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# 'Tweet-tweet' latest fad in Internet sharing

Kara Andrade  
SAN FRANCISCO  
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TWEET, tweet, tweet.

Internet and mobile phone message boards are atwitter with Twitter, the raging online trend to share one's every move with friends Haiku-style every moment of the day.

Twitter users get a maximum of 140 characters a shot to answer the question "What are you doing?"

A relentless flood of "tweets" as seemingly mundane as "I'm boiling water" or "Walking the dog" relentlessly flood members' emails, instant message boards and a public timeline on the twitter.com website.

"The first reaction is to hate it because it's seen as the most useless thing in the world and no one would ever want to know about boiling water," Twitter founder and chief executive Jack Dorsey told AFP.

"But these small details in life are what connect us most. Everyone has these specific moments and you normally don't bring them up in conversation because it seems so trivial but it's not, it's really important."

Twitter is run by Dorsey's ten-person San Francisco start-up Obvious.

Twitter's website uses instant messaging software to continually update a public timeline with terse sentences from "twitters" telling what they are doing that instant.

Twitters get seconds of fame at the top of the timeline before being bumped down by the next message in a perpetually repeating cycle.

Twitters can track their friends in the network but strangers or "followers" can also get people's tweets.

Some people simply sit and watch the timeline roll by, said Twitter designer Biz Stone.

Stone, 31, says the vision of Twitter as the future of communication came clear to him weeks ago when a tweet from friends told him of a California earthquake as he was about

to get on an underground train in the state.

"It was an immediate pulse that sums up the zeitgeist of Twitter," Stone said.

Inspiration for Twitter comes from Dorsey's experience writing software for courier and emergency services dispatchers that need to quickly route people between locations.

Twitter technology is not new, said University of California, Berkeley, information school professor Coye Cheshire.

What is new is that Twitter messages can be fired around the world on the Internet, where people can subscribe and use small software programs called "widgets" to get constant feeds of updates, Cheshire said.

"Twitter doesn't use up too much of your time," Cheshire told AFP.

"It's quick and easy and that's not trivial, it's really significant. It also introduces a new way of recalling information that's not journaling or blogging."

Dorsey says he measures the success of Twitter by the fact that his parents use it.

Twitter, which launched in March of 2006, does not release figures about the number of users.

Analytics company Hitwise reports that number of visitors to Twitter leapt 55 percent in just the week ending March 17, 2007.

Twitter is an open software platform that can be mixed with other applications to create "mash-ups" such as Twitvision, which overlays Twitter's timeline onto Google Maps to show what people are up to worldwide.

There is even a Twitterholic website for popular twitters.

Podtech.net media strategist Jeremiah Owyang says that as with much online life it is necessary to filter out "noise" on Twitter.

"There are people who talk about their frivolous daily activities," Owyang told AFP. "I remove them. For me it's more of a business communication tool than a frivolous personal introspection tool."

Twitter is something he recommends to his clients, many of who work for Fortune 500 companies.

Josh Bancroft, a self-deemed "social media evangelist" who works for Intel Software Network, said he introduced Twitter to co-workers at the US computer chip company.

Bancroft says he has sent more than 1,044 twitters and claims it helps him stay connected to what's going on in his industry.

"These tools are out there, they are free and easy to use," Bancroft said, referring to

Twitter.

"Some of these things are fads that are going away, but some of them aren't. Some of them help guide and direct our attention or scatter us to the four winds."

AFP

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