

June 2021

POV: What's new at Twitter?

razorfish

Contents

1. **Background: What's the latest with Twitter?**
2. **How are users responding?**
3. **What this could mean for your brand!**

What's the latest at Twitter?

It has been an all-around ambitious year for Twitter. The platform has made long-overdue product updates by acquiring companies and pushing the envelope on how it can create new streams of revenue from existing users. While Twitter is still a bit behind the Facebooks and even TikToks of the world in ad products, it is making strides in consumer-facing features.

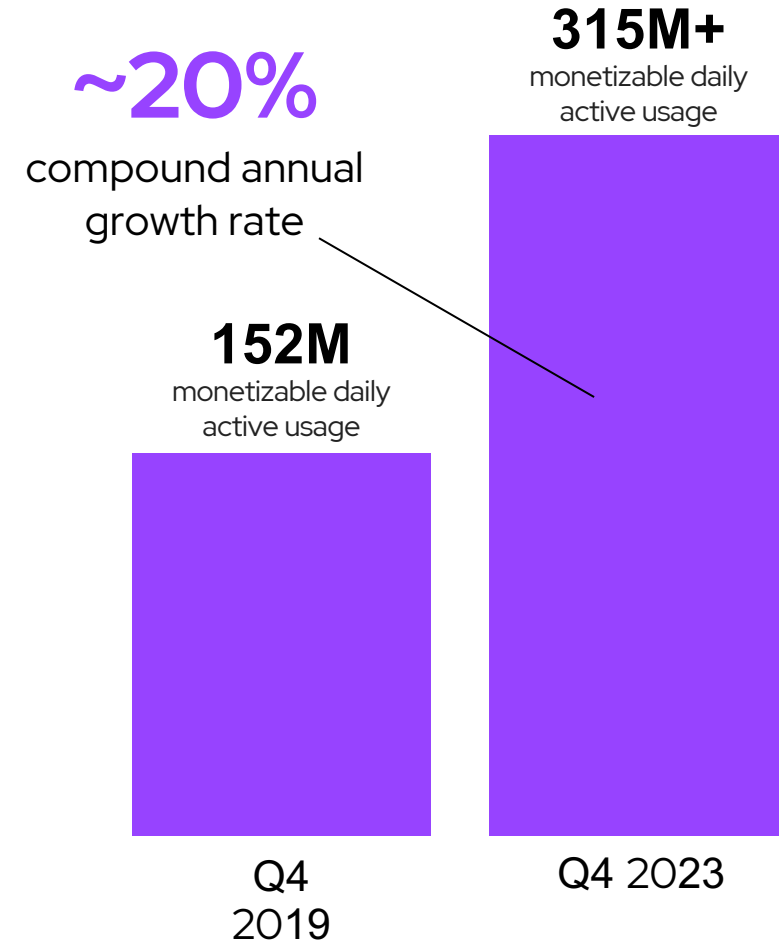
In this deck, we'll dive into the latest Twitter updates by highlighting their new product vision, what their user response has been, and most importantly, how this impacts your brand's presence on the platform.



Twitter has announced a bold set of growth goals

During its Analyst Day overview for investors in early 2021, Twitter offered a peek behind the curtain at its growth and product strategies. Among its goals, growth in its user base and its revenue stood out:

- **Users:** Reach 315M+ mDAU (monetizable daily active usage) by Q4 2023 -- that's 123M more users over the next three years. For context, Twitter has added only 83M mDAU over the past three years.
- **Revenue:** Double its revenue from \$3.7 billion (2020) to \$7.5 billion in 2023.

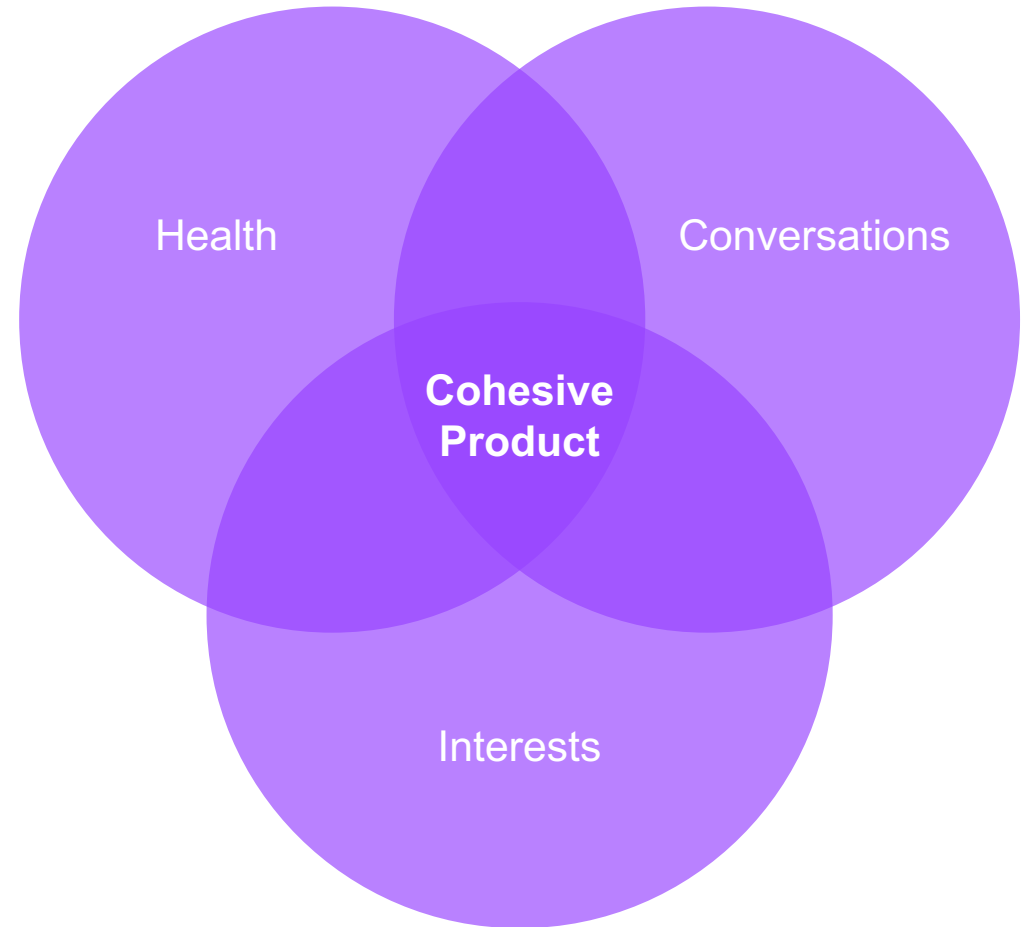


Source: SocialMediaToday, "Twitter Outlines Growth and Product Strategies in Analyst Overview," Feb. 25, 2021

