



Should Businesses and Non-profit organizations Stay on Twitter, or Leave? *A digital marketing expert weighs in.*¹

Written by Tim Campbell-Smith
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The Situation

Twitter has entered the public spotlight, surrounded by controversy since [Elon Musk's private takeover](#) in October of 2022. This has not been the source of Twitter's struggles, but is certainly making them worse: from declining revenues to a rise in bot accounts, Twitter has been [struggling for years](#). But now that Musk has taken over, clear [usage changes](#) are coming to light: hate speech is on the rise, major advertisers are leaving, niche advertisers are joining, and celebrities are weighing in mixed thoughts on the platform, with some leaving to take a stance (most notably including Elton John, Whoopi Goldberg, Jim Carrey, Shonda Rhimes and Toni Braxton). To make matters worse, Twitter is [crumbling from the inside](#) with demanding emails, mass layoffs, ultimatums for long working hours and reduced flexibility in how work happens. Everyone is wondering: is Twitter dying? While [Twitter is addressing the question](#) internally, it leaves speculation and confusion for many.

All of this is trickling its way down to businesses NPOs, and we're left wondering: should businesses stay on Twitter, or leave?

Businesses and organizations are wrestling with the pros and cons of staying on or leaving Twitter across Canada, the USA, and the world. Between the controversy, the rise in problematic behaviour and the uncertainty, no wonder there's doubt! However, these concerns on their own may not be enough to make an educated decision. Here we suggest some key questions and considerations in helping your organization decide: should you stay on Twitter, or leave?

Considerations to Make First

Before deciding whether to leave Twitter, we can make some personal considerations and professional considerations. Some personal considerations to make in deciding whether to stay on Twitter:

1. Base your decision on facts, not speculation.

There's a lot of [speculation around the future of Twitter](#), but speculation doesn't always mean facts. Focus on the facts at hand, and what we currently know in the moment you're making the decision.

2. Separate your beliefs about Elon Musk and current social climate from the platform itself.

The COVID-19 pandemic has [caused users to be more emotionally activated](#) than ever before, resulting in higher abuse cases and users changing how they use social media. Further to this, social media users already had mixed feelings about Elon Musk, leading us to have mixed feelings. This is where we separate the owner from the situation from the platform. Twitter is still extremely useful for journalists, politicians, and community groups, most of whom to date are still on the platform. This is also a good time to remind ourselves that the COVID-19 pandemic will not affect us forever, and Elon Musk will not be the CEO of Twitter forever.

From here, we can also make organizational considerations in deciding whether to stay on Twitter:

3. What does your organization stand to lose, and what does it stand to gain, from leaving?
You may find leaving Twitter opens up time, responsibilities and energy for other social

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media marketing efforts. There's a possibility this worry could lead to peace of mind and security around the brand. However, leaving could also mean losing touch points with key community partners, or any referrals that could come through from the platform.

4. What are the risks associated with staying on, or leaving, Twitter?

Risk is everywhere, and you have to choose which matters most to and what you can manage. If you stay, you risk being associated with Twitter and its public image, or complacent in public relations crises. If you leave, you risk missing out on larger community conversations, or that additional channel for your organization.

Guiding Questions

So far, we've considered some heavy statements to weigh in deciding whether or not to leave Twitter. If you're anything like me, you might prefer some guiding questions! As I've talked with businesses and organizations about Twitter, here's some guiding questions that have helped move the conversation forward:

1. Are the largest, most active groups of users still on Twitter?

We know some of the [largest demographics using Twitter](#) include politicians, journalists and then community groups. Are those the kind of people you may want to interact with? Whether it's to stay up to date on community events, stay in touch, or amplify your messaging, there may be potential in who's there.

This is also a critical question because these groups act as *the canary in the coalmine*: if they leave, what is Twitter? Watch these three groups, as they're an excellent indicator of platform usefulness and activity.

2. Is our target audience still on Twitter?

This question is crucial to doing anything on social media. If your target audience is still on Twitter, stay! If not, consider leaving. You can easily find out if they're on it by reviewing your followers, doing polls with your audience or sending out surveys.

