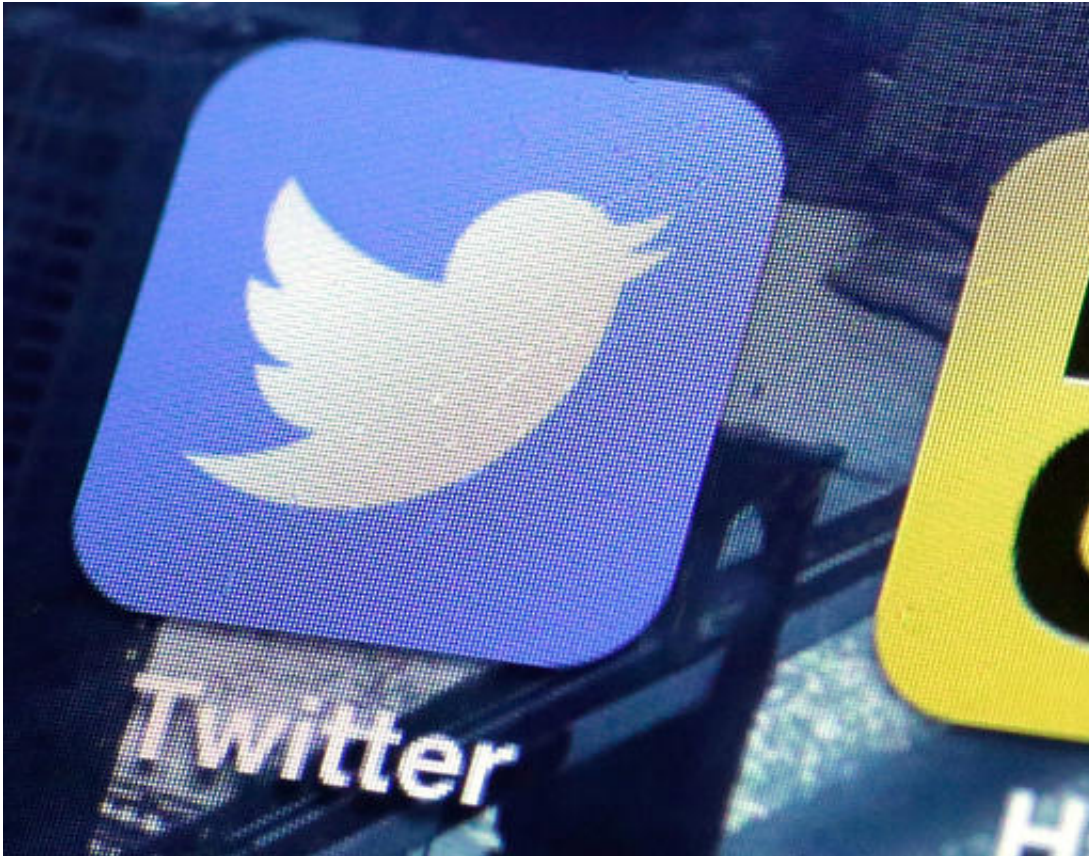


# Coming soon to Twitter: More room to tweet

May 24 2016

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This Friday, Oct. 18, 2013, file photo, shows a Twitter app on an iPhone screen, in New York. Twitter is giving users more room to express themselves. Photos, videos and other media won't count toward Twitter's 140-character limit in the coming months, giving users more space to write tweets, the company announced Tuesday, May 24, 2016. (AP Photo/Richard Drew, File)

Twitter is making some big changes, at least in the context of 140

characters or fewer.

The social media service said Tuesday that in coming months, photos, videos and other media won't count toward Twitter's 140-character limit. Now, for example, when a user posts a photo, it counts for about 24 characters.

That means slightly more wordy tweets are on the way.

The change, announced Tuesday, is yet another attempt by the San Francisco company to make its messaging service easier to use, and to attract new users.

Twitter did not, as many had speculated in recent months, abolish its character limit. Nor are weblinks exempt from the 140-character limit, which was also rumored.

But replies to another user, which start with the "@" symbol and the user's name, will not count against character limits. Names with the @ symbol in the middle of a tweet, however, will still count against the limit.

And people will be able to retweet and quote their own tweets.

In another change, any new tweet beginning with an @name will be seen by all followers. Previously, a tweet that started with a person's handle did not become part of their feed. If a user wanted this to happen, they had to put a period before the @ symbol.

Confusing? Some users thought so.

Twitter has tried to keep all users happy, those for and against relaxing character limits, by sticking to the current count while allowing more

freedom to express thoughts, or rants, through images and other media.

Above all, Twitter Inc. hopes that the changes will re-ignite user growth.

The company, which recently celebrated its 10th birthday, is dwarfed by its rival, Facebook. Its current number of users, about 310 million, trails even the professional networking service LinkedIn.

Facebook has 1.65 billion users. Even though many people are familiar with Twitter, at least that it exists, the company has been unable to convert them to active users. Twitter remains hard to understand for many, with its own lingo of hashtags and symbols.

The changes announced Tuesday are the latest put in place with hopes of spurring growth.

"It's a very user friendly change and it's about time," said Wedbush Securities analyst Michael Pachter. While he said the changes are not likely to bring back users who have abandoned the site, new users might be less alienated.

Abandoning the 140 character limit altogether would be going too far, he added.

"They want to be purists and stick to the original vision," he said "Baby steps. Let's start with that."

Late last year, as it continued to struggle, Twitter brought back co-founder Jack Dorsey. In addition to staff and cost cuts, it launched a channel called "Moments" that brings together hot topics in one place. Earlier this year, it tweaked its timeline to show users tweets that they may have missed while they were away.

Yet company shares continue to hemorrhage, falling almost 40 percent this year.

Twitter's stock hit an all-time low of \$13.73 on Tuesday before recovering some ground. It ended the day down 38 cents, or 2.6 percent, to \$14.03.

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