

# What do Trump's tweets say about his personality?

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The Twitter messages of Donald J. Trump, the entrepreneurial businessman turned US president, show that he is creative, competitive and a rule-breaker, but also has neurotic tendencies. An analysis of Trump's tweets and what implications his personality traits have for political leadership are the focus of a study published in Springer's journal *Small Business Economics*.

Since joining the social media platform Twitter in 2009 to May 2017, Trump has issued more than 35 000 messages. This amounts to about twelve tweets a day. With 30 million followers, he is the second most followed politician on Twitter after his predecessor, Barack Obama, who on average tweeted about four times a day.

The researchers, Martin Obschonka from the Australian Centre for Entrepreneurship Research at Queensland University of Technology in Australia, and Christian Fisch from Trier University in Germany analyzed how aspects of Trump's personality are revealed in the language he used in 3200 tweets issued by October 2016 (before he became president). They used established software for assessment of language and text for psychological purposes. Trump's language use and online personality were also compared with that of 105 other influential and famous business managers (including Google's Eric Schmidt, HP's Meg Whitman, and Apple's Tim Cook) and entrepreneurs (including Tesla's Elon Musk, Dell's Michael Dell, and Amazon's Jeff Bezos) who are not on the political stage.

Their results indicate that Trump is indeed a distinct type of person who shows strong features of a so-called Schumpeterian personality that is said to be typical of successful entrepreneurs. This personality was described by Joseph Schumpeter in the 1930s as being very creative, change-orientated, competitive and rule-breaking. The analysis further indicates that Trump has neurotic tendencies, and experiences underlying low well-

being.

"These traits are rather untypical for entrepreneurs since working as an [entrepreneur](#) may not only require emotional stability and optimism but also be able to increase happiness due to procedural utility," explains Obschonka, who adds that neuroticism isn't necessarily all bad, for it can also stimulate competitiveness.

"Maybe this high neuroticism is a major motivator to succeed in Trump's entrepreneurial projects in his business life, but also in his role as political leader," speculates Fisch.

"If social distinction is a core principle of the entrepreneurial personality, then we clearly see this principle reflected in his unusual personality profile," says Fisch. "Many experts agree that really successful entrepreneurs not only dare to be different - they are different."

The researchers speculate that having entrepreneurial personality traits could be advantageous in leading and governing an entrepreneurial society as a top-down process. But they stress that leading a company is very different from leading a country and it is unclear whether political leaders with an extremely entrepreneurial [personality](#) can indeed act strictly entrepreneurially in their highly responsible role.

**More information:** Martin Obschonka et al, Entrepreneurial personalities in political leadership, *Small Business Economics* (2017). [DOI: 10.1007/s11187-017-9901-7](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11187-017-9901-7)

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