

What does your Twitter stream communicate

Lots of communications people –journalists, PR folks, ad people—are on Twitter. I am too, and I follow many communications types. You can get a lot of good information, and interesting facts from your Twitter stream. But you can also learn a lot about the people you follow.

What you tweet about: Obviously, what you tweet about shows what you are interested in, and what you are more knowledgeable about. If you are in health care, you may tweet about the latest health research. If you are constantly tweeting about personal stuff, you are communicating that your business is not as important to you as your personal life. If you never tweet about personal stuff, you are saying that you view Twitter as only business.

When you tweet: Do you tweet during the day? Chances are that you incorporate Twitter into your work life. Do you only tweet on the weekend? Timing shows how much you understand how Twitter works. Although we have the ability to look at people's stream history, Twitter tends to be about immediacy. If you are tweeting in the middle of the night, you are saying you don't care whether people see your tweets, you just want to share.

How much you re-tweet: If you re-tweet stuff, it shows you are really reading what the people you follow share, and also, that you find it useful. You also are saying you are willing to share credit. If you never re-tweet, well, maybe you haven't found anything worth sharing.

Your Twitter stream really communicates a lot to those who follow you. Twitter is about building your network, and it is about sharing. I would argue that Twitter is also about

branding. If you haven't locked your tweets, anyone can see what you are putting out there, and can form an opinion about who you are and what you do.

What does your Twitter stream say about you?



Got clout?

I am not sure if it is just another way to establish your influence or another popularity measure on Twitter, but now there are several tools to measure your rank and influence on Twitter.

This post from CIO presents five options to measure your Twitter clout.:

- Buzzom
- Topsy
- Twinfluence
- Twitter Grader
- Twitter Score

Two other tools not mentioned in the article are:

- Klout
- Twitteranalyzer

I tested my score on a couple of these. I liked both Twitter Grader and Klout, although they do not coincide. According to Twitter Grader I have a 95 out of 100 whereas on Klout it is 25. Hmm...

I did not like Twitter Score. Twinfluence tells you who has

the most followers and does not really help you with your own effectiveness.

In my opinion, the most important measure for your communications effectiveness is how often you are being re-tweeted. If you share good material, people will share it.

Did you try any of the above? What is your take?

Is Twitter a High School for Adults?

There are followers and lists and getting many of each seems to be the focus for many people on Twitter. Some people make pleas for more followers and then there is “Follow Friday” in which people recommend to their followers other people to follow.

If this sounds a bit like a high school popularity contest, it is, for some people. Many people use Twitter to give and get information and ideas, but there is a subset of people who use Twitter to prove their hotness/coolness/hipness/in-the-knownness. These people go so far as to form cliques on Twitter, endlessly referencing their clique friends in every Tweet. They converse in public with each other and rarely engage with non-clique/inner circle people. Several of these people are “social media experts,” which is ironic since they are not being very social (I must credit Daria Steigman of Steigman Communications with this idea).

I have theories as to why Twitter becomes like a high school for these people but I won't share them here. It is important to remember what social networks are for, and that is to make

it easy to create connection. If all you are doing on Twitter is sending shout-outs to your five closest buddies or endlessly promoting yourself, you are not using Twitter to its full potential. I can't say that you are not using Twitter for what it is intended because I have no idea what its founder was thinking when he created the microblogging site.

Twitter is a great learning tool and it is a great sharing tool. It democratizes access and can really serve to mobilize people around causes. Eugene Robinson makes excellent observation in today's Washington Post, saying:

Twitter and other networking sites are unfiltered by editors or other gatekeepers. They rely on the wisdom of the crowd to sort out what is accurate and what is not. To someone (like me) who has spent his career as a gatekeeper, this was tremendously unsettling – at first. During the Iran protests, I saw how quickly Twitter users identified misinformation that was being posted by government propagandists. The self-policing capability of the medium is impressive.

The other big difference is that social networking offers not just information, but also the opportunity to take action. Twitter users were able to work together to mask the identities of the Iranian demonstrators who were using the site to tell the world what was happening. Last night, along with the news from Haiti came suggestions for how the Twitter community could most effectively help the relief effort.

Is this “news” the way we used to think of it? No. But it's news people can use.

Read complete article [here](#).

To those popularity hounds on Twitter I say put high school behind you. If you have something worthwhile to say people will follow you no matter who your friends are or aren't.

Words are Key

Keywords. They are the mantra of the Search Engine Optimization (SEO) people. Some websites are written in a weird, keyword heavy format to make them seem like candy for the search engines. Websites also have metatags and alt-text and other areas for keywords. Search engines read text, which is why content is king on the Internet. Search engines do not read images, unless they are labeled or tagged.

Some companies set up blogs just to increase their likelihood of being found. And SEO people think you should have keywords there too.

If you ever doubted that keywords are important, then do a little experiment on Twitter. Use a keyword like marketing, writing, or golf (if that is your thing) and see how many people start following you. Yesterday, I re-tweeted a story about the Christian Science Monitor getting rid of its religion reporter (fairly ironic, and that is why I shared it). Guess what, no less than three people of a heavy Christian persuasion started following me. Even though none of my posts and my bio say anything about Christianity. These people were simply keyword surfing and leached on to the word Christian in Christian Science Monitor.

So, how do you create a list of keywords? Easy. Start with your industry and work from there. Say you are a civil engineer. You would have the following: engineering, civil engineering, building, and so on. The important thing is to think of variations and related words. If you are in advertising, you would naturally choose marketing, and perhaps sales. You may also want to include location (city, state, country) and specialties. You may want to use the names of

your principals. **Just ask yourself: what would people ask if they needed to find me or someone that does what I do?**

Final thought: a popular word on this blog has been Twitter. In fact, I am sure if I tagged this article with the word Twitter, I will get plenty of search engine hits.



Resisting change

Does change frighten you?

If so, you are not alone. Many people are so frightened of change that they cling to outmoded things. For some people, it is that shoulder-padded 1980s look that keeps them grounded. In business, especially the marketing business, resistance to change may not look as jarring as a 1980s ensemble, but it still causes plenty of pain.

The only constant is change

Fortunately or unfortunately, depending on your perspective, change is constant. Technology is especially fond of change and this kind of change is not only hard to deal with but expensive. Upgrade to Vista anyone? A few years ago, we would have never dreamed that we would be communicating with each other in warp speed via text messages or Twitter, but yet here we are.

I have noticed that many people in the marketing industry resist change. Some PR practitioners may still insist on sending out press releases via fax or regular mail. Some may keep their website static, never updating. Many scoff at Twitter or blogs or Facebook, thinking that they are flavor of

the moment and quickly gone.

Whether Twitter will be here a year from now is debatable, but what is not debatable is that it changes the way people communicate and connect. If anything has derived from the new social media world, is how close connections can be to anyone anywhere. One can be in contact with an Australian designer or a French writer. And the other reality is that there is more information out there than ever before. It IS hard to keep up. But ignoring it because you don't like it will not make it go away. I have heard many people say they "don't have time for blogs or for Twitter." Do you also not have time for the news and for email? My point is that the way people are communicating and learning is changing, and by resisting that change, especially if you are a marketing person, you are staying behind the times.

This reminds me of a friend who refuses to be on Facebook. She and I were catching up and she relayed information about a mutual friend, whom I haven't spoken to in a while. I told her I already knew. She wondered how I knew. I told her I saw it on Facebook. The point is people communicate with each other via social media, and it is necessary for marketing people to understand where people find out things.

Let me know what things you are resisting, and why. I really want to know!