

# Sad!: Donald Trump and the Political Uses of Twitter

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## Abstract

Other United States presidential candidates and Presidents have used Twitter, but Donald Trump is the first true political product of the social media platform. Trump's use of Twitter was one of the most remarkable parts of the extraordinary 2016 campaign, and post-election the signs point to his continuing use of the medium as President. As such, it is imperative that we understand the rhetorical uses to which candidate and president-elect Trump has put Twitter and the rhetorical uses to which President Trump may put it. This paper argues that Trump's major uses of Twitter tend to fall into three categories: emotional expression, distraction, and potentially what is starting to be called "appeals to stochastic violence."

## Introduction

The message was posted at three in the morning, while most people on the East Coast were asleep. "Did Crooked Hillary help disgusting (check out sex tape and past) Alicia M become a U.S. citizen so she could use her in the debate?" it read, referring to Alicia Machado, a former Miss Universe contestant.

It was the middle of the night, and Donald Trump was awake and fuming on Twitter.

His angry attacks on Machado, whom Hillary Clinton had recently used as an example of his poor treatment of women, were far from the first time Trump had used Twitter in ways that were startlingly informal, personal, and inflammatory. Long before he announced that he would be running for president, he famously got into feuds on Twitter with actress Rosie O'Donnell, who he called "mentally sick" and a "slob" (Stack), political author Arianna Huffington, who he called "unattractive inside and out" and said he understood why her husband had left her for a man (Carlson), and many other people.

People wondered in some amazement why the Republican presidential candidate was awake and angrily using Twitter at three in the morning, especially to recommend that people search for a sex tape--one that turned out to be nonexistent (Evan). Others noted that Trump's intemperate use of Twitter proved him unpresidential. Hillary Clinton herself had said during her nomination speech at the Democratic National Convention, in a line often-referenced through the campaign, that "a man you can bait with a tweet is not a man we can trust with nuclear weapons" (Schultheis). His highly-personal, idiosyncratic style of tweeting expressed both his bombastic personality and lack of a filter. Over the course of the summer of 2016, as the campaign continued, you could see many people closing their tweets or comments with the quick ejaculation "Sad!" in mimicry of one of Trump's favorite ways to close a tweet (in 2015 and 2016 he used some form of "sad!" as a closer thirty-nine times). "National Review is a failing publication that has lost it's [sic] way. It's [sic] circulation is way down w its influence being at

an all time low. Sad!” (Jan. 22); “Europe and the U.S. must immediately stop taking in people from Syria. This will be the destruction of civilization as we know it! So sad!” (March 24); and “The Great State of Arizona, where I just had a massive rally (amazing people), has a very weak and ineffective Senator, Jeff Flake. Sad!” (Sept. 5) are all typical.

His tweets were largely a source of ironic amusement and mockery on Twitter. In fact, as the election drew near, the New York Times reported that Trump’s staff banned him from Twitter in the fear that it would harm his chances (Haberma et al.) In a speech on November 7, President Obama mocked the fact that the candidate had to be kept away from Twitter: “Now, if somebody can’t handle a Twitter account, they can’t handle the nuclear codes. If somebody starts tweeting at 3 in the morning because ‘SNL’ [a comedy show] made fun of you, then you can’t handle the nuclear codes” (Fang).

A day later, Donald Trump won the election.

In one of Trump’s first interviews after becoming President-Elect, interviewer Lesley Stahl asked if he intended to keep using Twitter after he became President. After first noting “I think I picked up yesterday 100,000 people. I’m not saying I love it, but it does get the word out,” he mentioned that “I’m going to do very restrained, if I use it at all, I’m going to do very restrained.” He then added: “I find it tremendous. It’s a modern form of communication. There should be nothing you should be ashamed of. It’s-- it’s where it’s at.” (“President-Elect”) His ambivalence toward Twitter and his defensiveness about his enjoyment of it was clear. As of this writing, it is still possible that as President he may show more restraint. However, his pattern of using Twitter as President-Elect has remained unchanged, prompting a great deal of speculation about what purpose he may put this new form of communication to as President.

