

Twitter ye, or Twitter ye not?

Paul Baker

Paul Baker is a self-employed web developer whose company, ClockTowerWeb, designs and builds websites for local and national businesses.

The Lambourne Drive resident, who has lived in Maidenhead since 1993, has been tweeting for about three years.

"I often tweet as a way of filling time when I'm waiting for the kettle to boil, or as a way to escape the real world," he said.

Paul's father recently died of prostate cancer, at the age of 73. "I decided that I would 'tell' Twitter the news and see what happened," he added.

"I was very surprised by the number of people who replied with kind messages of sympathy and support."

@MaidBloke



Tameena Hussain

Tameena Hussain is a volunteer for the community cohesion group Aik Saath in Slough, and was last month named as Young Volunteer of the Year at the annual Windsor and Maidenhead Voluntary Action's (WMVA) awards.

The 24-year-old explains: "Twitter's a great way of communicating with people you wouldn't otherwise be in contact with."

Tameena, from Aldebury Road, is currently followed by nearly 500 other accounts, including those of local councillors and the disability sports club SportsAble.

She regularly tweets about community-related issues.

"I'm on it quite a bit; about every half hour when I'm not working," she added.

@TameenaHussain



THE popularity of social media website Twitter has soared in recent years. Furze Platt Senior School pupil **ANDREW BURDETT**, 16, who has 1,223 'followers' on his account, has explained why he is a convert and spoken to four others about how they use Twitter and why.

IT WAS seeing how the news of the Hudson plane crash spread on Twitter that made me sign up to the social media site.

Twitter is a real-time information network that connects you to the latest stories, ideas, opinions and news about what you find interesting.

Businesses, celebs and individuals use Twitter and each will use it for different reasons.

At the heart of the site are small bursts of information called 'tweets'. Each tweet is 140 characters long, but you'd be amazed at how much information you can glean from such a small space.

I signed up in February 2009 and have practically used it every day since. I love seeing fellow Maidenians tweet about their view on events in the town and particularly enjoyed seeing pictures from the day the Olympic Torch Relay passed through the borough being shared in real-time.

I tweet about lots of different subjects. My followers can expect tweets about school life, the media, scouting and my latest blog posts.

I spoke to some fellow Maidenians about why they use Twitter.

www.andrewburdett.wordpress.com

@andrewburdett1



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Nicola Hine

Nicola has been a news reporter at the Advertiser for two years and is also the paper's entertainment editor.

"Twitter is a really useful tool for journalists as it helps us to interact with the community and to find out what the issues are locally," she said. "It's great for spotting potential news stories developing and is a quick and easy way to then share them with the world."

The former Newlands Girls' School pupil, 23, is followed by more than 870 accounts, including local businesses and clubs, residents, and journalists.

All of the Advertiser reporters have a Twitter account: their usernames for can be found on the paper's website.

@Nicola_Hine



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■ See pages 20-21 for these week's top tweets.

■ If you are new to the Twitter world and do not know where to start - do not fear. Read our Digital Editor's latest blog with Twitter tips in our online Lifestyle: Blogs section.



■ The Twitter website was founded in 2006.

■ At the heart of the site, members send 'tweets': messages, limited to 140 characters, containing thoughts, facts, or links to pictures, videos, or other websites

■ Smartphones have contributed to the recent surge in interest, with many modern devices offering users the ability to upload photos to the site, immediately after taking them.

■ Members can choose to 'follow' any other member that interests them, from next-door neighbours to world-famous celebrities and politicians. The latest tweets by those users are then visible as a live 'feed'.

■ 'Retweeting' offers users an easy way to share an interesting tweet with their own followers.

It's not just individuals that use the site. Many companies and organisations claim Twitter is a valuable way of connecting them to their customers.

■ Users often include 'hashtags' in their tweets: phrases, characterised by the # prefix, which categorise tweets and 'spread the word' on a topic.

■ There are 500 million active users sending 340 million tweets per day.



Phil Bray

LIFE-LONG Maidenian Phil Bray joined Twitter in 2008 and has since written more than 23,000 tweets.

A keen amateur photographer, Phil often shares his images of Maidenhead with his followers and also maintains an account for the Parkside Christian Fellowship church community (@ParksdChrstnFwp).

The dad-of-three from Crauford Rise confesses: "I use Twitter far more than I should, checking my feed a few times an hour."

An early-adopter, Phil created his account because he was 'fed up of Facebook'. He added: "I find Twitter gives me short, snappy bursts of information, relevant to what I am interested in; be it news, sport, or ongoing current events."

@PhilBray



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