3. Are we okay with being associated with Twitter?

Celebrities who left Twitter gave us an interesting perspective: sometimes who we associate with (or could be associated with) drives our decisions. [Actress Jameela Jamil left Twitter](#) immediately after the Musk takeover because of concerns of association. If this is something on your mind, consider answering the question with your organization and stakeholders.

4. What do we gain, and what do we lose from staying with Twitter? And vice versa?

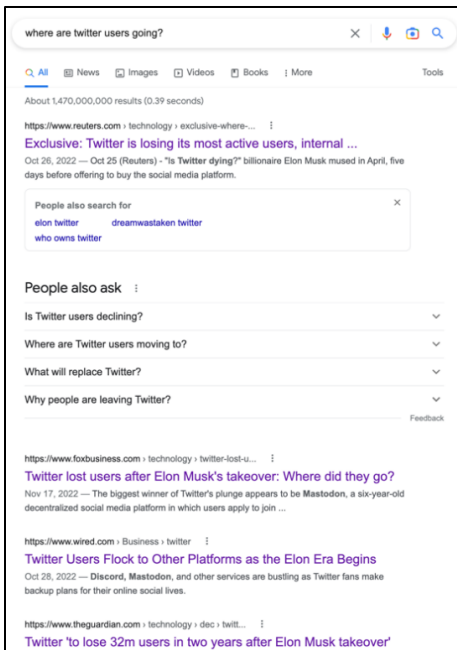
While we covered this in considerations, it's still an excellent question to pose. Consider asking key stakeholders what they think, and how they'd proceed in the situation.

5. Are there any thresholds that would cause us to leave? Have we crossed those thresholds yet?

Sometimes it's important to name and claim what *could* cause you to leave Twitter. These can include anything from specific actions (for example, some organizations have left in solidarity with Twitter employees being fired), particular benchmarks (like number of active Twitter users) or times (like if the platform isn't growing again in one year), or for some, notable benchmarks (like number of bot accounts). It's also worth checking if those thresholds have been crossed.

Where are Twitter users going?

The other question on people's minds is simple: if people leave Twitter, where are they going? It turns out users are spreading out far and wide away from Twitter. A review of dozens of [articles](#) found users are either going to



1. **Mastodon.** A relatively new (to us) social media platform similar in form and function to Twitter.
2. **Discord.** However, it's worth noting that many Discord users acknowledge that the platform *will not replace Twitter*, it's just another social media platform where those followers are.
3. **Other social media platforms.** Turns out many users are simply doubling down on what they already have or use.
4. **Nowhere.** Many users who do leave the platform reported not going anywhere else, and simply reclaiming time that would have been spent on the platform.

Where do we go from here?

I think it's worth answering the question *Why is Twitter good?* It is still worth noting that Twitter has a lot of powerful functions. The platform is an excellent place to share information, quickly, and have real interactions, particularly with those in specific geographic regions. The platform is still (as far as we know) a go-to place for journalists to collect, and share, information

that is fast and up to date. But, it also has some challenges ahead of it: from mass firings of core staff to advertising practices, hate speech to bot accounts, Twitter has to roll up its sleeves and get to work.

In the meantime, it seems like a lot of businesses are in a holding position, taking a wait-and-see approach. This is actually smart, as long as organizations know what they're waiting to see, or what they're holding out for.



About the Author

Tim Campbell-Smith is so extroverted he puts the social back in social media. A digital marketing generalist by profession, he is a content creator, corporate trainer, and teacher in the post-secondary system.

Tim has consulted for and spoken with thousands of entrepreneurs and organisations around the world, most notably with The Small Business Centres of Ontario, The Canadian Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce, The Resilience Summit, Innovation Guelph, Social Media Pro, The Professional Organizers of Canada and the Los Angeles Film School. Tim

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[Tim](#) is most active on [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#)

ⁱ Digital copy with links, can be found at: <http://www.oacao.org/resources/news-and-views/>