

Online revelry at Osama bin Laden's death

May 2 2011, by Glenn Chapman



The logo of social networking website Twitter. Word of Osama bin Laden's death has rocketed through the Internet in rapid-fire Twitter messages, Facebook updates, and YouTube video clips.

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The number of terse text message "[tweets](#)" at Twitter topped 4,000 per second while US President [Barack Obama](#) announced that the mastermind behind the 9/11 attacks was killed in Pakistan in a surgical strike by a US military team.

The barrage of tweets was among the highest message-sending outbursts at Twitter, which handled a record high number of 6,939 tweets-per-second when New Year's Eve 2010 arrived in Japan.

Messages tagged with "#osama" and "obl" quickly jumped to the top two spots in a list of the hottest topics at the global microblogging service.

"Twitter is our Times Square on this victory day," tweeted New York City journalism school professor Jeff Jarvis, who started his Buzz Machine blog online after being close to the World Trade Center when it was destroyed.

Word of bin Laden's death was apparently first leaked at Twitter in a public message sent by Keith Urbahn, chief of staff for former US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld.

"So I'm told by a reputable person they have killed Osama [Bin Laden](#)," read a [tweet](#) sent by Urbahn about an hour before president Obama announced the killing. "Hot damn."

An IT consultant in the Pakistan city of Abbottabad, who tweets under the name "ReallyVirtual," appeared to have unknowingly delivered a real-time account of the attack that killed bin Laden.

Sohaib Athar began tweeting messages about one in the morning local time complaining about helicopters hovering and then a window-rattling blast.

His series of messages at Twitter told of a helicopter crash, a family dying, and Pakistani military swarming the area.

"I am just a tweeter, awake at the time of the crash," he said in a Twitter message at 06:30 GMT on Monday.

"Uh oh, now I'm the guy who live-blogged the Osama raid without knowing it," he tweeted after connecting president Obama's announcement to what was taking place in his neighborhood.

By the time Sunday ended in California more than 265,000 people had "liked" an "Osama bin Laden is Dead" page at social networking service Facebook.

The Facebook page was packed with comments, videos and pictures, some purporting to be copies of graphic close-ups of bin Laden's mortally wounded body. Many of the comments lambasted the slain Al-Qaeda leader.

"This is an amazing day for the families of 9/11 victims," one Facebook user commented on the page.

In contrast, a set of English and Arabic Facebook pages titled "We are all Osama bin Laden" had logged fewer than 600 "likes."

"This page is a disgrace to Islam," a fresh comment at one of the pro-bin Laden pages read.

"He tarnished the name of Allah and (you are) proud?" the message continued. "May Allah have mercy on your ignorance."

Google-owned video sharing website YouTube dedicated part of its home page to clips related to bin Laden's death.

At geo-location service Foursquare, more than 185 people in San Francisco had "checked in" to a "Post-Osama bin Laden World" using their smartphones.

"Would've been nice to capture him alive and try him for crimes against humanity; show the world we stand for rule of law," Foursquare user 'Jonathan H.' commented with his check-in.

"But I'll take this close 2nd best and raise a glass to all who made this

happen."

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