This essay, written in the sliver of time between the election and Trump’s inauguration to the presidency, is a discussion of Trump’s rhetorical uses of Twitter. Looking particularly at his use of Twitter since the election, this essay posits three possible and probably-overlapping motivations behind Trump’s use of Twitter: as emotional expression for Trump himself, as an attempted distraction from ethical issues and concerns with his presidency, and as a tool of stochastic violence.

### **Emotional Expression**

The history of United States presidents on Twitter is a brief one. Twitter itself was only founded in 2006, and the @POTUS (the handle is an acronym for “President Of The United States”) account was not created until June 2013, under President Obama, making Barack Obama the first person to use Twitter while a sitting US president. Obama was also the first US president to use Twitter in any form, as his personal Twitter account was created quite early in the history of Twitter, in March 2007, when he was a senator. Of the other US presidents past and future, Jimmy Carter and George W. Bush are not on Twitter; George H.W. Bush joined in January 2012 as an ex-president, Bill Clinton joined in April 2013, also after his term as president; and Donald Trump has been on Twitter since March 2009.

Of all of these, Trump is the only one whose Twitter pre-existed his political career. Obama,

Clinton, and Bush all naturally see Twitter first and foremost as a tool to spread information--to make public political statements on important events or on policy issues. All three users are cautious about expressing anything too strongly-worded or too personal, because for them Twitter exists as a political tool, not as a means of personal expression.

Trump, on the other hand, first used Twitter to promote his reality programs and to express himself on a variety of personal topics. Success as a reality television star is not hindered--indeed, it can be dramatically helped--by using social media to express strong, controversial statements, and Trump never shied from this use of it. Indeed, some of his first forays into politics leading up to his presidential run were pushing the so-called "Birther" conspiracy theory that Barack Obama was a Muslim born in Kenya. "An 'extremely credible source' has called my office and told me that @BarackObama's birth certificate is a fraud," he posted on Twitter in 2012. In 2013, he noted that the woman who verified Obama's birth certificate had died in a plane crash: "How amazing, the State Health Director who verified copies of Obama's "birth certificate" died in plane crash today. All others lived." At the time, he used Twitter's very brevity and terseness to hint at sinister machinations without having to actually explicitly state what he was implying. Tweets like this were one of the first things to catch the attention and affection of conservative voters and thus they became the base of his political career.

In addition to simply saying controversial, shocking things to get attention, Trump had years to come to see Twitter as a vehicle for personal expression. He used it to brag about his intellect: "Sorry losers and haters, but my I.Q. is one of the highest -and you all know it! Please don't feel so stupid or insecure, it's not your fault" (9 May 2013) or to express his disapproval of New York Fashion Week: "New York Fashion Week is really bad, and used to be so glamorous and exciting! No stars, no fun-just boring. They need serious help. #NYFW" (15 Sept. 2013) or quoting other people's praise of him: "'@jorourke8: @realDonaldTrump your the greatest man on earth' So nice, thank you!" (23 April 2014).

By the time Trump became the President-Elect of the United States, his pattern of Twitter use to express himself in personal, emotional ways was clearly a set pattern, and one difficult if not impossible to change. It is also important to remember that Trump has in fact little motivation to change his behavior, as his brash impulsive rhetoric on Twitter seems to have been a factor that endeared him to some voters. All evidence on this point is anecdotal to date, but it is not hard to find people claiming that some voters felt "bullied" by the way the media portrayed conservative voters, and who feel that Trump's tweets "figuratively punch the bully in the face, and people love that" (Zito). No quantifiable study of the effect exists yet, but there is some suggestion that Trump's combative, personal style was a benefit rather than a detriment as the election drew close.

Since the election, Trump's use of Twitter has continued to be inflammatory and personal. He has lashed out at protesters, Bill Clinton, Barack Obama, the cast of the musical Hamilton, Vanity Fair magazine (after a negative review of one of his restaurants). He has promoted his "victory tour" rallies and thanked his supporters--though usually with a sting included, as in Dec. 19 2016's tweet, "We did it! Thank you to all of my great supporters, we just officially won the

election (despite all of the distorted and inaccurate media).”

