



X, Formally Known as Twitter:  
Documenting Group Development  
Through Storytelling in Design

---

A Master's Thesis  
Presented to  
College of Arts & Sciences  
Department of Information Design and Technology

---

In Partial Fulfilment  
of the Requirements for the  
Master of Science Degree

---

State University of New York  
Polytechnic Institute

by

Dahlia Sheehan-Yassin

May 2024

SUNY POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE  
DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

Approved and recommended for acceptance as a thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Information Design and Technology.

5-9-2024

---

Date



---

Kathryn Stam, Ph.D. – Thesis Advisor

May 9, 2024

---

Date



---

Ana Jofre, Ph.D., MFA – Second Reader

## Abstract

In 2006, Twitter launched as a novel social media platform characterized by its succinct 140-character limit with bright, bubbly branding. The site attracted people around the world from all walks of life, and by 2022, the renowned company boasted over 200 million active accounts and became a well-known name within the media landscape. That same year, the social media company would undergo new private ownership, leading to significant transformations for users. Now rebranded as X by entrepreneur Elon Musk, numerous changes have taken place, sending shockwaves to users with each new transformation.

This paper uses Tuckman's model of group development stages to examine the long-term impacts of leadership and user-interface changes on the community and cultural dynamics of the platform formerly known as Twitter. In addition, a timeline created in Adobe Illustrator used various design methods and principles to tell the history of Twitter, X, and the transition between them in a unified design.

## Acknowledgments

Inspiration for this capstone project stems from several places, some real and some imaginary. Thank you to my most influential professors: Ana Jofre for encouraging my design work; Doug Cohen for showing me that change is cool; Damian Scoffield for introducing me to the world of human-computer interaction in a unique and entertaining fashion, and Kathryn Stam for always answering your phone with the kindest and most supportive words.

My most sincere thank you to my parents, close friends, and colleagues who supported me during this project and throughout my academic career. None of you will know the amount of gratitude and love I have for you all!

Table of Contents	
Abstract	iii
Acknowledgments	iii
List of Figures	6
1. Introduction	7
1.1 Terminology	8
2. Literature Review	9
2.1 Design	9
2.2 Online Communities	11
2.3 Organizational Change	13
2.4 Tuckman's Group Development Stages	14
3. Methods	15
3.1 Tuckman's Group Development Stages	14
3.2 Advanced Search	16
3.3 Designing and Infographic	18
3.4 Universal Principles of Design	19
3.4.1 Color	19
3.4.2 Legibility	20
3.4.3 Readability	21
3.4.4 Iconic Representation	21
4. Discussion	24
4.1 Formation @ Twitter	24
4.2 Storming @ Twitter	25

4.3 Norming @ Twitter	26
4.4 Performing @ Twitter	27
4.5 Adjourning @ Twitter	28
4.6 Forming X	28
4.7 Storming X	29
5. Outlook	30
6. Conclusion	31
7. References	32
7.1 References for Timeline	36
8. Infographic	39

## List of Figures

Figure 1: 1977 revised model of group development stages (Bonebright, 2010).

Figure 2: Excerpt of the Twitter/X timeline's first Forming stage.

Figure 3: Excerpt of the Twitter/X timeline's first Storming stage

Figure 4: Excerpt of the Twitter/X timeline's Adjourning stage

## 1. Introduction

Initially launched in 2006 as an internal messaging system for a podcast company, Twitter rapidly evolved into a unique and prominent social media platform on the World Wide Web. Twitter allowed users to share succinct messages with friends and the public, and over the next two decades, the platform underwent numerous changes that impacted user trust and online community dynamics. These changes ranged from subtle adjustments, like font size, that could go largely unnoticed to significant shifts in the user experience, like paid subscription models, that reshaped user interactions and the platform's cultural role. Twitter acts as a cultural metronome, marking historical events, distributing slang cross-culturally, and keeping a pulse on trending topics worldwide.

The capstone project has two main objectives: first, to document the history of Twitter, now known as X, and its transition under new ownership, and second, to research how online communities react to organizational changes such as new ownership, user interface, and paid subscription models. The catalyst for some of the most significant changes at the company occurred in 2022 when Twitter, identified by its blue bird mascot, 140-character limit, and two-toned whistle, was acquired by billionaire investor Elon Musk. The acquisition led to profound changes, including removing character-length limits, minimal iconography, a shift in branding, and a pay-to-play attitude.

These aforementioned organizational changes are analyzed through Tuckman's five stages of group development, a model that outlines the progression of teams from beginning to end. This paper supports an infographic that details the social media site's history and correlates significant events with these developmental stages. The infographic, designed in Adobe Illustrator, aims to present these complexities in an easily understandable format.



This project contributes to the literature about social media studies, such as Twitter and X, and the transition between the two companies. The research and design artifacts produced—this paper and the infographic—reflect academic and professional curiosities about the dynamic interplay between social media companies and their user communities.

### 1.1. Terminology

Defining key terms is essential to ensure readers clearly understand this project. Twitter was the company's name since its inception, although it was initially spelled "twtr" in 2006, reflecting the shorthand text and micro-blogging culture of the mid-2000s (Britannica, 2024). The app gradually changed its name and branding to X between 2022 and 2023. For this paper, the following terms and phrases are used interchangeably to describe the social networking site and social media company depending on the context in which they appear:

1. Twitter
2. X
3. Twitter, now known as X
4. X, formerly known as Twitter
5. Twitter/X

The infographic created in Adobe Illustrator is called the design or the timeline because it intentionally illustrates some of the most relevant events and posts over nearly two decades. Infographics are designed with intention and focus on the "logical sequence" between text, drawings, graphs, and color (Yildirim, 2016). The infographic is included at the end of this document and is described in-depth in the Methods portion of this research paper.

## 2. Literature Review

Significant time was dedicated to researching various topics related to the final project; however, not all of the reviewed literature has been captured in this document. When the idea for this project first emerged, it appeared differently, focusing on specific online communities like K-pop fandoms, Trump supporters, and sports team fans. Over time, the ideas become more rooted in reality and what would be feasible when considering time and skills. Reviewing just a small portion of the literature about social media, design, and organizational change allowed the project's scope to narrow until reaching its final form. Although resources about archiving the Internet, imagined communities, and cancel culture were researched and documented, they are too far removed from the main topic and have been omitted, but worth mentioning. This section will focus on three main subtopics: design, online communities, and organizational change.

