



## Twittering the news in Australia

**The micro-blogging service Twitter has attracted global attention because of its rapid growth. As of August 2010 Twitter had 124 million users worldwide. If it were a country it would be the eight largest in the world by population. Almost two in five of all Twitter users worldwide were from Asia as of August 2010 (37 per cent), well ahead of North America (31 per cent) where Twitter initially flourished. South America was third, with 15 per cent of all users. Of the three countries whose population uses Twitter the most, two are in Asia. It is understandable that the United States should head the list because Twitter was invented there. The United States registered a quarter of all Twitter traffic in July 2010, followed by Japan with 18 per cent and Indonesia with 12 per cent. Asia is experiencing the fastest growth in Twitter adoption.**

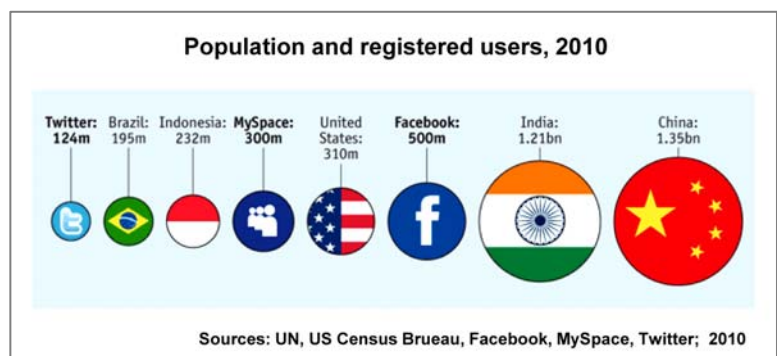
This chapter will show that disasters and big news stories tend to boost people's use of Twitter, along with major political events such as elections. Australia had a federal election in August 2010 and Twitter was involved in the electoral process in a range of ways. Candidates used it to deliver their message, journalists monitored it to follow breaking news, and political parties delivered their policies via Twitter links to web sites. Malcolm Turnbull, the former leader of the federal opposition in Australia, believes that politicians are in the communication business, which means they need to use every means available to them. "Social media in particular enable politicians

to communicate directly with the electorate without being edited or filtered by the traditional news media."

Twitter is important in Australia because more than 9 million Australians visit social networking sites a month, in an adult population of about 17 million, as of August 2010. Indeed, Australians are the world's biggest users of social networks and social media. A Nielsen study conducted for the first three months of 2010 showed Australians spent an average of almost eight hours a month with Facebook.

A year earlier another Nielsen study reported that Australians spent six hours and 52 minutes a month on social networks. By comparison, the average for people from the United States for the same period was six hours and nine minutes, followed by United Kingdom users with six hours and seven minutes.

The average Australian Internet user devotes almost a full day a month to online activities (23 hours and 58 minutes). Google attracts the biggest audience but Facebook was Australia's favourite online hangout, followed by MySpace and Twitter. More than 9 million Australians were registered Facebook users, as of March 2010. About 3 million Australian logged on daily, Matt Hehman, a vice-president at Facebook, said in an email interview.



A typical daily user spends an average of 22 minutes a day on the site. That is more time than most people spend reading a newspaper each day.

#### How Twitter works

Twitter is called micro-blogging because people only have a maximum of 140 characters in which to write a blog post, known as a tweet. These tweets are displayed on the author's profile page and are delivered to the author's subscribers, known as followers. Each Twitter user selects a unique name, sometimes known as a "handle", with the @ symbol at the start. Thus the Twitter name of the author of this chapter is @sraqinn

People send and receive tweets via the Twitter website ([twitter.com](http://twitter.com)), or through short message service (SMS) texts, or through external applications on computers, or via smart-phones like an iPhone or a Blackberry. Tweeting is free from a computer, but costs money via a mobile phone. For that reason two thirds of people tweet from their computer.

Founder Evan Williams described Twitter as an information network, rather than a social network. "It tells people what they care about as it is happening in the world." Details about its origins can be found in the first chapter of this book. By March 2010 more than 70,000 registered applications had been created for the micro-blogging platform. An unknown number of people use Twitter via these applications, so the figure of 123 million users mentioned in the opening paragraph is a conservative estimate because it only measures people who use Twitter via the home page ([twitter.com](http://twitter.com)).