And an even bolder product vision to reach those goals

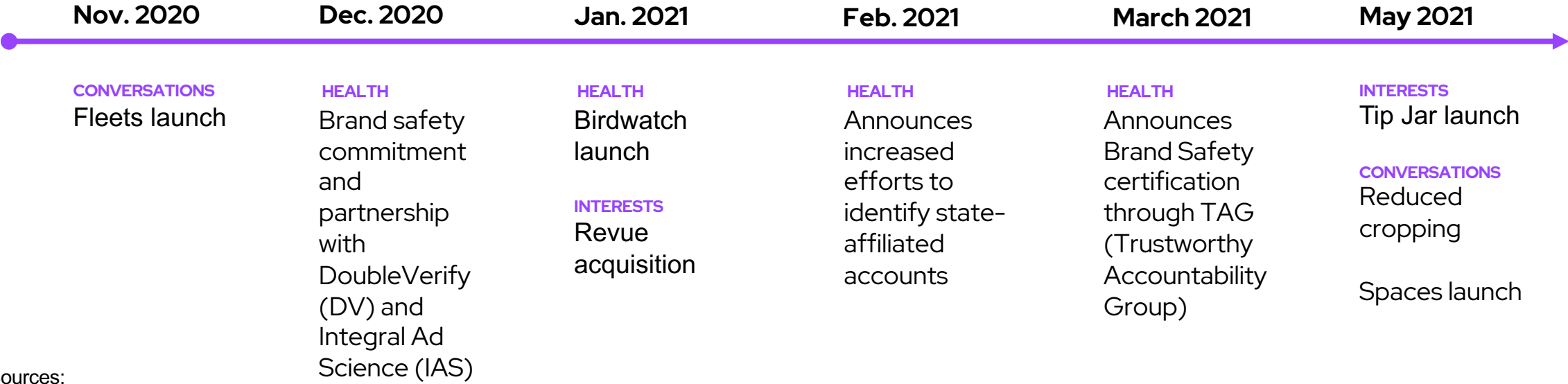
In an interview with *The Verge* in March 2021, Twitter's Head of Consumer Product, Kayvon Beykpour, said that the company has three "big rock" areas of focus for their product strategy:

- **Health:** Protect the health of the public conversation
- **Conversations:** Incentivize people and create the tools and capabilities to inspire them to start and participate in conversations on the platform
- **Interests:** Connect people to the people and content they're interested in



Sources:
Twitter Product Blog
The Verge, "Twitter is Reinventing Itself" by Nilay Patel, March 9, 2021

Let's dive into the recent product updates



Sources:
Twitter Product Blog
Twitter Company Blog

Product updates to improve conversations

Fleets: A spontaneous (and fleeting) way to share

What it is:

Fleets – named after “fleeting thoughts” – rolled out globally in late 2020 to offer users an alternative to permanent Tweets.

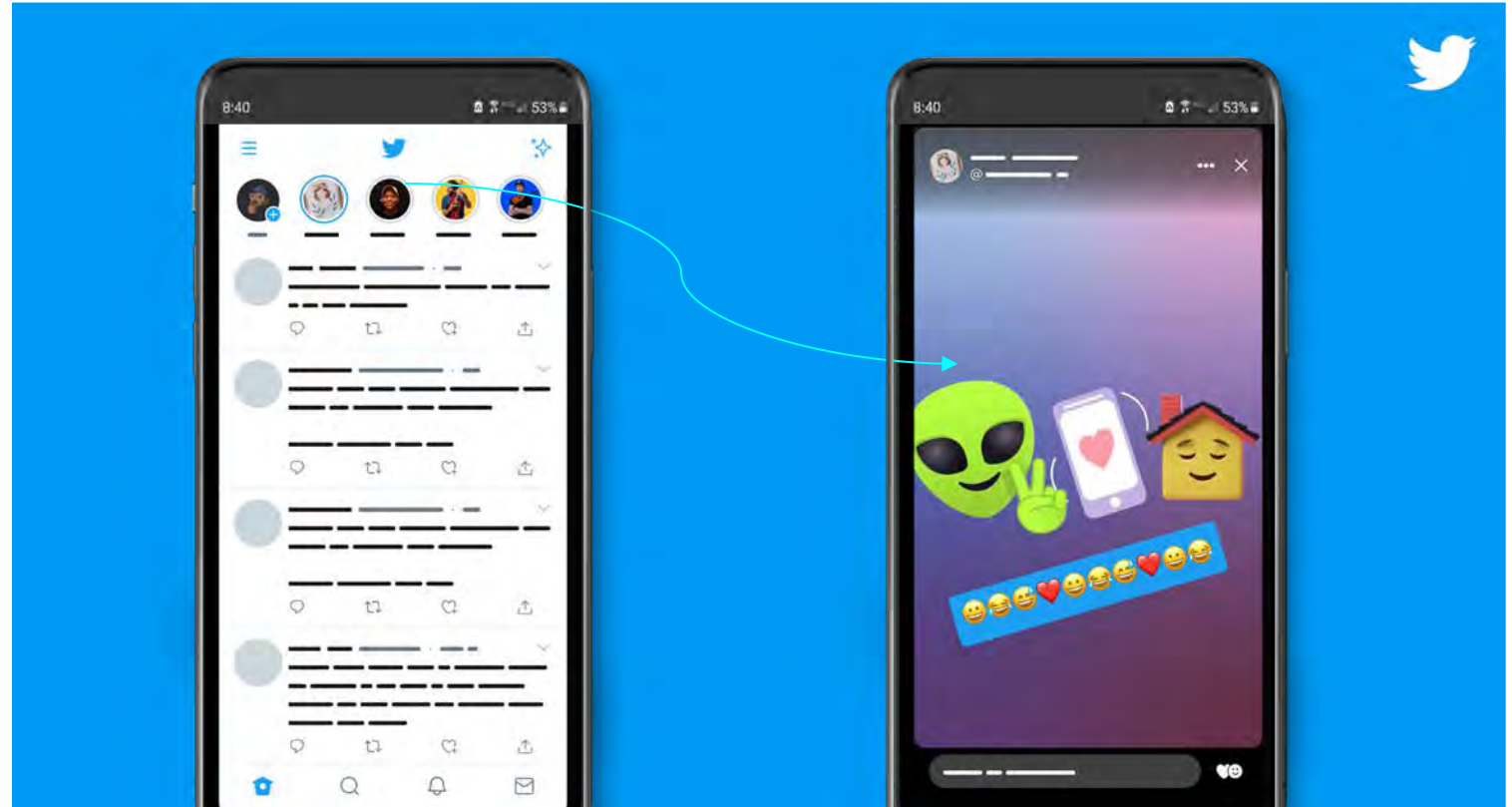
Fleets disappear from the platform after 24 hours and are available on mobile (iOS and Android) only.