### 2.1. Design

A substantial portion of the project revolves around creating the timeline, which illustrates significant events from 2006-2023 that Twitter, now X, has gone through. The timeline, created in Adobe Illustrator, provides readers with subjectively chosen excerpts from public accounts to help tell the story of Twitter, X, and the changes the sites experienced during the transition. The purpose and venue of an infographic are often multidisciplinary, making it a perfect type of design for this type of project and offering many valuable resources in related academic literature.

In an article in the Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology, Serkan Yildirim's research on infographics in the educational setting provides a rich and descriptive resource about this topic. Infographics are used in various venues and effectively share information and knowledge retention because infographics use logical sequences when presented. Text, images,

charts, tables, and other visual elements help communicate data and stories (Yildirim, 2016). The author adds that learners often prefer interactive materials, and the level of interactive elements can range greatly (p. 99). For the scope of this project, the timeline is non-interactive. Yildirim evaluates the uses and benefits of infographics in educational settings and suggests that designers consider the graphic's purpose, type, and presentation- this advice was extremely helpful during the design process. The author also conducted a study to identify users' preferences when reading infographics in an educational setting and concluded that infographics help facilitate learning and knowledge retention (p. 108). This journal article is one of a kind when studying past research on the effectiveness of infographics and explicit design considerations.

Ellen Lupton wrote another excellent resource for designing with the reader in mind. She writes entertainingly, using specific examples of various design methods in her book *Design is Storytelling* (2017). Her book serves as another pillar for the creation and design of the timeline. One notable section of the book with various examples about the "Rule of Threes" is the idea that three steps, items, and phases are easy to follow and remember (p. 40). Lupton's examples include things related to the consumer, "Three Easy Steps: Order, Ship, Enjoy," related to storytellers "beginning, middle, end," and to popular phrases "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Other examples, most notably seen in children's stories, include "Three Wishes" and "Three Little Pigs". The rule of threes was not first created or coined by Ellen Lupton, and the tool's simplicity may be overlooked, but it has been integral to the timeline design.

Another critical design consideration that dramatically impacts the overall look and effectiveness of the infographic is the use of color. By combining color and emotion, Lupton states it "is a powerful storytelling tool" because of the effect colors can have on a human's senses (p. 104). Lupton writes that color has a wide range of meanings, and "a changing color

climate expresses the changing mood of a drama" (p. 108-111). The emotional arc that visual audiences ride is heavily influenced by color. Using this understanding that color influences readers and combining it with the "Rules of Threes" has been incorporated into the design and explained further in the Methods section.

## 2.2. Online Communities

The literature on online communities is continuously growing, with various publications ranging from the groups' historical, anthropological, and economic perspectives. From an anthropological perspective, online communities are defined as "the phenomenon of Internet-based groups and collectives" (Wilson & Peterson, 2002). The anthropologists categorize user-generated online content as cultural artifacts and view social media sites as artifacts interwoven into everyday life rather than topics peripheral to culture (p.450). Although this article is slightly older than other references, the article in the Annual Review of Anthropology explores the phenomena of online communities and their communication styles and how the discipline of anthropology is well-suited for studying this topic. The comparison of the Internet, as the authors explain, is regarded as a novel idea. However, discussing this comparison in greater detail today is unnecessary because of technological advances and user experiences since 2002. Overall, the article provides a unique perspective on Internet culture before the inception of Twitter and a focus on how users interacted with each other in the early days of the Internet.

Another sub-topic closely related to online communities is knowledge collaboration among online groups. Communities are a popular place for knowledge collaboration to take place despite the absence of existing social relationships. A 2011 article by Faraj and Majchrzak focuses on how users participate in knowledge collaboration through their online community and analyzes social structures that exist within the community. The authors also theorize how users

engage in knowledge collaboration and the dynamics that result from the collaborations. This text is an excellent and detailed resource that explains how online community members contribute to online communities' fluid nature.

A unique aspect of an online community is that members of the community may not know each other personally; however, they are individuals bonded by shared interests and a responsibility to contribute to the community's mission. Knowledge collaboration is defined by Faraj and Majchrzak (2011) as "individual acts of offering knowledge to others as well as adding to, recombining, modifying, and integrating knowledge that others have contributed" (p. 1224). Knowledge collaboration is an essential part of the longevity of an online community because by participating and interacting, individuals gain satisfaction in contributing to the community, and the group grows when new information is added. The longevity of Twitter, now X, could indicate that the user base and online communities feel attached to their communities and the site.

Online communities defy the norms of in-person communities and perform well even when the traditional structures are unmet. Some of these "structural mechanisms," as described by Faraj and Majchrzak (2011), include "stable membership, convergence after divergence, repeated people-to-people interactions, goal-sharing, and feelings of interdependence among group members (Boland et al. 1994, Carlile 2002, Dougherty 1992, Schrage 1995, Tsoukas 2009)." (p. 1225). Despite lacking these traditional structures, online communities are still susceptible to changes which can result in tensions. The authors thoroughly describe five tensions: passion, time, socially ambiguous identities, social disembodiment of ideas, and temporary convergence. The authors go into great detail about these tensions. Still, it is challenging to incorporate them directly into this project without participant involvement and more robust research methods to fully understand organizational change.

### 2.3. Organizational Change

There are many reasons why researchers would want to study how a group has evolved, including adopting different technologies, new leadership, workforce restructuring, and economic changes. In the case of Twitter/X, the change started with new leadership and trickled down, impacting many parts of the organization, including all stakeholders, like employees, advertisers, and users. The third sub-topic of the project focuses on organizational change and its effect on users of the social media site. Although a seemingly straightforward topic, finding literature about organizational change related to users and social media sites was difficult. There are many resources about organizational change in information technology. However, the focus is mainly on the change management perspective and the workforce rather than a user base. In addition to this type of framework for analyzing change, several ways to analyze and evaluate organizational change are more helpful for this project.

One way to analyze organizational change is to apply a problem analysis method, like a PESTELE Analysis or Porter's Five Force Analysis. The PESTELE framework helps identify various external factors that affect organizations, including political, economic, social, technological, environmental, legal, and ethical aspects (Marketing, n.d.). Similarly, Porter's Five Force Analysis is a tool used to identify and compare external risks and is easily related to economic power (Grundy, 2006). Although a very useful tool for monitoring the current company environment, it does not serve a reflective view of the company on a long-term scale, and the project scope does not include an economic analysis. These two methods are unsuitable for evaluating Twitter/X as there is not enough consideration placed on the stakeholders, like users, and changes over time.

