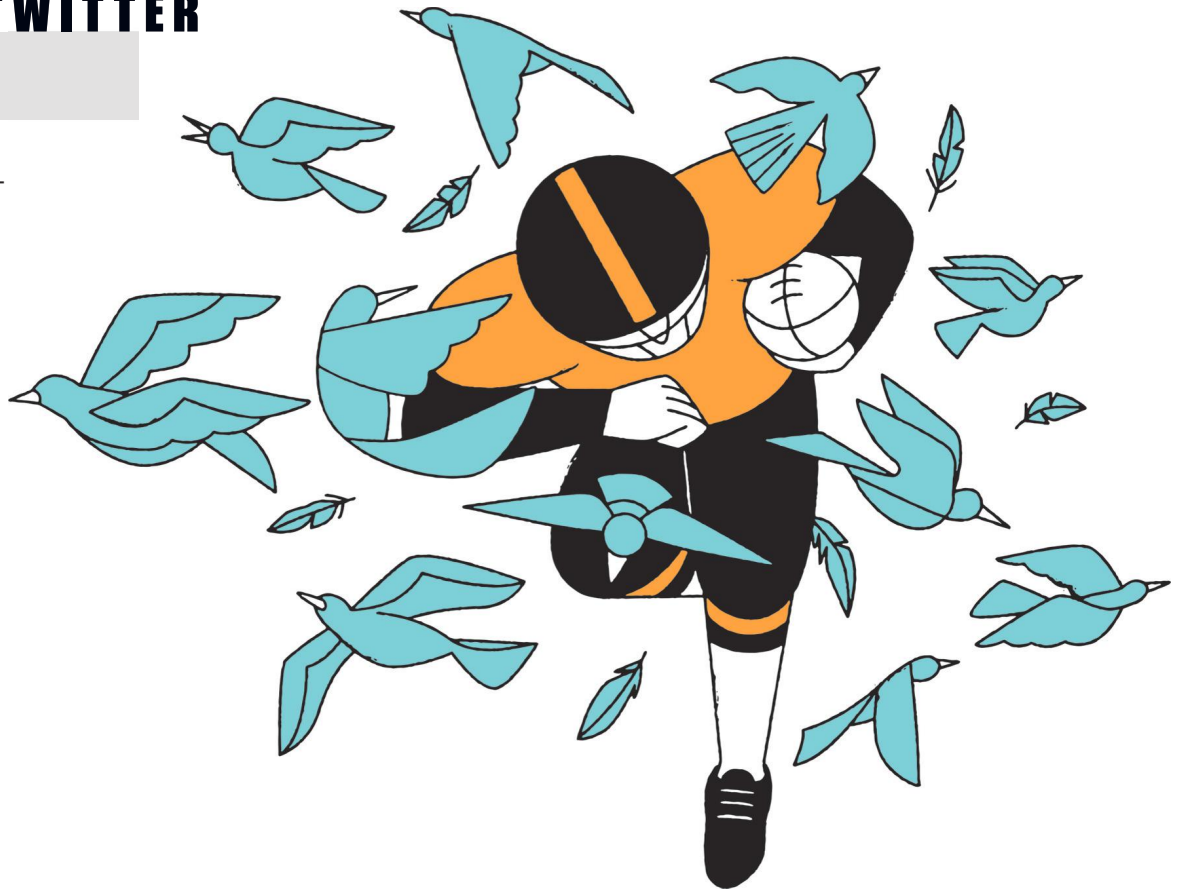


07

## CURRENT TWITTER VS. FUTURE TWITTER

FIGHTING TO WOO  
A NEW FLOCK WITHOUT  
SCATTERING THE OLD



### PSYCHOLOGICAL PROFILE

#### Current users

Skittish. The Twitter faithful are prone to freak out over change—or even the specter of it (see #RIPTwitter)—which helps explain why the service has long evolved at a pace that's leisurely by Internet standards.

#### Future users

Intimidated. Twitter has a persistent reputation for scaring off newbies before they've figured out the intricacies of its interface, followed other people, and racked up enough followers themselves to feel like they're part of a community.

### BY THE NUMBERS

Twitter has 310 million monthly users, many of whom are highly engaged. But in the last quarter, it added only 3% more new active members than a year prior, which suggests that it's found its tribe in its present form.

Twitter needs many more eyeballs that it can monetize with ads. Fairly or not, Wall Street measures it against Facebook's 1.65 billion users (not to mention its also-thriving Instagram, Messenger, and WhatsApp services).

### HOW TWITTER CATERS TO THEM

Rather than jettison Twitter's 140-character limit, the company has decided to stop counting photos, links, and @names against the total. "It's a good constraint for us," CEO Jack Dorsey has declared.

Many recent changes aim to help casual users get more out of Twitter, such as smarter recommendations for whom to follow and the Moments section of curated news. Even people who aren't logged in now have a richer experience.

### LONG-TERM PROJECT

Members have complained for a while that Twitter doesn't do enough to combat abuse, especially harassment of female users. It now has a Trust and Safety Council and has beefed up tools for reporting trolls.

Video! Twitter has started embedding live streams from its Periscope app in users' feeds, has a research team working on real-time image recognition, and will broadcast 10 NFL games next season.

### WHAT TO WATCH

Despite many would-be Twitter killers, the company still has no rival for real-time chatter. And users may be more adaptable than they think: Only 2% shut off the feature that pushes the best tweets to the top of their feeds.

Twitter's best efforts to improve its approachability may simply not be enough to ignite growth. It's a koan worthy of a tweet: Is a Twitter that appeals to vastly more people still Twitter?  
—Harry McCracken

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