

Leveraging Twitter and Facebook to Grow Traffic

January 2011



Washington Post Digital

Social media is a core element of our growth strategy

- Engage and have conversations with people where they are
- Adapt your approach to the medium/platform
- Analyze your audience/intended audience to determine areas of focus
- Incorporate social sharing and conversation tools into your own content

V. Rolando said Sunday. "They've adapted to so many changes over the years. What you have here, if you take the mail out of the equation, you've got this incredible universal network for the American people, probably the only universal network that goes to every home and every business six days a week."

Rolando, speaking Sunday on CNN's "State of the Union," noted that the Postal Service's chief holiday competitors, FedEx and UPS, are also its strongest business partners.

"Probably the fastest growing division in both of those companies is the Postal Service delivering the last mile for them, taking their parcels door to door because it makes more sense for us to do it because we go to every house," Rolando said. "They may go to every 50th house, every 100th house."

How are you sending your holiday letters and packages? How was your most recent visit to the local post office? Leave your thoughts in the comments section below

• **Cabinet and Staff News:** President Obama is [extending an olive branch](#) to liberal groups and had a [so-so year](#). Secretary of State **Hillary Rodham Clinton** had a [good year](#) while Treasury Secretary **Timothy F. Geithner** had a [better-than-expected year](#). Rep. **Darrell Issa** (R-Calif.) doesn't expect to be [Obama's chief persecutor](#). Vice President Biden says al Qaeda in Pakistan is "[weaker](#)."

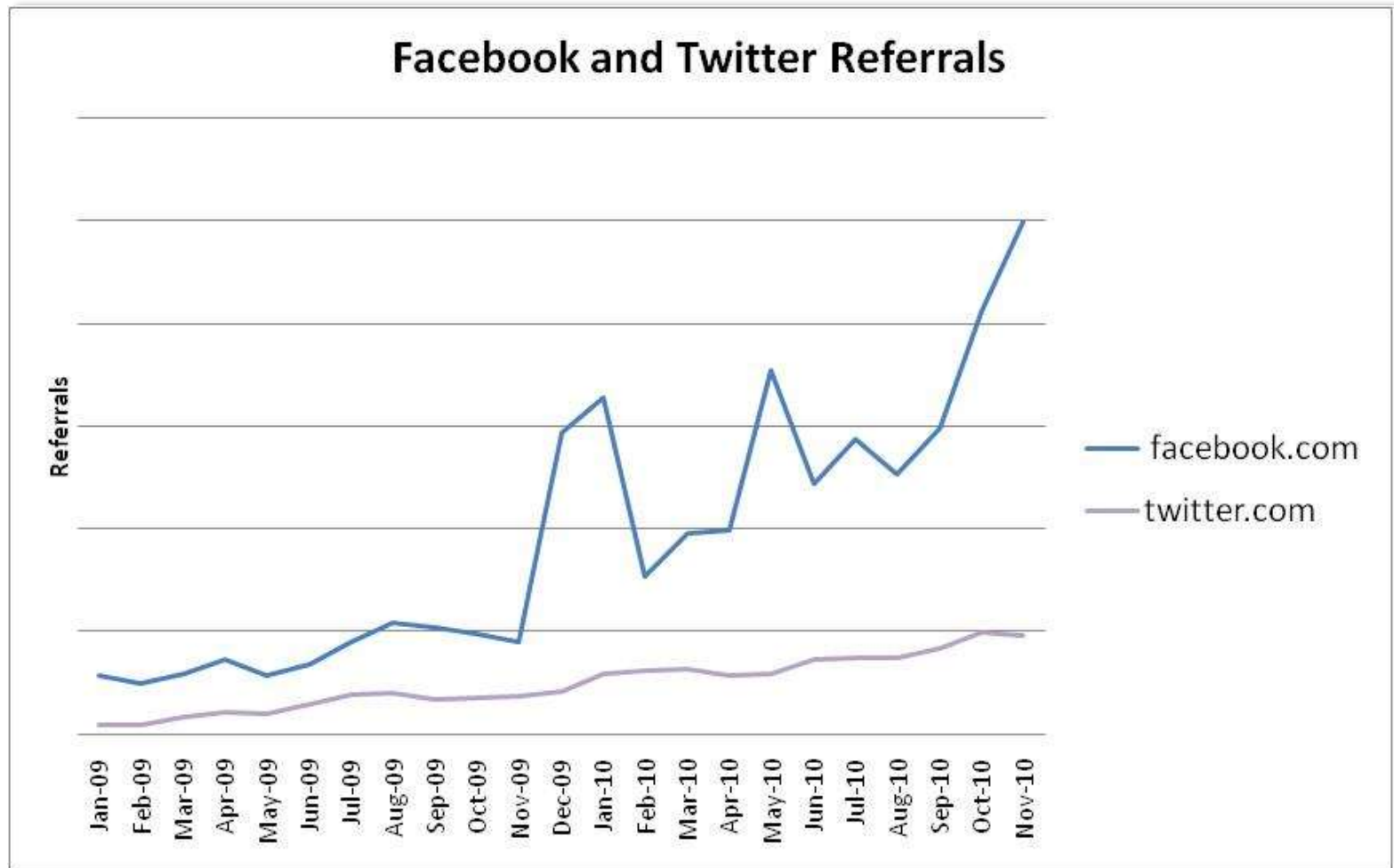
U.S. BORDER PATROL:

