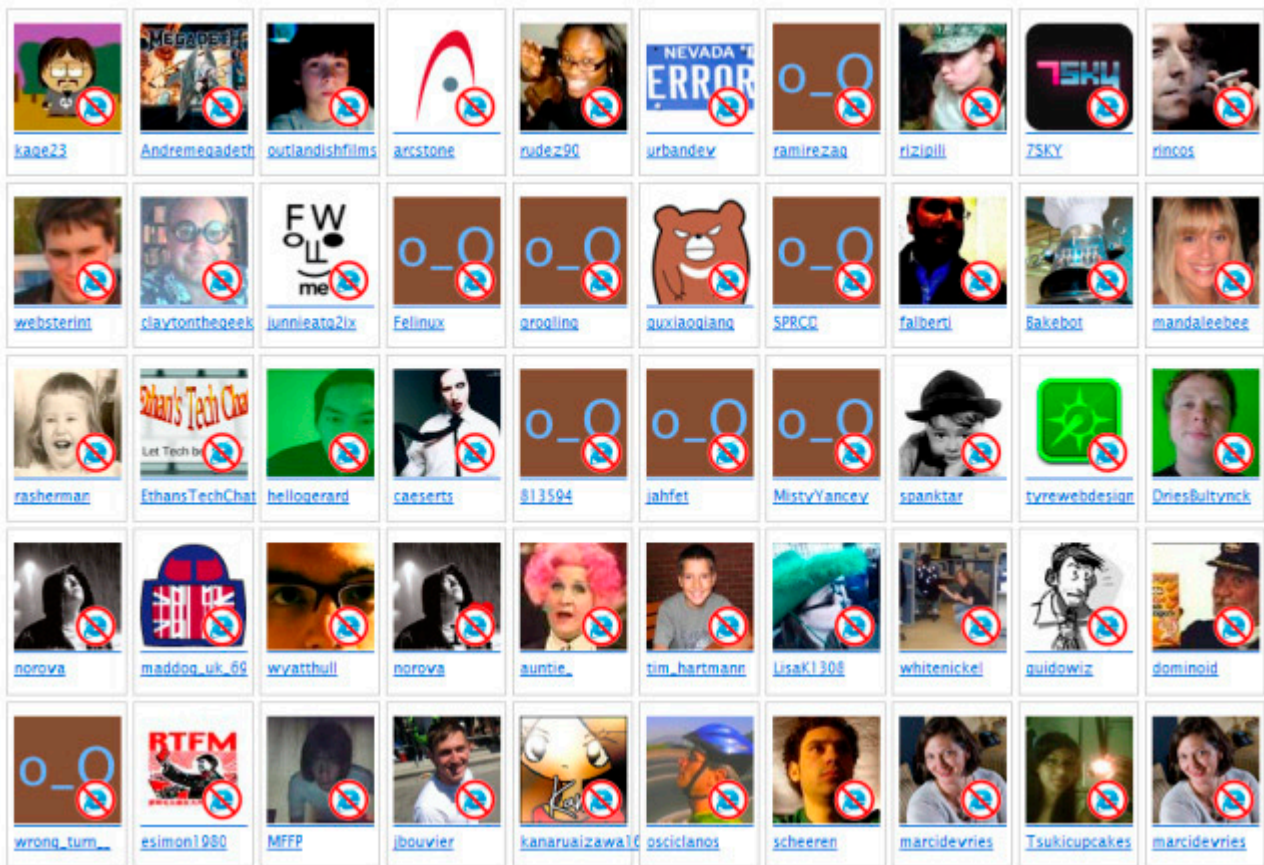

Try combining your petition with a Twibbon campaign and let us know how it goes. Tweet us at **@AM_National.**

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how to find your public

An important aspect of effective Twittivism is the ability to research the actions of your public officials and keep them engaged in the democratic process. If you and your community have a genuine concern, they should hear about it, regardless if they are busy tweeting about their lunch. Remember that this platform allows for conversation in multiple directions. You should take the tools laid out in this guide and use them for accountability and transparency.

