Blogger 'tweets' attack on Osama bin Laden

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An IT consultant in the Pakistan city of Abbottabad was an Internet celebrity on Monday after unwittingly providing a real-time account of the attack that killed Osama bin Laden.

Sohaib Athar, who tweets under the name "ReallyVirtual," began sending Twitter messages complaining about helicopters hovering in an unusual early morning annoyance.

"Go away helicopter, before I take out my giant swatter," Athar pithily quipped in a "tweet" at the San Francisco based microblogging service.

That message was followed in rapid succession by tweets telling of a window-rattling blast, a helicopter crash, a family dying, and then soldiers cordoning off part of the neighborhood and searching door-to-door.

He eventually connected the ruckus to an announcement by US President Barack Obama that a US military team killed bin Laden in a surgical strike at a mansion in Abbottabad.

"There goes the neighborhood," Athar tweeted. "Uh oh, now I'm the guy who live-blogged the Osama raid without knowing it."

Athar's comments were zealously "re-tweeted" by other Twitter users and he was swamped with email messages and requests for interviews by the media. The number of people signed on to follow his messages surged to more than 15,000.

"People don't use Twitter here, hence they don't realize the attention they're getting," Athar said, referring to himself simply as a "tweeter" who happened to be awake when the action broke out. "Ignorance is bliss."