Other change models that could be applied to the transition from Twitter to X include Lewin's Three-Stage Model of Change and Satir's Change Model. Kurt Lewin's Three-Stage Model of Change has three easy steps to follow and an emphasis on preparing for the change using a cycle of Unfreezing, Changing, and Refreezing (Raza, 2019). Although helpful in implementing change as a management tool, it does not offer a retroactive look at a change that has already occurred. Similarly, the Satir Change Model consists of phases that help leaders plan potential outcomes of an upcoming change. The five phases include Late Status, Quo, Resistance, Chaos, Integration, and New Status Quo (Janase, 2022). These two change models are inappropriate for analyzing the type of changes that Twitter, now X, has been through; however, the models may have been helpful to leaders who played a role in the transition. None of the abovementioned change methods provide a straightforward way to analyze change over a long period with a focus on the group dynamic.

#### 2.4. Tuckman's Group Development Stages

In the 1960s, a psychologist and researcher, Bruce Tuckman, established an evaluation method of group stages on team dynamics, procrastination, and motivation strategies. Tuckman's model is referred to as "the most predominantly referred to and most widely recognized in organizational literature" (Miller, 2003, p. 122) and proposed the model in simple language, making it easy for readers to follow and engage with the change model. Four steps initially made up his group dynamic model: Forming, Storming, Norming, and Performing. An article by Denise Bonebright (2010) offers an in-depth analysis of Tuckman, his literature, and the development of the model. She identifies when the coined stage terms were first used in Tuckman's writings and notes their significance and popularity (p. 113). It's important to mention that the fifth stage, Adjourning, was not added until 1977 when Tuckman and his colleague Mary

Ann Conover Jensen revised the development model, making it what many people recognize now. This revised model is shown below in Figure 1.



*Figure 1: The 1977 revised model of group development by Tuckman and Jensen (Bonebright, 2010, p. 114).*

According to Bonebright, the five-stage model was applied in various settings after Tuckman's publication, including in the workplace under practical conditions and applied to academia under theoretical circumstances. The author shares several reasonable concerns regarding Tuckman's model, including its over-simplistic design and inability to capture all of the complexities of group dynamics. Dr. Alex Jones at the American University in the Emirates challenges this idea by implementing Tuckman's Model on groups of graduate students (2019). He finds that the model is "a tool to observe" how study participants act and react to change (p.27). Jones accurately summarizes how Tuckman's change model is applied in the context of Twitter/X and will work to observe change over a period of time.

### 3. Methods

This section will highlight and describe methodologies to guide the overall project, including applying Tuckman's model, advanced search function, and design principles. The integration of these methods aids in the analysis and discussion of organizational change at Twitter and X.

#### 3.1. Tuckman's Group Development Stages

Tuckman's Group Development Model plays a major role in the timeline design and analysis of Twitter/X. One limitation of Tuckman's model is that its intended purpose was for small groups. However, when reviewing the history of Twitter and X, the overall history of



Twitter appeared to follow the five-stage pattern. In a way, Twitter/X is a myriad of small groups coming together on one platform, all playing a role within digital culture. Incorporating the revised model, with the addition of a fifth Adjourning stage, is important because it captures the end of Twitter and leads into another first Forming stage. The Forming stage appears twice in the social media site's history, once at inception in 2006 and again at the start of X in 2022. Further details of the integration of Tuckman's model in the context of Twitter/X and the timeline are explained in the paper's Discussion portion.

### 3.2. Advanced Search

Finding public posts from Twitter/X accounts to add to the timeline required more complex search parameters than the traditional search function on social media sites. The Advanced Search function on X was used almost exclusively to find posts accurately representing the group stage and related sub-topics to incorporate into the timeline. The tool is available to anyone with a Twitter/X account, and many Internet archivists have used this particular function in their studies (Kanhabua et al., 2016; Ben-David, 2019). The Advanced Search allows various parameters to be set in the search field, making finding posts more efficient than the regular search function. Without this function, sourcing posts would have been extremely laborious and potentially impossible in some cases.

Advanced Search was used to source public posts from 2006 to 2024, making the date function extremely useful for finding posts for a particular date related to an event. For example, there have been at least four significant changes to verification standards, or "the blue checkmark," over nearly 20 years, but using the date modifier within the search helps narrow down related posts to a short period of time. Other features of the Advanced Search include keyword searches and results from specific usernames, which makes it helpful to see posts from

a particular user. Another feature of the Advanced Search that helped identify popular posts was filtering how much engagement the post received, including retweets/reposts, quote-tweeting/quotes, replies, and likes. Some examples of the search parameters are as follows:

- **Search:** verified check until:2009-09-15 since:2009-02-12 -filter:replies
  - **Results:** posts between February 12, 2009 – September 15, 2009 with the words "verified" "check" and does not include replies.
- **Search:** twitter branding X min\_faves:150 until:2023-07-31 since:2023-07-15
  - **Results:** posts between July 15, 2023-July 31, 203 with words "twitter" "branding" "x" with at least 150 likes.
- **Search:** twitter (from:elonmusk) min\_retweets:2000 until:2024-04-10 since:2022-01-01 - filter:replies
  - **Results:** posts from the account @elonmusk between January 1, 2022 – April 10, 2024 with over 2000 reposts and does not include replies.

One limitation of Twitter/X's advanced search function is that it only shows posts from active public users on the site, meaning that any account that has been deleted or has a private setting engaged will not appear in any search, traditional or advanced. Using this feature was unknown before researching Twitter/X, and it was beneficial in finding meaningful posts as the project progressed.

### 3.3. Designing an Infographic

Using the Advanced Search function helped find content for the infographic, but having content is not enough to create a practical design. Using Yildirim's (2016) considerations for creating a useful infographic, identifying the four key points is crucial to creating a good infographic (p. 99):

1. Identification of the purpose
  - The purpose is to share the significant changes of a social media company through a cohesive design to audiences that have a ranging understanding and knowledge about Twitter and X.
2. Decide on the components that can be used in infographics
  - Components included in the design feature user's public posts, iconography, color, headings, and subheadings. All of the components help to tell the story of Twitter, X, and the transition between the two companies.
3. Determination of the type of infographic to be created
  - The infographic is meant for educational purposes and for audiences that may or may not know about Twitter or X. The infographic does not include interactive features but is easily viewed on desktop and mobile devices.
4. Presenting the information in a way that allows learners to understand the subject
  - The design is presented in a vertical timeline style, mimicking a social media feed and using elements like username, date, and text. The icons and headers delineate specific time periods throughout the history of Twitter and X. The background color aids in explaining when the company transitioned.

Combining these four points guided the design process in creating a clear, easy-to-follow, and informative infographic. The vertical format, use of color, and individually selected posts help tell the story of Twitter and X and the transition between the two companies.