Tweet Congress
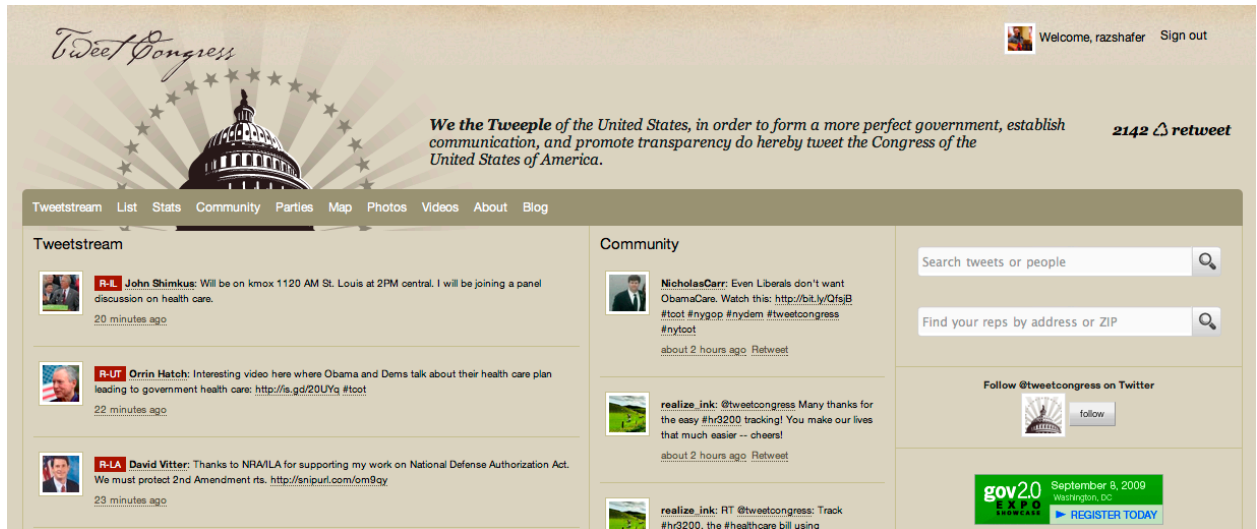
TweetCongress.org is a great example of the innovative power of Twittivism. While searching for their own Congressman on Twitter, the founders of TweetCongress were astonished at how few representatives were actually on Twitter. This realization prompted the five founders to build TweetCongress.com as a grassroots, non-partisan movement to get every member of the US House and Senate on Twitter!

As of the moment of this writing, there are 158 Congressional Tweeters. 101 are Republicans and 57 are Democrats. This is obviously significant progress in the past few months but considering that there are 118 Republicans and 260 Democrats which remain outside the Twitterverse there is clearly more work to be done. You should take a moment to look up your Representatives, US House and Senate, on TweetCongress.com. We'll wait!
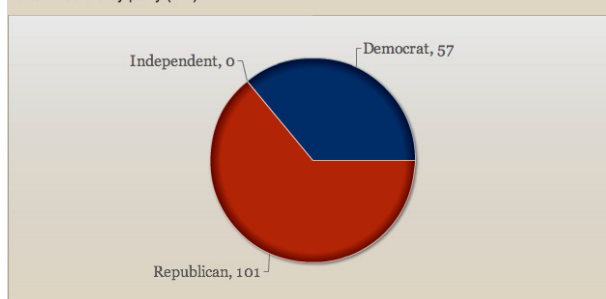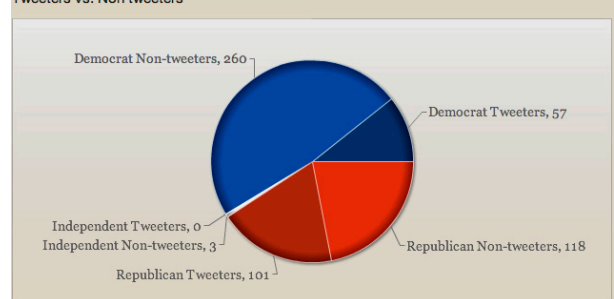
If you found your representatives, then you should immediately follow them and send them a message saying thanks for being on Twitter. Let them know you're watching! If your representatives are among those who are behind the times, then write them an email asking them why they aren't online yet. Better yet, call their offices and tell them that you want to see them online!

official on twitter

In addition to just helping you find your own representatives, TweetCongress compiles all the tweet-feeds from Congressional tweeps and aggregates them into an easy to read stream. You can also use the #tweetcongress hashtag and have your very own tweets show up on their webpage!

While still evolving, TweetCongress is one of the best ways to quickly find your public official on Twitter.

GovTrack.us

This independent tool will help you research and track the activities of our U.S. Congress. This open source site promotes transparency and civic education through technology and innovation. As Twittivists, this is exactly what we are looking for.