Co-founder Biz Stone told the company's first developer conference in San Francisco on 20 April 2010 that Twitter continued to grow by 300,000 users a day – a rate much higher than analysts' estimates. At the time Twitter had 180 million unique visitors a month, its users sent 55 million new tweets each day, and the company received 600 million search queries every day. In April 2010 the company had 170 employees, up from about 45 in May 2009, Stone said.

User growth has been huge: By the end of 2007 Twitter's users had posted about

500,000 tweets per quarter. By the end of 2008, the number had jumped to 100 million tweets per quarter. And by the end of 2009 it was 2 billion tweets per quarter. In the first three months of 2010, 4 billion tweets per quarter were posted.

As of mid April 2010, venture capitalists had invested about \$155 million in the San Francisco-based company. The most recent cash injection, in October 2009, valued the privately held Twitter at about \$1 billion, despite the fact it had no significant revenues. By comparison, in 2009 Google attracted advertising revenue of almost \$23 billion. Twitter's search engine processes about 30 million searches a month in the United States, comScore said, compared with Google's 10 billion.

The demographics of MySpace show the biggest audience is the 14-28 age group, while Facebook tends to be most popular with the 24-34 demographic. The biggest group of Twitter users are aged 35 or older. Many had not used other social sites before joining Twitter. Jeremiah Owyang, an American industry analyst studying social media, noted: "Adults are just catching up to what teens have been doing for years." A mere 11 per cent of Twitter's users are aged 12 to 17, web analyst firm comScore confirmed.

This chapter looks at journalists' use of Twitter in Australia, with a particular focus on the *Geelong Advertiser*, a daily newspaper in Victoria. As of August 2010 it was probably the most Twitter-focused newspaper in Australia. Indeed, the *Geelong Advertiser* is often identified as one of the most innovative dailies in the Asia-Pacific region. The Pacific Area Newspaper Publishers' Association named the *Geelong Advertiser* newspaper of the year in 2008 and 2009 in the 20,000 to 50,000 circulation category, and it is a finalist for the 2010 awards as well.

#### Twitter and the news

Twitter received significant publicity when gunmen attacked hotels in Mumbai in India in November 2008. Wikipedia said eyewitnesses sent about 80 tweets every 5 seconds during the sieges that lasted for several days. Twitter users sent out vital information such as emergency phone numbers and the location of hospitals needing

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### Asia's Media Innovators

by Stephen Quinn

September 2010 – Chapter Six

blood donations. CNN called 26 November 2008 “the day that social media appeared to come of age”.

A major news event early the next year gave Twitter even more publicity. In January 2009 a US Airways flight ditched in the Hudson River after birds flew into its engines causing them to stall. Several boats and ferries went to help passengers. Janis Krums, a passenger on one of the ferries, took a picture of the downed plane with his mobile phone as passengers were being rescued, and sent it to Twitpic, a part of Twitter that shows photographs (<http://twitter.com/jkrums/status/1121915133>). This is believed to be the first tweet about the aircraft in the Hudson River that contained a photograph. Mainstream news media such as CNN distributed that photograph widely, further enhancing Twitter's reputation as a source of breaking news.

The next month bushfires ravaged the state of Victoria in Australia, causing the largest single loss of life in that country's history. The Country Fire Authority used Twitter to send out regular alerts and updates. The event on February 7 became known as the

“Black Saturday” bushfires. Australia's then prime minister, Kevin Rudd, used his Twitter account to spread information about the fires. He asked people to donate money and blood, and suggested where fire victims could seek help. Rudd was deposed as prime minister on 24 June 2010 but remains the undisputed king of Twitter users in Australia, with 944,118 followers (@kruddmp) as of August 2010.

The website of the national broadcaster, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, covered the bushfires story in full, with an interactive map, photographs and videos sent by viewers. It also included numerous tweets (@abcnews) giving the location of the worst fires, and the places where people died. Full details of the disaster can be found at Wikipedia at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black\\_Saturday\\_bushfires](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_Saturday_bushfires)

Journalists from *The Age* newspaper in Victoria tweeted about the fires (@theage). A rival daily paper, the *Herald Sun*, was new to Twitter at the time and did not post many updates. *The Sydney Morning Herald* similarly was not involved with Twitter, though its web site offered a fascinating story about using new technology to find victims of the fires. Caroline Overington, a reporter with *The Australian*, was one of the country's first reporters to provide coverage of the aftermath of the Black Saturday bushfires on Twitter (@overingtonc).

