

## @millennials wary of @twitter, #MSU study finds

May 14 2014

---



"Our findings suggest young people are somewhat wary of information that comes from Twitter," said Kimberly Fenn, assistant professor of psychology at Michigan State University. Credit: Michigan State University

A new study indicates young adults have a healthy mistrust of the information they read on Twitter.

Nearly anyone can start a Twitter account and post 140 characters of information at a time, bogus or not, a fact the study's participants

seemed to grasp, said Kimberly Fenn, assistant professor of psychology at Michigan State University.

"Our findings suggest young people are somewhat wary of information that comes from Twitter," said Fenn, lead investigator on the study. "It's a good sign."

The study, funded by the National Science Foundation, is the first to examine social media and false memory. Participants were college students from the so-called Millennial Generation. Twitter, with 230 million users, is most popular among people in their teens and 20s.

Fenn and MSU colleagues showed 74 undergraduates a series of images on a computer that depicted a story of a man robbing a car. False information about the story was then presented in a scrolling text feed that bore a high resemblance to Twitter or in a feed from a more traditional online source.

The researchers tested whether the students integrated the bogus information into their minds, which psychologists call false memory. The results showed that when the participants read the "Twitter" feed, they were much less likely to form [false memories](#) about the story.

Fenn said the students were more mistrustful of the Twitter feed than they were of the more traditional feed.

"We propose [young adults](#) are taking into account the medium of the message when integrating information into memory," Fenn said.

The study appears online in the Springer research journal *Psychonomic Bulletin & Review*.

**More information:** Reference: Fenn, K. M. et al (2014). The effect of

Twitter exposure on false memory formation, *Psychonomic Bulletin & Review*. DOI 10.3758/s13423-014-0639-9

Provided by Michigan State University

Citation: @millennials wary of @twitter, #MSU study finds (2014, May 14) retrieved 17 July 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2014-05-millennials-wary-twitter-msu.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.