#shapingimagetweetbytweet: A Study of Celebrity Impression Management and Restoration via Twitter

Alison Bos

Jamie Jones

Sarah Schacher

TheCaseSolutions.com
Premise

- How have celebrities’ use of Twitter damaged personal image?
- How have celebrities used Twitter to restore personal image?

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Why Twitter?

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- Everybody else is doing it, so why can’t we? In July 2012, Twitter surpassed 517 million users.

- The Trendy PR Tool
  The ‘new’ internet: Web 2.0 programming
  Microblogging presents fluid opportunities for branding and immediacy for correction (Zhang et al., 2009).

- The Dark Side:
  “once a tweet is posted, it is out there forever, and up for public scrutiny” (Nichols & Meadows, 2010).
History of Twitter

• Founded in 2006
• 140 million posts daily
• Known as the fastest growing social media platform today

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How many of you have Twitter accounts?
Theoretical Foundation

Apologia Theory

Image Restoration Theory
- Denial
- Evading Responsibility
- Reducing Offensiveness
- Corrective Action
- Mortification

Rhetoric of Atonement

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The Research Questions

RQ1: Is Twitter an effective tool for positively managing personal image crises when applying strategies of apologia?

RQ2: Which image repair discourses (denial, evasion of responsibility, reduction or offensiveness, corrective action, or mortification) extend or diminish the timeline of the crisis event?

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Our Method

Content Analysis Case Studies:

- Ashton Kutcher (@aplusk)
- Charlie Sheen (@CharlieSheen)
- Alec Baldwin (@alecbaldwin)

Indicators used to answer research questions were subjective; based upon authors’ interpretations and supported by case details.