• **Napolitano confirms gang killed border agent in battle:** The homeland security secretary says an elite Border Patrol squad was pursuing a gang that [preyed on drug smugglers](#) when agent **Brian Terry** was shot and killed.

The screenshot shows a Facebook News Feed interface. At the top, there's a "Buy a link here" button. Below that is a "top Network News" header with a "MY PROFILE" button. The main section is titled "Friends' Activity" and lists several posts: Sheilah Bradley shared Carolyn Hax - CAROLYN HAX (4 hours ago), Lisa Beth Goldstein shared Falafel Frenzy in Washington, DC: Events on washingtonpost.com (4 hours ago), and Katharine Zaleski shared Creators of Angry Birds happily dreaming of spinoffs (on Sunday). Below these are three news items, each with a "wp" logo: "Chavez defends plan for Internet regulations" (935 people shared this), "'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' clears hurdle in Senate" (14,135 people shared this), and "Probable carcinogen hexavalent chromium found in drinking water of 31 U.S. cities" (4,110 people shared this). The last item is "SPIN METER: Conflicting GOP messages on pay cuts" (238 people shared this). At the bottom, there's a "Facebook social plugin" button and a "logged out view" link. A "View More Activity" link is at the very bottom.

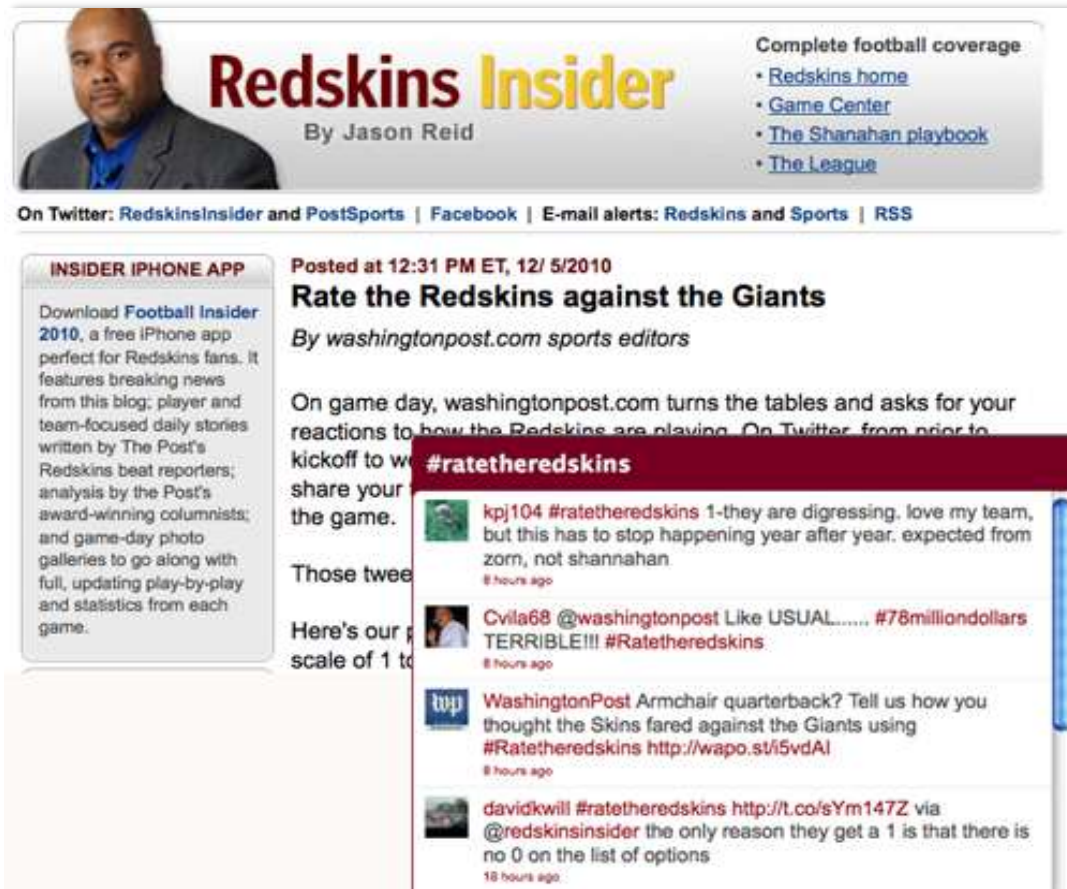
Does social media drive traffic?

- Facebook fans up from 30K to 100K in one year; referrals up 455%
- Twitter followers up from 20K to 250K in one year; referrals up 158%



We embed social media into our journalism

- Example: #RateTheRedskins
- Daily callouts for feedback on an article or issue



The screenshot shows a web browser displaying the "Redskins Insider" blog by Jason Reid. The header includes a photo of Jason Reid, the blog title "Redskins Insider", and a list of links for "Complete football coverage": Redskins home, Game Center, The Shanahan playbook, and The League. Below the header, there are links for "On Twitter: RedskinsInsider and PostSports", "Facebook", "E-mail alerts: Redskins and Sports", and "RSS".

The main article is titled "Rate the Redskins against the Giants" by Washington Post sports editors, posted at 12:31 PM ET on 12/5/2010. The article text is partially visible, mentioning "On game day, washingtonpost.com turns the tables and asks for your reactions to how the Redskins are playing. On Twitter, from prior to kickoff to w... share your... the game." and "Those twee... Here's our p... scale of 1 to".