It is possible, but seems unlikely, that Trump will switch to the more abstract, formal style favored by the previous president upon assuming office. Twitter is clearly psychologically valuable to him personally, and strategically valuable in rhetorically positioning himself as a shoot-from-the-hip, hard-hitting, authentic person. It also serves a further use which will be examined next: that of distraction and smoke screen.

### **Distraction**

Since the election, Trump’s tweets have become, naturally, the focus of intense scrutiny as people try to guess from them what issues and policies the new president might enact, and what his thoughts and opinions are. As a partial list of his actions on Twitter, Trump has demanded an apology from the cast of Hamilton, questioned the need for a new Air Force One jet, upended America’s “One China” policy, criticized Bill Clinton and Barack Obama, attacked a negative review of one of his restaurants, asserted that he is one of the biggest winners in US history, dismissed concerns about conflicts of interest with his businesses, attacked a labor leader, re-affirmed the US support of Israel, floated renewing the arms race, discussed stripping people who burn the flag of their citizenship, criticized the United Nations, and mocked concerns that Russia influenced the US elections.

At the same time, Trump has been picking his Cabinet and advisers, having victory rallies, settling a fraud lawsuit against his university, meeting with various famous people (including Bill Gates, Kanye West, and Floyd Mayweather). The process of picking his Cabinet alone generated huge amounts of attention; Trump seemed to model the process on a reality game show like his own *Apprentice*, treating conversations like auditions and literally calling possible appointees “finalists”: “Very organized process taking place as I decide on Cabinet and many other positions. I am the only one who knows who the finalists are!” (Nov. 16 2016)

All of these things combined means that there has been a lot to pay attention to, much of it alarming or unprecedented. Journalists and political analysts are unclear on how important it is to pay attention to Trump’s tweets, as there has never been a president who uses Twitter in this way. Confusing the matter further, Trump’s speech and his tweets sometimes contradict each other: for example, on Dec. 28, 2016, Trump tweeted “Doing my best to disregard the many inflammatory President O statements and roadblocks. Thought it was going to be a smooth transition - NOT!” However, later that very day he answered a question from a reporter about the transition by saying it was going “very, very smoothly” (Scott).

Even more confusing is when his tweets contradict each other. For example, three days after the election on Nov. 11 2016, when there were protests in the street, Trump tweeted, “Just had a very open and successful presidential election. Now professional protesters, incited by the media, are protesting. Very unfair!” Almost exactly nine hours later, he tweeted “Love the fact that the small groups of protesters last night have passion for our great country. We will all come together and be proud!” These two basically contradictory messages still sit side by side on Trump’s timeline, unexplained and undeleted, and it’s unclear which one we are to take as the president-elect’s actual opinion, or if indeed either of them reflects his mental state.

The chaos and turmoil of Trump's tweeting habits have led some people to conclude that he is using Twitter as a deliberate distraction, a smoke screen; that when public attention turns to something that he finds legitimately worrying or possibly damaging, he tweets something inflammatory in order to distract everyone into talking about that instead. In the wake of his Twitter attack on the cast of *Hamilton* for addressing his vice-president-elect at a performance, Jack Schafer at *Politico* magazine wrote an article called "Stop Being Trump's Twitter Fool," in which he argued "Haven't any of these people raised children? Don't they know about bait and switch? Have none of them been paying attention to Trump's Twitter strategy for the past 17 months? For anybody who has read a half-dozen of Trump's tweets, the pattern is obvious. He compiles these tweets precisely in order to elicit strident protest." According to this argument, Trump's tweets are an attempt to keep people outraged about trivial things so that larger scandals go unnoticed. Journalist David M. Perry tweeted the argument, written in distinctive Twitter style so that the message is abruptly truncated at the end: "Focus on Trump's business. Follow the money. Ignore the tweets. Focus on Trump's business. Follow the money. Ignore the tweets. Focus on Tru"

The difficulty with this strategy is first, that it assumes that Trump's tweets are a rational, Machiavellian plan to deliberately manipulate the public. Unfortunately, nearly everything that people have assumed Trump is trying to distract from (his business conflicts of interest, the lawsuit against Trump University, his potential ties to Vladimir Putin) has also been the subject of tweets by the president-elect. If he is trying to hide something particularly damning, he is trying to hide it in plain sight, one among many tweets, and ignoring all of them would therefore lead to ignoring exactly what he wants his opponents to ignore.