Strategic reason for launch:

- Easier spontaneous sharing option
- Low-pressure way for people to join the conversation
- User research showed that people were following silently or creating drafts and not tweeting them

Similar product experiences:

Snapchat Stories
Instagram Stories
Facebook Stories



Consumers will see icons for users who have recently posted Fleets at the top of their feed. When they click any of the users, a continual, chronological “slide show” automatically advances from one Fleet to the next - similar to Instagram Stories.

Fleets are available worldwide.

Source: Twitter Product Blog

Twitter // New features POV // June 2021

Spaces: Bringing live audio conversation to the app

What it is:

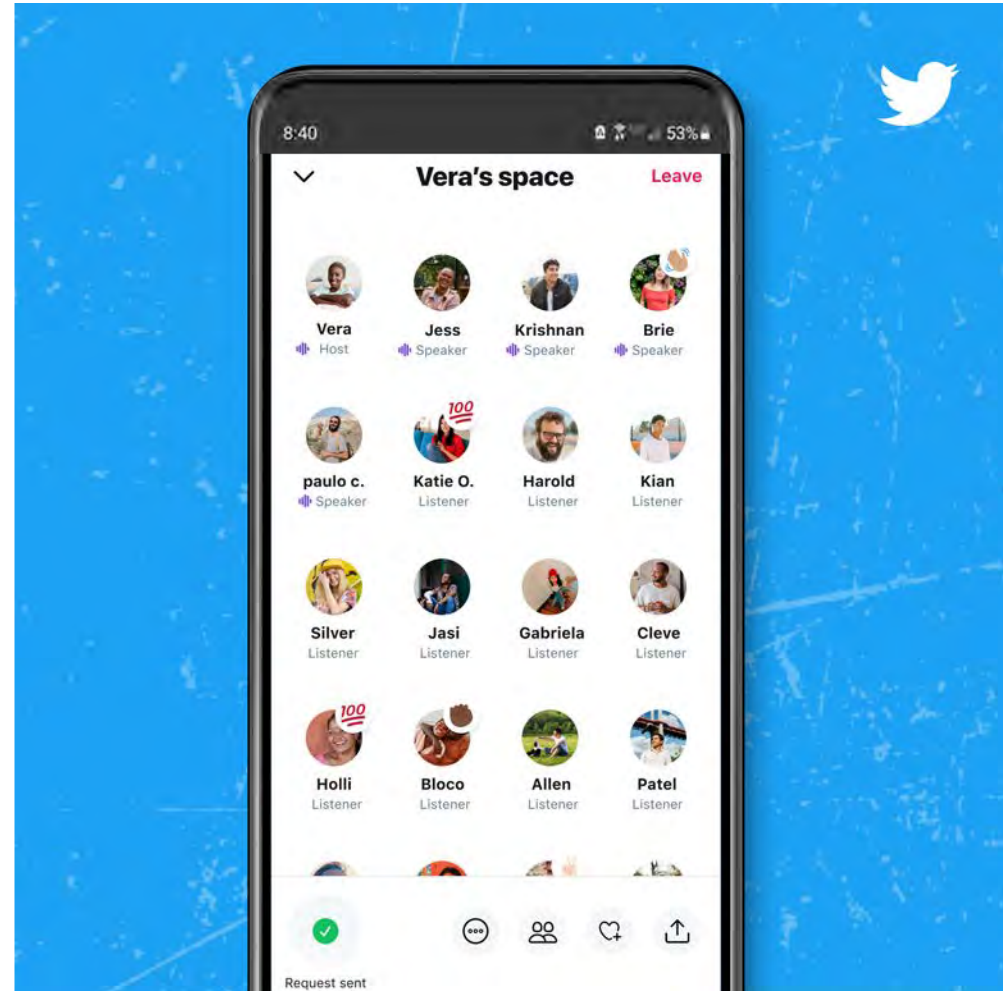
Spaces is a new way to have live audio conversations on Twitter. On iOS and Android, when someone you follow starts or speaks in a Space, it appears at the top of your timeline as a purple bubble for as long as it's live. As a listener, you can react to what you hear with emojis, follow along with captions, Tweet or DM the Space, and request to speak.

Strategic reason for launch:

- Keep thought leaders on Twitter vs. them going off-platform for a competitive experience
- Draw in new users

Similar product experiences:

Clubhouse
Instagram Live
Facebook Live
Twitch



Spaces is available worldwide on iOS and Android only. As of May 2021, Twitter was still working on bringing the feature to Twitter.com.

Source: Twitter Product Blog

Photo cropping enhancements: A move towards more user creative control

What it is:

Essentially, it's no more cropping. Twitter is testing a "what you see is what you get" image preview within the compose box and experimenting with displaying full-frame images within a Tweet -- in line with most other social platform feeds.

Strategic reason for launch:

- Cut down on problematic image cropping that users have complained about
- Allow for more user control in how their content is presented

Similar product experiences:

Instagram



Before

The new, un-cropped version

The new photo cropping enhancements are available to anyone on iOS and Android.

Source: Twitter Product Blog

Twitter // New features POV // June 2021

**Product updates to
connect users to their
interests and support
creators**

Tip Jar: Incentivizing conversations on Twitter

What it is:

A way for users to send and receive tips on the Twitter app. An account can enable the Tip Jar functionality by connecting it to payment services or platforms of their choice.

Currently, payment services supported include: Bandcamp, Cash App, Patreon, PayPal and Venmo.

Strategic reason for launch:

- It's common practice for users to share their Cash Apps after their Tweets go viral -- now that functionality can be built into the app
- Incentivize creators into keeping the conversations on Twitter
- Incentivize "lurkers" to continue to consume on Twitter

Similar product experiences:

Patreon, Twitch, Substack, Sessions

Source: Twitter Product Blog

Twitter // New features POV // June 2021



Individual users can accept tips via several payment systems.

As of May 2021, Tip Jar is available to everyone using Twitter in English. They can send tips to applicable accounts on Twitter for iOS and Android.

**Product updates to
improve the health of
public conversation**

Birdwatch: A community fight against misinformation

What it is:

Birdwatch is a community-based approach to misinformation, which allows people to identify information in Tweets they believe is misleading and write notes that provide informative context.