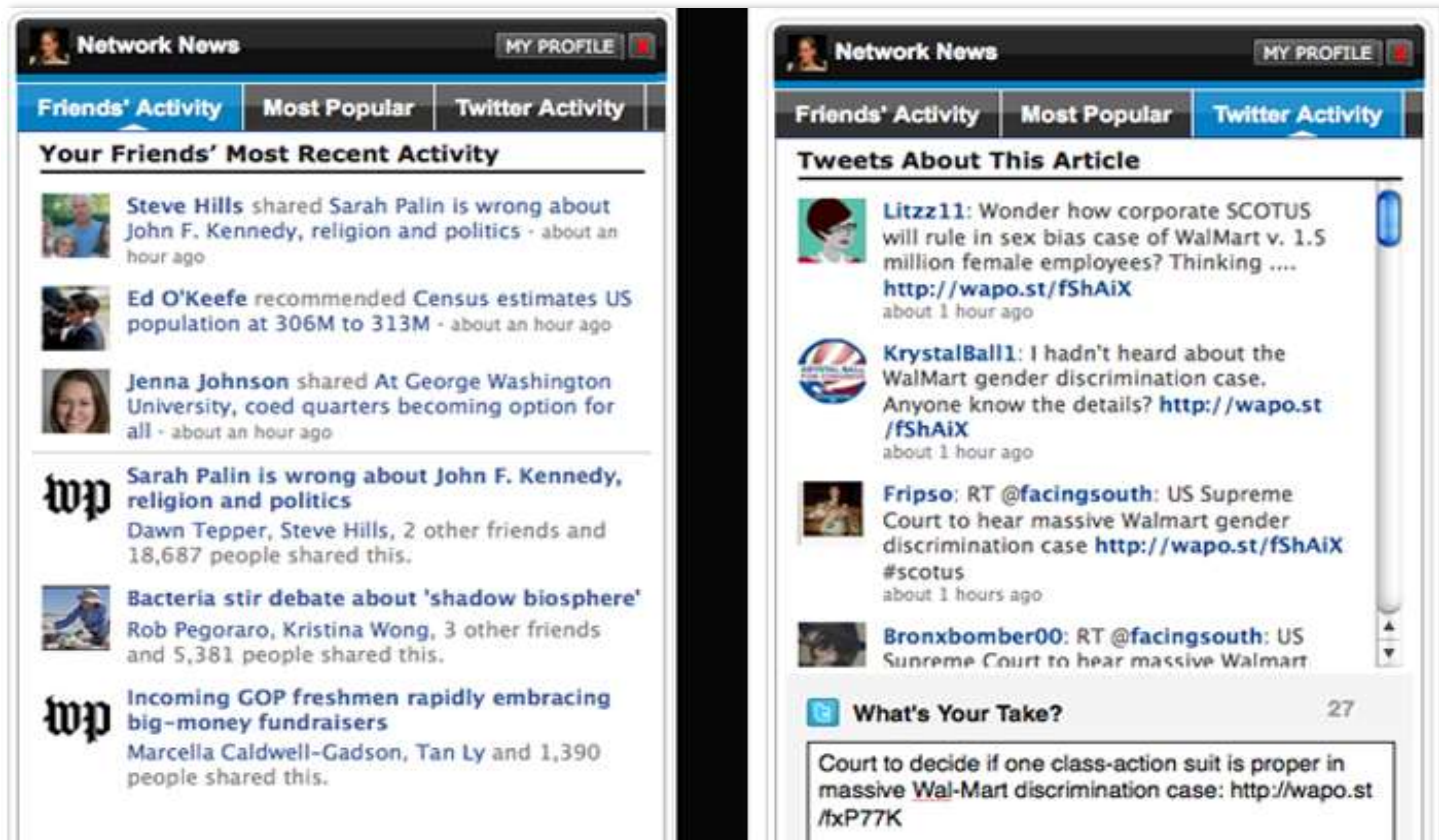
On the left side, there is a sidebar for the "INSIDER IPHONE APP" with a download link for "Football Insider 2010", described as a free iPhone app for Redskins fans featuring breaking news, player and team-focused daily stories, beat reporters' analysis, award-winning columnists' analysis, and game-day photo galleries.