Ellen Lupton's "Rule of Threes" was a helpful guide for organizing the design. This design feature stems from the idea that items in groups of three are memorable (p. 40). An example of a very applicable rule of thirds is a design with a beginning, middle, and end. The

timeline has been designed considering the rules of threes by having a clear beginning, middle, and end, guiding readers through the history and story of Twitter/X.

Another design consideration that will greatly impact the overall look and effectiveness of the infographic is the use of color. Combining the "Rules of Threes" and intentional use of color, the timeline is divided into three distinctive eras defined by color. Distinctive eras and one transitional period in the center connect the opposing sides. Color is used in the design to allow viewers to easily distinguish between the eras of the social media site and the transition from Twitter to X. The beginning of the timeline is reflective of the Twitter style guide and brand kit used from 2012-2022; this document has been preserved thanks to the Wayback Machine (About Twitter, 2021). The colors used throughout the timeline help set the scene for viewers to understand the foundation that flourished before the change to X. The style on the timeline's lower part is based on X's current user interface, primarily black and white, with an indistinctive and unremarkable logo.

### 3.4. Universal Principles of Design

Many methods were applied to uphold consistent design standards throughout the timeline's creation, the most significant being using Lidwell et al.'s (2003) "Universal Principles of Design." The book, organized alphabetically by method, provides valuable context for over 200 design principles. Four of them are described in detail below.

#### 3.4.1. Color

Using color conservatively throughout a design is an important component of Lidwell et al.'s recommendations about color. The right amount of color attracts attention, but too much color can overwhelm the reader. Lidwell et al. also recommend that color should not be the only way to share information, which is why the timeline only uses color as a supporting way to show

the organizational change rather than relying solely on it. The design uses color conservatively by adhering to consistency among blue, white, black, and grey.

### 3.4.2. Legibility

Another design principle closely related to color is legibility, which refers to "the visual clarity of text" and often refers to the size, spacing, and font used in a design. The timeline has various elements, which were carefully thought through and compared to Lidwell's book. Font size is extremely important for two reasons: to ensure audiences can read it and to show a pattern on the page. The hierarchy explains the relationship between the heading, subheading, and tweets/posts within that section. The repetition also helps readers understand that a group of elements relates to that specific stage. The design uses size 26 type font for headers, size 15 for subheaders, and size 14 font for tweet/post details.

Contrast is a key design element to ensure readers can see what is on the page. As a result of having two distinct brand color palettes to incorporate, extra colors needed to be used throughout the design to improve legibility and design cohesion. Throughout the Twitter portion of the design and the initial round of five group stages, white is used for the heading and subheadings. The tweets in the first half use a different color, dark grey, to provide more contrast and an effortless reading experience. In the X section, white headings and subheadings continued, but the posts appear in a light grey. The posts are in different colors in each half of the timeline to give an appropriate contrast and aid in legibility. One element that stands out with a distinct color and bold typeface in each stage is the date of the post, which draws a clear distinction between the user, the post, and the date.

### 3.4.3. Readability

Readers also benefit from a design that is easy to read, not just in terms of color and size but also the words used in a design. Lidwell et al. write, "Readability is determined by factors such as word length, word commonality, sentence length, number of clauses in a sentence, and number of syllables in a sentence" (p. 162). This design concept was heavily considered in the subheadings of the timeline, where the relationship between the group development stage and the user posts is explained. When writing the text for each subheading, readability was a top priority to ensure the final design produced a brief summary of what happened during that time. Each subheading follows a pattern; the first half explains the occurred change, and the second half describes the general reaction from users featured in the design.

### 3.4.4. Iconic Representation

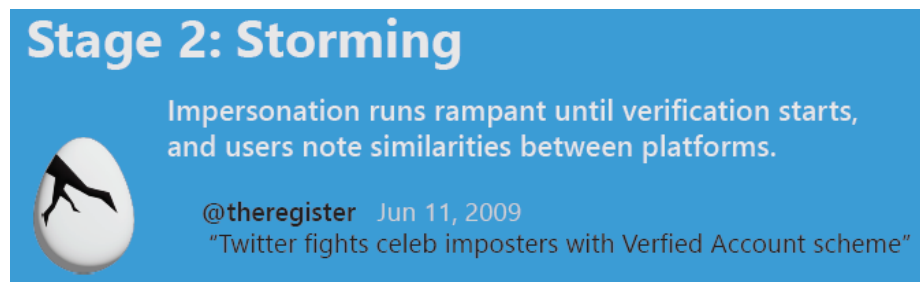
One last design consideration and a significant part of the timeline is iconic representation. The use of iconic representation is featured in various ways, including similar, example, symbolic, and arbitrary icons (Lidwell et al., 2003, p.110). When used appropriately, iconic representation can help readers understand a design and reduce stress. The authors also recommend that icons "be labeled and share a common visual motif (style and color) for optimal performance" (p. 110). The timeline follows these recommendations by using black, white, and grey for all symbols. The first main symbol seen is a communication symbolic and arbitrary icon used in the initial Forming stage.



*Figure 2: Excerpt of the Twitter/X timeline's first Forming stage.*

The egg was chosen for two reasons. One is because of the symbolic nature of an egg, which often means something new and fragile. The other iconic representation used is an arbitrary reason rooted in branding mimicry from the original Twitter branding through 2017. During this time, new users were given the default avatar of an egg (Wamsley, 2017).

The second stage used the same egg icon but with extra design elements, including a fracture through the egg.



*Figure 3: Excerpt of the Twitter/X timeline's first Storming stage*

Using an egg with cracks through it indicates breakage in a fragile object and conflicts arising. The cracks in the egg represent the online user's actions and reactions during conflict and mistrust among the group.

Another example of iconic representation used in the timeline at the Adjourning stage, as Twitter ends and Musk's X begins in 2022.



*Figure 4: Excerpt of the Twitter/X timeline's Adjourning stage.*

In the icon representing this final group stage, two icons are used together to represent the death of Twitter. The first and largest of the two is the Twitter bird icon, first introduced in this form in 2012 (*Twitter Blog*, 2012) and used up until the X branding took over in July 2023 (Mueller, 2024). The use of the Twitter bird in this example goes against the branding guidelines (About Twitter, 2021). However, with the company and branding now defunct, it feels appropriate to use the logo as needed. The bird has been rotated facing downward rather than maintaining its existing plane, as shown in its. This change in direction is symbolic as it is easily recognizable and well-established (Lidwell et al., 2003, p. 110).