Through this amazing resource, you and your fellow Twittivists can track the status of federal legislation and voting records in both the Senate and House of Representatives. In addition, you can view detailed information about each member, their district maps, and the congressional committees they sit on and even their voting record. This site is truly a must bookmark for even the most novice Twittivist.
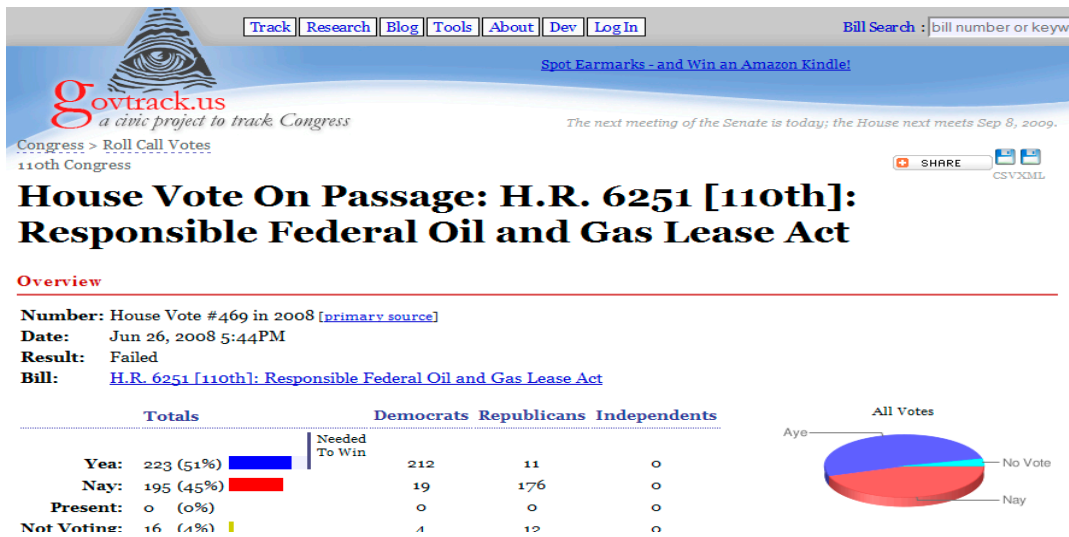
One of the great things about the site is that you can add "Trackers" to specific members of Congress, legislation, or committees. GovTrack.us will follow your "tracked" items and send you email updates when something changes. So, if you have a smart phone, there is no reason you can't stay informed and inform others.

Lastly, the site offers a unique Q & A function that allows visitors to ask questions to other visitors. Essentially, they have created a large think tank in which facts, outcomes, and opinions can be debated. There is also a tweet tracker that allows them to display tweets discussing bills and legislation when someone attaches one of their #hashtags to the tweet.

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Examples:

twitter in action

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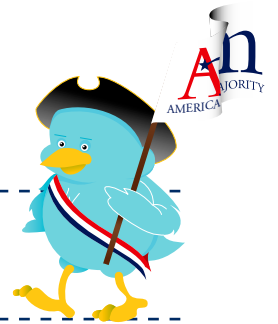
twitter vs cnn: *The rise of WEdia*

As the Iranian election aftermath unfolded in Tehran during the summer of 2009, thousands of demonstrators took to the streets to express their anger at perceived electoral irregularities. While many were focused on showing their support for Iran and its freedom, a unique hashtag began appearing throughout the Twitterverse: #CNNFail.

Even as Twitter was quickly becoming the best source of news from the front lines of the riots in Tehran, a growing number of users were becoming seriously enraged at the apparent lack of coverage CNN was giving to the story, compared to other mainstream news channels.

For most of Saturday, CNN.com had no stories about the massive protests on behalf of Mir Hossein Mousavi, who was reported

by the Iranian government to have lost to the sitting president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Widespread street clashes occurred, nearly unheard of in the tightly controlled Iran.

Yet even as word of the urban strife, seemingly led by those posting to Twitter, spread next around the world on news networks like the BBC, NPR, and the Times, CNN remained mostly mute. Even when the network's Internet site finally posted a story late Saturday, the network's first "story highlight" was, "Ahmadinejad plans rally after winning second presidential term."

To many, it has become obvious that Twitter is becoming the go-to source for breaking news stories from around the globe. But, as easily as someone can share a fact, they can share an opinion. Many Twitter users were becoming increasingly appalled that CNN failed to give much coverage to such a story.

