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## You are what you tweet

Illinois' nine law schools are on Twitter, but have varied approaches to social networking

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When Chicago's weather turned arctic, The John Marshall Law School and IIT Chicago-Kent College of Law turned to Twitter.

The primary Twitter feeds for both schools — @JMLSChicago and @ChicagoKentLaw — also used more standard means of digital communication to announce class cancellations, namely mass e-mails.

But Twitter served as an additional messaging tool, one that reached any students more apt to check their timeline than their e-mail.

John Marshall tweeted class cancellation updates on Sunday and Monday, while Chicago-Kent tweeted regular cancellation updates Monday through Wednesday that included links to its website.

"We got people retweeting (weather tweets) and faculty retweeted as well as favorited," said Christine Kraly, John Marshall's director of public affairs and the primary human behind @JMLSChicago.

"So we do know that people saw (the tweets) and passed it along."

The use of Twitter at Illinois' law schools is as varied as the schools themselves. The two feeds that have been active since 2008 — @UChicagoLaw and @ChicagoKentLaw — are also the two that are the most active.

The four schools with the fewest followers — Northern Illinois University College of Law, Northwestern University School

### LAW SCHOOL NOTES

of Law, Southern Illinois University School of Law and University of Illinois College of Law — are also the only four schools with stronger followings on Facebook than on Twitter.

Five of the nine schools have at least five additional law school-related feeds, dedicated to news in, for example, career services, admissions or specific clinics, while three schools — NIU, SIU and U. of I. — only have a primary feed.

For the University of Chicago, the division of audiences is crucial.

"One of the things we worry about a lot in communications is:

A. How do you get the information to the people who want it?

B. Without annoying them? and

C. Without also having to tell a lot of people who aren't interested in what you have to say?"

said Marsha Nagorsky, associate dean of communications for the U. of C. law school.

The solution is different Twitter feeds. U. of C. has seven — a main one, one for the library, one for admissions, one for career services and three for clinics.

To help its community navigate these various feeds, the school also launched a page on its website called Tweet Chicago (www.law.uchicago.edu/tweetchi



Chicago-Kent Law  
@ChicagoKentLaw



Driving to campus? Your parking spot may be taken up by Optimus Prime.  
pic.twitter.com/CX3XlcdNsR

Reply Retweet Favorite More

Paramount Pictures will be filming scenes for the feature film, "Transformers 4" in your neighborhood. Our scheduled film date for this area is this Thursday, September 12<sup>th</sup>, 2013. We are working closely with the Chicago Police Department and the Chicago Film Office to ensure a smooth and cooperative filming event.

No Parking Signs posted Wednesday, Sept. 11 6:00AM to Friday, Sept. 13 11:59PM

- BOTH SIDES OF CLINTON FROM MONROE TO CONGRESS
- NORTH SIDE OF JACKSON FROM CLINTON TO RIVERSIDE PLAZA
- SOUTH SIDE OF ADAMS FROM JEFFERSON TO CANAL
- BOTH SIDES OF CANAL FROM JACKSON TO ADAMS



John Marshall Law  
@JMLSChicago



@JMLS grads-Don't forget to use the hashtag #JMLSgrad when posting photos and tweets from graduation this Sunday, Jan. 19! Congratulations!



Penny Proud @smileitsjoy

Jan 8

Y'all university of Chicago law school is in my top 5 to apply to eventually. But I'd have to leave as soon as the first snow hit lol

Details

Reply Retweet Favorite More



UChicago Law School  
@UChicagoLaw



@smileitsjoy If it helps, we have free coffee and donuts every Wednesday. Oh, and one of the finest legal educations in the world, too. :-)

**Law schools are using Twitter to inform students of unusual circumstances on campus (Chicago-Kent), encourage discussion of school events (John Marshall) and interact with prospective students (University of Chicago).**

ago). That page is a database of all accounts related to the law school broken into six categories: alumni, faculty, official law school accounts, staff, students and student organizations.

Users can then click on a category and instantly see all of the feeds that apply.

One of the benefits, the school believes, is that prospective students can get a view of daily campus life outside of the official lens.

"There can be a perception, especially among prospective students, that something that comes officially from the law

school is propaganda,” Nagorsky said.

Therefore, independent student feeds not controlled by the school can provide prospective students with an unbiased view of campus life.

“Prospective students always want to know, ‘What is my experience going to be like?’ This is a way to find out,” Nagorsky said. “This is students giving you a perspective in real time and unfiltered.”

It’s a method that made Melissa Englund, the main tweeter at @UillinoisLaw, take notice.

“They do a very good job of balancing their content and appealing to their constituents,”

Englund said. “I think last year they had a music list of graduation songs for 2013. ... They speak very well to their different audiences.”

Like any kind of writing, knowing your audience is crucial to Twitter. So is having a unique voice.

“The best thing that you can do on Twitter is have a personality,” said Allison Bernstein of Chicago-Kent. “It’s difficult when you’re tweeting from a business. But we have law students. Most of them are in their mid-20s. They’re on Twitter for fun.”

Since Sept. 1, no Illinois law school feed has been more active than Chicago-Kent’s. Its averaged 5½ tweets per day, while U. of C. has averaged 3½. Loyola and Northwestern are the only other schools averaging at least one tweet per day over that span.