Overlaid on the right side of the article is a Twitter feed for the hashtag #ratetheredskins. It shows four tweets:

- kpj104 #ratetheredskins 1-they are digressing. love my team, but this has to stop happening year after year. expected from zorn, not shannahan (8 hours ago)
- Cvila68 @washingtonpost Like USUAL..... #78milliondollars TERRIBLE!!! #Ratetheredskins (8 hours ago)
- WashingtonPost Armchair quarterback? Tell us how you thought the Skins fared against the Giants using #Ratetheredskins http://wapo.st/i5vdAl (8 hours ago)
- davidkwill #ratetheredskins http://t.co/sYm147Z via @redskinsinsider the only reason they get a 1 is that there is no 0 on the list of options (18 hours ago)

Network News is a popular tool


- Added Twitter feeds to every article this summer
- Added most popular social content by section
- 196K people have opted in to SHARE their info with Network News
- Millions have interacted with the tool









iPad App Live Topics are social, aggregated content

The screenshot displays the iPad app interface for The Washington Post. At the top, the status bar shows AT&T service, 6:15 PM, and 40% battery. The app header includes the Washington Post logo, the date DECEMBER 6, 2010, a welcome message for katharine.zaleski, and navigation options for Redskins, Sections, and settings.

The main content area is a grid of article teasers:

- THE WASHINGTON POST**
With Redskins spiraling downward, focus turns to planning for future
IN EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. Early in the fourth quarter Sunday, Washington Redskins quarterback Donovan McNabb walked slowly off the field at New Meadowlands Stadium...
- THE WASHINGTON POST**
Thomas Boswell: Albert Haynesworth must be let go - now

- THE WASHINGTON POST**
Mike Wise: Redskins must rebuild
- WALL STREET JOURNAL**
Manning Finds His Other Targets
- NEW YORK POST**
Good ol' days relived in vintage victory
- RIGGO'S RAG**
Redskins offensive-line woes predictable

Below the grid is a section for social media updates:

- TWEETS FROM @REDSKINSINSIDER**
 -  **RedskinsInsider:** Most interesting thing to me: He repeatedly called Devin Thomas by name of "Derek." Odd. 3 h
 -  **RedskinsInsider:** That's it for Shanahan. Gave no info on Haynesworth, but hopes a couple of injuries – Landry, Torain and Rogers - are improved by Sunday 3 h
 -  **RedskinsInsider:** Trent Williams is still sore. Shanahan won't know
- TOP TWEETERS ON REDSKINS - POWERED BY SULIA**
 -  **Rich_Campbell:** Oh yeah, still 4 games left. RT @redskinsblog RT @davidelfin: Good news for #Redskins: Bucs put CB Aqib Talib C Jeff Faine on I.R. 27 m
 -  **RedskinsDotCom:** Shanahan Holds Off On Discussing Haynesworth: Mike Shanahan said he would address questions about Albert Hayne... <http://redsk.in/hplgQu> 27 m
 -  **redskinsblog:** RT @davidelfin: Good news for #Redskins: Bucs just

At the bottom of the social media section is a navigation bar with a back arrow, a "Live Topics" button with a checkmark, and a "Read Later" button with a plus icon and a red "1" badge.

The footer features a blue banner with the text "Ways we are helping provide more energy with fewer emissions. See how." and a play button icon. To the right is an ExxonMobil logo with the tagline "Taking on the world's toughest energy challenges."

We have started global Twitter Trends

- #wherewereyou became GLOBAL Twitter Trend after we started it on BlogPost



A PROJECT OF THE NIEMAN FOUNDATION AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY

→ #Wherewereyou: WaPo puts the humble hashtag to work

In our new age of two-way news, news organizations sometimes struggle to find a way to foster productive conversation: to move beyond superficial gestures of inclusiveness — empty questions, atomized responses — to create conversation that is meaningful and purposeful. This weekend, The Washington Post found a way to create that kind of conversation, by way of commemorating Saturday's nine-year anniversary of September 11: It created a Twitter hashtag, [#wherewereyou](#), asking readers to share where they were when they first learned that the towers had been hit.

