

it's OK to be a follower after all

[a look at Twitter's various uses]



You know the basics of Twitter's 140-character system and the difference between followers and those you follow. It's time to look at the different ways news outlets, media organizations, groups and individuals use Twitter.

Tweets generally fall into one of the following categories:

- (1) to share a link to something useful/helpful
- (2) to drive traffic to one's site, such as a headline and link to a new post
- (3) to spread breaking news
- (4) to provide commentary
- (5) to chat or respond to someone else
- (6) to pose a question or ask for help
- (7) to update status, a la Facebook
- (8) to entertain
- (9) to weigh in on a popular conversation, usually referred to as a trending topic
- (10) to promote an event

When planning your staff's Twitter presence, it's important to determine your focus. What will *your* tweets do? Select three types of tweets from the list above and provide an example or sample tweet your student media organization might post. Share/discuss.

As with any kind of social media, Twitter has a wide range of users with posts from incredibly helpful to unbelievably annoying. Analysis will help you set goals before planning the next steps in building a community of followers.


Here's the assignment:


Follow a news source, organization, celebrity and high school student for the same 48-hour period. [EX: CNN, SF Giants, Lady Gaga, WHS student] Create a log to record the four Twitter names, how many followers each has and how many times each tweeted. Also record observations for the following:


- Were the tweets personal or professional? Anything especially humorous or noteworthy?
- Based on the categories above, what type of tweets came from each user? Record a few tweets in your log, or if you're especially tech savvy, do a screen shot and paste into a digital file.
- If any of the tweets included links, which ones did you follow? Describe what you found.
- What difference(s) did you find between the celebrity and the high school student?
- Did you read any stories suggested by the news outlet? What made you want to read each particular story?
- What surprised you about your findings?


[What's the point?]


Based on the list at the left, identify which type of tweets appear below. What type was your organization's last tweet?


[a]  **johncmayer** I just got traded to Cleveland. Signed a 24-hour provisional contract with the Cavs for my concert tomorrow night.
34 minutes ago via Twittelator

[b]  **NewsEditors** August 26 Webinar: ASNE announces webinar on newsgathering with iPhone <http://bit.ly/bivOOm>
about 5 hours ago via twitterfeed

[c]  **NPRPictureShow** I like this. <http://bit.ly/dAbskS> via @photodonuts
about 8 hours ago via TweetDeck

[d]  **News10_CA** 3 youths arrested in I-80 rock-throwing injuring man
<http://bit.ly/d4NfzV>
about 4 hours ago via twitterfeed

[e]  **matthew_schott** Off on a design idea/inspiration quest on the web. Any yearbook tweeps got fave sites for inspiration?
about 4 hours ago via web from O'Fallon, MO

[f]  **sunsetgirl1234**: I also want to see the movie **inception** because my friend said it is good but you really need to listen or you miss something good
less than 20 seconds ago via Mobile Web