"CNN needs to talk about the important things like Ms. California and who Paris Hilton is (sleeping with)," wrote Twitter user @ArchivalQuality.

Others used the opportunity to applaud the work of other networks while indirectly criticizing CNN. "Might I point out to all of those tracking #CNNFail that there's a corresponding #NPRWin good coverage @ www.npr.org," opined Twitter user Nickbernstein.

The consistent use of #CNNFail to share tweets referring to the poor coverage by CNN quickly became an animal all its own.

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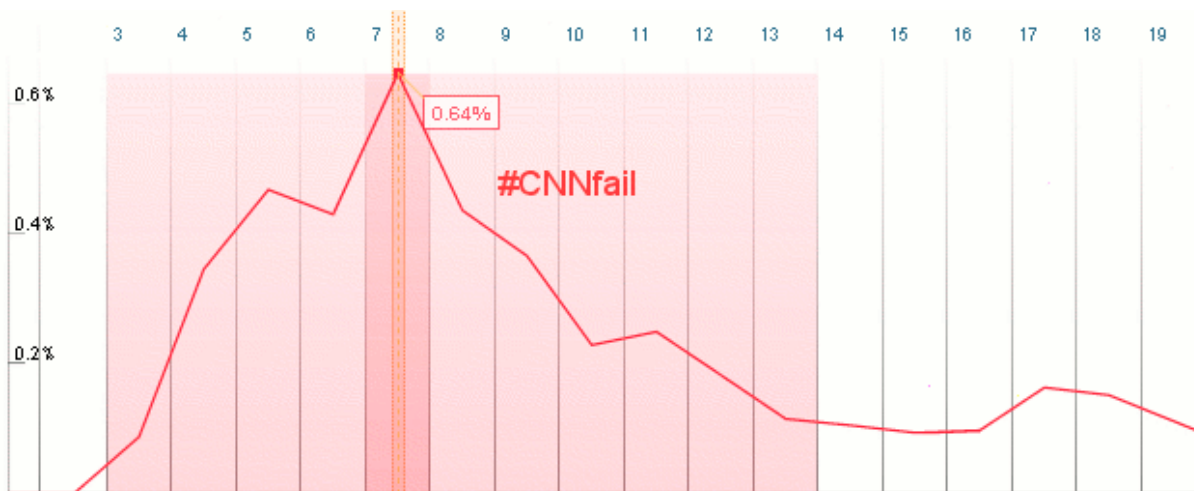
And it wasn't long before word of CNN's theoretical reporting failure began to make its way into more established media. Under the headline, "Dear CNN, Please Check Twitter for News About Iran," the popular blog ReadWriteWeb blasted the network for its failure to cover the clearly massive story in the Middle East.

"Hours after Iranian police began clashing with tens of thousands of people in the street," ReadWriteWeb wrote, "the top story on CNN.com remains peoples' confusion about the switch from analog TV signals."

It's odd that CNN would be so late to this story, especially given the criticism it's getting from the Twitterverse, and given how clued in the network is supposed to be to Twitter, Facebook and social media. While CNN failed to act, the hashtag continued to grow in popularity. The event became so important that CNN had to change its program schedule to publicly respond.

CNN's Rick Sanchez had to spend a segment addressing the issue. He put together a rebuttable to the claims that CNN failed to do its journalistic duty. Click on the image above to watch the video.

The story spread like wildfire, from the popular social media blog, Mashable.com, to the Wall Street Journal, everyone was talking about Twitter. There were stories on Twitter's breaking coverage of Iranian protests and there were stories of how Twitter brought CNN to its knees. This is a fantastic example of the power of the collective voice. There has been a lot of disdain for the main stream media lately, but with the rising power of social media sites like Twitter, we are now on the verge of a paradigm shift in mass communication. We are entering the era of WEdia, where we decide what is news-worthy and what is propaganda, and this new era of communication will be orchestrated and molded by Twittivists like you.

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additional resources

Video Tutorials can be found online covering everything from Twitter to YouTube and Blogging to Facebook check them out here - http://americanmajority.org/video-tutorials

For more guides like this one discussing additional social media resources check out http://americanmajority.org/resources/guides/

If you're interested in running for office, check out our podcasts available here - http://americanmajority.org/resources/podcasts/ - with loads of campaign tips

Even more resources can be found at http://americanmajority.org/resources

To request an American Majority training in your area, go to http://americanmajority.org/request/

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