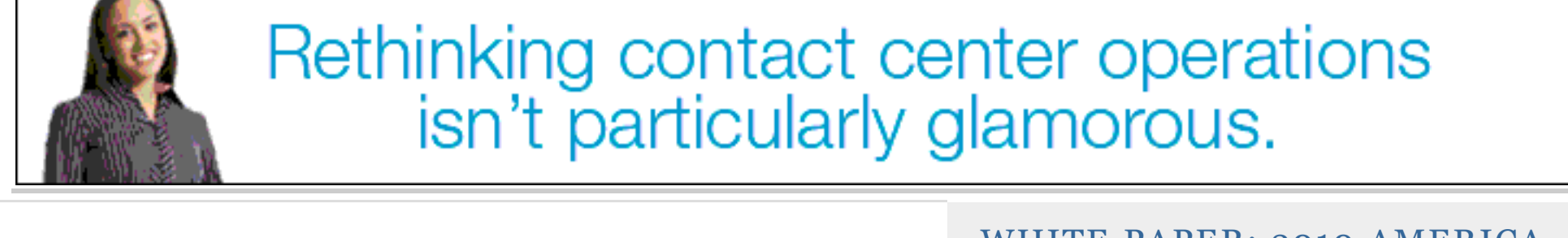


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### What the Trend?'s Top 50 Twitter Topics of the Year

The Year in Tweets: From Google Wave to 'New Moon' to Michael Jackson to Tiger Woods

by [Simon Dumenco](#)  
Published: [December 17, 2009](#)



Back in May, I conducted the first interview -- "[The Tw Truth About Twitter Trends Revealed \(by Brit Living in Shanghai\)](#)" -- with a young technologist named Matt Mayer who'd created a very clever site called [What the Trend?](#) (the question mark is an official part of the name, but for the sake of readability, I'll exclude it henceforth). Speaking via Skype from China, Mayer filled me in on the genesis and functionality of his service, which offers brief, crowdsourced explanations of the often mystifying memes that constantly pop up on the Twitter "trending topics" chart. It remains completely indispensable for anybody trying to make sense of Twitter.



Michael Jackson came in at 3 on What the Trend's year-end list.

Mayer and I have stayed in touch, and he recently informed me that he was selling What the Trend. Today, I can tell you that Mayer's creation has been formally acquired by a U.S. investor group. Start-up veteran Ingo Muschenetz (he was CTO at DefenseWeb, later acquired by Humana, and headed development at Aptana Studio, a web app-development company) has been named CEO and President of What the Trend.

I spoke with Muschenetz yesterday, and he debriefed me about What the Trend's ambitious plans to expand the service with new functionality and partnerships. (Stay tuned.) He also gave me background on the creation of the first annual What the Trend Twitter Zeitgeist chart. You've likely seen similar year-end charts -- including the [2009 Year-End Google Zeitgeist](#), Yahoo's [2009 Year in Review: Top 10 Searches](#) and Microsoft's [Top Bing Searches in 2009](#) -- as well as Twitter's own category-specific [seven-part list of Top 10s](#)

Muschenetz explained What the Trend's unique approach to parsing the year's trends: "We looked at the occurrence of every term that reached the Top 20 trending topics for every hour of every day of 2009, ranking both the height of popularity it achieved, and then the length of time it stayed as a trending topic." He argues that What the Trend's year-end list offers a fuller, more accurate picture of Twitterers' obsessions -- and in fact avoids the blind spots of some other lists. For instance, he notes, "It seems almost inconceivable that the Iran elections aren't on the Google list."

Without further ado, the **What the Trend?/Twitter Zeitgeist 2009**, presented here as a barebones list. But I encourage you to check out the heavily annotated list, which appears on What the Trend's site [here](#) (some adjustments in ranking may occur today and through the end of 2009, as the list remains dynamic).