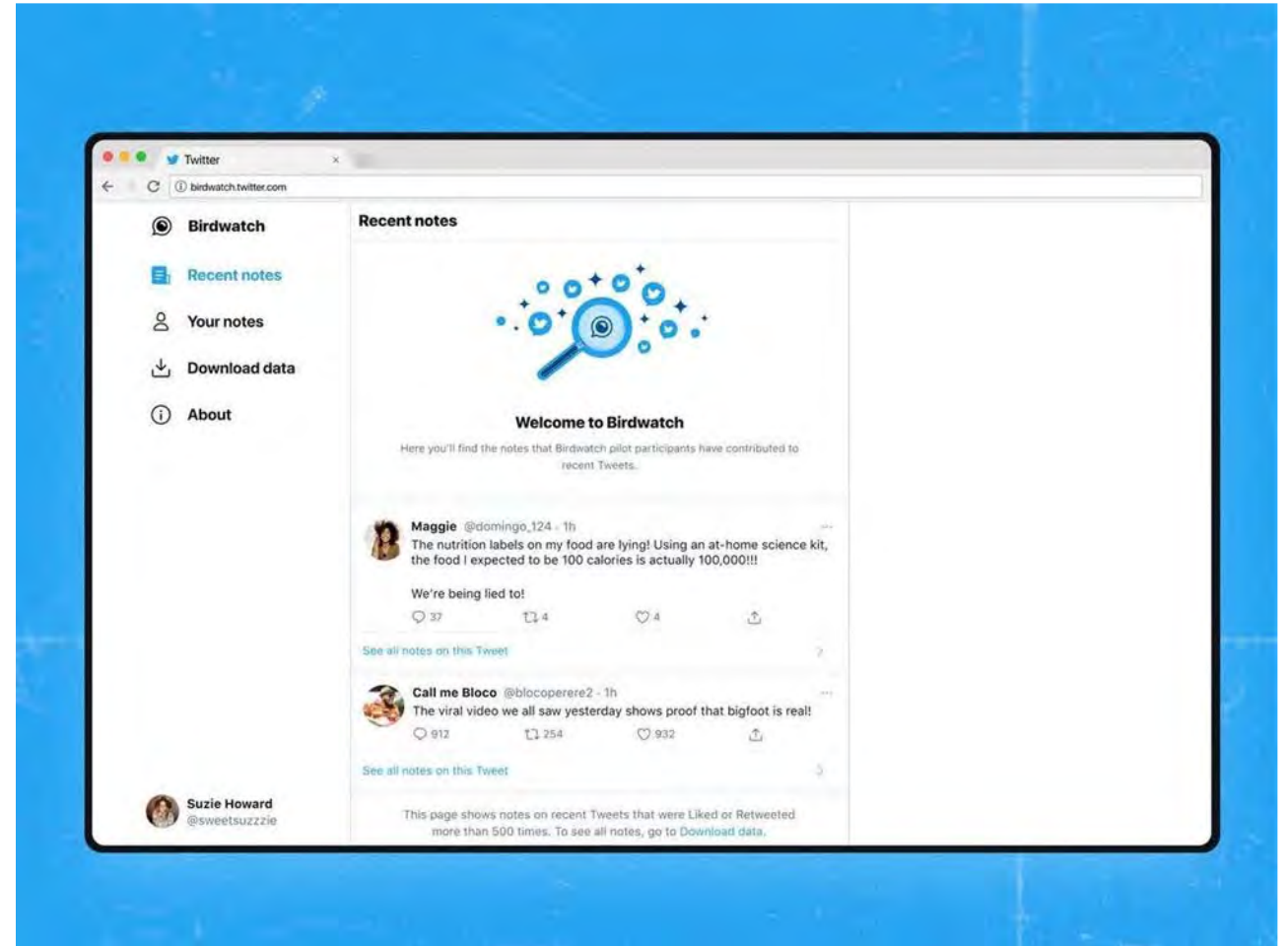
All data contributed to Birdwatch will be publicly available and downloadable but is separate from the Twitter experience for now. It is currently in pilot mode in the U.S. only.

Strategic reason for launch:

- Add credibility back to Twitter
- Combat the spread of misinformation

Similar product experiences:

WhatsApp's fact-checking feature



As of May 2021, Birdwatch is available to a select number of users within the U.S.

Source: Twitter Product Blog

Twitter // New features POV // June 2021

Increased brand safety commitments

What it is:

DoubleVerify and Integral Ad Science partnership:

Twitter's preferred partners will provide independent reporting on the context in which ads appear on Twitter in order to build solutions that give advertisers a better understanding of the types of content that appear adjacent to their ads.

Increased efforts to identify state-affiliated accounts:

Labels applied to government officials and state-affiliated media entities so users have context on the accounts' national affiliation.

Brand Safety certification through Trustworthy Accountability Group (TAG):

TAG is a leading global certification program fighting criminal activity and increasing trust in the digital advertising industry. The certification affords advertisers and agencies the assurance that Twitter has been independently audited to ensure compliance with TAG's guidelines.

Strategic reason:

- Fits within Twitter's mission to become a safe space for brands and consumers alike
- Building trust back into the platform
- Creating a platform where brands feel comfortable advertising

Source: Twitter Product Blog

Twitter // New features POV // June 2021

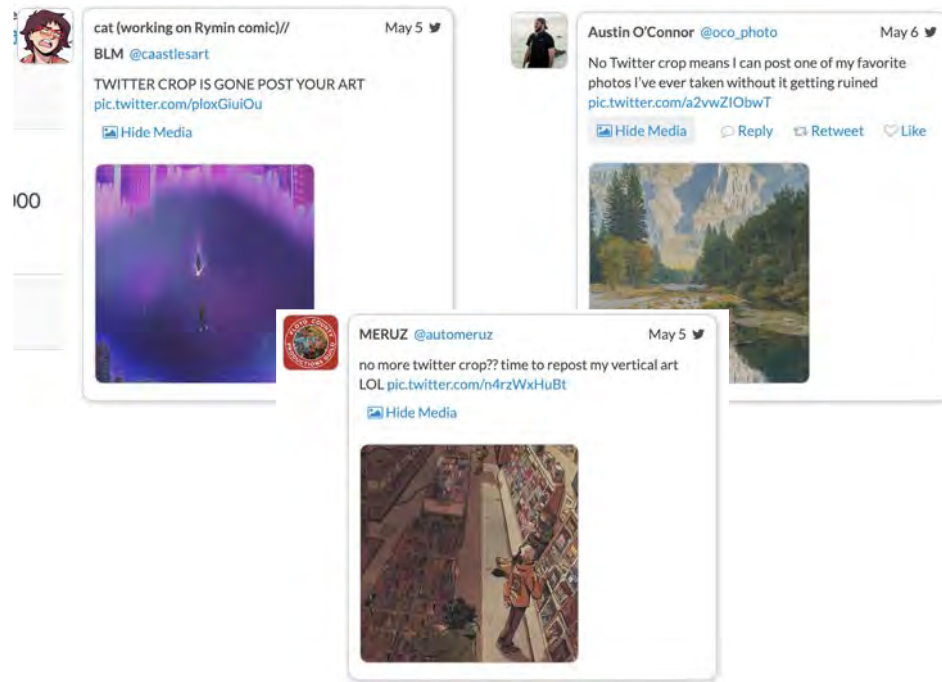


Labels will only be applied to accounts from the countries represented in the five permanent members of the UN Security Council: China, France, Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

