

Twitter: it's a medium not a platform

 blogs.lse.ac.uk/polis/2009/03/23/twitter-its-a-medium-not-a-platform/

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It tweets but it ain't Twitter

So I am on a [panel](#) talking about Twitter, while [Jemima 'mistress of multi-skilling' Kiss](#) is Tweeting to the few enterprising students who are Tweeting while another is broadcasting it on [Qik](#). Then Anthony Thornton from IPCmedia says "Twitter is a not a platform, it's *the* medium for short-term communication". And he's right.

I have been active on [Twitter](#) for a month or so. It is a micro-blogging service that limits messages to 140 characters, but you can link out to other webpages and thus include video/stills.

People can follow your messaging and you can pick favourites to follow yourself. There are dedicated websites to help promote your twittering and to connect you to other relevant people.

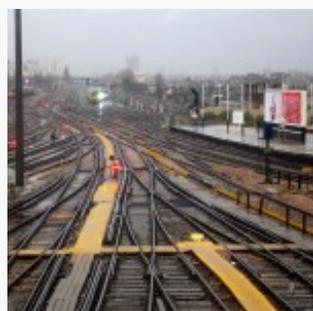
You can search through the Twittering for subjects that interest you and you can assign a series of messages with a tag that helps create a conversational thread. But generally, Twitter lives and breathes by being transient. You tune in and out, but you don't look through it like emails or a blog.

So, is it worth it?

Yes, would be my answer but everyone will use it in different ways and it won't work for some. I know that my more academic colleagues find it pointless. The problem is not the celebrities, public relations marketeers or narcissists. You can easily ignore them and create your own network. It is whether you need that kind of instantly updating data interactivity. I do.

I now use my vast bank of RSS feeds as a weekly checkup while Twitter seems to serve my basic media needs. It keeps me in touch with my favourite analysts such as [@jemimakiss](#) and [@kenanmalik](#) while maintaining contact with a whole range of journalists, students and academics.

I only spend about 30 minutes on it daily but in return I have received a whole stack of useful data and made some really interesting connections to people who would not have crossed my path otherwise.



It's a network but it ain't Networking

In that sense, it seems to do two things that we always hoped New Media would do. It provides us with a way of having regular conversations with our core networks in an efficient and creative way. It allows us to share one thought with many interested people. Secondly, the Twitter networks seem to interlink outwards in a creative and efficient way. Unlike blogs and websites, Twitter makes contact between people who have common interests without them having to make more than a minimal effort.

Twitter is wonderful for journalism. As the [BBC's Pete Clifton](#) explained, it is a great way to connect in to public expertise. Krishnan Guru Murthy ([@krishgm](#)) and Channel 4 News uses it very wittily and cleverly to garner question ideas and to generate audience interest. It is a lovely way to shed a bit of light into the news process and open up things to interested networks. It is, indeed, a great place for [Networked Journalism](#).

Email will remain my medium for long-form, storable communication. This blog remains the place for me to set out what I am doing at Polis and the best medium for serious interaction and dissemination of views and data related to my work. I even hope to write another Old Media [book](#).

But Anthony was right. Twitter is not just a platform to post about what you are doing elsewhere. It is turning into a medium itself. I am not sure it can sustain too much extrapolation and additional applications. If it becomes too clever it will lose its over-riding chief virtue: Simplicity.

If I can use it, then anyone can. Increasingly, everyone is.

You can follow me on Twitter @charliebeckett

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