1. #iranelection
2. #musicmonday
3. Michael Jackson
4. Google Wave
5. New Moon
6. Follow Friday
7. Halloween
8. Paranormal Activity
9. Harry Potter
10. TGIF
11. BBC
12. BBQ
13. Swine Flu
14. District 9
15. Susan Boyle
16. Star Trek
17. Snow Leopard
18. Lakers
19. #SxSW
20. American Idol
21. Glee
22. Adam Lambert
23. Easter
24. Watchmen
25. True Blood
26. Dollhouse
27. #openwebawards
28. Goodmorning
29. Lady GaGa
30. Kobe
31. VALENTINE'S DAY
32. NFL
33. SUPER BOWL
34. Wolverine
35. CNN
36. AIG
37. Bruno
38. Thanksgiving
39. Oprah
40. Mexico
41. SUMMER
42. Chris Brown
43. SNL
44. Palm Pre
45. MIAMI
46. Paris
47. California
48. Transformers 2
49. MW2
50. CES

Simon Dumenco is the "Media Guy" media columnist for Advertising Age. You can follow him on Twitter [@simondumenco](#)

#### 4 Comments

By proximityblue | Brooklyn, NY [December 17, 2009 02:58:39 pm](#):

I'd like to see these types of trends broken down to demographics, at least per country. Many of these words may be popular, but only because it is being used a lot in a specific country and doesn't apply to another. That kind of data makes more sense.

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By derek | placencia, CA [December 17, 2009 04:11:44 pm](#):

It's nice to see that the masses are mostly concerned with the latest movie, music or celebrity gossip instead of actual real world issues affecting society. Score another one for the internet age!

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By SIMON | NEW YORK, NY [December 17, 2009 04:22:02 pm](#):

To commenter proximityblue: I agree. In fact, if you look back at my May interview with What the Trend creator Matt Mayer (linked in the first sentence of the piece above), you'll see that we talked about the region-specificity of trends, and how things that are meaningful to an American audience are useless elsewhere, and vice versa. At the time, it may have been a bit premature to create country-specific trending charts, but given how much more global penetration Twitter has gained in just the last six months, I think we'll see soon see such regionally-parsed trend tracking from not only services like What the Trend, but Twitter itself.

Simon Dumenco  
"Media Guy" media columnist  
Advertising Age  
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By two2\_tango | Campbell, CA [December 18, 2009 02:01:34 pm](#):

What's with this headline: "The Year in Tweets: From Google Wave to 'New Moon' to Michael Jackson to Tiger Woods"

Tiger Woods isn't on the top 50 list. Kinda misleading, don't you think?

