

# the tweet life

More and more online users are turning on, tuning in and tweeting up on the addictive social-networking site.

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Josh Carrico was ahead of the curve by about two years. When the Wesley Chapel man signed up for Twitter.com on Aug. 9, 2006, he couldn't exactly use the site to keep up with his friends. They weren't on it.

Instead, Carrico followed messages from Adobe and *Fast Company*.

"I started finding a lot of people who were prominent figures in the tech community and saying, 'Wow, I have this one-to-one relationship with them that I never would've had before,'" said Carrico.

Carrico, 32, is what's called an early adopter. As a Web developer, he's forever trying to sell his friends on the latest Internet sites and gadgets. He told them they could use Twitter to send instant messages without being chained to a computer.

He told them they could vent to the masses. He told them they could keep tabs on their favorite celebrities and athletes.

"Then again, I couldn't get anyone to use it," Carrico said.

That was then.

## So, what are you doing?

Twitter, in case you haven't heard, is a microblogging site that asks users to answer the question "What are you doing?" Users post updates, or "tweets," of 140 characters or fewer, which can be seen by all the "followers" who sign up to view the user's feed. They can also send public or private messages to individual Twitter users, or "tweeters." To reply to someone's message, followers use @username. Even with its add-on applications and widgets — for instance, a program that allows you to sync your Twitter and Facebook statuses — the site remains relatively uncluttered.

But that hasn't stopped more than 7 million unique visitors from logging on to Twitter since it launched in

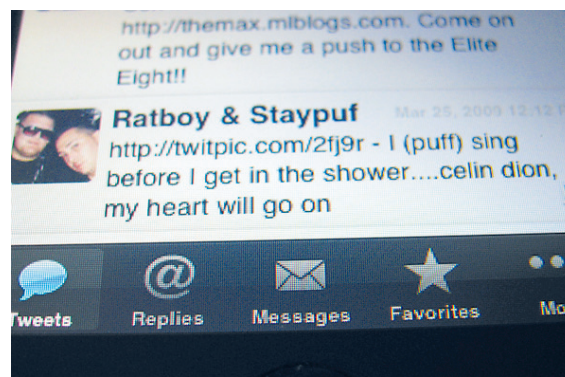
## tampa tweetup

Local Twitter users will congregate from 5 to 8 p.m. Saturday at Walker Brands, 1810 W Kennedy Blvd., Tampa. Now the bad news: Event capacity is 60 people, and there's already a waiting list. But Josh Carrico is planning future Tweetups for Florida Aquarium and Tampa Theatre. For more info, call Carrico at (813) 477-1403 or go to tampabloggers.com.



Luis Santana/tbt\*

A growing trend around the state: Tweetups. The one at MOSI in Tampa attracted more than 100 Tweepers. Maybe some of them follow the adventures of local deejays and new Tweepers Ratboy and Staypuff, photo below, from 93.3 WFLZ-FM.



March 2006, says Silicon Valley Web strategist Jeremiah Owyang. But why do we care? According to USF sociology professor John Skvoretz, the explanation is simple: "To interact with people takes time, so it's a way of passively keeping up with people." But why do we ourselves tweet

our every move for others to read?

"It gives you a sense of self-worth," said Skvoretz, who specializes in social network analysis. "You sort of say, 'If I find what they're doing interesting, then maybe they'll find what I'm doing interesting. Maybe, therefore, it is interesting.'" And once you start tweeting, Skvoretz said, you can't stop. "You now have an audience, and now you have to perform for that audience."

Two guys who know this well are deejays Ratboy and Staypuff from 93.3 WFLZ-FM. The evening show co-hosts got a Twitter account (@ratandpuff) three weeks ago and already have more than 750 followers.

## yes, tbt\* is on twitter, too

Once you get the hang of Twitter, check us out:

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