Beyond the RTs

Why Twitter still matters - and how a data-driven approach is helping one council get more from the platform

Whetstone Communications

Georgia Turner COMMUNICATIONS

COMMS=POINT=
creative communicators

Zoom Poll

As a comms professional, how is your relationship with Twitter?

The social media landscape in 2023

Twitter   19.05 million UK users (4* highest in world)
Facebook   46.3 million UK users (highest use is by those aged over 45)
Instagram   32.3 million users (25 - 34 year olds use is highest)
Linkedin   34.9 million UK users (used by 58% of 25 - 34 years old)
TikTok   23 million UK users (44% of users are aged over 25)
NextDoor   27 million UK users a month (* NextDoor quoted figure)
WhatsApp   30.1 million UK users (used by 80% of 18 - 24 year olds)

METRO
NEWS... BUT NOT AS YOU KNOW IT

NEWS SPORT ENTERTAINMENT SOAPS LIFESTYLE VIDEO PLATFORM SHOPPING MORE ⌄

LONDON UK US WORLD COST OF LIVING ROYAL FAMILY RUSSIA-UKRAINE WEIRD TECH

Twitter launches new £7 per month charge for blue tick subscription

Comment

the Guardian
one, funded by readers

The Guardian
News website of the year

Opinion   Sport   Culture   Lifestyle   More ⌄

crisis Newsletters Football Coronavirus Business Environment UK politics Education Society Science Tech Global development Obituaries

Elon Musk 'doesn't seem like' right person to own Twitter, says co-founder

Biz Stone, one of quartet who set up company, says positive changes he oversaw have been undone by Tesla chief executive

News > World > Americas

'Twitter Files' journalist quits 'unusable' platform after Elon Musk puts restrictions on Substack

Elon Musk unfollows journalist after his announcement, Twitter users say

Peony Hirwani • 3 days ago • 35 Comments

mastodon

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Too soon to drop Twitter?

🖨 By Darren Caveney | 07 December 2022

You'll remember back in 2016 when the Cambridge Analytica scandal broke (where personal data belonging to millions of Facebook users was collected without their consent) and sparked the #DeleteFacebook movement. Many left the platform in protest only to join Instagram instead, which is also owned by Facebook (now known as Meta).

More recently, whistleblower leaks from former Facebook employee Francis Haugen showed the company failed to combat misinformation and abuse causing more negative headlines and similar #DeleteFacebook protests. Reported user numbers fell for the first time in 2022 and while it remains to be seen whether this trend will continue Facebook continues to be a huge platform.

But what about Twitter?

It's tough because the way Elon Musk has gone about 'managing' his new workforce is widely seen as awful and that goes against the grain for many of us. And mistakes have been made early in his tenure – from the switch to paid for verified accounts causing a rise in bogus accounts, through to a public vote on whether Donald Trump should be allowed back onto the platform – have been reputationally damaging for Twitter. I can't imagine advertisers are currently approaching Twitter with too much optimism either and this could lead to further problems.

However, important conversations and engagements take place all across local government and with our residents and businesses each day on Twitter.

I've reviewed more than one thousand council social media accounts and at their best they perform as important information channels and helpful customer services outlets.

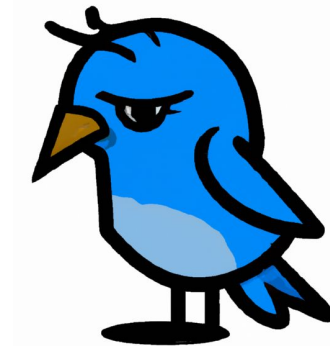So, here are four reasons why I believe councils should remain on Twitter:

1. **Twitter is still powerful and punches above its weight.**

MARKETING

Balenciaga Has Left Twitter

Following Elon Musk's acquisition, advertisers have raised concerns about the risks of loosening content moderation on the site.

Is it too soon to drop Twitter?

Here are four reasons why I believe councils should remain on Twitter

1. **Twitter is (currently) still powerful and punches above its weight**
2. **We have communities and networks on Twitter**
3. **Twitter is still the go-to customer services channel on social media**
4. **The conversations will just go on without us if we're not there - risk of creating voids**

In-house perspective

How can data help us?

