

Does Twitter Matter for News Sites?

Publishers with **typical*** content on Twitter get:

1.5%
traffic from
Twitter

8
tweets per post

3
clicks per tweet

0.7
retweets per
original tweet

* Median values for publishers.

Publishers with the **most active*** content on Twitter get:

11%
traffic from
Twitter

180
tweets per post

18
clicks per tweet

4
retweets per
original tweet

* Average values for the top 5% of publishers for each metric.

Twitter drives a median **8.5 percent** of all social traffic to media sites across Parse.ly's network of digital publishers. But to what extent can publishers influence this number? For example: does the type of content shared on Twitter impact how readers engage?

Starting in January 2016, Parse.ly partnered with Twitter's "firehose" data team to collect 100% of tweets that link to our customers' websites. This partnership powers new Twitter-specific features in our dashboard, but also allows us to perform analyses like this one on social news activity. For this study, Parse.ly examined data from 200 websites, spanning 14 calendar days (January 10–24), to see what trends we could uncover.

There is no "secret sauce" for digital publishers looking to improve their success on Twitter. Sites that are doing well on the platform—achieving high levels of engagement—are not necessarily the most active; rather, they are sites that are producing interesting and shareable content that appeals to a large number of people.

The lesson? Know your audience. Understand what they find interesting and make sure that you are creating content that reflects this. Not only will this help you to improve the shareability of your content across social channels, but it may provide you with the insight you need to generate more traffic or encourage loyalty.



Differences Between Conversational & Breaking News on Twitter

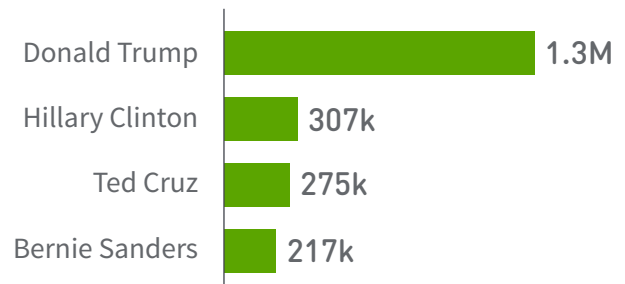
Typical content on Twitter tends to be conversational in nature, with thousands of people engaging with a particular topic for an extended period of time. Breaking news stories, on the other hand, often drive large spikes in traffic over shorter periods of time. The following two topics offer a glimpse at the difference between conversational stories and breaking news on Twitter.

CONVERSATIONAL NEWS: U.S. Presidential Election 2016

The United States continues to engage in an active conversation about its political candidates, and much of this conversation is happening publicly on Twitter.

In March 2016, there were **1.9 million** tweets to news stories published about the U.S. Presidential race, which made up more than six percent of all tweets during this period. The chart to the right shows the breakout of tweets mentioning the top Republican and Democratic candidates.

Tweets About U.S. Presidential Candidates Sending Traffic to Parse.ly's Network



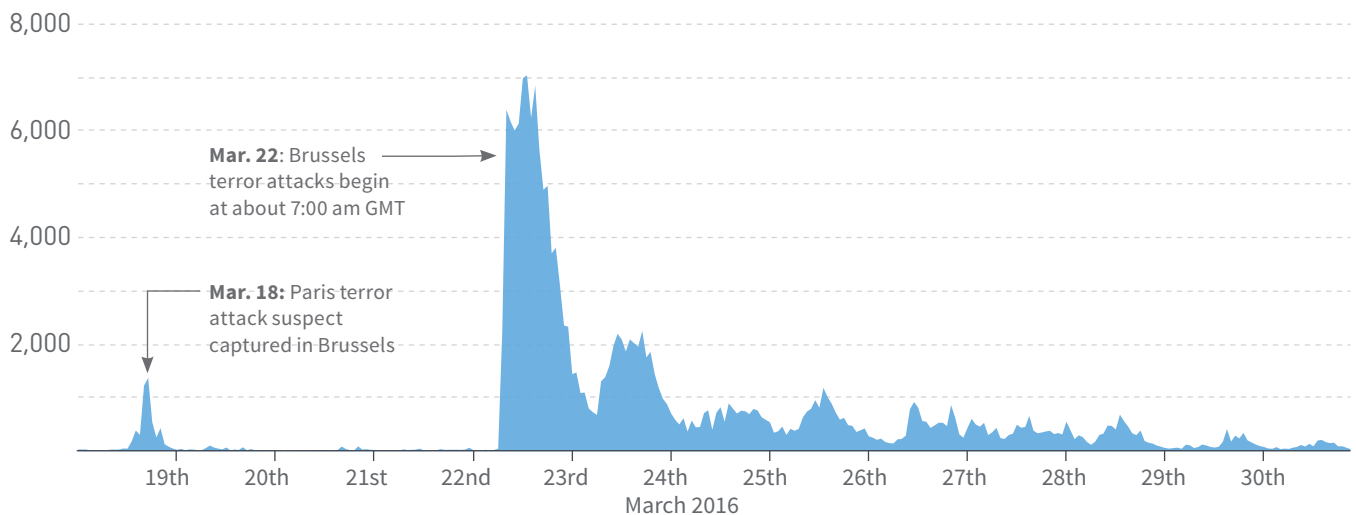
BREAKING NEWS: Brussels Terrorist Attack

On March 22, 2016, three coordinated bombings marked the deadliest act of terrorism in Belgium's history. The tragic news shocked the world, and news organizations shared reports about the event as it unfolded via Twitter.

