

Actual people physically gather to talk Twitter

September 23 2009, By SANDY COHEN , AP Entertainment Writer



Former professional wrestler The Iron Sheik, right, and comedians Loni Love, and Chris Hardwick pose together after speaking on a panel together during 140: The Twitter Conference LA in Los Angeles on Tuesday, Sept. 22, 2009. (AP Photo/Matt Sayles)

(AP) -- Twitter was a trending topic Tuesday - and not just on Twitter.

Actual people were physically gathered at the Skirball Cultural Center for the two-day conference dedicated to the micro-blogging site. Company co-founder Biz Stone opened the conference with a 40-minute speech about the origins of Twitter and its goal to make a positive global impact, citing the site's importance in organizing political protests worldwide.

The Twitter Conference boasted big names Tuesday, including San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom and pro skateboarder Tony Hawk. The event's Twitter tag - (#)140tc - was a trending topic by late afternoon.

Newsom, who spoke to conference guests via the Web telephone service Skype, said he is "trying to use Twitter and this technology to improve the governance of our city."

Hawk, meanwhile, took part in a panel on Twitter and celebrity with actors Tyrese Gibson and LeVar Burton and "Celebrity Rehab" host Dr. Drew Pinsky.

The skater, who famously posted a photo of himself skateboarding through the White House on his Twitter page, said he has "fully embraced" the site.

"I'm a full nerd," he said. "I'm a professional skateboarder. I'm in the White House. I'm (going to) tweet that up for sure."

Rapper Chamillionaire and Curt Smith of Tears for Fears participated in a panel on how musicians can benefit from the site.

Smith said Twitter allows him to "speak directly to people and it's not being translated by an interviewer or by a record company." It's also a great tool to knock down rumors, Chamillionaire said: "You can get straight to the point."

Burton echoed those sentiments. "It's put my career back in my hands," he said.

Ultimately, the celebrities said the site is most valuable for brand building - and apparently the Parnassus Group agrees. The Washington-

based company, which specializes in social media, put on the Twitter Conference even though Twitter is not among the clients it touts on its corporate Web site. Admission was \$429.

The [Twitter](#) Conference continues through Wednesday.

On the Net:

<http://www.140tc.com>

<http://www.twitter.com>

AP entertainment writer Sandy Cohen tweeted from the conference Tuesday. Follow her at <http://twitter.com/apsandy> .

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