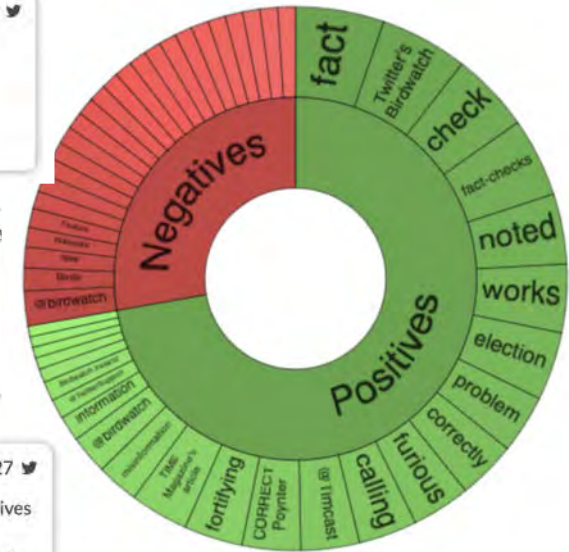
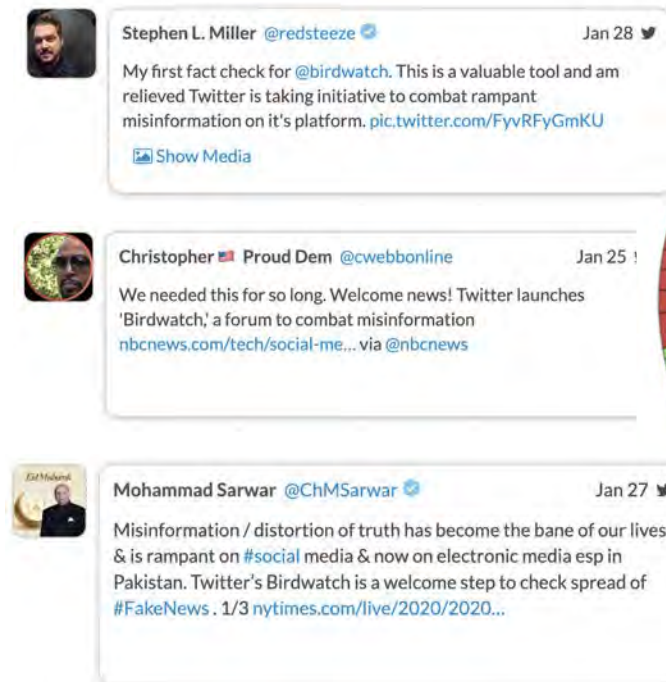
What are consumers
saying about Twitter's new
features?

The good: Users heralded long-awaited features that allowed them to take back control of content

Users hopped right into sharing content and made “Twitter crop is gone” trend on the app when the functionality launched



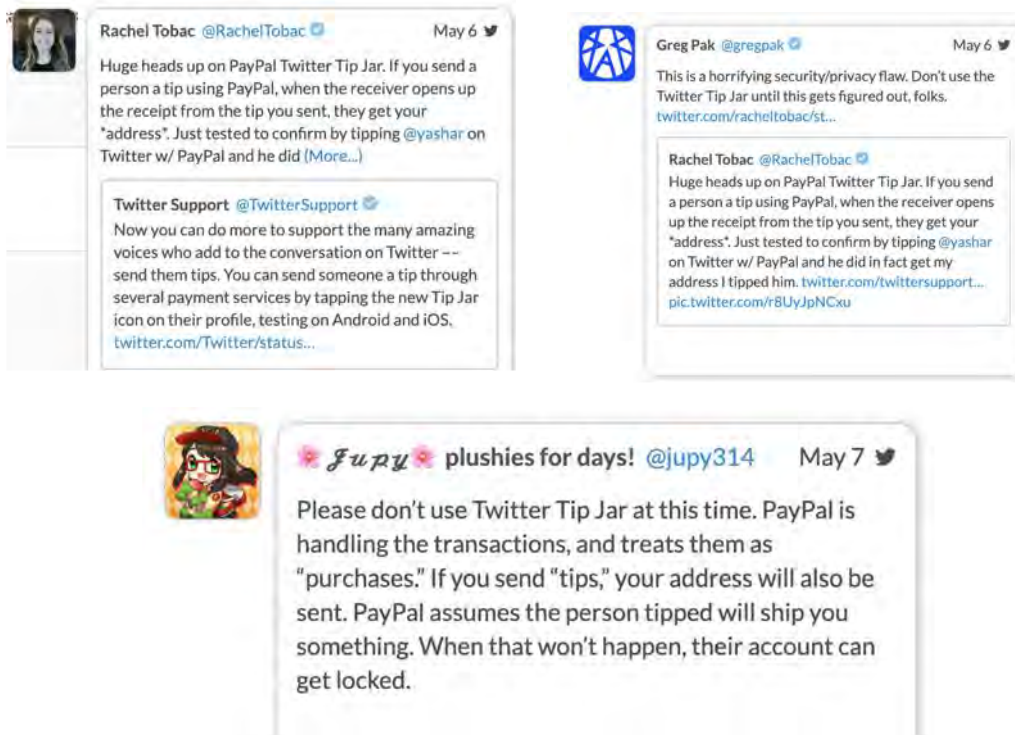
Birdwatch was a welcome new feature, as users have asked Twitter (and other social platforms) to combat misinformation for years