The other half of the icon rests in the eye of the bird, using an X to indicate death. It is not exactly known where this concept of "X eyes" symbolizes death, but it is a well-recognized concept in Japanese Manga ("Manga Iconography," 2024). The X used on the bird is part of the X brand kit, which was finally released on February 15, 2024, despite user interface changes starting in July 2023. When designing the timeline in January and early February, it was unknown when the X brand kit would be released; therefore, the X logos on the timeline were traced in Illustrator. The combination of design elements in the Adjourning stage represents Twitter's imminent end after a long life.



## 4. Discussion

The Discussion section will refer to the original timeline, including the public posts cited in the design and how they relate to Tuckman's group development stages. An important note of context when reviewing the infographic is that all the posts sourced for the design were public posts from active accounts on Twitter.com or X.com between February 2024 and April 2024 or were archived by a legacy media company. Some of the posts included in the timeline have been shortened to preserve the conciseness of the design while maintaining the essence of the social media post.

Starting at the top of the infographic is the first thing users see, but one of the last elements designed is the title. In his studies, Yildirim (2016) found that the most important criterion when reviewing infographics is the title, which quickly gives audiences context about the graphic's topic. The design surrounding the title mimics the Twitter, now X, an online element where users can write a new post for their followers to see. The name of the title includes important keywords that hold up for future academic searches while briefly summarizing the entirety of the project.

### 4.1. Forming @ Twitter

Moving ahead in the timeline to the first of two Forming stages, the first belonging to the Twitter era of the timeline. Twitter first became accessible to the public with an iconic post by Jack Dorsey, one of the company's founders (Britannica, n.d.). On March 21, 2006, he tweeted "just setting up my twtr" to his followers. The initial idea of a public micro-blogging site is credited to Jack Dorsey, former CEO of the company, and this moment set off a chain of events that no one could have predicted. The first and second tweets in the timeline feature the Forming stage of Twitter as the online community started coming together and collectively figuring out

what this new technology is capable of. The excitement of something new can drive positive expectations (Stein, n.d.), which is very visible during the first months of Twitter's inception.

#### 4.2. Storming @ Twitter

No more than one year after going public, Twitter usage nearly tripled during the 2007 South by Southwest (SXSW) conference, hosted annually in Austin, Texas. The new company won the SXSW Web Award after a weekend filled with 60-inch screens along the conference hallways streamed real-time tweets from attendees (2007 SWSW, 2024). Although this milestone is not captured on the timeline, it brought new users to the site. In the years after this turning point for Twitter, the site attracted celebrities, news channel corporations, politicians, and more average social media users. Between 2009 and 2012, the world witnessed and took part in historical events unfolding in real-time on Twitter. Accessible footage and a newsbreaking story of the 2009 emergency landing on the Hudson River by "Captain Sully," a 2010 aid campaign for the earthquakes in Haiti, and protests organized via Twitter, now known as the Arab Spring or Arab Uprisings, all happened with the help of Twitter (Britannica, 2024, Brown et al., 2012). These events, as historically significant as they were, required extra context for users reading about them to prevent unintentional misinformation and intentional disinformation from spreading. In 2009, Twitter started to verify certain accounts that the company felt warranted a verification badge, also known as a blue checkmark, an iconic and memorable indicator for reputable or famous accounts (Lerman & Siddiqui, 2023).

Before verification went into effect, there were instances of people posing as celebrities and sharing unreliable information. Instances of inauthenticity happened to Kanye West and the Dalai Lama (Siegler, 2010; PCMag Staff, 2009). While rolling out this new verification system, Twitter also made significant updates to the user interface. There were various tweets about the

latest upgrade, with some explicitly calling out the similarities between Facebook and Twitter's user interface. Between these two significant changes, users were affected in different ways. Some acted out against other users, and others publicly criticized the company. This time at Twitter is considered a Storming phase because of the mistrust and dissatisfaction expressed among users. Tuckman (1965, p. 386) writes that "group members become hostile toward one another and toward a therapist or trainer as a means of expressing their individuality and resisting the formation of the group structure." The initial excitement has worn off, and people feel comfortable expressing anger and resentment towards the company and other users.

#### 4.3. Norming @ Twitter

Users might find and accept changes with more grace once the dust has settled from a tumultuous time at Twitter. In 2012, a new brand kit for Twitter was rolled out, including a new logo and the bird icon shown in the design, which would end up defining the site's image for the decade to come. The logo was a true design feat, with no words and just one color used. The bird is said by some to represent "freedom and movement" (Fitzgerald, n.d.) and fits the subtle bird theme integrated into the user interface and company brand with elements like a birdhouse for the home page, the egg for a default profile picture, and the chirp sound for a notification alert. All these elements solidify the branding, reign users into feeling more acceptance among others, and help to reestablish rules and norms (Stein, n.d.), leading Twitter into its Norming era. Another example of Norming is a significant change to an algorithmic timeline but with the option to opt in or out. Giving users the option to choose is critical to maintaining a happy and active user base while adding to the trust of users on Twitter.

#### 4.4. Performing @ Twitter

Stages 3 and 4, Norming and Performing, seamlessly blur into one another as the satisfaction and awareness grow from the third to the fourth stage. Users continue collaborating towards common goals such as group fact-checking, and Community Notes become visible on users' feeds. An example of this practice is depicted under the post of President Donald J. Trump of the United States of America. His post claims that mail-in ballots are "...anything less than substantially fraudulent". This post has since been taken down but was archived on the New York Times website (Conger & Alba, 2020). The alert under the post brought users to a site with various verified sources to educate people about the use of mail-in ballots for the upcoming elections. The contribution behind Community Notes is a collaborative effort between users and the company to provide more context for posts that may not violate community guidelines but could use more transparency.

The second tweet featured in the fourth group development stage is the first time where Twitter users can pay for additional features. It is not a requirement but an incentive to access exclusive features. The introduction of Twitter Blue marks the first time users can pay for Twitter features, adding another way for the business to gain revenue besides through advertising. Users who feel included in paying for extra services are free to do so, and Twitter benefits by increasing their revenue. The roles that users and the company play have reached a point of flexibility, and the group is a "problem solving instrument" (Tuckman, 1965, p. 387). Users appear to understand their role within the media landscape at this point in Twitter's history. As a company, Twitter has a mechanism to prevent and solve problems, a crucial feature of the Performing stage (Stein, n.d.).