Research reported in the May 2008 edition of *New Scientist* magazine found that blogs and micro-blogging systems like Twitter did a better job of distributing information during emergencies than either traditional news media or government emergency services. During the fires in California in October 2007, for example, people kept their Twitter followers informed of the location of various blazes minute by minute. Relief organisations have also started using Twitter to support rescue efforts. The American Red Cross has

“There's a plane in the Hudson [...] Crazy.”



Photo by @jkrums

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by Stephen Quinn

September 2010 – Chapter Six

started using Twitter (@RedCross) to exchange information about local disasters.

Protests in the aftermath of elections in Iran in June 2009 further accelerated the size of Twitter's audience. It gained about 7 million new visitors that month and its website attracted a total of 44.5 million unique visitors worldwide, according to comScore. Tech industry analysts said Twitter was better able to resist the Iranian government's attempts to block access to communications links because users could post updates via a mobile phone's text-messaging service, or SMS.

"Twitter is a unique property because it works easily with SMS," one analyst said. "That gives it a resiliency that isn't shared by other online-only sites such as Facebook," he said. To block Twitter Iran would have either had to shut down text messaging on a one-to-one basis, a tedious and time-intensive process, or shut down text messaging throughout the country. The latter is unlikely because of the inconvenience it would cause for business.

People who use Twitter regularly will be familiar with hashtags, used to aggregate comments on a specific topic. Each hashtag is unique. For example, the main hashtag used for the Australian federal election in August 2010 was #ausvotes.

Twitter also featured in the reporting of disasters and protests around the world in 2009 and early 2010, further enhancing twitter's reputation as a place to find breaking news. Some of these events included the riots in Urumqi in north-west China in July 2009, the suicide bombings at the J.W. Marriott and Ritz-Carlton hotels in Jakarta the same month; the earthquakes in Haiti in January 2010; and the on-going protests in Thailand in 2010.

**Twitter as newsgathering tool**

Astute journalists have come to appreciate the potential of Twitter a newsgathering tool. Paul Nolan is deputy editor at the *Geelong Advertiser* in Victoria in Australia, with special responsibilities for online. In January 2010 he ran a series of training programs for his editorial staff to introduce them to Twitter. The *Geelong Advertiser* is now probably the most Twitter-focused print publication in the southern hemisphere. Nolan said Twitter was a great new tool for

newsgathering, describing it as the "cutting edge of up-to-the-minute crowd-sourced journalism". It was also useful to generate conversations between journalists and the people they followed.

Good stories have come from using Twitter. Soon after the initial training, Nolan and reporter Jessica Craven tweeted: "know anything about the woman rushed to Geelong hospital after being bitten by a croc?" This tweet generated a flurry of activity and led to emails that produced a most usual story. Crocodile attacks are very rare in Victoria in Australia. "This story was well away from any news agenda created by public relations staff," Nolan said. "This was an unusual story that we would probably not have got without Twitter."

Nolan encourages *Geelong Advertiser* reporters to follow a simple process: Create an account and find people to follow. Then generate followers through intelligent use of tweets. Upload photographs and provide links to good *Advertiser* stories using the URL-shortening service that Twitter tools offer. "The key is to begin a conversation with our many audiences," Nolan said.

Former *Advertiser* editor Peter Judd started tweeting about major news stories at the newspaper's web site. Each morning from early 2009 he issued four or five tweets, each with a link to a major story on the paper's web site. Initially the process only occurred in the morning. Now stories are tweeted during the working day, and the newspaper's Twitter account has generated a sizeable following. As of August 2010 @geelongaddy had about 850 followers.

Research has shown the power of tweets to send audiences to web sites. Jacob Harris, a reporter with *The New York Times*, told the "Chirp" conference – Twitter's first developers' conference – in San Francisco in April 2010 that someone tweeted a link to a *New York Times* story once every four seconds. Analysts estimate that Twitter generates about 10 per cent of the traffic to the newspaper's web site – about 2 million unique page views a month.