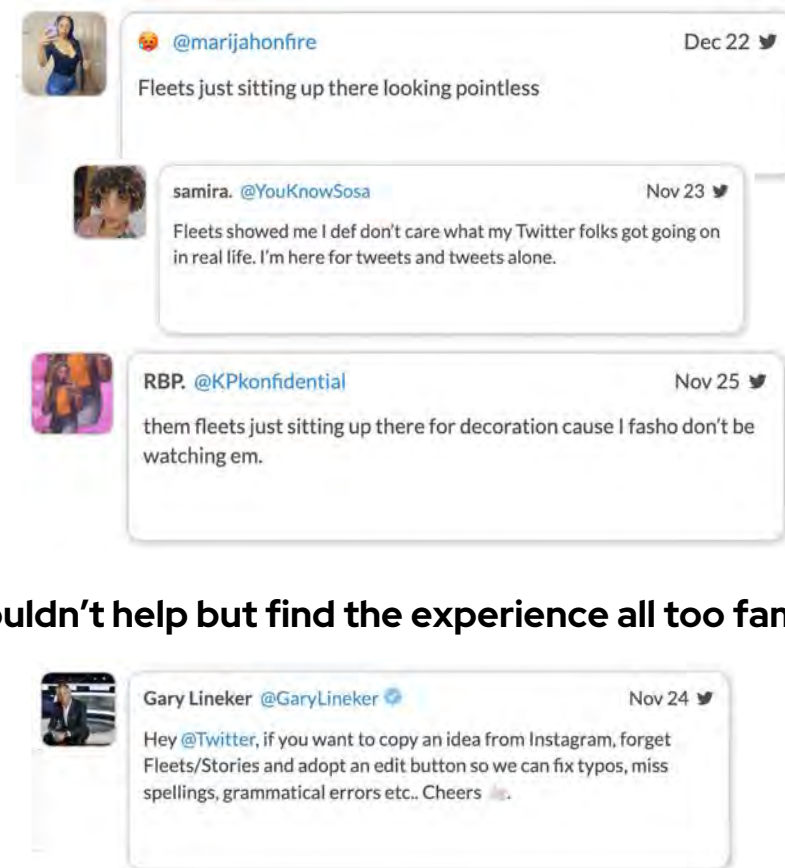
Source: Netbase, 1-year period

The bad: Features that closely resembled competitors were met with apprehension and criticism

The Tip Jar rollout came with a major flaw



Users were slow to embrace Fleets when it rolled out globally



And couldn't help but find the experience all too familiar...

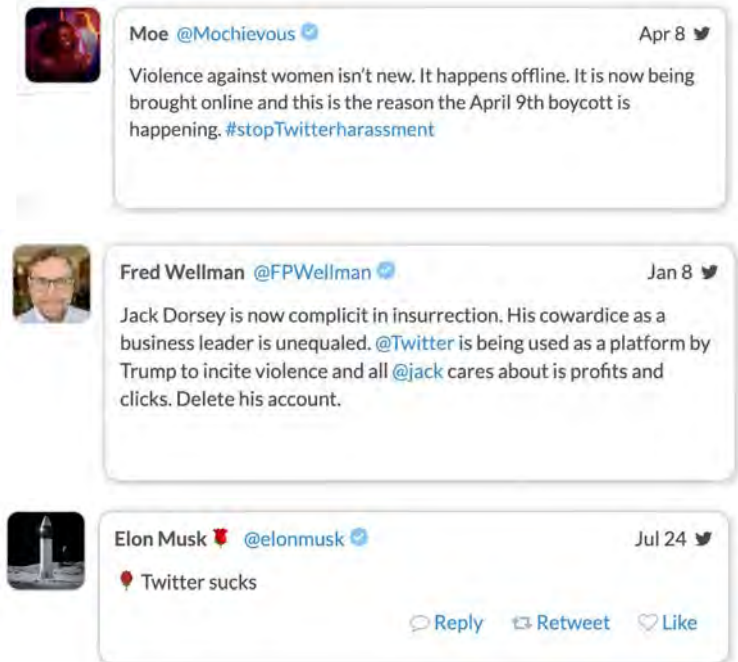
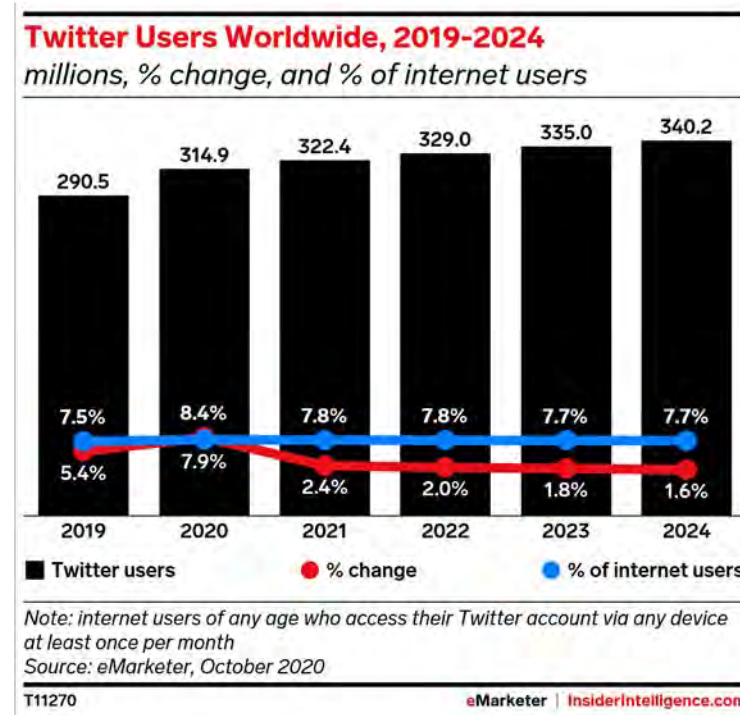
Source: Netbase, 1-year period

Twitter // New features POV // June 2021

The ugly: Despite an increase in daily users and growth in revenue, Twitter still has a ways to go in earning user trust and sustainable growth

Twitter's worldwide audience increased in 2020 as a result of greater social network usage during the pandemic (and in the U.S. as a result of the election and ongoing protests). However, growth in future years is expected to return to a flattened trajectory.

This is due to a lack of user trust in the app (particularly in the U.S.) and a disinterest among younger audiences.



Sources:

eMarketer, Global Twitter Users 2020 Report

CNET, "Twitter's user growth lower than expected despite tackling misinformation," by Queenie Wong, April 2021

Variety, "Twitter Gains 5 Million Daily Users in Q4, Projects 20% Growth in Q1," by Todd Spangler, Feb. 2021

