Matt Cooper takes over from Des Cahill at top of #murraytweetindex

- **Followers reached by top 100 up 13% on 2015 to 2.6m**
- **RTE, INM and Irish Times top 3 news outlets with reporters in top 100**
- **Category winners include Conor Pope, David McWilliams and Dearbhail McDonald**
- **Daniel McConnell, Ingrid Miley and Dan O'Brien amongst biggest gainers**
- **Irish Star's Michael O'Toole tops new crime category**

Today FM's Last Word Presenter, Matt Cooper, has taken over from Des Cahill as the most influential Irish journalist on Twitter as measured by the latest #murraytweetindex. Sunday World Sports journalist, Kevin Palmer took 2nd place, with Newstalk's George Hook in 3rd.

Now in its 3rd year of publication, the *#murraytweetindex,* compiled by communications consultancy Murray (@MurrayIRL), ranks journalists across six parameters*, measuring popularity, quality of engagement and level of activity. A composite index was then created to rank overall positions; the top 20 journalists in the overall rankings were:

The wide reach of journalists on Twitter is indicated by data showing that the Top 100 on the index have over 2.6m followers, over six times the combined circulation of daily newspapers in Ireland, and up 13% from 2.3m in 2015. The number of journalists reviewed more than doubled this year to over 700, and the life time total number of tweets these journalists have generated on the platform is over 7m.

In addition to the overall table, the research ranked journalists' influence on Twitter in a range of different categories**. RTE's US correspondent Caitriona Perry topped the news category, pushing last year's winner Simon Carswell from the Irish Times into 2nd place.

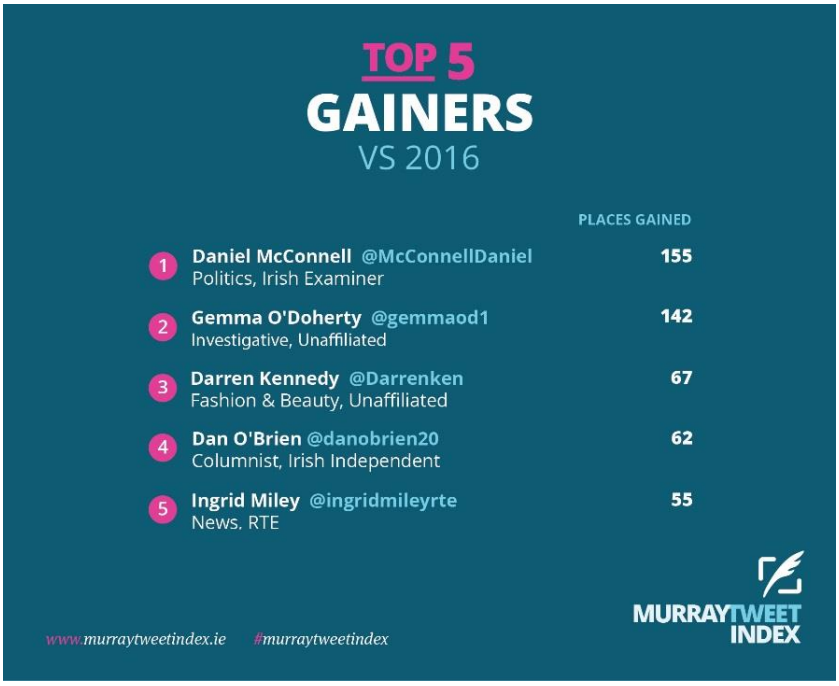
Independent News & Media's Group Business Editor, Dearbhail McDonald, took over as the top business reporter, closely followed by RTE Business Editor David Murphy. Today FM's Gavan Reilly topped the political category for the third year in a row followed by the Irish Times' Harry McGee and Irish Independent's Kevin Doyle.

David McWilliams is the top columnist, Adrian Weckler top for technology, and the Sun's Ken Sweeney took over from TV3's Lisa Cannon as number one in the entertainment category. A new category introduced this year covered crime reporters and was topped by the Irish Daily Star's Mick O'Toole.

