***Jack Dorsey***



The word “influential” is thrown around far too frequently in the modern world, but to be truly influential one must impact the lives of billions of people. One person who there can be little argument over whether he is an influential software engineer is Jack Dorsey, the co-founder and CEO of Twitter and more recently Square, a mobile payments company.

Jack Patrick Dorsey was born on the 19th of November 1976 in St. Louis, Missouri and now resides in San Francisco. His passion for computer science and software engineering began from a young age. At the age of 14, Dorsey created software for dispatch routing which is still used today by some taxi cab companies. Like many other of the world’s most successful people in modern times, Dorsey was a college dropout. He studied in his local college, the University of Missouri-Rolla for two years before moving to New York University. It was in NYU that he dropped out in 1999, one semester before receiving his degree. However, it wasn’t a complete waste as it was during his time in NYU where he developed the idea behind Twitter.



Dorsey began working as a programmer in 2000 and continued to develop his dispatch routing software, so successfully he set up a dispatch company for couriers, taxis and emergency services from the web. It was during his free time on the weekends and late at night when he would come up with the concept that would eventually become the multi-billion dollar company, Twitter. Dorsey had the idea in 2006 to produce an SMS-based communications platform where you could keep tabs on your friends’ lives which would also be free to use. Inspiration came to him for this idea as he and his friends were sick of racking up very expensive monthly phone bills. He created the web-based real time status/short message communication service. Dorsey proposed this idea to Odeo, a big podcasting company who gave him the go-ahead to further develop the product.

Noah Glass, a software engineer is credited with coming up with original name ‘twttr’ which later became Twitter. Dorsey sent the first message on Twitter on the 21st of March 2006 which read, “just setting up my twttr”. Twitter was an instant success with more than 60,000 tweets sent per day at the 2007 South by Southwest Interactive conference. Twitter has encountered issues over the years but has been able to overcome them. Most notedly, users complained about the 140-character limit which was in place as Twitter was originally designed as an SMS-based platform. In 2017, the limit was upped to 280 characters as Twitter wanted users to spend more time expressing their thoughts and less time thinking about character limits.

In 2010, Dorsey put his incredible software engineering braining to work once more, alongside Jim McKelvey they developed Square Inc. a platform which accepts debit and credit card payments on a mobile device with strong encryption for improved security. The square-shaped device attaches to mobile phones and tablets via a headphone jack, allowing the user to swipe their card and make a payment to whichever bank account that is desired. The company began with 10 employees in late 2009 and was valued at US$3.2 billion in September 2012.

Throughout Dorsey’s life he has obtained many honours including:

* 2008: He was named to the *MIT Technology Review* as one of the top 35 innovators in the world under the age of 35.
* 2012: *The Wall Street Journal* gave him the "Innovator of the Year Award" for technology.
* 2012: At the 5th Annual Crunchies Awards, hosted by TechCrunch, Dorsey was named Founder of the Year.
* 2013: He was considered by Forbes the world's most eligible bachelor.

Whether you know it or not, Jack Dorsey has more than likely had an impact on your life due to the products he has produced. There are more than 331 million twitter users worldwide, making it the second biggest social media website in the world behind Facebook, with more than 80% of Twitter users being millennials. As you may have noticed, most retail stores now use iPad’s for customer transactions and payments which is in no small part thanks to Dorsey’s Square Inc. which accepts Apple Pay and other contactless payments, used in many self-checkout systems today.

Jack Dorsey’s incredible understanding of software engineering has enabled him to modernise both the technology industry and more importantly the way we interact. In a tech world which is constantly changing, Dorsey has managed to stay one step ahead of his rivals and his incredible entrepreneurship has allowed him to produce two products which are both ingeniously inventive and required in this ever-changing technological landscape, both of which were only made feasible through his software engineering expertise. In essence, his inventive ideas were only made possible through his excellent software engineering skills. Who would doubt Dorsey to remain at the forefront of the technological revolution and even fewer would bet against him producing another billion-dollar enterprise! I felt Charles Whitehead, a business law professor at Cornell Law School described Dorsey perfectly: "Half of Jack Dorsey is worth 100% of anyone else. He appeals to investors, whom he attracts, and employees, whom he retains."

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