#### 4.5. Adjourning @ Twitter

Groups can stay in the Performing stage for an extended period, but some cases of group development lead to the final stage of Tuckman's group development model: Adjourning. The first signs of the Adjourning were not apparent then because of the meme-worthy value and the unbelievability that one person could outright purchase Twitter. In hindsight, the end of Twitter started on April 14, 2022, when businessman, investor, and controversial figure Elon Musk tweeted a link to the United States Securities and Exchange Commission Electronic Data Gathering, Analysis, and Retrieval system, also known as the SEC and EDGAR. The link he posted included a public notice for an order to buy out 100% of Twitter for \$54.29 per share, in cash, by Elon Musk (Twitter, Inc., 2022). The transaction's closing would take six months, filled with impulsive tweets, lawsuits, and confusion among Twitter's active user base and the media (Hals, 2022). Some users, like Shonda Rhimes, decided to leave the platform entirely because of the takeover, while others remained and enjoyed the idea of Musk's new reign. The deal had not been finalized yet, but the promise of a significant change caused disdain and excitement among users.

#### 4.6. Forming X

The transition from Adjourning to Forming can be seen in the timeline using gradient color, from Twitter's bright blue to the new company, X's minimalist black. On the day of the deal closure between Twitter Inc. and Musk, he posted, "the bird is freed." Some companies quickly pulled all advertising from the platform, rumors circulated that Musk would allow previously banned accounts, like Donald Trump and Kanye West, to return to the platform, and an increase in hate speech was recorded (Lewis, 2022). The start of Elon Musk's takeover of the social media company marks the end of Twitter, and the beginning of his company, X. The

Forming stage of X quickly turned into a Storming stage as tensions rose and more organizational changes occurred.

#### 4.7. Storming X

The first year of Musk's takeover was fraught as many changes were made to previously well-established group norms within the online communities on Twitter. Changes to verification schemes, paid subscription models, and branding revealed discontent from some users and support from others. Like in 2009 with Twitter users, X users faced intergroup conflict between 2023 and 2024. As Bonebright summarizes, the Storming phase "is characterized by lack of unity and polarization around interpersonal issues" (2010, p. 114). As depicted in the infographic, the three posts discuss impactful changes to how users interact and perceive the social media site.

One significant change is how users refer to and speak about the social media site. Not only has the company name changed from Twitter to X, but *tweets* are now called *posts*, and *retweets* have been renamed *reposts*. Changing branding and the user interface is one thing, but changing how people refer to the site will take more time to adjust. A brand consultant, Ramon Jimenez, told CNN, "With a product experience so unique that its brand name has become synonymous with a behavior, We 'Tweet,' we 'Google,' we 'Uber,' and so on" (Why, 2024). Twitter's special terminology helped create a culture on and off the site.

In addition to branding and language, changes to verification occurred numerous times since October 2022 and have continued in April 2024 during the production of this project. To summarize the changes, here are three newspaper article headlines about Twitter and X verification scheme changes: "A Verifiable Mess: Twitter Users Create Havoc by Impersonating Brands" from The New York Times in 2022 (Mac et al.), "Twitter begins phasing out legacy 'blue check marks' in latest platform change" from ABC News in 2023 (Dobuski), and "Musk's X

pivots again, restoring blue checks to popular accounts” from The Washington Post on April 4, 2024. (Oremus, W., & Cho, K. K). These articles only account for some of the changes and implications that changes to verification schemes have influenced.

It's difficult to know if X users have moved on from the Storming stage. Currently, X still lacks stable leadership, standard group norms, and collaborative culture. The significant changes since Musk's takeover have emotionally impacted the user base. Not all of the changes since Musk's leadership or even since Twitter's inception have been documented in this project. However, the highlighted changes facilitate a story about Twitter/X and the online group's transformations. Future changes to this social media site will continue to affect the user base in positive or negative ways, plus these changes could have offline consequences related to economic or political issues.

## 5. Outlook

It would be an understatement to say it will just be “interesting” to see what happens with X over the upcoming months and years. After countless hours learning about and recording the history of Twitter, X, details about Elon Musk, and the drawn-out transition, I am really invested in this project and will continue to monitor changes as time goes on. As a long-time casual user with a network of friends online from different parts of my life, it's been a great learning experience to look at the bigger picture of the changes affecting users and their reactions. Even on my own news feed, I have noticed a change in how my friends post and have changed my habits online since Musk's takeover, frequenting the site less and posting less.

After working on this project for months, there are some things that I would have done differently. Something that would have added significantly to the effectiveness and success of this type of project is to incorporate a level of interactivity into the timeline. With more time and

experience with coding languages like HTML, CSS, and JavaScript, the timeline could be created into a webpage with interactive elements for users to navigate. Some interactive elements could include hovering to reveal more information and context about the topic, links to the post, and a section for site users to submit posts to add to the timeline. Another design aspect that would be accessible if web development methods were used is the opportunity to make the design responsive. A responsive design automatically adjusts to fit screens of different sizes, from mobile devices to tablets to desktops (HTML, 2024). This auto-adjusting feature would give users, no matter what device they used to view the timeline, a better viewing experience. Another project addition could be interviewing users who felt affected by the organizational changes. This qualitative research method of collecting personal narratives has the potential to reveal a lot of new perspectives and information about changes at Twitter and X over time.

## 6. Conclusion

This work provides a unique insight into documenting the history of one popular social media platform and relating it to organizational change methods. Although not every company change or user reaction is documented in this project, the analysis and infographic provide a general overview of the trends the social media site and user base have experienced from its inception until now. This work contributes to the existing literature about online communities and organizational change by providing another way to discuss and categorize the monumental changes from Twitter to X. It's impossible to determine what will happen next at the company and how users will react. Still, one thing is certain: users will be watching and posting about it.



## 7. References

2007 SXSW Interactive Web Awards | SXSW Iconic Moments. (n.d.). SXSW. Retrieved February

28, 2024, from <https://www.sxsw.com/iconicmoments/video/sxsw-interactive-web-awards-2007/>

About Twitter | *Our logo, brand guidelines, and Tweet tools*. (2021, February 8).

<https://web.archive.org/web/20210208031037/https://about.twitter.com/en/who-we-are/brand-toolkit>

Ben-David, A. (2019). 2014 not found: A cross-platform approach to retrospective web archiving. *Internet Histories*, 3(3–4), 316–342.

Bonebright, D. (2010). 40 years of storming: A historical review of Tuckman’s model of small group development. *Human Resources Development International*, 13(1), 111–120.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/13678861003589099>

Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia (2024, March 27). *X*. *Encyclopedia Britannica*.

