Twitter lets users claim their personal history

Gerry Shih, Reuters

(Reuters [1]) - Twitter's 200 million active users can soon savor or cringe over every single statement they've tweeted when the social media company begins sending users their entire archive of 140-character messages.

Only English-language users have this service for now, but Twitter will eventually send a download link containing the full personal archives in one file to any user who asks, the company said on Wednesday.

"Maybe you wanted to recall your reaction to the 2008 election [2], reminisce on what you said to your partner on your 10th anniversary, or just see your first few Tweets. We know lots of you would like to explore your Twitter past," Mollie Vandor, a Twitter engineer, wrote in an official blog post Wednesday.

Since Twitter launched the service in 2006, tweets have evolved from a tool for youngsters to chat about frivolous things into a force for social change.

It has served as an alternative to government-controlled media, for example, in the Middle East. And during Superstorm Sandy this year, news organizations and emergency response officials turned to Twitter as an essential source of real-time information.

In 2010, the Library of Congress pledged to preserve every public tweet as a matter of record - a significant undertaking, given that some 400 million tweets are dispatched worldwide everyday.

Bookending that archive will be one noted dispatch by Twitter Executive Chairman Jack Dorsey, who is widely recognized as its inventor. Dorsey, ignoring punctuation, brought the service to life shortly after 1:00 p.m. on March 21, 2006 with a supremely pedestrian update about his experimental social network.

"inviting coworkers," Dorsey wrote.

(Reporting by Gerry Shih; Editing by Richard Chang)

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