

India's Narendra Modi is the most influential world leader on Twitter in 2022

India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi was announced as the most influential world leader on Twitter in the *2022 World Leader Power Ranking report* from BCW's Twiplomacy, the global communication agency's digital diplomacy initiative.



Source: www.unsplash.com

Modi is followed closely by US President Joe Biden and Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. The top three African leaders are Kenya's William Ruto, South Africa's Cyril Ramaphosa and Uganda's Yoweri Museveni.

Influence

Twiplomacy's new ranking algorithm has been designed to identify what influence is on Twitter among a particular list of handles. Analysing data from 1 October 2021 to 30 September 2022, Twiplomacy's algorithm assigned a tailored weighting to variables including mentions, tweets, retweets, reach, impressions, follower changes, likes and follower count. It then applied additional variables such as gender, age, length of time in office and others to further contextualise, compare and understand influence factors in the ranking.

At a time when new leadership at Twitter has made the future of digital diplomacy on the platform uncertain, one thing remains clear: You can't take the social out of social media – even for politicians. The top three bring together big personality, geopolitical clout, and a strong domestic following – all factors that determine a world leader's influence on the platform.

Authenticity

What else determines a world leaders' success on Twitter? Authentic, human language; quick reaction times; and a sense of humour or flair – attributes that depart from the formality of traditional diplomacy. Top-ranked leaders in the report – from Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy (rising six places into the top 10) to Chilean President Gabriel Boric (breaking into the top 10 in his first year in office) – have engaged audiences with shorter, more emotional content.

While President Zelenskyy's rise is driven in part by widespread support for Ukraine in the wake of war, if this ranking had been released a year earlier, he'd still make the top 15, in part because of his distinctive, raw Twitter personality and skillful use of the platform.

The top 10 shows that leaders can command influence of the platform despite short tenure in office, with two of the top 10 only taking office within the previous 12 months. Overall, the top 10 on average has been in office four years, compared to seven years for the wider ranking.

Youth

In terms of age, at an average of 58 years, Twiplomacy's top 10 are two years younger than the average world leader. Analysis found that younger leaders are more likely to communicate with followers using emojis, with the top five under 50 years old using more than the overall top five, including favourites such as the strength emoji, sunglasses emoji, party emoji and fire emoji.

Jillian Stead Jones, director & digital adviser for Twiplomacy said: "Influence on Twitter is more than how many followers a user has -- it's about how engaged a follower base is, and how likely they are to interact with a leader's message."



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"Our proprietary algorithm uncovered engagement metrics like retweets as the indicators contributing most to influence, which also power a leader's reach. This signals a shift from the popularity contest of the last decade to a more earned approach, powered by people – and to some extent, an updated algorithm that rewards active participation over passive consumption," said Jones.

"The leaders who place high in our ranking sustain an active and engaged community of users who carry and amplify the digital conversation. The recipe for success varies from leader to leader, but we've observed that the highest-ranking individuals are those with big personalities who use Twitter as a means to reach their audiences directly – from their electorate, to fellow leaders and influencers," she said.

Digital diplomacy

Beth Laffin, head of international affairs at BCW and geopolitical adviser for Twiplomacy said: "Twitter has long been the platform of choice for global leaders looking to shape the zeitgeist due to its influence among fellow politicians, journalists and political audiences."

"This makes the relative rise and fall of global influence among the world leaders telling. In a tangible reflection of world events, Russia President Vladimir Putin's handle has fallen to outside the top 50 while Ukrainian President Zelenskyy has risen into the top 10. The research also shows the women of the world dancing in solidarity with Finland Prime Minister

Sanna Marin, with her digital influence soaring 19 places in the global ranking to 24th. Maintaining, growing and leveraging that following for her own global influence will be the opportunity for her in 2023," she said.

"Of course, as Twitter continues to evolve, it remains to be seen what the next year will bring to what is currently the world's foremost platform for digital diplomacy."

BCW's Twiplomacy has been tracking the changes in digital diplomacy, conducting international affairs through digital channels since 2012. Digital diplomacy is now one of the most essential forums for international affairs and has revolutionised global communications, creating new, direct channels of dialogue between the biggest geopolitical entities and the people they serve.

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