In January 2010 a Geelong woman tweeted live updates as she gave birth to her first child – believed to be one of the more unusual uses of Twitter. Amanda Williams

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by Stephen Quinn

September 2010 – Chapter Six

described the birth of her baby daughter, starting from when she was induced at St John of God Hospital on January 20. "Almost 200 followers read about mucus plugs, contractions, catheters and an epidural until there were complications and she was taken into theatre for a C-section," wrote reporter Jessica Craven (@JessCraven).

Amanda Williams maintained a humorous commentary, warning her Twitter followers she would be talking of "unmentionables". By mid morning on April 21 Amanda Williams wrote: "Water broken two hours ago. Disgusting, now having intense contractions. Oh f--- it hurts!" At 11.20am she posted "I'm not sure what getting kicked in the balls feels like but this is gotta be worse right?" Soon after she tweeted: "Time for the epidural" and then "Epidural working a treat. Time for a rest while the drugs do their work." But after her 1.26pm post the tweets stopped. She had been taken to an operating theatre.

Mrs Williams was back micro-blogging after her caesarean surgery, and posted a photo of her baby. "Baby and I are doing very well! I didn't feel a thing and we got to meet our baby finally! She breastfed well and weighs 3.07kg," Mrs Williams wrote just after 4.30pm.

#### Recommended Twitter tools

Paul Nolan recommends a series of applications that link to Twitter that are useful for reporting. More are discussed at the end of this chapter. "I use Twitterfall to search what is happening now," he said (<http://twitterfall.com/>) "and to monitor trending topics." Copy editors at the newspaper use Twitter to seek ideas for headlines from reporters and the general public.

For example, one editor tweeted: "I'm writing a headline for page 3 story about Geelong's push to lure [the cyclist] Lance Armstrong. Any suggestions?" A reader with the Twitter handle @brett\_smith replied: "How about Geelong wants Lance-a-lot?"

One reporter tweeted that she was on her way to the nearby suburb of Lara after reports of a three-car accident on the highway near the suburb. At the scene she tweeted: "Two dead, one injured; road

blocked Melbourne bound" before uploading photographs via Twitpic. The story attracted a large audience as it developed during the day.

Nolan said journalism could become even more exciting as reporters started using Twitter in new ways. "Imagine a political party shut away voting on who will be their next leader. A journalist with good contacts inside the room could get a scoop when the contact direct messages the reporter with the result of the vote." A direct message in Twitter is like a one-to-one email message that no-one else can see. "Something like this could change the face of reporting in Australia," Nolan said.

Nolan's words were prophetic. Twitter emerged as a major player in federal politics in December 2009 and June 2010. In December 2009 federal opposition MPs voted to choose a new leader and elected Tony Abbott, who went on to contest the federal election in August 2010. Academic Julie Posetti later wrote about how political journalists in the capital "shared the news with their Twitter followers before they filed it to their employers, signalling a fundamental shift in practice".

Twitter was even more involved in the reporting of the deposing of prime minister Kevin Rudd on 24 June 2010. His deputy, Julia Gillard, and a group of supporters convinced Rudd to step down as leader, arguing that the ruling Labor party had "lost its way" and news of the coup spread quickly on Twitter before even radio could report events. Gillard as prime minister called a federal election on 17 July 2010.

#### Tweeting court reports

On 6 October 2009 two journalists at the Federal Court in Sydney in Australia pioneered a new method of court reporting – by tweets. Technology journalists Andrew Colley from *The Australian*, and Liam Tung from the website ZDNet Australia started using the micro-blogging site to publish running reports of a landmark copyright case being heard before judge Dennis Cowdroy. The story was big news in Hollywood because of the likely impact on the movie business. Colley started his blow-by-blow coverage on October 6, the first day of the trial, and Tung started the next day. This was the first example of court

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by Stephen Quinn

September 2010 – Chapter Six

reporting via Twitter in Australia. The reporters published their tweets using their personal Twitter feeds. They identified themselves as journalists and named their media organisations. Both used laptop computers because mobile phones and recording devices are prohibited in court.

The judge, Justice Cowdroy, soon became aware of what was happening but opted not to stop them. "On the basis that Twittering does not distract or interfere with the conduct of my court, I personally have no objection to its use," he told *The Australian*. "I believe that the public has a legitimate right to be fully informed of proceedings, particularly proceedings such as cases which have attracted considerable public interest. Twittering can serve to inform the public in a more speedy and comprehensive manner than may be possible through traditional media coverage."