Washington Post Uses #wherewereyou Twitter Hashtag to Commemorate 9/11

Posted by Lauren Duato on September 13th, 2010 5:00 PM [View Comments](#)

In a tasteful display of using social media to commemorate a tragedy, the Washington Post's #wherewereyou hashtag made its way around the Twitter-verse this weekend to get users to share where they were on September 11th, 2001. The semantics of the tag itself and the poignancy of the event that is still fresh in many American's memories no doubt contributed to the outpouring of responses originating from the Washington Post's Twitter page, but Nieman Journalism Lab points out that the very nature of digital media has caused the hashtag to shift in meaning and begin documenting other sentiments as well. The call for





WHERE TV MEETS SOCIAL MEDIA



Washington Post starts #wherewereyou hashtag

BY CORY BERGMAN · SEPTEMBER 13, 2010 · [POST A COMMENT](#)

[Tweet](#) 6 [Recommend](#) [Be the first of your friends to recommend this.](#)

The Washington Post had a great and tremendously simple idea to encourage people to share memories on Twitter — it created the hashtag [#wherewereyou](#).

In DC, crossing the street to the bank. I could see the smoke rising from the Pentagon from my desk all day.

[#wherewereyou](#)

9:30:58 PM from 11/11/2001 via @coryb

Twitter Promoted Trend #Election

Promoted Trends on Twitter

Worked with Twitter to select trend name with the most potential—selected #Election

The image shows a screenshot of the Twitter homepage from 2010. The main interface includes a search bar at the top, navigation links (Home, Profile, Messages, Campaigns), and a 'What's happening?' section with tabs for Timeline, @Mentions, Retweets, Searches, and Lists. The timeline shows several tweets, including one from NPR News about a bomb exploding at the Swiss Embassy in Greece. A red circle highlights the 'Trends' section, which lists various trending topics. The top trend is '#Election', which is marked as 'Promoted' with a yellow label. A red arrow points from this label to a larger, detailed view of the '#Election' search results on the right side of the image. This detailed view shows the top tweets for the hashtag, including one from The Washington Post and another from NRDC. The bottom of the page features a footer with links for About, Help, Blog, Status, Jobs, Terms, Privacy, Shortcuts, Businesses, Media, Developers, Resources, and a copyright notice for 2010 Twitter.

twitter

Search

Home Profile

What's happening?

Timeline @Mentions Retweets Searches Lists

1 new tweet

nprnews NPR News
Bomb Explodes At Swiss Embassy In Greece <http://n.pr/aAaorq>
1 minute ago

nprnews NPR News
As Votes Come In, Here's How NPR Will 'Call' Races <http://n.pr/bNJsLt>
1 minute ago

UKCoachCalipari John Calipari
How about @EBled24 getting his first NBA start last night and @boogiecousins with the big buckets late in SACs win! Remember them last Nov?
1 minute ago

emccorp EMC Corporation
RT @scott_lowe: Update on #EMC #RecoverPoint behavior with #VAAL (good news!): <http://bit.ly/a4kYIY>
2 minutes ago

alleyinsider SAI
TEARDOWN: What It Looks Like Inside A Samsung Galaxy Tablet by @ncsaint <http://read.bi/aemepO>
3 minutes ago

jimmyfallon Jimmy Fallon
I just voted. Vote today!!!

Your Tweets 529

11 hours ago: Heard a rumor that Christmas Cup are back @Starbucks - @JesaCascio you know what that means...

Following 266

Followers 447

Listed 12

Recently listed in: Filter-My-Following, omer_kostak07@hotmail.com, omer_kostak07@hotmail.com, Twitter-Team, soso2006ful

Trends

#Election Promoted

#shouldhaveknown

#electionday

KRY Japan

Yun Jae

Poseidon

Atenas

Sakineh

Rafters

Twitter-for-BlackBerry

n: the official Twitter app for BlackBerry.