It’s no surprise that Chicago-Kent is at the top of that list. Bernstein’s title is social media strategist and manager. She’s the only lead tweeter among the law schools whose title includes “social media.”

Along with regular tweets about events at the law school, Bernstein’s tweets for Chicago-

Kent promote faculty and student achievements, share news stories about the law school and interact with students in a fun yet informational manner.

Bernstein’s favorite tweet, for instance, came on Sept. 12 when “Transformers 4” was filming near campus. Paramount Pictures sent the school a notice about which streets would be blocked off for filming.

Naturally, Bernstein wanted to relay that information to any students who might otherwise park on the blocked streets.

To do so, she posted a photo of the Paramount news release along with this message: “Driving to campus? Your parking spot may be taken up by Optimus Prime.”

That tweet, referring to the primary robot hero of the film franchise, got a response from first-year student Kayla Higgins: “Best campus alert ever.”

Chicago-Kent has also pushed their feed by creating hashtags. They use #ckbegins during orientation and the start of the school year, a hashtag quickly embraced by their students.

“We got a pretty good response, enough to put together a Storify of everyone’s excitement for their first week of law school,” Bernstein said.

John Marshall did the same with #jmlsgrad, promoting graduation discussion among students.

And though Loyola hasn’t launched any hashtags, they’ve done something the others have not yet done — launching a social media advisory board for the account managers for the school’s eight law accounts and the school’s non-law accounts.

The board’s first meeting was Jan. 24, and they expect to meet approximately four times a year.

“It’s a way for Loyola’s (marketing and communications department) to meet with the

## A BEGINNER’S GUIDE TO TWITTER

**Tweets** — 140-character messages posted by a person with a Twitter account.

**Followers** — Users who have chosen to receive the updates of another user.

**Timeline** — The first page a user sees after signing into Twitter, it shows recent messages from all the accounts a user is following.

**Hashtag** — Users indicate that a tweet is about a certain topic by putting a pound sign before a word. By including #SuperBowl in a message about Peyton Manning, for example, a user can ensure the tweet is seen by someone searching Twitter for messages about Sunday’s big game.

**Mentions** — Users send messages to other users by including an @ sign at the start of the other person’s account name. To send a message to the Daily Law Bulletin’s Twitter account, for example, users type @CDLB.

**Retweets** — A way for users to share tweets posted by other users. If a user reads a @CDLB post he or she likes, clicking the retweet button will ensure that tweet is seen by all of his or her followers.

**Favorites** — A star icon that appears below each tweet that users can click on to indicate approval, similar to Facebook’s “like” button.

**Storify** — A website that allows tweets and other items from the Internet to be collected on one page in a news story-style format.

various schools to kind of talk about social media,” said Elisabeth Brookover, Loyola law’s director of communications and the lead tweeter for @loyolalaw.

The group, Brookover said, figures out “what’s working (and) what’s not to gather ideas on shaping a policy. So just growing our social media and learning how to do it more effectively.”

Northwestern is another school with multiple feeds working in concert. They have the fourth-lowest follower total among the schools, but they have one huge piece that is missing from the others.

Their dean, Daniel B. Rodriguez, is hugely active on his own account.

“I am very impressed with Northwestern law,” Nagorsky said. “Their dean tweets. That’s unusual still. They are really good at retweeting the dean, and

he is really good at tweeting. He has his own blog. That’s a personality thing.”

Nagorsky said that U. of C. Dean Michael H. Schill supports Twitter but does not want to be active on it. She sees the impact of Rodriguez’s tweeting, though.

“When you have a dean who is out there with it, you can do incredible things,” she said. “I am impressed with what they have been able to do in that regard.”

Northwestern’s Kirston Fortune appreciates Rodriguez’s tweeting, too. His is just part of what makes Twitter a great tool for law schools, she said.

“We put a bunch of stuff up there, and the people who are reading Twitter can choose to investigate it or they can choose not to,” Fortune said. “That’s what’s nice about Twitter. The information is there if you want to go a little deeper.”

### Law school Twitter presence by the numbers

School	Main account	Date account started	Twitter account manager’s job title	Followers	Following	Number of tweets, Sept. 1 - Jan. 29	Number of active accounts	Total followers on all active accounts
DePaul	@lawdepaul	Jan. 27, 2009	Director of communications	3,410	93	22	7	4,982
IIT Chicago-Kent	@chicagokentlaw	Oct. 24, 2008	Social media strategist and manager	2,856	2,385	844	7	4,323
Loyola	@loyolalaw	March 26, 2009	Director of communications	1,753	252	188	8	3,522
Northern Illinois	@niu_law	Jan. 6, 2012	Admissions records specialist	233	69	19	1	233
Northwestern	@northwesternlaw	June 28, 2010	Asistant dean of marketing and communications	544	47	173	8	4,506
Southern Illinois	@siuschooloflaw	Feb. 14, 2011	Director of communications and outreach	149	62	83	1	149
John Marshall	@jmlschicago	Feb. 5, 2009	Director of public affairs	2,916	363	104	9	4,076
University of Chicago	@uchicagolaw	May 22, 2008	Associate dean for communications	12,419	2,769	540	7	15,369
University of Illinois	@uillinoislaw	April 30, 2013	Director of communications	131	51	54	1	131