- Helps make decisions on what we **know** - not just what we **think**.
- Assess effectiveness of BAU & alignment to comms strategy
- Inform and adjust tactics - make the case for change
- Helps us test and evaluate new approaches
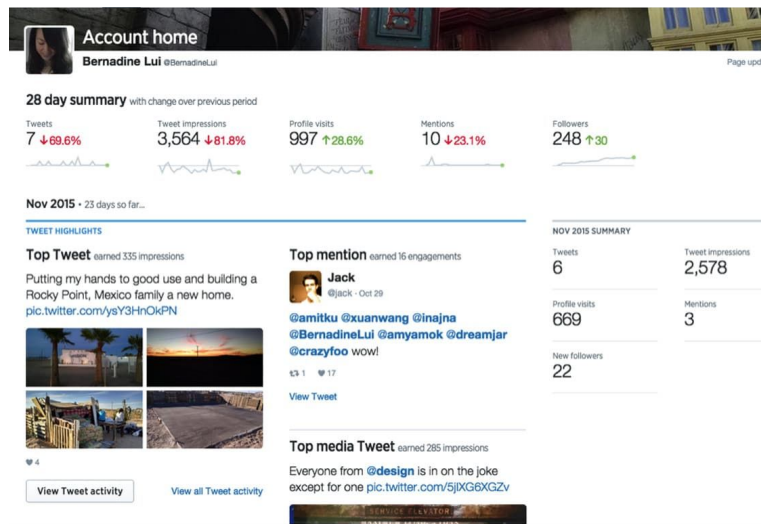- We can use data to advocate for courses of action and demonstrate value

Data can help us to be;

- More effective
- More efficient
- More credible

●◆■

Beyond Twitter analytics

- 'Vanity metrics'.
- Restricted range and functionality
- Tells you little about your audience.
- Locks you out of the good stuff

Get your data into an Excel spreadsheet!

Filter and Sort are your friends

Getting started

Write down your beliefs, arguments, theories or hunches - and then **use data to give them a good test.**
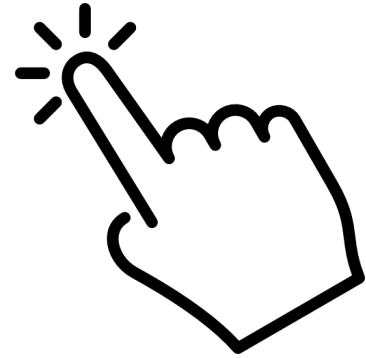
Central Bedfordshire - Theory 1

Twitter posts with video content get the highest levels of engagement

Why would it be useful to know this?

- Inform tactical use of video in future
- Make informed decisions on use of (limited) resources
- Challenge internal 'demands'
- Build clearer picture of content that resonates

