

# Singapore PM finally taps into Facebook, Twitter

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Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong joined Facebook and Twitter on Friday to better connect with citizens who have increasingly vented their frustrations with his government on social media.

Lee, 60, said he decided to "join the fun" and set up a Facebook page with pictures going back to his childhood.

He also launched a Twitter account after being encouraged by cabinet colleagues who were already using the two social networking platforms.

"I hope you will find my Facebook page interesting. I will use it to talk about some of the things I am doing, and thinking about, but I would also like to hear from you," he said in his first post, signed with the initials LHL.

With the mainstream Singapore media widely seen as pro-government, an increasing number of Singaporeans have gone online to complain about everything from an influx of foreign workers to breakdowns in the metro train network.

The ruling People's Action Party, in power since 1959, suffered its worst setback in general elections in May 2011, winning an all-time low of 60 percent of the vote.

News portals and social media played a crucial role in shaping the political debate.

Lee's Facebook page surpassed 10,000 "likes" within hours while his Twitter account had several thousand followers.

His first tweet under the name "@leehsienloong" simply said "Just launched my Facebook and Twitter pages" and included the Facebook pagelink.

Lee received scorn from some followers.

"It's about time you come down from your Ivory Tower and touch the Ground," wrote one Facebook member who identified himself as Raul Panday.

Ten Kuet Fui Brovo wrote: "It's a good platform for you to connect with the ground, especially the young and restless."

The prime minister, in office since 2004, is the son of Singapore's first leader Lee Kuan Yew, 88, who retired from the cabinet after last year's polls but remains a member of parliament.

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