

Twitter's New 280 Character Limit

Double-length tweets could well ruin Twitter. That 140-character limit was the thing that made it interesting in the first place. That took up 131 characters.

LOS ANGELES, CA, UNITED STATES, October 15, 2017 /EINPresswire.com/ -- In what could be an influential development in the culture of the Internet, Twitter has announced a proposal to expand the allowed size of tweets by doubling their canonical 140-character length to 280 characters.

o give an idea of what that means, consider the above sentence. It consumes 214 characters (counting, as Twitter does, spaces.) While I stand by it as a good topic sentence (which is why I wrote it), it is not sharp and to-the-point the way a Twitter message should be.

Twitter doubles message length to 240 characters? Two times the room for people to say nothing!

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Nevertheless, with all the hashtag clutter and shorthand, Twitter does still pose a brevity challenge to its users. That brevity makes a tweet easy to bite off and digest.”

John A. DeMarr PI

That takes up 95 characters – and wouldn't make a bad tweet on the subject. On Twitter, however, 144 more characters wouldn't improve it. It would lose what punch it has.

Although I use it, I'm not Twitter's biggest fan. The initial challenge of compressing a thought into 140 characters was, however, interesting. That tweets were designed for people who have no attention span doesn't change the fact that getting an idea into 140 characters calls for some old-fashioned organizing of thoughts and language. The world stood to learn a lot from the discipline of composing a tweet.

Unfortunately, the response to the challenge was to cheat, using all kinds of shorthand (some of it unintelligible), and sometimes stringing tweets together to make a longer message. Then the emergence of hashtags made for a lot of clutter that ate up characters and ate away at the challenge of presenting an idea pithily and succinctly. Bad spelling, random capitalization and omitted punctuation made things unravel even more, so that the elegant challenge posed by Twitter at the outset got diluted into a steady stream of tweets that read and looked pretty ugly.

I don't know that Twitter set out to be noble and to encourage people to arrange their thoughts in



language in a better way. I believe that the 140-character length was dictated by the allowed SMS length, and wasn't Twitter's idea. Still, people could have learned a lot about expressing themselves by respecting the 140-character limit as it was originally conceived. They could have. The results show they didn't.

Nevertheless, with all the hashtag clutter and shorthand, Twitter does still pose a brevity challenge to its users. That brevity makes a tweet easy to bite off and digest. The average user doesn't have to stop what he is doing in order to read something on Twitter: your brain can absorb 140 characters pretty instantaneously. However it's formulated, it's still a quick idea in a short space of time, and that's how it will be received.

Forgetting for the time being about how things work from the sender's end, 280-character tweets will completely alter the experience at the recipients' end. It will take twice as long to read one of these new tweets, so there will no longer be the effect of one idea in one quick spurt of language. That's without mentioning all the people who are foolish enough to check Twitter while driving: double-length tweets mean people will be taking their eyes off the road for twice as long.

At the recipients' end, a 280-character Tweet will change the [Twitter experience](#) by making it less convenient, less compressed, and, I'd suggest, less fun.

For the sender, my suggested tweet above sums it up: people will have twice the space to say nothing. I don't think that you can say that, if you can't say something in 140 characters, it's not worth saying, but giving people 280 characters to say something that probably wasn't worth saying in 140 is not going to improve the quality of the messages broadcast by Twitter. It's going to make people get even sloppier in what they tweet. Although they'd have room for punctuation, that room will probably end up being used for more hashtags.

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My own Twitter account is [@JohnDeMarrPI](#). Everyone is more than welcome to sign on as a follower. That will give you a chance to let me know your thoughts on this and the other subjects I write about from time to time. My integrated [private investigation firm](#) is available for free consultation around the clock. Please call us at 877-433-6277 with any inquiries you may have.

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