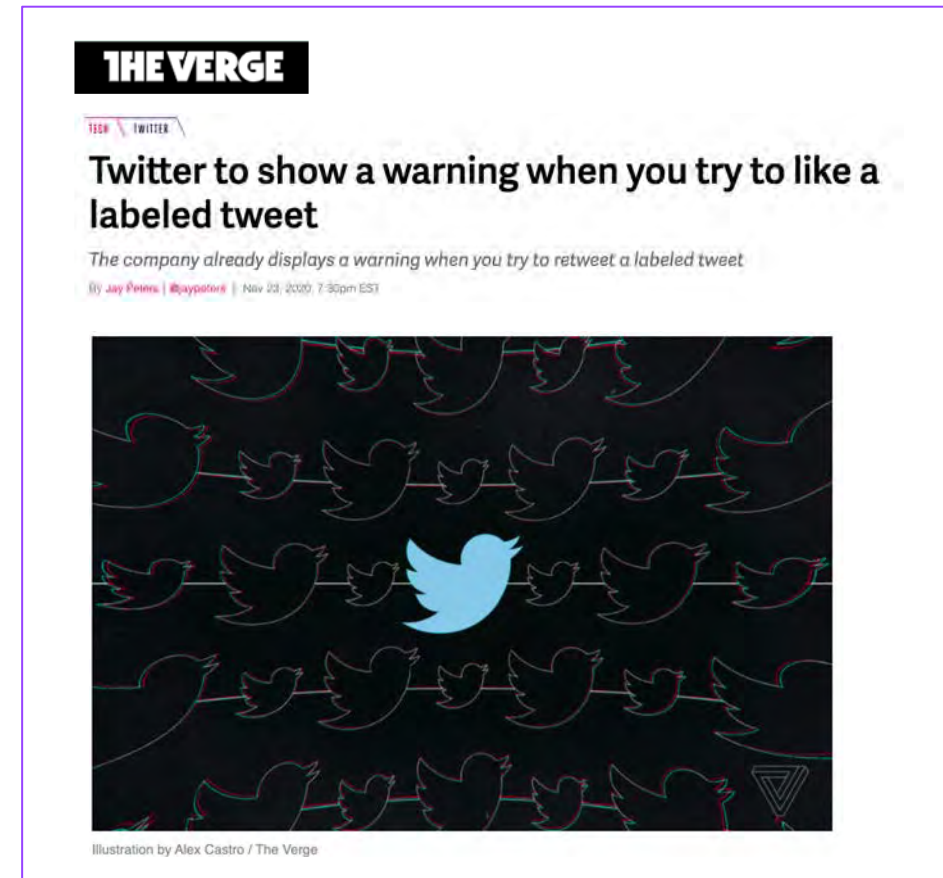
Twitter // New features POV // June 2021

What this could mean to
your brand...

Twitter is catching up and becoming a safer place to market (and play)

After gaining the reputation for being a bit of the wild, wild west of social platforms, Twitter has gradually put measures in place to become safer for brands and consumers alike. In 2019, ahead of the controversial 2020 elections, Twitter even famously banned political ads to help maintain civility and balance.

Newer features like the aforementioned Birdwatch, the ability to hide replies and even Twitter's algorithmic "abuse protection" filters are moving Twitter in the right direction. Last year's proactive warnings about fake news or misleading claims has also helped to tamp down the rampant misinformation flooding the platform as well.



Twitter's new features provide more opportunities for brands to engage and reach new audiences

Spaces

The long-term success of livestreaming audio-only social content is unproven. Clubhouse, the buzzworthy drop-in audio hangout app, has seen a loss in hype after a pandemic-fueled juggernaut period. Perhaps its recent launch on Android devices will refuel growth. That being said, Spaces may be in a position to overshadow Clubhouse due to its large user base and potentially more invested followers.

Considerations: You need to be ready to play with LIVE ammunition. While facilitators of Spaces can mute users or limit consumer input to Tweets only, content cannot be moderated in advance (and trolls will be trolls, people will talk like people without filter at times). Also, there is no real permanent record of your session – so highly regulated industries may want to steer clear. A sponsorship of an existing conversation led by an influencer or entertainer may be a safe way to wade into these waters.

Fleets

Twitter's Fleets rollout was expected, as other social platforms have invested in a "story"-like functionality to varying degrees of success. While user adoption has been slow, it is another content format for your brand to leverage to connect with followers.

Considerations: Because Fleets is still rolling out, not everyone may be able to see the functionality. It is also currently a mobile-only experience, so users on desktop will be unable to see the content. We recommend Fleets for your brand if you are able to leverage existing content (like from IG Stories) or for quick turnaround content, like sharing audience responses the way you would a Retweet.

Cropping Changes

Recently, there has been much criticism that Twitter's algorithm used for image cropping isn't equitable. Twitter took this criticism and worked to become less reliant on machine learning-based image cropping.

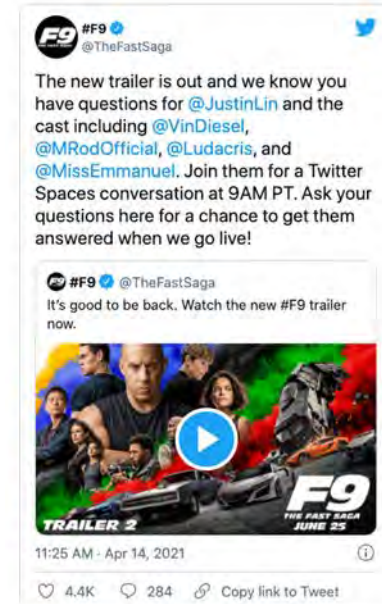
Now, instead of gambling on how an image will show up within the feed, brands have more creative control over their assets -- and an opportunity to have a little fun.

Considerations: Currently the image crop changes are viewable on mobile only.

Take advantage of Spaces as a conversation facilitator

A cost-effective way to host a panel discussion. In these examples, Ad Age gives access to Xbox's marketing minds, and P&G uses Spaces to create an open discussion about diversity.

Give fans direct access to celebrities and influencers via your sponsorships and partnerships: From pro gamers to Hollywood stars, fans turn to Twitter for access.



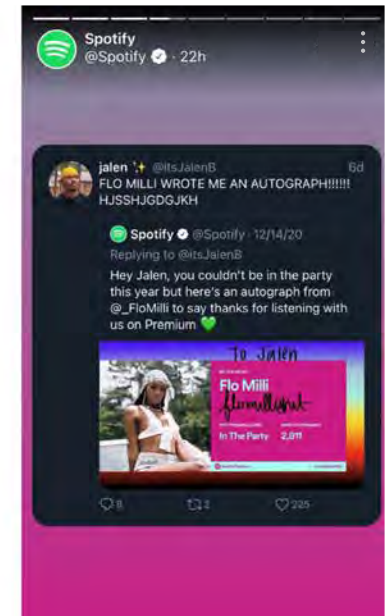
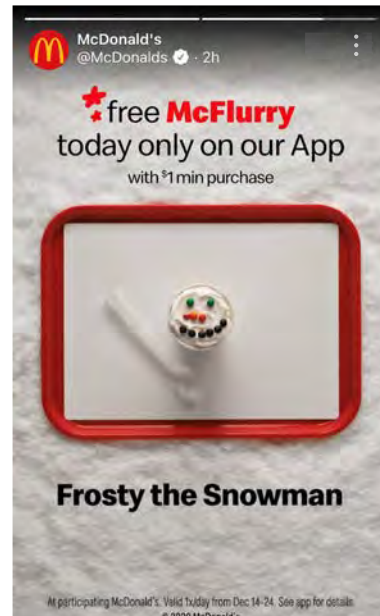
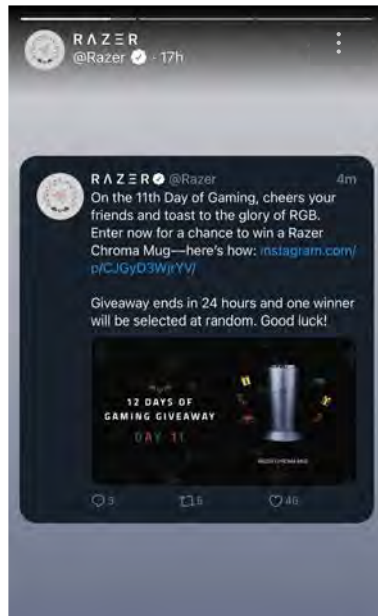
Use Fleets for quick turnaround content like reactions, responses, or short-term promotions