Blogger Stilgherrian commented on the tweeting of the court case in a post on 14 October 2009: "I've live-tweeted quite a few events now," he said, "and it's hard work. The process of trying to understand what's happening and distilling it into pithy comments and getting them out there – especially if it's within Twitter's 140-character limit – is one hell of a cognitive load. The 'fair and accurate' of courtroom reporting would be an added burden."

On 19 October 2010 Sally Jackson reported in *The Australian* that the Federal Court decided it would allow individual judges to decide whether to let cases to be covered from within their courtrooms on new platforms such as Twitter. It must be remembered that while reporters are twittering, people outside the court are interacting with them by commenting on posts and offering different points of view and opinions. The whole process is visible to anyone in or outside the court with a mobile phone or a laptop with Internet access.

Stuart Kennedy, editor of *The Australian's* IT section, said the newspaper had decided to discontinue live tweeting from the courtroom, pending a wider analysis of the potential risks and benefits of using the micro-blogging platform to cover such stories. "We're looking at all of the legal issues around tweeting from a courtroom and on a production level, looking at how

we can maximise our reporters' efforts in terms of making use of those tweets on our website," Kennedy said.

Meanwhile, ZDNet's Tung continued to cover the story via Twitter, and ZDNet published his tweets on its website: [www.zdnet.com.au/afact-vs-iinet-live-courtside-twitter-feed-339298920.htm](http://www.zdnet.com.au/afact-vs-iinet-live-courtside-twitter-feed-339298920.htm)

Kennedy said it was "very difficult" to maintain a fair and accurate account of proceedings in 140 character bursts. "It's also fair to say that due to the fact that tweets are going through unfiltered, it doesn't give our legal team a chance to look over them and provide advice on any coverage, which may be contentious legally."

#### Media companies and Twitter policy

This introduces the key issue of media companies and their policies regarding social media. In September 2009 journalists at *The Australian Financial Review*, Australia's national financial daily, were asked to sign an ethics policy in which they could be disciplined for taking part in political debates on social media sites and blogs.

Australian author and blogger Margaret Simons said the prohibition in using social networking and blogs for anything other than personal purposes was controversial, given that many journalists were increasingly using Twitter and Facebook to promote and take part in debate about their stories. "Journalists are only allowed to use Facebook, Twitter, blogs, wikis, forums and 'other websites that invite community participation in a strictly personal capacity'," Simons wrote about the newspaper's policy.

"Social networking is going to become one of the main ways in which people discover media content online in the future. It is also going to become vital to journalists, particularly freelancers, in building reputations and followers as the institutional media declines. Very soon now, a journalist without an active social network will be next to invisible. On the other hand, reporters are kidding themselves if they think they cannot or should not be held to account for what they do and say on Twitter and the like," Simons wrote in her blog *The Content Makers* (<http://blogs.crikey.com.au/contentmakers>).

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### Asia's Media Innovators

by Stephen Quinn

September 2010 – Chapter Six

The *Geelong Advertiser* has also been using a live-blogging software tool called CoverItLive since early 2009. Tweets from reporters in the field are now embedded in the CoverItLive blog site, along with photo-graphs. Some of the reporters who have embraced Twitter have developed large groups of followers by focusing on a specialist subject. Junior reporter Sophie Smith writes about cycling for the newspaper and has a large following for her regular tweets (@SophieSmith86).

#### Dangers of fake tweets

One of the fears many journalists express when discussing Twitter is the possibility of breaking news based on a fake tweet. How can we know a tweet is legitimate? That is the role of the next section of this chapter. Meanwhile, it is informative to look at the wide range of fake Twitter accounts used during the Australian federal election.

The @JuliaGillardPR account was one of a handful of fake sites pretending to represent the prime minister, Julia Gillard. The site used an official-looking photograph taken from the prime minister's real Twitter site (@JuliaGillard) and a link to the prime minister's official web site in the capital, Canberra. So did another fake site, Gillie\_THE\_PM. This site's biography on Twitter showed it was a fake site: "Marxist member of the Aussie ALP, now PM of Wales & Australia. Kevin is leaving soon to join the UN. Wireless Washing Machine Freak. Good question, yes I'm sexy." In mid 2010 Twitter introduced a process of verifying real accounts, signified by a blue tick on the site, and reporters should look for that blue tick when checking Twitter accounts.