The second difficulty with "just ignore his tweets" as a strategy is that Trump has so far allowed very limited access by the press, and as a result his tweets are one of the few forms of direct rhetoric people have access to. Aaron Blake in the *Washington Post* explained that ignoring Trump's tweets is not possible for the press:

What we're basically talking about here is treating Trump like a social media troll with an egg for an avatar who can be blocked or ignored and hopefully loses the will to keep harassing us. But this is the president-elect of the United States. The job comes with the so-called bully pulpit, and what he says matters and will be the subject of debate no matter what the mainstream media does. Everything he says reverberates. It doesn't matter if he says it on Twitter or at a news conference; either way it's going to be consumed by tens of millions of people, and the media has an important role to play when it comes to fact-checking and providing context. (29 Nov. 2016)

The very ridiculousness of the name "Twitter" and the fact that the standard verb for using it to communicate is "to tweet" (both of them terms for the high-pitched little noise that small birds make; the connotation is that of lightness, frivolity, unimportance) makes it difficult to take the things Trump says there seriously. Reporters, perhaps naturally, blanch at having to write "Today Donald Trump tweeted that he believed in expanding the US nuclear arsenal" as if he were sitting on a branch singing. But if he were speaking from the Oval Office on television or

issuing a formal press statement saying the exact same things, they would be taken seriously, and in the likely absence of such formal channels of communication, Twitter is what the public will have to judge him on.

Donald Trump will be, as Joe Wiesenthal puts it for Bloomberg magazine, “the first president of our post-literate age.” Citing Walter Ong’s thoughts on secondary orality, Wiesenthal points out that the culture of the Internet loops back around to that of a world before writing: “Before the invention of writing, knowledge existed in the present tense between two or more people; when information was forgotten, it disappeared forever. That state of affairs created a special need for ideas that were easily memorized and repeatable (so, in a way, they could go viral). The immediacy of the oral world did not favor complicated, abstract ideas that need to be thought through. Instead, it elevated individuals who passed along memorable stories, wisdom and good news.” The Internet’s pithy immediacy plays to all of Trump’s strengths--and accentuates all of Hillary Clinton’s and other traditional politicians’ weaknesses. That it creates a sort of “informational fog” which makes it almost impossible to tell what is important, what is trivial, and what is meant to distract from matters of true importance is extremely useful--whether used deliberately or not--for the future president.

So far we have looked at the way Twitter fulfills certain emotional needs in Donald Trump as a user of the medium, and we have considered some ways in which its style, perhaps serendipitously for Trump, can baffle and confuse people who want to understand or oppose the future president. The final possible rhetorical use of Twitter to be considered is far more ominous, which is as a tool of stochastic violence.

### **Stochastic Violence**

“Stochastic” is a word from the Greek, most commonly used in mathematics and probability theory, which refers to a problem involving a random variable that can only be predicted at levels of probability, not with certainty. Its use to modify “violence” or “terrorism” comes from a 2011 post on the political site Daily Kos in which the author uses it to discuss the modern (especially Internet-based) phenomenon of terrorists using digital communication to incite violence in service of their aims (G2geek). Specifically, stochastic terrorism is “the use of mass communications to stir up random lone wolves to carry out violent or terrorist acts that are statistically predictable but individually unpredictable.”

In the article’s example, when Bin Ladin (or more recently ISIS) releases videos or online messages urging people to commit terrorist acts, they cannot know who will find their message inspiring and decide to take action. But they do know that it is likely someone will. For example, the nightclub shootings in Orlando in 2016 were the doing of what is generally called a “lone wolf” in English, a single person acting alone. However, the shooter pledged his allegiance to ISIS before the murders, and ISIS gladly took credit for his actions (Malsin). As I type these words, CNN reports that a man who murdered five people in a Florida airport hours ago told the FBI in November 2016 that “he was hearing voices in his head, including some telling him to join ISIS” (Shoichet & Almasy). With modern communication technology, ISIS or other terrorist groups don’t need to do the hard and dangerous work of infiltrating other countries. All they need to do is keep spreading their message and wait, because eventually someone random

will act on their suggestions, and they can then take the credit.

