

Ashton Kutcher wins Twitter battle with CNN

April 19 2009, By JAKE COYLE , AP Entertainment Writer



This image provided by CNN Larry King Live, shows Larry King interviewing Ashton Kutcher Friday April 17, 2009 regarding Twitter and Kutcher's "Twitter challenge" to CNN. Kutcher triumphed over CNN in their much ballyhooed race to be the first to reach a million followers on the microblogging Web site. Kutcher surpassed that benchmark in the early morning hours Friday, narrowly edging out the breaking news feed from the Time Warner Inc.-owned network. (AP Photo/CNN Larry King Live)

(AP) -- For now, Ashton Kutcher is the king of Twitter. But there is a new challenger - Oprah.

Kutcher triumphed over CNN in their much ballyhooed race to be the first to reach a million followers on the microblogging Web site. Kutcher surpassed that benchmark in the early morning hours Friday, narrowly edging out the breaking news feed from the Time Warner Inc.-owned

network.

Speaking in a live webcast early Friday, Kutcher took the tone of a revolutionary.

"We have shown the world that the new wave is here," Kutcher said on ustream.tv shortly after passing the million mark. "It is present and it is ready to explode. You guys are all of it because I can't follow me."

Kutcher had long trailed CNN, but he staged a rally in recent days that captured the attention of the Web. The million mark race was taken by many as a symbol of huge upswing of Twitter's popularity.

In recent months, the site has increased exponentially in visitors. The search engine Yahoo said Friday that searches for Twitter over the past four months increased more than 5,559 percent over the same time last year.

The site allows users to type "[tweets](#)" of 140 characters or less on their computers or cell phones, which others "follow" on Twitter like a stock ticker.

Kutcher, who's an avid user of the site along with wife Demi Moore, said Twitter is democratizing media and removing filters between celebrities and fans, big media companies and their customers.

"We can and will create our media," said Kutcher, who celebrated his victory with champagne and by posting the tweet: "Victory is ours!"

The 31-year-old Kutcher had claimed he would "ding-dong-ditch" CNN founder Ted Turner if he won, and pledged to make good on his promise after winning. Sean "Diddy" Combs was among the celebrity "Twitteratti" who supported his run.

CNN's Larry King posted a video earlier in the week, playfully threatening Kutcher: "CNN will bury you!" Kutcher was to appear on King's program Friday evening.

King was far from the only person sucked into Twitter by the million-mark showdown. Among the many new users to join was Oprah Winfrey, whose entry caused ripples across Twitter.

She gained more than 130,000 followers in less than a day, suggesting Winfrey - so successful in television, magazines, books and other media - would thrive on yet another platform.

Kutcher, [CNN](#) and Winfrey pledged to mark the occasion by purchasing mosquito bed nets to combat malaria. Kutcher donated \$100,000 to the Malaria No More Fund, the charity said Friday.

Winfrey hosted a [Twitter](#) special on her show Friday with Kutcher as a guest, connected through the Internet communications service Skype. She also sent her first tweet.

"I'm still not sure I get it," Winfrey said before tentatively typing "ASHTON IS NEXT" into a laptop, announcing the actor's appearance.

"OK, here goes," she said, pressing a key.

It didn't go, actually. Winfrey's representatives said she hit the wrong key. Her next attempt, also all in capital letters, went through: "HI TWITTERS. THANK YOU FOR A WARM WELCOME. FEELING REALLY 21st CENTURY."

On the Net:

<http://twitter.com>

<http://www.oprah.com>

<http://malariaanomore.org>

Associated Press Writer Rupa Shenoy in Chicago contributed to this report.

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