Tony Abbott, the leader of the opposition, attracted several Twitter parodies including "The Mad Monk" (@PhoneyTony) whose bio said: "not to be mistaken for `phoney\_tony,' future leader of the free world. Mega Catholic. Beach Bunny." The @phoney\_tony account had a bio that described him as "Leader of the Opposition for Opposition's sake. Member for the Gospel Truth (except in the heat of the moment)." Another fake account (@tonyabbottmp) looked very real but the biography "Federal Member for Warringah. Shadow Minister for everything Holy" gave it away.

Many of the descriptions in the biographies above contained references that only people who follow Australian federal politics would understand, such as the fact the prime minister was born in Wales, or the fact the leader of the opposition espoused strong Catholic views and had been shown on television on the beach in a brief swimming costume.

When a journalist encounters a tweet that would make news, they should go to the Twitter page and read related tweets around the tweet they found. Often people have posted a follow-up tweet, or have written something before the breaking news tweet, which contains useful information. This could provide extra context for a story. More importantly, it can help to verify that person is who they say they are. Journalists should also read the biography (known as the "bio") on the user's page, and read any links to home pages or blogs. Journalists should also send a direct message to that person and ask for their phone number to contact them. This is probably the quickest way to check the identity of a Twitter user. A direct message in Twitter is like an email that only that person can read. It does not appear in the Twitter stream.

Read as much as you can of a contributor's Twitter stream. Check the kinds of people they interact with. This will provide more background on them. Google their Twitter name because sometimes people use a Twitter handle as their user name on other sites. Type the phrase in quote marks into Google's search bar: "site:twitter.com in-text:bio \* [search term]". Make sure to leave spaces on either side of the asterisk, and choose a relevant search term.

Locate the person's LinkedIn site or their Facebook page, or any other sites that will provide information about who they are. Be sceptical. The more information people offer and the more open they are, the more likely they are legitimate. The reverse applies as well.

With breaking news check for similar tweets. If someone says they heard an explosion in a city, what are other people in that city tweeting about? If a range of diverse people are tweeting about an event all at the same time, and they don't appear related from looking at their accounts,

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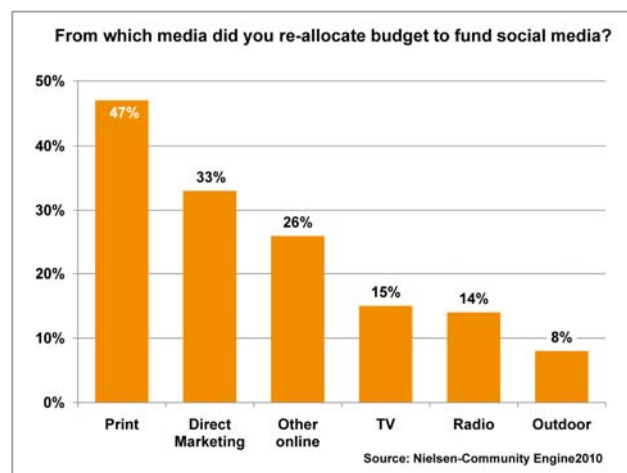
by Stephen Quinn

September 2010 – Chapter Six

something important might be happening. Remember that many journalists reported silly errors about the Mumbai hotel attacks in November 2008 because they re-tweeted information from people who had Indian-sounding names. But many of those people were not in or near Mumbai, and could not have been eye-witnesses.

**Social media and media houses**

Newspapers need to consider their social media strategies as a matter of urgency, given the way that audiences are migrating to social networking and social media sites, because eventually advertising follows audiences. In Australia, the number of organisations using social media almost doubled in the past two years, the inaugural Nielsen-Community Engine 2010 social media business benchmarking study reported in April 2010. About 70 per cent of all Australian businesses intended to conduct some form of social media activity in 2010, compared with only 40 per cent in 2008.



These organisations have recognised that they risk failing to connect with a significant online constituency if they do not incorporate social media in their marketing. The study found that many businesses were actively moving a large part of their marketing budgets out of traditional media into social media. The greatest budget shifts came from print media (47 per cent) and direct marketing (33 per cent).