Or, if they wished, they could deny involvement, claiming with full factual accuracy that the shooter has no affiliation with them and reaping the benefit of the act--increased terror--without any of the legal or moral responsibility. It is this nuance of stochastic violence that people fear with President Donald Trump.

Throughout the 2016 presidential election, people--especially religious and ethnic minorities and women--reported a sharp rise in harassment on Twitter and other social media. The anecdotal evidence was horrifying: for example, USA Today reported that “Hadas Gold, a Politico media writer, began receiving threats on Twitter. One image superimposed a yellow star of David on her shirt and a bloody bullet hole in her forehead. Another photoshopped her face on a corpse in a concentration camp oven. The message that came with the photos: ‘Don’t mess with our boy Trump, or you will be first in line for the camp’” (Guynn). David French, a conservative writer who criticized Trump, started his article called “The Price I’ve Paid for Opposing Donald Trump” with the sentence “I distinctly remember the first time I saw a picture of my then-seven-year-old daughter’s face in a gas chamber. . . . I saw images of my daughter’s face in gas chambers, with a smiling Trump in a Nazi uniform preparing to press a button and kill her.” A Newsweek reporter known to have epilepsy was sent images designed to trigger seizures that also incorporated a known neo-Nazi symbol (Hawkins) (A discussion of how a cartoon frog became a symbol of the neo-Nazis is too complex to detail here, but cf. Andrews in the Washington Post for a more in-depth discussion).

The evidence was not merely anecdotal: the Anti-Defamation League, which tracks anti-Semitic behavior, released a report noting that “From August 2015 to July 2016, the ADL found 2.6 million tweets with anti-Semitic language. Of those, nearly 20,000 tweets were directed at 50,000 journalists in the U.S., with more than two-thirds of the tweets sent by 1,600 Twitter accounts. Words that appear frequently in the profiles of these Twitter accounts: Trump, nationalist, conservative, white” (Guynn).

Trump himself, of course, did none of these crude attacks. But the harassment was focused intensely on people who criticized Trump, and a mention by Trump in his Twitter feed was a guarantee that the negative attention would spike. After the election, the pattern became even more clear: when Trump used Twitter to criticize the cast of the musical *Hamilton*, the actors received death threats that necessitated hiring extra security for a time (Stern). When an Indianapolis union leader criticized the president-elect, Trump shot back on Twitter that “Chuck Jones, who is President of United Steelworkers 1999, has done a terrible job representing workers” (8 Dec. 2016). As the Washington Post reported, “Half an hour after Trump tweeted about Jones on Wednesday, the union leader's phone began to ring and kept ringing, he said. One voice asked: What kind of car do you drive? Another said: We’re coming for you. ‘Nothing that says they’re gonna kill me, but, you know, you better keep your eye on your kids,’ Jones said later on MSNBC. ‘We know what car you drive. Things along those lines.’” (Paquette). When Trump mentioned a negative review a *Vanity Fair* writer did of one of his restaurants on Twitter, “In a set of actions that other media outlets would be wise to study, the *Vanity Fair* public relations team quickly contacted Nguyen. ‘They kept an eye out for anyone who tried to release my address or my phone

number or even tried to call me through the Condé [Nast] switchboard,' she says. 'They were on top of their game, so big credit to them.'" (Vernon). That media outlets are being advised to have security contingency plans in place in case the future president criticises them says a great deal about both the power of Twitter and the rhetorical strategy of Donald Trump.

In the age of the Internet, the odds for violence increase steadily as time goes on. The examples above have remained at threat and intimidation, but even before Trump assumes the presidency, the level of threat has escalated. In December 2016 a man brought a gun to a Washington DC pizza restaurant in an attempt to free the child sex slaves being kept in its basement. The "Pizzagate" conspiracy theory started with people going through the Democrats' leaked emails and feeling there were a suspicious number of references to pizza which must hide some code for terrible secrets. The theory evolved into a full-blown Byzantine melodrama in which Hillary Clinton was running a child sex ring from the basement of a specific DC pizza shop. People online found secret Satanic symbols in the signs of the pizza shop and other nearby stores, they found secret codes about cannibalistic rituals. Trump didn't mention it directly, but his followers latched onto it because it confirmed everything they knew about Hillary Clinton's secretive, duplicitous nature.

