

A brief history of Twitter—in tweets

November 4 2013

Billions of messages are fired off each week via Twitter, many of which capture defining moments in history, or in the evolution of the San Francisco-based firm.

Below is a sampling of 10 memorable tweets since the Twitter era began.

"just setting up my twttr"

@jack

March 2006

Twitter co-founder Jack Dorsey sent the first [tweet](#), an automated message saying "just setting up my twttr." That same day, he sent the first live tweet, "inviting coworkers."

"Arrested"

@jamesbuck

April 2008

US university student James Buck got off a one-word tweet after being taken into custody by Egyptian authorities at an anti-government protest in that country. In what is seen as an early demonstration of the power of

Twitter to rally people to a cause, the resulting outcry prompted authorities to quickly restore his liberty. He proclaimed his release in a tweet reading "Free."

"There's a plane in the Hudson. I'm on the ferry going to pick up the people. Crazy."

@jkrums

January 2009

A US Airways jet crash-landed on the Hudson River in New York. This tweet and others by witnesses and passengers was accompanied by a link to a picture of the scene, breaking the news well ahead of mainstream media outlets.

"HI TWITTERS. THANK YOU FOR A WARM WELCOME.
FEELING REALLY 21st CENTURY"

@Oprah

April 2009

Talk show queen and media royalty Oprah Winfrey took Twitter mainstream with her debut post and now has more than 21 million followers.

"From orbit: Launch was awesome!! I am feeling great, working hard, & enjoying the magnificent views, the adventure of a lifetime has begun!"

@astro_mike

Astronaut Mike Massimino makes history with the first tweet from space.

"Twitter Revolution"

June 2009

Not a specific tweet, but an unofficial name given to a bold movement by thousands of Iranians who took to the streets to protest what they saw as a rigged presidential election and used Twitter to thwart government efforts to block them from communicating with one another and the world. Two years later, Twitter would become a vital tool used in "Arab Spring" series of uprisings in an array of countries in the Middle East and North Africa.

"Helicopter hovering above Abbottabad at 1AM (is a rare event)."

@ReallyVirtual

May 2011

IT consultant Sohaib Athar unknowingly tweeted about US Navy Seals raiding a nearby home in Pakistan where Osama bin Laden was hiding. Bin Laden was killed during the operation.

"Four more years"

@BarackObama

November 2012

US President Obama put out word of his election victory along with a picture of him and his wife, Michelle, hugging. The post was "retweeted" more than 800,000 times, becoming the most shared Twitter message to date.

"Dear [friends](#), I am pleased to get in touch with you through Twitter. Thank you for your generous response. I bless all of you from my heart."

@Pontifex

December 2012

Pope Benedict XVI launched the first papal Twitter account, which was continued by his successor, Pope Francis. The English-language papal account has more than three million followers, and a Spanish-language version four million.

"Power Out? No Problem. You can still dunk in the dark."

@Oreo

February 2013

A tweet fired off by the makers of Oreo cookies when a power outage interrupted the American football spectacle known as the Super Bowl was an instant hit, demonstrating the potential of Twitter to adapt cleverly to the real-time messaging platform.

"Breaking: Two Explosions in the White House and Barack Obama is injured."

April 2013

Hackers from a group calling itself the Syrian Electronic Army commandeered a news wire account and posted this bogus message, showing that Twitter has become such a trusted place for the latest information that it had become a target.

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