



## Demystifying the 'Twittersphere'

At Naked Generations we work in a number of different areas with our clients and they broadly fit into three categories: Succession strategies, Communication Strategies and Innovation Strategies. This article aims to unpack one of the areas within communication strategies we call – platforms.

Time and again the questions come: **Why would anyone want to use twitter? What can we do with it in our company? How do we get started?** And **what are the common pitfalls to avoid looking amateur?** So here it is. The article that 'demystifies twitter'!

Twitter, to put it in context, was born as a prototype in March 2006 and launched publicly in August 2006. In May 2007 it was incorporated and founded (source: twitter.com).

So **why would anyone want to use twitter?** We see two main reasons why you might want to use it. To 'speak' or to 'listen'. The original purpose for Twitter was for Jack Dorsey (its founder) to listen to what his friends were up to. However, that naturally assumes that there were people willing to speak (or 'tweet' as it has become known).

Within listening (point 1) we again see a division in the actions of individuals. First, we may listen to individuals or 'celebrities' (point 1.a). Generally this has come to mean that individuals who have a following in the 'real world' can now be listened to through tweeting on their phone or computer, about what they are up to. For example Richard Branson posted this (@richardbranson):

*"Around the world in 8 days: video diary - days 5 & 6: <http://tinyurl.com/b2qms9> 3:20 AM Mar 2nd from web"*

To many in business this will seem like a waste of time, unless of course you are in PR; working for a magazine like *Hello!*; or a fan interested in knowing where you are likely to find your celebrity of choice at a particular moment in time (. Secondly then, you may want to listen to experts or companies (point 1.b). That is to say: you may be interested in a particular topic or company and therefore decide to 'follow' a particular twitter profile because their research is interesting or they aggregate information for other people that would take you a long time to find otherwise – this is what we do for our Global Clients and Gen Y (see: [www.twitter.com/nakedgen\\_chris](http://www.twitter.com/nakedgen_chris)) – other examples of this might be Harvard Business Review (@HBR) or Forrester Research (@Forrester).

Secondly (point 2), we may wish to *speak* – which in essence is just the opposite of what is described above – but we'll give you some examples. Obama famously did this during his presidential election campaign (we have already covered that extensively in a three part series on [our blog](#)). This will be because we believe that we have something that is of interest to a certain target group or because they are interested in us as individuals. First (point 2.a), we may know information that is relevant to others – for instance, as a graduate where to find an internship (@nakedgen\_sam):

*"Government pushes internships <http://bit.ly/sysaB> 2:42 PM May 15th from web"*

Twitter language notes: '@' is a prefix used before a name on twitter to identify an avatar. To find these people you need to type [www.twitter.com/](http://www.twitter.com/) and then add the name without the '@'. '#' (known as a '# tag') is a prefix to a 'subject' word that makes the tweet searchable and, groups messages together that all use that '#' + a particular word.

# naked.

generations mapping

If we see interesting information on someone else's twitter profile that we think would be relevant to our own followers we may want to re-tweet that information using the convention 'RT' (a kind of 'twitter currency' of acknowledgement of the source of the information and then post the whole post again: e.g. (@nakedgen\_chris):

"RT @nakedgen\_sam Government pushes internships <http://bit.ly/sysaB> 4:16 PM May 17th from web"

Or (point 2.b) we may wish to talk *about* our organisation (as an individual or as a brand/ marketing manager):

"Efforts by a Tearfund partner to stem the tide of cholera in Zimbabwe are showing signs of success. Read <http://tinyurl.com/qgkvqf> 3:21 PM May 13th from web"

**What can we do with it in our company?** There are a whole host of things that you can do with it, and here are a few of the things that we have seen it used for successfully, as a tool, to get you thinking.

- Announce events/ jobs/ technical needs (simple text)
- Provide links to research on your blog/ site (paste your links into the box with a brief descriptive comment – if you use #tags it becomes more easily searchable).
- Have a 'tweet-up' (becoming more popular – this is where you invite all the people that are interested in a particular topic to a specific venue, to meet in real time to discuss/ socialise/ network).
- Hold a '@twestival' (offline fundraiser) – see [www.twitter.com/twestival](http://www.twitter.com/twestival))
- Build connections (mainly through following and messaging with other twitterers)
- Research (asking questions online and listening to responses or gathering links to specific bits of research through aggregators).
- Use twitter with a specific #tag to get immediate feedback during a conference/ seminar – because Twitter is a live feed you can use twitter during a seminar or conference: simply agree a #tag that everyone will use somewhere in their tweets and watch them aggregate online using <http://search.twitter.com/>

**How to get started?** Log on to [www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com) and create a profile/ 'avatar'. Put a descriptive 'Bio' in, so that the people you want to attract will be drawn to you. Next, find something of interest to tweet or listen to. If you are 'speaking' then type your comments into the box that says: *what are you doing?* If you are listening you may want to use <http://search.twitter.com/> to search a particular topic and then click 'follow' if the person you find seems to be regularly talking about a topic relevant to you. Twitter is also about interaction so, if someone RT's your comments, or you RT theirs, its good practice to send them a message to say 'thank you' – after all they are building your brand.

**Common mistakes** are made when people who have a following, because they speak about their company/ subject, then switch and believe that their followers will also be interested in hearing about their son or daughter's birthday party – not sensible – you will lose followers about your core topic. The learning here is: stick to the topic you are an expert in and create another avatar for your tweeting about your family. **Happy Tweeting!**

**Naked Generations** is a **Strategic Consultancy** empowering the Top 200 global brands with Insights, Research, Frameworks and Strategy to Understand, Engage and Leverage Generation Y. For more information go to [www.nakedgenerations.com](http://www.nakedgenerations.com) or call the office: +44 (0)208 333 0465. The author of this article was Christopher Lomas ([c.lomas@nakedgenerations.com](mailto:c.lomas@nakedgenerations.com) / @nakedgen\_chris)

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