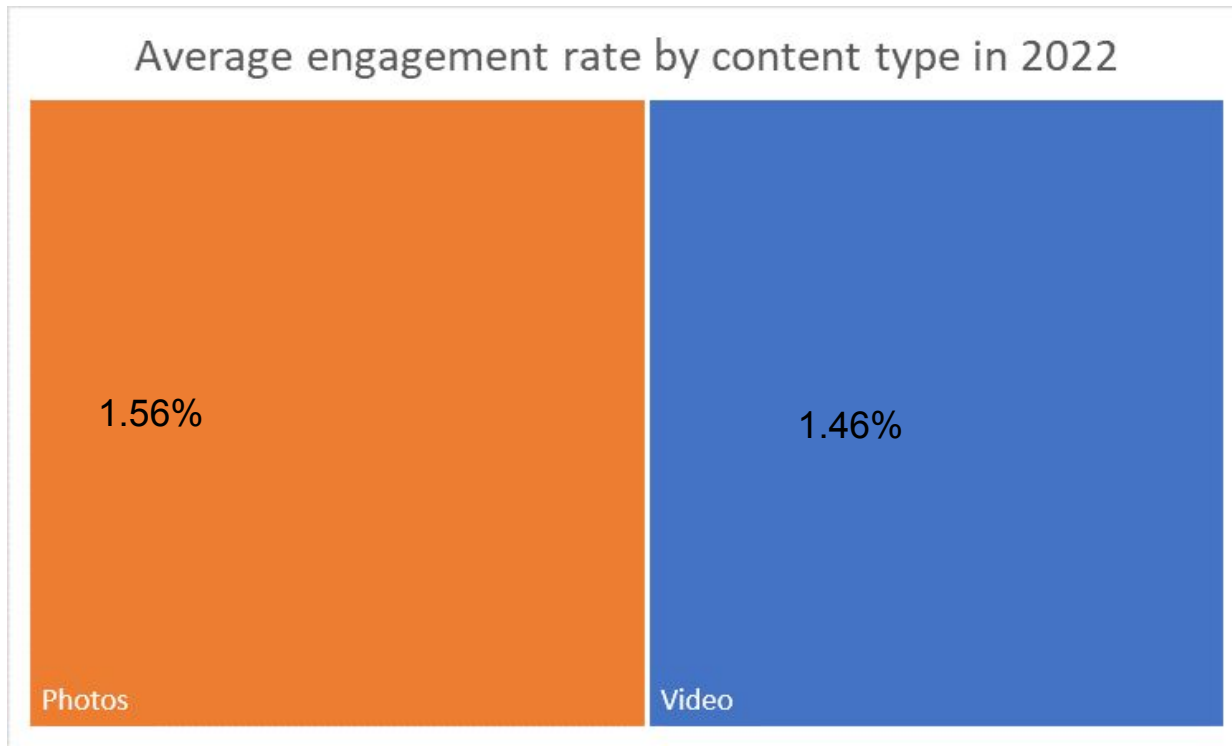# Theory 1

Twitter posts with video content get the highest levels of engagement.

Average engagement rate by content type in 2022

Photos
(962)

Videos
(205)

Theory 1

Twitter posts with video content get the highest levels of engagement.

The data <u>does not</u> support this theory.

- On average, Tweets with images and Tweets with videos get the same level of engagement.

Theory 2

95% of our Twitter followers never engage with any content

Why would it be useful to know this?

- Establish a baseline for organic reach
- Understand channel limitations (and strengths)

    Use to;
- support a case for investment (time and or money)
- inform tactical use of channels (eg in a campaign)
- Set realistic KPIs

Theory 2

How to test this?

- **Filter 2022 dataset** so we are seeing only the Tweets from 2022 that had RTs, Likes or Replies
- **Identify Twitter handles** of everyone who engaged with those Tweets
- Use Excel to **calculate number of unique 'engagers'**

Theory 2

- From **1665 Tweets in** 2022, **766** had some form of engagement (a Reply, Like or ReTweet)

- There were a total of **1937 engagements** from **556 unique accounts**

Theory 2

- Central Beds has **16,400** Twitter followers
- **550** unique users engaged in 2022

- 550 / 16,400 x 100 = **3% of followers engaged**

- **So, 97% of Followers did not engage**

- (Assumption - everyone who engaged is a Follower)

Theory 2

95% of our Twitter followers never engage with any content.

The data strongly supports this theory

- Further analysis suggested that **34 users accounted for 50% of all engagements** - around half of these users are corporate accounts.

- 10 of the 34 look like they could be residents (several councillors or officers).

- Number of residents who engaged in 2022 roughly estimated to be in the low hundreds (but needs further testing).

How have these findings informed tactics?

34 users accounted for half of all engagements

- Small numbers - analyse and categorise them (orgs, staff etc..)
- Who are the big influencers - and who are they connected to?
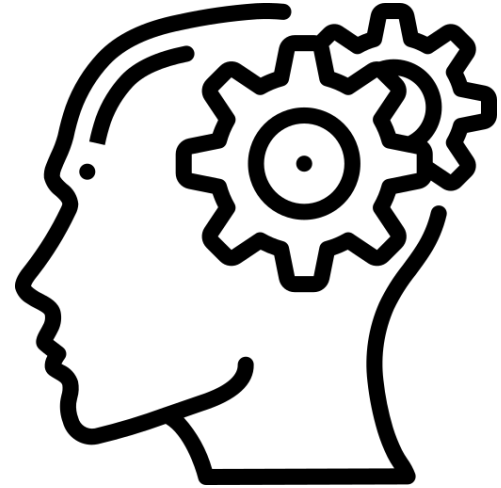- Geography useful for specific comms (eg local consultations)

Back to basics
- Follow key accounts back if they are actively engaging
- Making use of Topical / Geographical Twitter Lists
- Tagging + RT requests

- Further steps? **Local Government Twitter benchmarking / peer learning group**

Thoughts and Questions

Thank you for attending!

alex@whetstonecomms.com
darrencaveney@gmail.com
georgiaturnercommunications@gmail.com
alan.ferguson@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

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Whetstone
Communications

Georgia Turner
COMMUNICATIONS

COMMS≥POINT⚬
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