Fleets is a quick and easy way to give your audience temporary information.

Giveaways

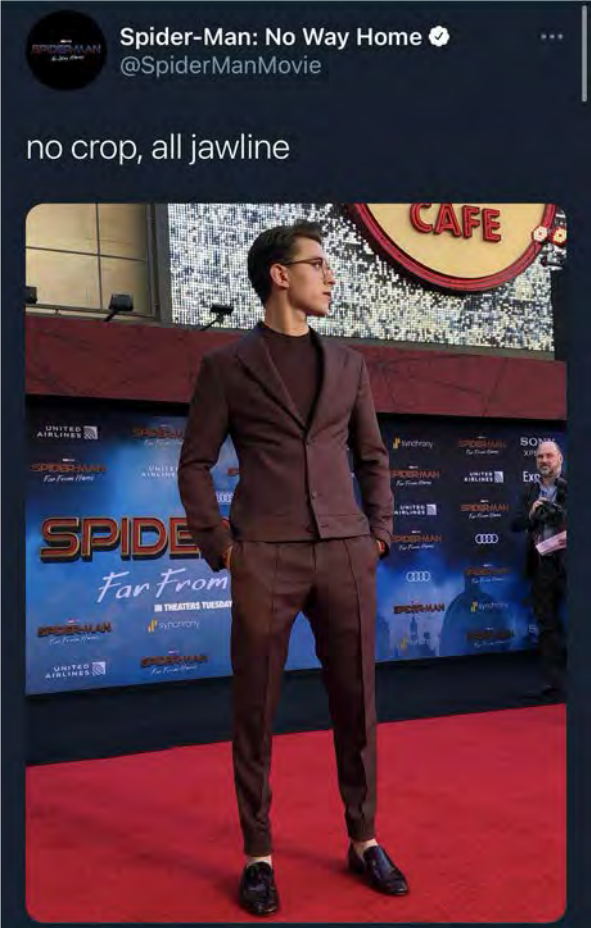
Limited offers

Community engagement



Get creative with new image possibilities

Twitter's move away from cropping means that you have more control over your content and gives your brand another creative opportunity to engage with its audience.



Explore untested, white space opportunities for your brand

Tip Jar

While Tip Jar seems built for creators, it could be an opportunity for **partnerships and fundraising on behalf of brands**. Here are some thought starters on how your brand can leverage this new functionality:

- Have influencers and allies perform for tips, with the donations going to **a larger movement**
- Do **"tip matching"** for certain users and their goals to buy new merch, take trips or fight for a cause
 - ... and that tip matching could be in the form of **loyalty and rewards points**

Spaces

Spaces can be used as a conversation facilitator, or as a way to field qualitative research on your brand, products, or other topics of interest.

- Create **advocate feedback** sessions with consumers
- Create a **daily tech support** space to help consumers unlock the best features from their devices with the help of a product specialist
 - Bonus: These could be recorded and reposted on YouTube for SEO fodder
- **Humanize your executives** via open and informal chats with consumers
- Use Spaces as **virtual recruitment** fairs in today's still-COVID-stunted world

Fleets

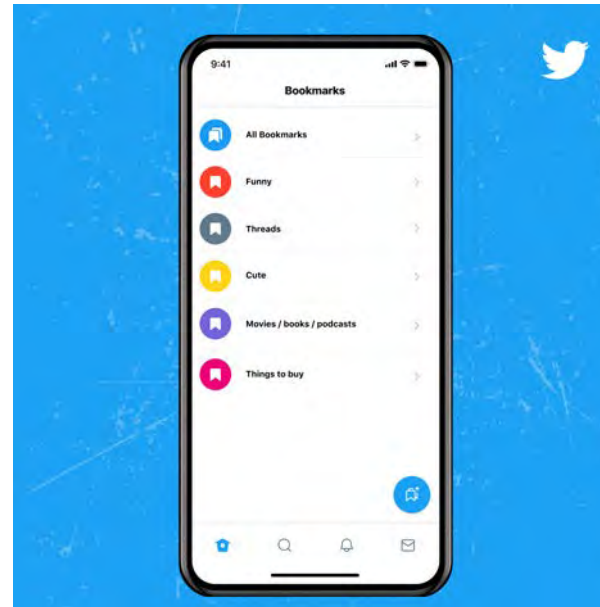
The beauty of Fleets, as with other Story-like features, is that it's a way for **lo-fi and quick-turn content** to shine.

- Feature heartfelt but lo-fi fan content
- Serve up **serial content**: daily trivia, phone tips, countdowns to launch events
- Surprise and **delight mega fans** with visual shout outs

And some breaking news...a subscription service called Twitter Blue has been announced

At the beginning of June, Twitter rolled out its first iteration of Twitter Blue, its first-ever subscription offering, to Australia and Canada. For a monthly price of \$3.49 CAD or \$4.49 AUD, Twitter Blue subscribers get access to:

- **Bookmark folders:** An easier way to organize your saved content
- **Undo Tweet:** Preview and revise the tweet before it goes live, and set a timer up to 30 seconds to click “undo” before the Tweet, reply, or thread posts to your timeline
- **Reader mode:** Turns long threads into easy-to-read text
- **Other perks:** Customizable app icons and fun color themes for the app itself, as well as access to dedicated subscription customer support



Thank you!

About the authors



[Alexandria Eby](#)

Director – Social Content and Engagement Strategy

@[Allie_Eby](#)



[Matt Heindl](#)

Senior Director – Content Marketing Engagement Strategy and Social Media

@[matt_heindl](#)

razorfish