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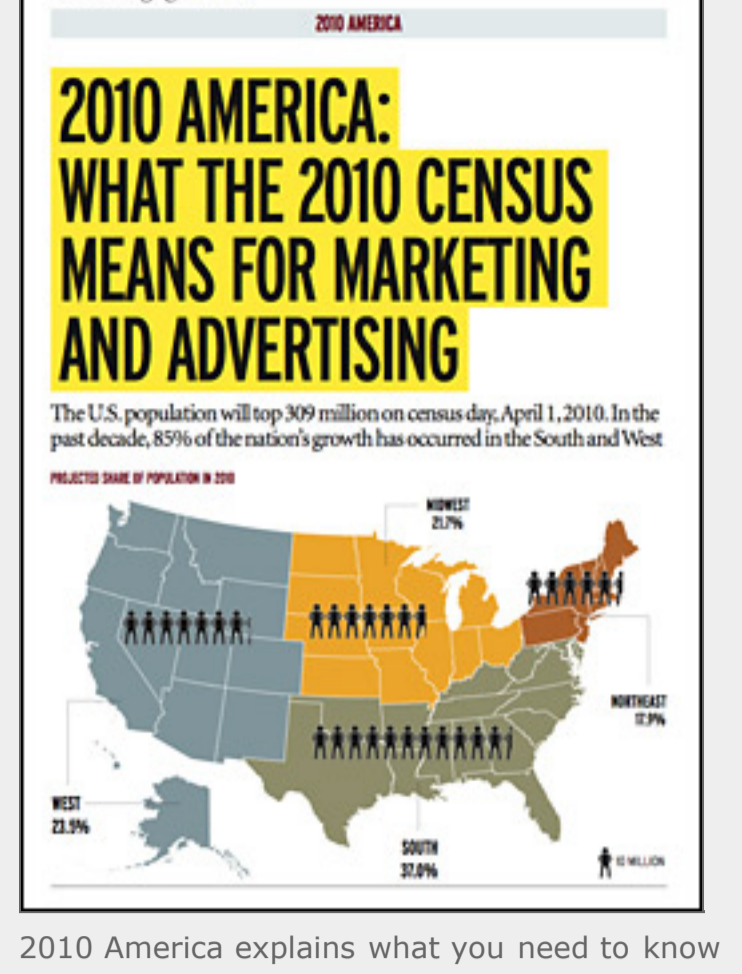
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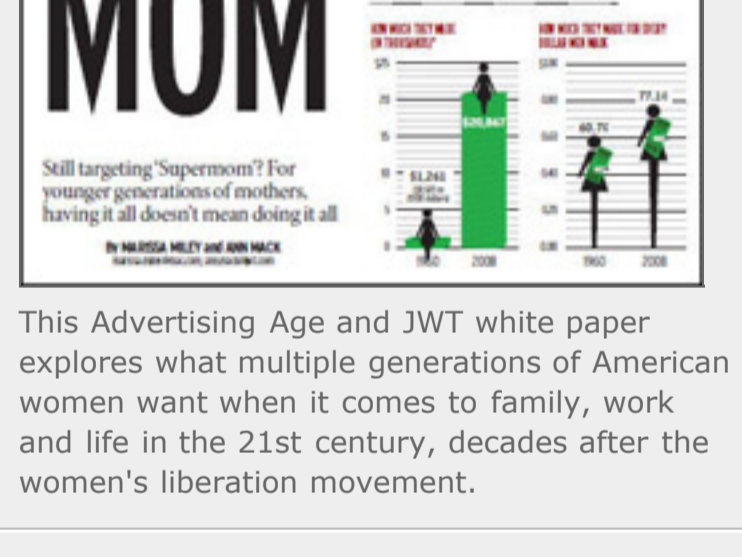
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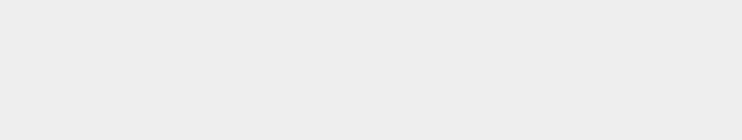


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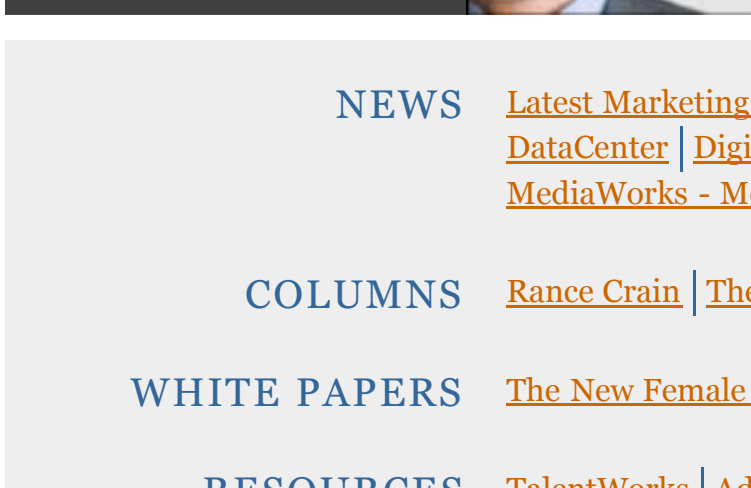
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