About · Help · Blog · Status · Jobs · Terms · Privacy · Shortcuts
Businesses · Media · Developers · Resources · © 2010 Twitter

twitter

Search

Home Profile

Results for #Election

Tweets Tweets with links Tweets near you People

washingtonpost The Washington Post 53 Retweets
Use our #election guide to track all 50 states: <http://wapo.st/cXTr8p>
2 hours ago
Promoted by The Washington Post

NRDC NRDC by Lingerelli
There's still time to make an important difference for our environment, get out to vote! #GOTV #election
5 minutes ago

FedoraFugitive Aaron Smith
Protect our moon borders! Build a fence between the light and dark sides! #election
23 seconds ago

Union_Man Kevin Hegel
RT @travismclark: Prediction: democrats lose big today, absolutely nothing changes in the USA. #election
23 seconds ago

SMKSensei Sean Michael Kelly
If possible, vote before work. That way you can make smug comments to non-voters all day. #Election RT @theSusanWright: RT @TheOnion
22 seconds ago

TehRubenDC Ruben Mucos
@dcseth Ha ha ha...that old boy, eh? Too #RightWing for me :) I'll try the Old Ebbitt, might be good. #election
23 seconds ago

Goals and Outcomes

Goals:

- Build awareness of The Washington Post brand around the election
- Drive conversations about the midterm elections
- Increase referrals to The Washington Post election coverage

Campaign Results:

- 2x average follows during trend
- 2x average account mentions
- 2.5x average referrals to The Washington Post

Impressions built as results came in



Press coverage

Poynter Online: *“By being the only news organization using Twitter this way, **the Post** could rise above the din of election-related conversation and draw more traffic to its website.”*

Nieman Lab: *“This is an **intriguing and aggressive move for a news organization** and it'll certainly be interesting to see if they can take advantage of the increased election conversation on Twitter to drive traffic.”*

Read/Write Web: *“Twitter just announced its plans for election day as well, though they appear focused more on working with other more established media outlets than on producing original content and calls to action. That's typical of Twitter, compared to Facebook. CNN will be performing bulk analysis of sentiment across Tweets, but **perhaps most interesting is the Washington Post's plan.**”*

Atlantic: *“I think [Katharine Zaleski] should be [happy], even if buying a Twitter promoted trend didn't crash the Washington Post servers. It shows that **the Post** is willing to take social media seriously as the means by which news is transmitted now.”*

Quality is important

- From The Bivings Report:

“The Post ranks 3rd in number of Facebook fans within the top 100 US newspapers, but its particularly effective form of audience engagement is what ranks it at the top of our list. It averages 41 likes and 55 comments for every post on its fan page wall, and maintains a very high fan-to-circulation ratio. The Post also features two custom tabs and its editors periodically use HootSuite to schedule posts and ensure a consistent stream of information to its readers.”

2010 Best US Newspaper Facebook Fan Pages December 17, 2010

Posted by [Alla Goldman](#) in [Bivings](#), [Facebook](#), [Newspaper Study](#)

 Tweet  75  Like  Charles Balazs and 58 others like this.

This is the second installment of our [2010 Facebook Newspaper study](#), and features our top 10 rankings for the best and most interactive fan pages amongst U.S. newspapers. Newspapers selected were among the 100 largest in the U.S. (based on circulation). In addition to ranking each paper by the number of Facebook fans, we also looked at number of comments per post, and the variety of post on each page. The overarching intent was to create a ranking that allowed large regional newspapers to compete on an even digital playing field with large national papers.

1. **The Washington Post** – The Post ranks 3rd in number of Facebook fans within the top 100 US newspapers, but it's particularly effective form of audience engagement is what ranks it at the top of our list. It averages 41 likes and 55 comments for every post on it's fan page wall, and maintains a very high fan-to-circulation ratio. The Post also features two custom tabs and its editors periodically use HootSuite to schedule posts and ensure a consistent stream of information to its readers.
2. **The Chicago Tribune** – It may be ranked 9th in the US in terms of circulation, but the Chicago Tribune has its Facebook engagement down to a science. It boasts a custom Welcome landing page, a number of newspaper-specific sub pages, as well as a discussion tab. This is in addition to it's high average number of likes and comments on every post, and its continuous reader questions.

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