

Obama gets his own @POTUS account, joins Twitter age

May 18 2015, by Jim Kuhnenn



In a Thursday, May 14, 2015 file photo, President Barack Obama speaks during a news conference after meeting with Gulf Cooperation Council leaders and delegations at Camp David in Maryland. In a surprise announcement on Monday, May 18, 2015, coming nine months after police in riot gear dispelled racially charged protests, President Obama is banning the federal government from providing some military-style equipment to local departments and putting stricter controls on other weapons and gear distributed to law enforcement. (AP Photo/Pablo Martinez Monsivais, File)

President Barack Obama is embracing short-form communication. Twitter has a new account: @POTUS. Spelled out, that's President Of The United States.

For years, White House officials have used Twitter to communicate White House policy and occasional personal observations.

But Obama himself pretty much stayed out of the social media fray.

No longer.

With a frugal 92-character message—48 short of maximum permitted—Obama on Monday declared: "Hello, Twitter! It's Barack. Really! Six years in, they're finally giving me my own account."

The account name—@POTUS—stands for the common acronym used for President of the United States.

The White House says the tweets on that account will come exclusively from the president. The Obama-affiliated Organizing for Action group has an @BarackObama account and the White House has an @WhiteHouse handle, both mostly written by staff. Obama has on rare occasions used them, signing his personal messages with his initials, BO.

The move is the latest by a White House particularly attuned to social media and new digital technology. But Twitter, with its ability to be anonymously interactive, is a new forum for the president, even one who still carries his own Blackberry.

One interested party checked in with the president Monday afternoon:

"Welcome to @Twitter, @POTUS!" wrote @billclinton. "One question: Does that username stay with the office? #askingforafriend"

That was an unsubtle reference to his wife Hillary, who is again running for president.

Within the hour, Obama had replied: "Good question, @billclinton. The handle comes with the house. Know anyone interested in @FLOTUS?"

FLOTUS is First Lady of the United States.

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