

Actor Ashton Kutcher, CNN in Twitter duel

April 16 2009, by Chris Lefkow



US actor Ashton Kutcher, seen here in January 2009, is in a race with 24-hour news channel CNN to see who can be the first to amass one million followers on micro-blogging service Twitter. Kutcher promised that if he beats CNN, he will donate 10,000 mosquito nets to a charity fighting the disease in Africa and give his millionth follower a copy of the videogame "Guitar Hero."

Hollywood actor Ashton Kutcher has challenged CNN to an online duel.

The star of the television series "That '70s Show" and husband of actress Demi Moore is in a race with the 24-hour [news](#) channel to see who can be the first to amass one million followers on micro-blogging service [Twitter](#).

Kutcher, whose Twitter handle is @aplusk, threw down the gauntlet to the Atlanta-based Cable News Network earlier this week after noticing that he had nearly as many followers on his Twitter account as CNN.

"I found it astonishing that one person can actually have as big of a voice online as an entire media company can on Twitter," the 31-year-old Kutcher said in a video posted to Qik.com explaining his decision to take on CNN.

The actor said that if he reached one million followers ahead of CNN he would "ding, dong ditch" the house of CNN founder Ted Turner -- ring his doorbell and then run away.

Turner does not actually own CNN anymore but the network good-naturedly took up the challenge and taped a video response by talk show host Larry King.

"Hey Kutcher," King said. "Are you putting me on? Are you kidding? Do you think you can take on an entire network?"

"Do you know how big we are? Do you know what CNN is? Kutcher, you're playing out of your league. CNN will bury you," King joked.

Kutcher has since promised that if he beats CNN to one million followers he will donate 10,000 mosquito nets to a charity fighting the disease in Africa and give his millionth follower a copy of the videogame "Guitar Hero."

Videogame publisher [Electronic Arts](#) has also gotten into the act, announcing -- on its Twitter feed, of course -- that it would put Kutcher's one millionth follower in a Sims videogame and give them all of its 2009 titles for free.

At noon (1600 GMT) on Thursday, CNN's breaking news feed on Twitter -- @cnnbrk -- was leading the popularity contest with 966,363 followers to Kutcher's 953,268.

In a twist to the race, [CNN](#) acknowledged that it had not even owned the @cnnbrk account until this week and that it had only acquired it on Wednesday, from a British Web developer.

Kutcher, who has long had a passion for high-tech gadgets and regularly appears on panels at Web 2.0 conferences across the country to discuss "New Media," said he views his popularity as evidence of the rise of social media.

"I think it's a huge statement about social media for one person to actually have the ability to broadcast to as many people as a major media network," he said in a YouTube video.

"I think it sort of signifies the turning of the tide from traditional news outlets to social media outlets, social news outlets," Kutcher said.

"With our video cameras on our cellphones and our picture cams and our blogging and our Twittering and our posting and our Facebooking we actually become the source of the news and the broadcasters of the news and the consumers of the news," he said.

Kutcher is one of many celebrities who have adopted social networking tools such as Twitter, MySpace and Facebook in a bid to shape their own image and bypass the tabloids.

Moore, Kutcher's wife, is also on Twitter, sending out the updates of a maximum 140 characters under the handle @mrskutcher. She has nearly 550,000 followers herself.

In his race to one million followers, Kutcher sailed past another notable Twitter user -- pop singer Britney Spears, who has more than 915,000 followers.

Unlike Kutcher and Moore, however, most of the updates on Spears' Twitter feed are from her publicist.

(c) 2009 AFP

Citation: Actor Ashton Kutcher, CNN in Twitter duel (2009, April 16) retrieved 9 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2009-04-actor-ashton-kutcher-cnn-twitter.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--