



Hi there,

I've been reflecting a lot on Twitter lately. Is it a true public forum? Is it real life? Is it enough like real life if all your coworkers, peers, and friends spend a significant amount of time on it?

Let's gloss over all the Musk panic for now. I actually like Twitter as a concept. It's nice—and convenient—to follow my local weather station, political journalists, friends, old professors, and coworkers all in one space. Sometimes I want to share an article I read or put a half-assed joke out into the world, and Twitter is great for that! I'm also generally uninterested in posting photos of myself or seeing someone's dog/baby/wedding dress, and Twitter more or less deters this kind of content. And as cringe as it sounds now, it was revelatory to be able to message your favorite author or musician and have them reply more often than not.

And jeez, I've had my personal account since the website was in its INFANCY. I have a distinct memory of sitting on my friend's bed in early 2009 (I was in eighth grade!!!), telling her I made a Twitter because Tyler Oakley had one and I liked his YouTube videos. Rachel, I've been on Twitter so long, I remember when they rolled out their inaugural ads and changed the "favorite" function from a star to a heart. My first tweets¹ included "is making eggs" and "marching band was hard today" along with random, unattributed quotes from my friends and family with some song lyrics thrown in. Such are the pains of growing up in tandem with the internet.

But back to the introspection. While I'm a firm believer in curating your online experience and liberally muting and unfollowing, there's no denying that spending time on the platform is a slog. It's gotten worse: the ads are invasive, the #1 trending topic is debunking the most

obvious misinformation, the feed constantly switches to random, unchronological tweets from people you don't know, and every time I see what's trending, there's always some asinine BuzzFeed or POPSUGAR promotion with a stupid celebrity headline written in first person.

So why am I checking it so often if I'm not having a good time? If it's really such a "hellscape" (again, language lifted from Tumblr² in the late aughts)³, why haven't we migrated somewhere else?

Maybe we want our opinions validated in the haughtiest possible way. How we communicate on Twitter rewards anger and condescension wrapped in a 280-character joke—and it's addicting to play along. One reaction begets another, then someone with a bunch of esoteric emojis quote tweets that with "lol," then someone with a doctorate degree writes a thread about the NY Times editorial board's reaction to the reaction, but at that point the world has moved on.

I think it would do us all a bit of good if we disengaged. What would the average profile look like if retweets, quote tweets, and tags were taken away? What would *your* profile look like if what you put out on the internet was stripped down to original, isolated thoughts? I bet we'd all tweet less. I bet we'd find more joy in our online experience.

1. *The prompt used to be, "What are you doing?" and I took that literally.*
2. *(Signs point to Twitter coursing through what Tumblr went through with a five-year lag. Real internet denizens know something much more stupid is afoot)*
3. *Will there be a Twitter Dashcon? If you understand what this means, you are my core audience.*

LET'S CONSUME MEDIA

Books

- ***The Fifth Season*** by N. K. Jemisin. Finally some good fantasy! Loved the way this world was set up, loved the three different perspectives, loved all the casual horror. The writing style took a while to get used to, but I think she eventually found her footing.

- ***The Ghost in the House*** by Sara O'Leary. Despite a few nice lines, I do not recommend this needlessly sad and overindulgent book.
- And I'm almost done with ***Animal Farm*** by George Orwell. Yes, it's my first time reading it. Sue me!

TV & Movies

- **The Leftovers.** Ooh, this show is a delight. I love seeing how everyone is pushed to their limits when something awful and inexplicable happens. Justin Theroux is constantly on the brink of a mental breakdown, and he looks good doing it!
- **Bridgerton.** I could write a book on the enduring appeal of Bridgerton, Austen, and romantic subtlety in entertainment. But that doesn't mean the new season of this Shonda show was...good.

it's finally nice out baybey

Goodbye.