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Twitter>

Conger, K., & Alba, D. (2020, May 26). Twitter Refutes Inaccuracies in Trump’s Tweets About Mail-In Voting. *The New York Times*.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/26/technology/twitter-trump-mail-in-ballots.html>

Dobuski, M. (2023, April 1). Twitter begins phasing out legacy “blue check marks” in latest platform change. *ABC News*. <https://abcnews.go.com/Technology/twitter-begins-phasing-legacy-blue-check-marks-latest/story?id=98244725>

- Faraj, S., Jarvenpaa, S. L., & Majchrzak, A. (2011). Knowledge Collaboration in Online Communities. *Organization Science*, 22(5), 1224–1239.  
<https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.1100.0614>
- Fitzgerald. (n.d.). The History Of The Twitter Logo. *Hatchwise*. Retrieved April 19, 2024, from <https://www.hatchwise.com/resources/the-history-of-the-twitter-logo>
- Hals, T. (2022, July 12). Twitter sues Elon Musk to hold him to \$44 billion deal | Reuters. *Reuters*. <https://www.reuters.com/technology/twitter-sues-elon-musk-hold-him-44-bln-merger-2022-07-12/>
- HTML Responsive Web Design*. (2024). W3Schools. Retrieved April 2, 2024, [https://www.w3schools.com/html/html\\_responsive.asp](https://www.w3schools.com/html/html_responsive.asp)
- Janse, B. (2022, June 9). *Satir Change Model*. Toolshero. <https://www.toolshero.com/change-management/satir-change-model/>
- Jones, A. (2019). THE TUCKMAN'S MODEL IMPLEMENTATION, EFFECT, AND ANALYSIS & THE NEW DEVELOPMENT OF JONES LSI MODEL ON A SMALL GROUP. *JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT*, 6(4).  
<https://doi.org/10.34218/JOM.6.4.2019.005>
- Kanhabua, N., Kemkes, P., Nejdil, W., Nguyen, T. N., Reis, F., & Tran, N. K. (2016). How to search the internet archive without indexing it. *Research and Advanced Technology for Digital Libraries: 20th International Conference on Theory and Practice of Digital Libraries, TPDL 2016, Hannover, Germany, September 5–9, 2016, Proceedings 20*, 147–160.

- Lerman, R., & Siddiqui, F. (2023, March 31). Twitter is ending legacy verification in favor of paid blue checkmarks—The Washington Post. *The Washington Post*.  
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2023/03/31/twitter-verification-checkmark-ending/>
- Lidwell, W., Holden, K., & Butler, J. (2003). *Universal principles of design*. Rockport.
- Mac, R., Mullin, B., Conger, K., & Isaac, M. (2022, November 11). A Verifiable Mess: Twitter Users Create Havoc by Impersonating Brands. *The New York Times*.  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/11/technology/twitter-blue-fake-accounts.html>
- Manga iconography. (2024). In *Wikipedia*.  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Manga\\_iconography&oldid=1217808501](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Manga_iconography&oldid=1217808501)
- Marketing Theories – PESTEL Analysis*. (n.d.). Professional Academy. Retrieved April 7, 2024, from <https://www.professionalacademy.com/blogs/marketing-theories-pestel-analysis/>
- Miller, D. 2003. The stages of group development: A retrospective study of dynamic team processes. *Canadian Journal of Administrative Sciences* 20, no. 2: 121–43.
- Mueller, S. (2024, February 24). *Why can't we stop calling X, Twitter?* | *CNN Business*. CNN Business. <https://www.cnn.com/2024/02/23/tech/twitter-x-rebrand-cec/index.html>
- Oremus, W., & Cho, K. K. (2024, April 4). Musk's X pivots again, restoring blue checks to popular accounts. *Washington Post*.  
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2024/04/04/twitter-blue-check-restored-x/>
- PCMag Staff. (2009, December 6). *Phew! Twitter Verifies Celebrity Tweets as Authentic* | *PCMag*.  
<https://web.archive.org/web/20210206202337/https://www.pcmag.com/archive/phew-twitter-verifies-celebrity-tweets-as-authentic-241349>

Raza, M. (2019, November 5). *Lewin's 3 Stage Model of Change Explained*. BMC Blogs.

<https://www.bmc.com/blogs/lewin-three-stage-model-change/>

Siegler, M. G. (2010, July 28). Kanye West Finally Has A F\*cking Twitter. *TechCrunch*.

<https://techcrunch.com/2010/07/28/kanye-west-twitter/>

Stein, J. (n.d.). *Using the Stages of Team Development | MIT Human Resources*. MIT Human

Resources. Retrieved April 7, 2024, from <https://hr.mit.edu/learning-topics/teams/articles/stages-development>

Tuckman, B. W. (1965). Developmental sequence in small groups. *Psychological Bulletin*, 63(6),

384–399. <https://psycnet.apa.org/doiLanding?doi=10.1037%2Fh0022100>

Twitter, Inc. AMENDMENT No. 2 to SCHEDULE 13D/A, (April 13, 2022). Retrieved April 5,

2024. [https://www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/1418091/000110465922045641/tm2212748d1\\_sc13da.htm](https://www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/1418091/000110465922045641/tm2212748d1_sc13da.htm)

Wamsley, L. (2017, March 31). Twitter Drops Its Egg, The Unintended Avatar Of Harassment.

*NPR*. <https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2017/03/31/522229420/twitter-drops-its-egg-the-unintended-avatar-of-harassment>

Why can't we stop calling it Twitter? (2024, February 26). *ITV News*.

<https://www.itv.com/news/2024-02-26/why-cant-we-stop-calling-it-twitter>

Wilson, S. M., & Peterson, L. C. (2002). The Anthropology of Online Communities. *Annual*

*Review of Anthropology*, 31, 449–467. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4132888>

### 7.1. References for Timeline - in order as they appear.

Dorsey, J [@jack]. (2006, March 21). *Just setting up my twttr*. [Post]. X.

<https://twitter.com/jack/status/20>

hodder, m. [@MaryHodder]. (2006, July 15). *twttr is the new blogging: broadcasting your txt messages and having them on the web. anywhere anytime*. [Post]. X.

<https://twitter.com/MaryHodder/status/11847>

The Register [@theregister]. (2009, June 11). *Twitter fights celeb imposters with Verified Account scheme*. [Post]. X. <https://twitter.com/theregister/status/20748535>

DTW. [@dailyteenwords]. (2011, April 20). *That awkward moment when Twitter's homepage steals the same layout as the Facebook homepage*. [Post]. X.

<https://twitter.com/theregister/status/20748535>

Twitter [@Twitter]. (2012, June 4). *In flight: our new #Twitterbird*” [Post]. X.

[https://blog.twitter.com/official/en\\_us/a/2012/taking-flight-twitterbird.html](https://blog.twitter.com/official/en_us/a/2012/taking-flight-twitterbird.html)

Social Media Today. [@socialmedia2day] (2016, March 16) *Twitter’s Algorithm Timeline Switches to Opt-Out, Coming to All Users*. [Post]. X.