The full list of category winners follows:

The top 100 *#murraytweetindex* performers are displayed on an interactive website designed by Murray Creative, a division within Murray focussed on supporting clients' digital and social media needs: www.murraytweetindex.ie

Compared to last year, the biggest gainers were the Irish Examiner's Political Correspondent Daniel McConnell (+155), investigative journalist Gemma O'Doherty (+142) and TV presenter Darren Kennedy (+67). During a year of increasing trade union unrest RTE's industry and employment correspondent was another big gainer (+55), whilst the year of the Brexit vote saw Irish Independent columnist Dan O'Brien (+62) also moving into the top 100.



Analysing the results by outlet showed RTE with 18 journalists in the top 100, Independent News & Media with 16, the Irish Times with 15, Newstalk with 8 and the Sunday Business Post with 7.

Commenting on the #murraytweetindex, Doug Keatinge, Director at Murray, who led the research said:

> *"It's not that Des Cahill has been too busy Dancing with the Stars, but simply that Matt Cooper's profile on Twitter has increased more rapidly in the past 12 months, with a large increase in both his followers and daily level of activity.*
>
> *The #murraytweetindex continues to evolve, and we've added a new crime reporter category this year and doubled the number of journalists analysed. The reach of journalists on Twitter continues to surge with the top 100 journalists listed having a combined 2.6m followers, up*

13% on the previous year, which is an audience six times bigger than total daily circulation of newspapers in Ireland.

Even though as a business Twitter faces growth challenges, it continues to provide an important channel for journalists to engage with readers and alert them to new content and breaking stories."

Pat Walsh, Managing Director of Murray said:

"Professing his love of twitter Donald Trump rather unkindly described it as akin to 'owning your own newspaper--- without the losses.' What our research shows is that today's journalists don't see twitter as 'either or', instead using twitter's immediacy to complement and strengthen personal and platform reach.

"Whether it was Caitriona Perry's US election views, Adrian Weckler's insights on technology or Gavan Reilly's breaking news on Irish politics, their profiles on Twitter helped enhance and amplify their traditional reporting activity"

In addition to the overall results and news category winners, the research looked at how journalists performed in each of the parameters by which they were measured. David McWilliams reclaimed the slot he held in 2014 for having the most followers, with over 195,000 people tracking his feed compared to George Hook's 186,000.

The top-ranking journalists for each parameter are as follows:

The methodology used in the research analysed journalists across 6 parameters and then ranked them based on a weighted average of the results. The approach sought to measure each Twitter users' performance across three main areas:

1. Absolute popularity (as measured by number of followers)
2. Quality of engagement (as measured by the level of retweeting and favouriting)
3. Activity level (as measured by tweets per day)

ENDS

For further information please contact:

@dougkeatinge, +353-1-4980379/ +353-86-0374163; dkeatinge@murrayconsultants.ie
@aimeeabeale, +353-1-4980330/ +353-86-1514024; abeale@murrayconsultants.ie

Top 5 by category***

Methodology

*The study was based on the analysis of the Twitter handles of over 700 journalists carried out in November and December 2016. Using the analysis tool Twitonomy, we gathered the following data for each of the journalists:

1. Total Number of Followers 30%
2. Total Number of Retweets 25%
3. % Retweeted 15%
4. Total Number of Favourites 15%

5. % of Favourited 5%
6. Tweets per day 10%

The data was based on the previous 3,200 tweets that the user had made (or if the user had yet to make 3,200 tweets then all their tweets to date). To calculate the overall rankings we attached a weighting to the users' ranking in each of the individual parameters. The percentages shown above indicate the weighting each parameter was given in the overall score. The factors that influence the overall ranking are:

- A person's absolute popularity on Twitter (as measured by number of followers)
- The quality of engagement the user has with followers (as measured by the absolute number of retweets and favourites, and the percentage of these in the tweets analysed)
- The level of activity on Twitter (as measured by Tweets per day)

**Journalists were restricted to being considered in only one specialist category even if they might have been ranked in more than one. For example George Hook could have been considered in the sports category, but was restricted to what we viewed as his primary role as broadcast presenter.

*** Joint 5th places were awarded where there was a difference of less than 5 in the overall ranking score between two journalists

For comments or suggestions on the methodology, or to suggest a name that was not included and should have been, please email us at tweetindex@murraygroup.ie