

Methodology

This Pew Research Center analysis is based on the Twitter profiles of 1,021 survey respondents who volunteered a Twitter handle (their unique username preceded by an “@” sign) for research purposes and whose handle was valid and active as of Jan. 31, 2022. Researchers used these handles to collect information about users’ on-site behaviors using the Twitter API. Profile elements that are not made available by the Twitter API – most notably, the user’s birth date – are not included in this study in compliance with the Twitter user agreement. For more details on the survey design from which these handles were initially collected, read [this 2021 report methodology](#).

Coding for common topics in Twitter users’ profiles

Researchers used all 1,021 sample Twitter profiles to manually identify prevalent themes or topics. The proposed topics, and the rules to code for them, were then tested on a different set of Twitter profiles taken from accounts that had interacted with the sample accounts (through mentions or replies) to ensure the generalizability of the codebook.

The final codebook includes the following topics, which were identified using the criteria listed:

Job and occupation

Includes:

- Mentions of past, present or future job or occupation
- Mentions of “I work for/at...” or similar phrases
- Mentions of being retired, as long as they also mention a former job or occupation

Does not include:

- Mentions of job or occupation that are explicitly said to be done as a hobby
- Links to content-sharing or marketplace platforms without explicit job or occupational context

Hobbies and interests

Includes:

- Mentions of hobbies, interests or extracurricular or recreational activities, including hashtags or other references to sports teams and entertainment
- Mentions of being a “fan” or similar words that imply partiality (“stan,” “lover,” etc.)

- Emojis that substitute for mentions of certain hobbies, interests or recreational activities

Political positions

Includes:

- Mentions of the following in a manner that expresses affiliation and/or opinion:
 - A major political party or ideology
 - Contemporary political figures or electoral campaigns
 - Nationally known political movements
 - Major political or partisan issues
- Accounts belonging to a politician

Does not include:

- Mentions of possible political terms in a manner that doesn't express a position or opinion
- Mentions of possible political terms with no obvious tie to any major political party, ideology, figure, campaign or movement, or that offer no political affiliations or opinions

Religious affiliation

Includes:

- Mentions of major religions or religious beliefs and traditions
- Mentions of deities or religious figures
- Mentions of religious activities or holidays
- References to religious scripture or verse
- Explicit mentions of areligious or nonreligious belief systems, such as atheism

Personal pronouns

Includes:

- Mentions of conventional pronouns (he, they, it, etc.) and neo-pronouns (xe, ze, etc.)
- Explicit mentions of “no pronouns” or “any pronouns”

Family relationships

Includes:

- Mentions of a family title, connection, or relationship to another human or a pet
- Explicit mentions of “family”

Using the tested codebook, researchers separately coded the same 100 profiles from our representative sample and achieved high levels of intercoder reliability (with an average Krippendorff's alpha for the topics ranging from 0.83 to 1) before each coded part of the remaining profiles.

In addition to the above topics, researchers also manually coded the profiles for mentions of real locations within the United States, as well as profile or banner pictures that contain discernible facial features of someone who is neither a public figure or fictional character and is not a meme, stock photo or public domain image – using the help of Google Reverse Image Search where necessary to identify public figures that were unknown to the coding team.