And eventually, a man came to "investigate" the pizza restaurant, bringing his rifle with him in case children needed to be rescued. He fired the gun at a door inside the restaurant, but surrendered peacefully after searching the building and deciding there were no children in danger there (Kang & Goldman).

Trump's tweets are fleeting and transient, but the effects they have are not. Long after most people have forgotten whatever prompted an annoyed message from him, the people he tweets about continue to experience the effects in their everyday life. In 2015, for example, an 18-year-old female college student asked Trump about abortion and said she didn't believe he was "a friend to women." The next day, an irritated Trump tweeted, calling her "The arrogant young woman who questioned me in such a nasty fashion" and accusing her of being a plant from political rival Jeb Bush (13 Oct. 2015). For Trump, this was a most likely a momentary flash of anger. For most of his Twitter followers, it was a somewhat random event they forgot fairly soon. For the woman in question, it was the beginning of a year of harassment. Just days before the election, over a year later, she got a message on Facebook saying "Wishing I could f---ing punch you in the face. id then proceed to stomp your head on the curb and urinate in your bloodied mouth and i know where you live, so watch your f---ing back punk" (Johnson).

Trump's motivation is unclear, as is the extent of the understanding of his rhetorical power. When he presses send on a message naming a private citizen, is he aware that he is opening them up to emotional intimidation, threats, and potentially actual violence? Does he not understand, does he understand but simply not care compared to his need to vent, or does he understand perfectly well that he increases the odds that his opponents will be silenced? No matter what the answer is, the practical reality is that if his style of using Twitter continues into his presidency, we will surely see the power of probabilistic violence explored to its fullest and discover the ways in which "mere words" influence actions in the world. Trump and his surrogates have been clear in their belief that a speaker is under no obligation to facts or reality when speaking.

Immediately after the election, the Trump transition team reassured Japanese Prime Minister Abe that “campaign remarks calling the [Japan-US] alliance into question should not be taken literally” (Bunnstrom), and Trump surrogate Corey Lewandowski later expressed surprise that the media “took everything that Donald Trump said so literally. The American people didn’t. They understood it. They understood that sometimes — when you have a conversation with people, whether it’s around the dinner table or at a bar — you’re going to say things, and sometimes you don’t have all the facts to back it up” (Tumulty & Rucker). Trump either truly believes or is eager to have others believe that his rhetoric can shift within days or even hours, that he can say whatever he wishes and face no consequences, because his words are not supposed to be “taken literally.” So when he calls for his opponents to be jailed, or for protesters to be assaulted, or for enemies to be beheaded in public, he doesn’t mean that literally. Until, perhaps, he does.

### **Conclusions**

On January 20, 2017 (after this article goes to press), Trump will become president of the United States of America and inherit the @POTUS account. It’s unclear yet whether Trump will keep and use two Twitter accounts, switch over to the @POTUS account, or continue mainly to use his own (which currently has 18.2 million followers to @POTUS’s 12.8 million). At this point Trump’s Twitter management is hardly the most pressing issue of his transition, but it will be interesting and an obvious avenue of future research to see how his Twitter rhetoric evolves over the years of his presidency. Which of the uses outlined above will be his primary uses? Or will he discover new ways to communicate through Twitter that have never even been considered before?

Twitter can be a valuable tool for organizing and quickly sharing opinions, ideas, and plans. The speed, simplicity, and anonymity of Twitter makes it an ideal tool for political organization--and indeed, during the so-called “Arab Spring” of 2011, Twitter was often cited as an important tool of democracy. “We use Facebook to schedule the protests” an Arab Spring activist from Egypt announced “and [we use] Twitter to coordinate, and YouTube to tell the world” (Kassim). At the time, there was a great deal of hope that Twitter could be a powerful aid in the spread of democracy and equality around the world.