<https://twitter.com/socialmedia2day/status/712325665413046272>

Trump, D.J. [@realdonaldtrump]. (2020, May 27) *There is NO WAY (ZERO!) that Mail-In Ballots will be anything less than substantially fraudulent*. [Post]. X.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/26/technology/twitter-trump-mail-in-ballots.html>

Twitter Blog [@TwitterBlog]. (2021 June 3). *Twitter Blue offers access to exclusive features and perks*

*that will take their experience on Twitter to the next level.* [Post]. X.

[https://blog.x.com/en\\_us/topics/company/2021/introducing-twitter-blue](https://blog.x.com/en_us/topics/company/2021/introducing-twitter-blue)

Musk, E. [@elonmusk]. (2022, April 14). *I made an offer*

<https://www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/1418091/000110465922045641/tm2212748d1>

[sc13da.htm](https://www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/1418091/000110465922045641/tm2212748d1_sc13da.htm). [Post]. X. <https://twitter.com/elonmusk/status/1514564966564651008>

Calvin. [@RealCalvin1]. (2022, October 4). *Everyone who said they would leave if Elon buys*

*Twitter. Don't let the door hit you on the way out.* [Post]. X.

<https://twitter.com/RealCalvin1/status/1577399483712778240>

rhimes, s. [@shondarhimes]. (2022, October 20). *Not hanging around for whatever Elon has*

*planned. Bye.* [Post]. X. <https://twitter.com/shondarhimes/status/1586399694896390147>

Musk, E. [@elonmusk]. (2022, October 27). *The bird is freed.* [Post]. X.

<https://twitter.com/elonmusk/status/1585841080431321088>

Insider Paper. [@TheInsiderPaper]. (2022, October 28). *JUST IN GM temporarily suspends ads*

*on Twitter after Elon Musk takeover – CNBC.* [Post]. X.

<https://twitter.com/TheInsiderPaper/status/1586104681470005248>

Fournier, R. [@RyanAFournier]. (2022, October 28). *Breaking: Elon Musk has confirmed that*

*all permanent Twitter suspensions will be lifted. The time has finally come.* [Post]. X.

<https://twitter.com/RyanAFournier/status/1586109108603998210>

Lewis, P. [@Phil\_Lewis\_]. (2022, October 29). *Elon Musk's Twitter takeover sparked a surge in*

*the use of the N-word on the social media platform. A social media research group told*

*The Washington Post the use of the slur increased by nearly 500%.* [Post]. X.

[https://twitter.com/Phil\\_Lewis\\_/status/1586368991580237827](https://twitter.com/Phil_Lewis_/status/1586368991580237827)

America is Musty [@DrangonflyJones]. (2023, July 30). *Twitter had a great theme going with the whole twitter/tweet/bird thing. And you tore all that down for nothing.* [Image attached]. [Post]. X. <https://twitter.com/DragonflyJones/status/1685740475376930816>

Marais, J. [@JonahMarais]. (2023, April 20). *lol so you have to pay for a blue check mark now?* [Post]. X. <https://twitter.com/JonahMarais/status/1649246806868656129>

schnitt, e. [@holy\_schnitt]. (2024, April 3). *omg they gave me a blue checkmark for being “influential” on twitter. they have simply reinvented the original blue check i’m laughing so hard.* [Image attached]. [Post]. X. [https://twitter.com/holy\\_schnitt/status/1775730411903008846](https://twitter.com/holy_schnitt/status/1775730411903008846)

@DahliaSheehan-Yassin IDT599

# X, Formally Known as Twitter: Documenting Group Development Through Storytelling in Design



Post



## Stage 1: Forming

First tweet sent and Twitter goes public. Users are excited for the future!



**@jack** Mar 21, 2006  
"just setting up my twttr"

**@MaryHodder** Jul 15, 2006  
"twtr is the new blogging: broadcasting your txt messages and having them on the web. anywhere anytime."

## Stage 2: Storming

Impersonation runs rampant until verification starts, and users note similarities between platforms.



**@theregister** Jun 11, 2009  
"Twitter fights celeb imposters with Verified Account scheme"

**@dailyteenwords** Apr 20, 2011  
"That awkward moment when Twitters' homepage steals the same layout as the Facebook homepage"

## Stage 3: Norming

New branding and timeline options are introduced while users feel more comfortable.



**@Twitter** Jun 4, 2012  
"In flight: our new #Twitterbird"

**@socialmediatoday** Mar 16, 2016  
"Twitter's algorithm timeline switches to opt-out, coming to all users"

## Stage 4: Performing

Users and company collaborate towards common goals. There are more personalized options for users.



**@realDonaldTrump** May 27, 2020  
"There is NO WAY (ZERO!) that Mail-In Ballots will be anything less than substantially fraudulent."

*! Get the facts about mail-in ballots*

**@TwitterBlog** Jun 3, 2021  
"Twitter Blue offers access to exclusive features and perks that will take their experience on Twitter to the next level."

## Stage 5: Adjourning

New ownership looms, users react with disdain and excitement for the future.



**@elonmusk** Apr 14, 2022  
"I made an offer: sec.gov/archives/edgar."

**@ShondaRhimes** "Not hanging around for whatever Elon has planned. Bye"

**@RealCalvin1** "Everyone who said they would leave if Elon buys Twitter. Don't let the door hit you on the way out."

## Stage 1: Forming



Ownership is transferred to Musk and immediate changes ensue while users share mixed reactions.

**@elonmusk** Oct 27, 2022  
"the bird is freed"

**@TheInsiderPaper** "GM temporarily suspends ads on Twitter after Elon Musk takeover"

**@RyanAFournier** "Elon Musk has confirmed that all permanent Twitter suspensions will be lifted."

**@Phil\_Lewis\_** "Musk's Twitter takeover sparked a surge in the use of the N-word by nearly 500%"

## Stage 2: Storming



New branding is introduced and verification rules continue changing.

**@JonahMarais** Apr 20, 2023  
"lol so you have to pay for a blue check mark now?"

**@DragonflyJonez** July 24, 2023  
"Twitter had a great theme going with the whole twitter/tweet bird thing. THIS X SHIT DOESN'T MAKE ANY SENSE"

**@holy\_schnitt** Apr 3, 2024  
"omg they gave me a blue checkmark for being "influential" on twitter. they have simply reinvented the original blue check i'm laughing so hard"

## Stage 3: Forming



No real certainty that users have reached this stage yet.

**@DahliaSheehan-Yassin** April 30, 2024  
Without stable leadership and clear group norms, its not obviously clear that users have reached a cohesive structure.