

If you can't stand the tweet

IT SEEMS THAT EVERY MAN AND HIS DOG IS GETTING IN ON THE TWITTER ACT. BUT NOT ALEX RITMAN

Scaw Int. Milan futbol team at their hotel yesterday. They looks ready to go for the match.' To you, to me, to anyone who doesn't clap when their plane lands, that statement sounds like the pointless, grammatically creative, diary-style dribblings of someone who should have spent less of their time at school gnawing on the ends of biro until the ink went in their mouths. But, on July 18 2009, that message was sent to just shy of three million people across the planet. And every single person actually asked to receive it. They signed up. They ticked boxes. Things saying 'click here' were clicked there. And yet these people aren't idiots. They are, so we're being led to believe, part of an exciting 'craze' that has the whole world glued to its BlackBerries.

Because, you see, ladies and gentlemen, that statement came from Ashton Kutcher. Now, he may be the comedic equivalent of a dim-witted dog that has eaten a sock and now has the soggy, undigested and soiled undergarment hanging loosely out of his rear end, but he's recently emerged as the king of Twitter, the micro-blogging social networking doodad where users post personal messages of up to 140

characters in length that are then posted to their 'followers'. With over 2.8million such followers, Mr Kutcher is firmly at the top of the Twitter list and that comment, supposedly about Inter Milan's pre-season training in Los Angeles, was one of his many equally insightful 'tweets'. (NB: I physically heaved as I typed that word.)

Another notable 'twitterer' (bleurgh) is Fiddy Cent; but, rather than his messages being all guns and impressively bottomed ladies, 50 Cent (Dhs1.8) has taken a more commercial route. 'Download "OK You're Right" music video on iTunes now!' is one of his many demanding digital outbursts, leading me to wonder why 1.4million people would sign up to be regularly shouted at by a gangsta-turned-millionaire.

Worst of all, Ashton Kutcher's better half, Demi Moore, is in on the act as well. And the two use Twitter as a platform to engage in somewhat odious coupley banter online. 'Why don't you put our phone away and come kiss your husband' is one such instantly pass-the-bucket affair. We can only hope that when their relationship eventually breaks down, they're so used to communicating to each other via Twitter that the entire world gets to hear every mud-slinging word, right from accusations of infidelity down to cheap digs at one party's inability to fix the washing machine.

Having a celebrity marriage implode live on your laptop or BlackBerry may sound like fun, but surely this technology could be put to better use? Recently, having already taken the Facebook plunge, Dubai's very own

Sheikh Mohammed signed up to Twitter, following in the footsteps of Barack Obama and Gordon Brown. And perhaps this is the way forward. Forget self-indulgent celebrity types, it's the world's leaders who should start twittering en masse. And not just for boring accountability so we know what they've been doing ('spoke with members of the American Nurses Association today' is one of Obama's more riveting updates). Instead they should use it to shake some order into town, firing out regular messages reminding people not to get up to anything even remotely mischievous, coupled with the odd comment about last night's TV or a particularly nice sandwich they've had in order to still appear down-to-earth rather than a little on the dictator-y side.

Carrying on down this path, perhaps in some dark Orwellian future, everyone will be forced by law to 'follow' one supreme twittering overlord, someone who barks out regular tweets such as 'I'm watching you' or 'Stop doing anything untoward' direct to their terrified subjects. Let's just pray it's not Ashton Kutcher.

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