As of 2017, however, that hope is largely null and void. More and more people are stepping away from the platform, simply because the level of harassment is too emotionally draining and anxiety-producing. As writer Lindy West put it in explaining why she was stepping away from Twitter:

[On Twitter] I am micromanaged in real time by strangers; neo-Nazis mine my personal life for vulnerabilities to exploit; and men enjoy unfettered, direct access to my brain so they can inform me, for the thousandth time, that they would gladly rape me if I weren’t so fat. I talk back and I am “feeding the trolls”. I say nothing and the harassment escalates. I report threats and I am a “censor”. I use mass-blocking tools to curb abuse and I am abused further for blocking “unfairly”. I have to conclude, after half a decade of troubleshooting, that it may simply be impossible to make this platform usable for anyone but trolls, robots and dictators.

Human ingenuity tends to find new ways to communicate, and the Internet is a very flexible

platform. It seems likely that in the long run, ways will be found to counter the most toxic forms of communication and create a medium that lives up to some of its early promise. But in the short run, it does appear that, both rhetorically and pragmatically, the trolls, robots and dictators are running the show.

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- Trump, Donald J. (realDonaldTrump). "The arrogant young woman who questioned me in such a nasty fashion at No Labels yesterday was a Jeb staffer! HOW CAN HE BEAT RUSSIA & CHINA?". 13 Oct 2015, 11:39 UTC. Tweet.
- Trump, Donald J. (realDonaldTrump). "National Review is a failing publication that has lost it's [sic] way. It's [sic] circulation is way down w its influence being at an all time low. Sad!" 22 Jan. 2016, 9:56 EST. Tweet.
- Trump, Donald J. (realDonaldTrump). "Europe and the U.S. must immediately stop taking in people from Syria. This will be the destruction of civilization as we know it! So sad!" 24 March 2016, 9:55 EST. Tweet.
- Trump, Donald J. (realDonaldTrump). "The Great State of Arizona, where I just had a massive rally (amazing people), has a very weak and ineffective Senator, Jeff Flake. Sad!" 5 Sept. 2016, 17:05 EST. Tweet.
- Trump, Donald J. (realDonaldTrump). "Did Crooked Hillary help disgusting (check out sex tape and past) Alicia M become a U.S. citizen so she could use her in the debate?" 30 Sept. 2016, 3:30 EST. Tweet.
- Trump, Donald J. (realDonaldTrump). "Just had a very open and successful presidential election. Now professional protesters, incited by the media, are protesting. Very unfair!" 11 Nov 2016, 02:19 UTC. Tweet.
- Trump, Donald J. (realDonaldTrump). "Love the fact that the small groups of protesters last night

- have passion for our great country. We will all come together and be proud!" 11 Nov 2016, 11:14 UTC. Tweet.
- Trump, Donald J. (realDonaldTrump). "Very organized process taking place as I decide on Cabinet and many other positions. I am the only one who knows who the finalists are!". 16 Nov 2016, 02:55 UTC. Tweet
- Trump, Donald J. (realDonaldTrump). "Chuck Jones, who is President of United Steelworkers 1999, has done a terrible job representing workers. No wonder companies flee country!" 08 Dec 2016, 00:41 UTC. Tweet.
- Trump, Donald J. (realDonaldTrump). "We did it! Thank you to all of my great supporters, we just officially won the election (despite all of the distorted and inaccurate media)." 19 Dec 2016, 23:51 UTC. Tweet.
- Trump, Donald J. (realDonaldTrump). "Doing my best to disregard the many inflammatory President O statements and roadblocks. Thought it was going to be a smooth transition - NOT!". 28 Dec 2016, 14:07 UTC. Tweet.
- Tumulty, Karen, and Philip Rucker. "Shouting match erupts between Clinton and Trump aides." Washington Post, 1 Dec. 2016. Web. 7 Jan. 2017.
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- West, Lindy. "I've left Twitter. It is unusable for anyone but trolls, robots and dictators." The Guardian, 3 Jan. 2017. Web. 7 Jan. 2017.
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