For my police blotter website following UMPD’s arrest and activity logs, I originally wanted to make a Twitter bot. The data seemed more appropriate for a weekly or daily email, since the site is primarily for reporters and not the general public, but I wanted to have the experience of working with Twitter.

Twitter did not share the sentiment. I made an email account to connect a new Twitter account to for the bot and registered for a developer account to start working with the Twitter API. I looked into how to use the manage tweets endpoint, but the authorization levels were really confusing. I found a few tutorials, but the one that seemed simpler (using pre-generated access tokens) didn’t work, and the other (pinged my project, requested access then, gave a web link to visit to find a PIN and report back) worked—as in it hit the API and told me I needed Elevated, not Essential, API access. So I applied for that, but it can take up to two weeks for a response, the internet says.

I started looking briefly into making an email bot, especially since I already had an email account set aside for the automated bot, but didn’t get farther than connecting to Gmail’s protocol.

If I got Twitter to work, I would tweet each morning with the newest updates from the previous day, anything that had been updated or newly pushed—so before crafting my master concatenated data set of all activity and arrests, I would grab duplicates (an inner join in a sqlite table) between the two and push the newer set to a dataframe. Then anything in the new data but not the old, determined by another join, would also be saved into a different, separate dataframe.

One tweet would come first, announcing the thread. Then each item would receive its own tweet. The duplicates, or updates, would be tweeted out with update-ish language first, with type of crime, day, time, and location. Then the new activity would follow in the thread, with the same info quoted. Any arrests would be linked to their activity in the same tweet. There would be a lot of switch casing to determine the language used here.

I don’t see there being any input form users, but if there were, commenting “more” might be the same as putting verbose in the command line—all info on an actiivyt or arrest point would be quote tweeted to the more request. That’s managed by the same “manage tweets” endpoint, I think.

While most tweets would be daily updates, if there are no updates, the bot would say so. There may be a weekly stat tweet to start the thread on Mondays, about the previous week, with just totals for each present crime category.