Piers Hogarth-Scott, managing director of Community Engine, said the study was the first in-depth look at the way Australian organisations were engaging with social media. The results have "substantial implications" for business. "This study reveals that corporate Australia has not just woken up to

social media, but has seized on it as a vitally important addition to their marketing and business toolbox," Hogarth-Scott said.

The survey found that more than half of large businesses had allocated funds away from traditional media to fund social media. For example, in March 2010 budget airline Jetstar announced its decision to redeploy 40 per cent of its marketing budget into social media, and away from traditional forms of advertising.

According to the study, 50 per cent of businesses agreed they risked losing touch with their customers if they did not employ social media. The figure was even higher (62 per cent) for big businesses. About 26.5 per cent of Australian businesses had a Facebook presence in early 2010, with 17 per cent on Twitter, 10 per cent on YouTube and 5 per cent on MySpace.

Melanie Ingrey, research director of Nielsen's online division, noted substantial growth in the number of consumers engaging with companies via social media in the past year, up from 23 per cent in 2008 to 38 per cent in 2009. "Australian organisations cannot afford to overlook social media as a highly effective means of engaging with their customers and stakeholders," she said. More than half (54 per cent) of organisations said they already had a formal social media strategy in place or were developing one in 2010.

**Resources about Twitter**

Here is a list of useful tools and videos for journalists that relate to Twitter. Most have no commercial connection with Twitter, but were started by journalists interested in the potential of Twitter for reporting.

**Twitter Journalism**

([www.twitterjournalism.com](http://www.twitterjournalism.com))

is a collaborative blog focusing on Twitter's impact on journalism. It provides related resources and analysis. Craig Kanalley (@ckanal) started the blog in June 2009. He was the founder and editor of **Breaking Tweets** ([www.breaking-tweets.com](http://www.breaking-tweets.com)) which launched in January 2009.



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## Asia's Media Innovators

by Stephen Quinn

September 2010 – Chapter Six

**Media Twitter** (<http://media.twitter.com/>) describes itself as tools to help people to use Twitter to “transform media, entertainment and journalism”.

The **Mashable** blog has produced a series of guidebooks about digital tools. The guidebook about Twitter (<http://mashable.com/guidebook/twitter/>) is impressive in its depth and breadth of information.



**Social Media Today** has a useful post ([www.socialmediatoday.com/SMC/189327](http://www.socialmediatoday.com/SMC/189327)) that describes 50 ways to search for information with Twitter.

**Tweetscan** (<http://tweetscan.com/>) is like a search tool for tweets. Insert words that interest you, such as earthquake or riot or protest and see who is twittering about these things.

**weetGrid** (<http://tweetgrid.com/>) is similar to Tweetscan. Here is a video about how to use TweetGrid: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=WsvQh2tRIsI](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WsvQh2tRIsI).

**Twittervision** (<http://twittervision.com/>) is a map of the world in which tweets appear from the continent of origin. Mesmerising.

**Twitscoop** ([www.twitscoop.com](http://www.twitscoop.com)) offers a useful way to see what the blogosphere is saying. Results are displayed in a tag cloud. Pierre Stanislas, one of the developers in Paris, said Twitscoop crawls in excess of 20,000 tweets an hour.

**Picfog** (<http://picfog.com/>) shows a stream of photographs uploaded to Twitter. It is possible to choose images from a specific area or city via the site's database. Some of the content is risqué.

Watch this YouTube video **Twitter in plain English**, by the talented Lee LeFever, to learn more about Twitter: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=ddO9idmax0o](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ddO9idmax0o).

### Some final words

Elisabeth Murdoch, CEO of the Shine television production company and the daughter of media baron Rupert, believes social media is the key to media's economic future. “Audiences expect more and they want to be involved more,” she told the January 2010 annual conference of the National Association of Television Program Executives in Las Vegas. “If you engage them [audiences], I believe they will pay more. This change is the answer to our economic problems. Social networking is nothing less than Web 3.0.”

“Social networks are the interactive dimension of storytelling. We now need to evolve with our audience. To resist this would be like resisting Technicolor,” *Broadcasting & Cable* magazine reported her as saying. □