



February 19, 2010

Senator Richard Durbin
United States Senate
309 Hart Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Durbin,

Thank you for your letter. We share your interest in the important issue of internet freedom and are eager to express our opinion in this response. Indeed, our company was founded on the belief that the open exchange of information has a positive effect on the world. Our product and business decisions in Twitter's short existence have been inspired by that belief.

This begins with the simplicity and openness of Twitter. We've limited our messaging system of "Tweets" to 140 characters of text, with no images, video or other files. That means that people with the most rudimentary mobile phones around the world can tap into Twitter's functionality via SMS.

We also decided from the start to make Twitter open to improvements and innovations from both users and third party developers. It's for that reason that Twitter, the company, seems much bigger than it actually is. We have greatly benefited from the energy and momentum of thousands of developers who have freely tapped into our system and have created more than 50,000 applications that allow our users to send and receive Tweets on a vast array of devices, web services and software programs.

The innovation and rapid growth of Twitter's developer community has had a dramatic impact on global communication but we are constantly reminded that Twitter is a triumph of humanity -- not technology. Credit goes to the brave and dedicated individuals who tapped the power of Twitter during the aftermath of last years Iran election; the steadfast human rights activists in China working around blocks of the service; and the opposition efforts currently underway in Venezuela who dare use what President Hugo Chavez calls a "terrorist" tool. While the potential of Twitter has not yet been realized, these early examples show how important information can find its way from one restless area of the world to engage a much bigger audience.

For Twitter to reach its potential as a democratizing service we need to keep a steadfast focus on building a scalable service and a sustainable business. When the Iran election happened last summer, Twitter only had about 30 employees and struggled to keep the site up during the protests (which caused the State Department to request the postponement of a critical fix to the service). We're growing, but on relative terms to other big internet

players, we are still tiny, with less than 150 employees (as compared to the tens of thousands of employees at companies such as Google, Yahoo! or Cisco). At our size, nearly everyone in our company is working long hours to ensure that Twitter keeps up with user demand to increase the chances that information can be shared in current global hot spots and ones not yet considered.

We also need help through the leadership and action of Congress and the Obama administration. We greatly applaud your efforts to that end and also hope that Secretary Clinton's recent speech on internet freedom is followed by continued administration action.

Specifically, we believe that the free and open exchange of information would benefit enormously from limits on the abilities of governments and private parties to require service providers to remove information or to respond to requests to reveal user information. Even though we only operate in the United States, we face significant challenges in these areas both domestically and internationally. We have been sued for not removing information both in the United States and Brazil and we expect more litigation. In other countries, such as China, even though we have neither received nor responded to any removal or information requests, we believe that we have been technically blocked. We appreciate the United States government's willingness to engage with those countries in order to end such speech suppressive blocking.

Though we have spoken with a number of advocacy groups with respect to internet freedom issues, we have not had the luxury of time to be able to fully evaluate GNI. It is our initial sense that GNI's draft policies, processes and fees are better suited to bigger companies who have actual operations in sensitive regions. Nevertheless, we will continue to evaluate GNI along with other organizations, such as the Chilling Effects Clearinghouse (<http://www.chillingeffects.org/>), as we maintain our focus on helping our users freely express themselves.

Finally, Twitter greatly appreciates your invitation to speak at the March 2 hearing. It would be an excellent opportunity for Twitter to tell our story to a supportive audience given our shared beliefs regarding internet freedom. However, as I discussed with your staff, we are simply still too small a company to be able to deal with the increase in Washington exposure that participating in such a hearing would cause. We hope that you understand that we are focused on making our service better and more reliable rather than speaking about our record promoting freedom of speech. For that reason, we have declined all such appearances and ask that you accept our sincere apology in declining yours as well.

I appreciate the opportunity correspond with you about Twitter. Also, please accept my apologies that we did not receive your previous letter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'A. Macgillivray', followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Alexander Macgillivray
General Counsel
Twitter, Inc.