The chart below shows how tweets mentioning the Brussels attacks developed throughout the month: more than **92 thousand** Brussels-related tweets linking to published news stories were posted within 24 hours of the event, with **34 thousand** of those posted in the first six hours after the attack.

Hourly Volume of Tweets Mentioning Brussels

Sending Traffic to Published News Stories in the Parse.ly Network



WHAT'S THE KEY TAKEAWAY FOR NEWS ORGANIZATIONS AND TWITTER?

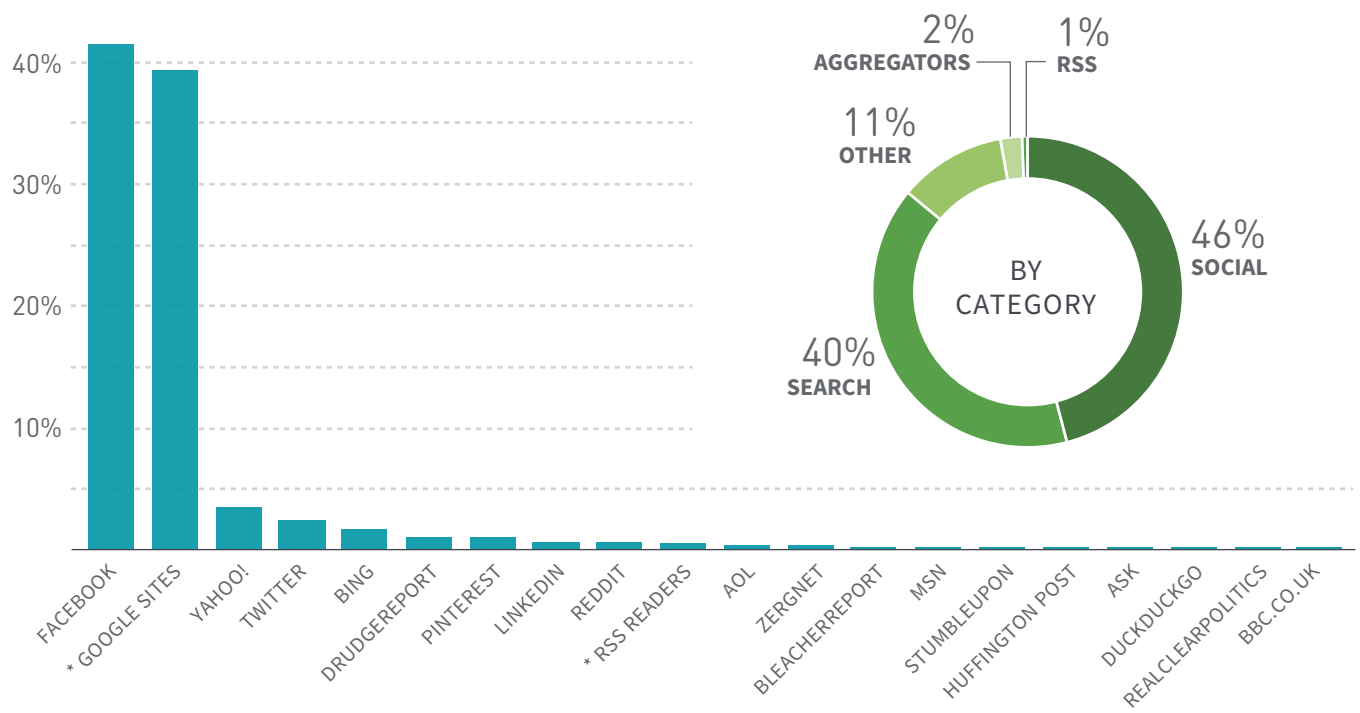
As a medium, Twitter excels at both conversational and breaking news. With respect to conversational news, Twitter acts as a “public square” where ongoing conversations happen around long-lived news topics. When it comes to breaking news, Twitter is a place journalists post their earliest reports and seek immediate confirmation of reports coming from other news outlets.

Though Twitter may not be a huge overall source of traffic to news websites relative to Facebook and Google, it serves a unique place in the link economy. News really does “start” on Twitter.

In each Authority Report, we show the top known referral sources to our network of sites. Each of these shows a snapshot of the traffic to our network in time and reflects both industry trends and shifts in our publishing clients.

TOP TRAFFIC REFERRAL SOURCES JAN. – FEB., 2016

Percent of Known Referrals in the Parse.ly Network



* **Google Sites:** Aggregate of all of Google-owned properties, e.g. Google.com, Google.ca, and Google News.

* **RSS Readers:** All external traffic from RSS reader services such as feedly.com.

About Parse.ly

Thousands of writers, editors, site managers, and technologists already use Parse.ly to understand what content draws in website visitors, and why. Using our powerful dashboards and APIs, customers build successful digital strategies that allow them to grow and engage a loyal audience.