

Twitter, Favorability Rank, and the President

✘ *By Todd Murphy, Vice President, Universal Information Services*

This week the United States will demonstrate for the world how a planned and peaceful transition of power looks. As President-Elect Donald Trump assumes the role managed by President Barrack Obama for the past eight years, many differences between the two men will be noted.

One factoid that hasn't gone unnoticed by social media analysis team at Universal Information Services, is the difference between the favorability rating for each as they came into office, and their number of followers each has under their personal Twitter Profile.

Trump has already announced that he will forego any use of the @POTUS (President of the United States) Twitter profile, in favor of his personal profile, @realDonaldTrump. Previously, Obama used the @POTUS profile for certain types of messaging, and his @BarackObama profile to message as "bo".

Much has been said about the importance Twitter played in this immediate election cycle, where Trump used Twitter to disrupt traditional politics. What may have been lost on some is that Obama is completing two terms that coincided with the inception, acceptance, and rise of Twitter as a viable communication tool. Let's look at the numbers of the Presidential profiles.

Presidential Twitter Numbers

- *Twitter gained initial mainstream exposure in 2007*
- *Twitter grew from 400,000 tweets in 2007 to 100 million*

in 2008

- *Barack Obama was elected November 2008*
- *Obama took office January 2009*
- *Over the next eight years Obama gained over 80.5 million followers on Twitter*
- *In that same time, Obama chose to follow 632,038 profiles on Twitter*
- *November 2016, Trump won the election*
- *Trump will take the office of President on January 20, 2017*
- *At this point, Trump has just over 20.1 million Twitter followers*
- *At the time of measurement, Trump is following only 42 other Twitter profiles*

The Twitter Numbers for @POTUS

- *At 13.5 million followers, this profile is named President Obama*
- *After January 20th that will be changed to President Trump*

Pre-Inauguration Favorability Ratings

- *Barack Obama 78%*
- *Donald Trump 40%*



The question: How will @POTUS be affected as a communication profile when Trump declines to use it?

Next question: Is @POTUS a profile that is less important to the world for communication, and is it more important to build personal brand equity within your own profile?

Final question: Why would the President of the United States not use an official communication tool, favoring their own profile pulpit?

For fear of turning this into a political post, I want to make sure our media measurement analysis simply draws attention to the numbers, but leaves speculation to those who read this post. What the numbers do illustrate is that President Obama was the first President to spend a full eight years with the communication power of Twitter at his disposal. Donald Trump will be only the second president to have this tool, and has demonstrated a firm command of Twitter.

How one uses Twitter to communicate may or may not contribute to one's favorability rating as president, but certainly what each of us says when communicating publicly is how we are perceived. The next four years, or eight years, will allow us to continue our analysis of social media on the favorability of the Presidential office. What we learn here is being extended to the voice of CEO's, spokespersons, celebrities, and others who use social media to communicate their thoughts and positions. When analyzing their their impact, their voice and tone can reveal much.

The data above shows how using media intelligence to inform your business intelligence is a critical tool in today's environments. What are you saying on Twitter and how does it impact the perception of your company, service or organization? It seems there is still a great need for media training as it can impact the favorability rank you receive, relative to your competition... and that can make or break your bank.