

Paid Twitter Ads, Spice, and Real Time Search

He who controls the spice, controls the universe!

-Baron Vladamir Harkonen, *Dune*

In the classic science fiction novel, *Dune* by Frank Herbert there is one substance more valuable than anything else. (please forgive the nerdiness of the analogy) The spice on the planet Arrakis, which prolongs life and makes space travel possible. Is there anything on Earth as valuable? The only thing that comes close is INFORMATION- and time and time again over the last year Twitter has proven to be the best source of real time information. Whether it is breaking news of Micheal Jackson's death, an earthquake in Haiti, or gossip about Justin Bieber- Twitter is scooping all of the major news stations in real time. This is an impressive feat by Twitter, but how does controlling all of this information make money?



After years and years of not making a single dollar, Twitter announced last week that they were in fact interested in cash. This entrepreneurial endeavor is taking the form of paid ads- of which there are two types. First, paid ads that will be shown on the top of the organic results through searches (like those that can be seen on [http:// Search.Twitter.com](http://Search.Twitter.com)) and second, embedded within conversations. Think about this second one as an interruption of your Twitter conversations with an advertisement. All of these paid tweets will be marked clearly as ADVERTISEMENTS.

Advertising tweets will have far less credibility and will be much more likely to be ignored, and here's why. Any company can currently use any number of free apps to search conversations and reply to them in real time (join the conversation) without having their tweet marked ADVERTISEMENT. This could even be automated by the companies, for free, with the right applications.

One thing that people on Twitter hate is SPAM. Ads for teeth whitening, FOREX automation, get rich quick schemes, and the new Donald Trump MLM (which apparently will create a larger GDP than the People's Republic of China). These advertisements are not only annoying, but they lose all credibility in the minds of readers because they are so obviously SPAM. Why will these automated Twitter advertisements have any more credibility? They won't.

In addition, why does Twitter have to mark them as advertisements? As long as the tweets are being created in a way that follows the terms and conditions of Twitter (which Twitter could adjust in any way they like), they shouldn't have to be marked that way. The fact that they are advertisements will be obvious to anybody that clicks on the profile of the individual or company sending the message.

I'm really not bugged by the Twitter advertisements at all. In fact I don't even notice them. That is exactly the problem, if we never see them, and nobody ever clicks on them, how is this business model going to sustain a company that believes itself to be worth \$1 Billion? Paid ads won't begin to get them there.

As Google has proven already to those who doubted them, *he who controls the information, controls the world*. Remember when Google had their IPO? Everybody said, how can a company go public, if all they do is offer free searches? It is all about the value of the right information- and how that information is organized. Twitter controls a massive amount of real time information, superior in many ways to the info that Google handles- there have got to be some powerful ways to monetize that. Time for Twitter to be a little more ambitious. If they want to take over the world- it will take more than just a few Twitter ads to do it.

