

ENG2720 Writing with New Media
Project 6: Twitter
Dr. Jason W. Ellis

In the final individual project, you will transform your original think piece essay into a series of 10 to 20 tweets on Twitter. Before posting your tweets, you will need to carefully consider and plan your Twitter “rant” before deploying it live during an upcoming class, during which time we will engage your writing synchronously in class. In addition to using your writing, ideas, and sources from your think piece essay, you will want to think about how you can leverage other affordances of Twitter, including links to your other work (your podcast, your YouTube video, your photo essay, etc.) and hashtags relevant to what you have to say.

Of course, we will do a lot of thinking and planning to prepare for your tweets. Why do we do this? Social media use by companies, organizations, and even some individuals is a carefully orchestrated affair meant to seem spontaneous, engaging, and attention giving. However, these campaigns are often anything but. They involve meticulous planning and careful execution. We will be modeling these characteristics in transforming your think piece essay into a Twitter “rant.”

Everyone in class will need to have a Twitter account and follow one another’s accounts including Professor Ellis’ (@dynamicssubspace). You may use any Twitter account that you have created including one specifically for this class or assignment.

We will follow this schedule for this brief, but interesting project:

1. Planning and Details: Open your original think piece essay and create a new document. In the new document, create a numbered list. Reading through your think piece essay, find your thesis or argument sentence(s). Copy and paste this into the first item on your list. Then, fill in the important points from your think piece essay into your numbered list by copying-and-pasting from your think piece essay. Perhaps as the last entries on your list, you should include links to your other new media transformations, including your photo essay, podcast, and YouTube video. (in-class on Apr. 12)
2. Structure: Save your planning document with a new name to signify its difference as your structure document. Each numbered item on your list will represent one tweet. Narrow down your list of points to the required 10 to 20 tweets. Consider first what are the 10 to 20 things that I should say that represents the development of my discussion in the think piece essay, and what supporting evidence can I give to support what I have to say, which includes quotes and links to your other work. After narrowing down your list, you will revise each number to be only 140 characters in length and using the affordances of Twitter, including truncated words, grammatically inventive writing, hashtags, links, attached photos, etc. To quickly check your character count, select the text next to each number and use the word count feature of your word processor to see the number of characters with spaces. You will also want to account in the number of your tweets an introductory tweet and a concluding tweet, and all of your tweets should be numbered thus: 1/20, 2/20, 3/20, etc. Replace the last number with the total number of tweets that you will be using. (in-class on Apr. 14)

3. Execution: With your list of tweets prepared in advance of today's class, each student will take a turn posting their tweets in order while Professor Ellis and the other students read and respond to the tweets in real time, providing feedback, suggestions, comments, etc. Due to the limitations of time in our class, it is important that each student come to class with their tweets ready to deploy by copying-and-pasting them from their structure document. While one student is posting his or her tweets, the others in class will respond, favorite, and retweet as appropriate. The student making posts should pause occasionally to see his or her responses and reply quickly to some but not necessarily all responses. (in-class on Apr. 19)
4. Archiving: Create a blog post on our OpenLab site with a catchy and engaging title for your Twitter project followed by your byline. In the body of your archive, write a brief introduction stating that this is an archive of a tweeted version of your original think piece essay (link to this on OpenLab). Then, copy-and-paste the link to each tweet in chronological order (this would be the reverse of Twitter's reverse-chronological order) beneath the introduction. When you copy and paste a link to a tweet into OpenLab/Wordpress, it automatically turns it into an embedded tweet. Finally, write a concluding reflection of about 250 words on your writing process, who your audiences were, how you shaped your think piece on Twitter to connect with those audiences, how effective (or ineffective) your story was based on quoted feedback from your peers (look back responses to your Tweets), and write a 50-100 word analysis of your Twitter analytics of your tweeted think piece essay (go to ads.twitter.com and review your analytics for the numbers that you can incorporate into this part of the discussion). (due before class on Apr. 21)