**Biography of Jack Dorsey**

*By Nika Jashi*

Jack Dorsey is an American tech entrepreneur and is the co-founder and acting CEO of Twitter, which is said to be the catalyst of the participatory internet. Twitter is used as a key communication platform by a wide spectrum of users, ranging from young teenagers to the likes of powerful political figures.

Early Life

Dorsey was born on November 19, 1976 in St.Loius Missouri. Described as a quiet child, he became interested in computers at an early age and taught himself to code while still in high school.

His father worked for a corporation that manufactured mass spectrometers and while his mother was a homemaker. Dorsey had a fascination for tracking people and objects in real time. He was interested in solving the logistical problems that faced taxi drivers, delivery vans and other fleets of vehicles that needed to be in constant communication with each other. At 15 he wrote open-source dispatch software which is still used by taxi companies today. Dorsey also occasionally worked as a fashion model in his younger yours.

After graduating from Bishop DuBourg High School, Dorsey began his studies at the University of Missouri-Rolla. He transferred to New York University in 1997 but dropped out in 1999. It was during this period that his idea for Twitter was born. Dorsey worked on his first company in 2000 which was aimed at expediting tasks for dispatch couriers, taxis and even emergency service vehicles. He also had another idea at this time; “One night in July of that year I had an idea to make a more "live" LiveJournal. Real-time, up-to-date, from the road.” This idea of a live communication platform would trickle into his other venues of interest but would not fully manifest into Twitter until he started working at Odeo.

Career

While studying at NYU Dorsey Joined Dispatch Management Services Corp. It is claimed that he hacked the security system of the firm’s website and emailed the company director with recommendations on how to patch the exposure. Despite the legal consequences, Jack was hired at the company. Here he could explore his passion for real time management of objects in motion. It was at this time that he began to delve into the idea of SMS messaging and thought if there was a possibility that it could be a public platform for friends to view their activity in real-time.

Dorsey worked at the dispatch management company for a few years and played a pivotal role in the promotion of a new project, dNet.com. Unfortunately, after the dot-com bubble, the project failed, and he was left unemployed. He would go on to freelance for the next five years and even work as a massage therapist.

Dorsey would join a startup called Odeo, headed by Evan Williams. Here Dosey would meet his fellow Twitter co-founders. It was originally set to be a podcasting service, however, with Apples launch of iTunes it was decided that they should take a different direction. Dorsey and two other colleagues presented the idea to the rest of the company. It was a system where a user could send a text to another and it would be broadcasted out to all their friends: Twttr. By March of 2006, Odeo had a working Twitter prototype. In July, TechCrunch covered Twttr for the first time. Odeo employees were racking up monthly SMS bills totaling hundreds of dollars. In August, a small earthquake shook San Francisco and word quickly spread through Twitter; the website had more than a thousand users by this time. Dorsey became CEO of Twitter inc. which was a spin-off of Obvious corporation, founded by Evan Willaims, Biz Stone and Noah Glass. He was shortly relieved of his CEO position due to his habit of leaving work early.

The original name for the site was twttr, inspired by flickr, a picture sharing platform, and SMS short codes. In addition, twitter.com was in use, the crew then bought the domain for seven thousand dollars and subsequently changed the name of the service. The first tweet was published by Dorset at 9.50 p.m PST. Twitter was coded using the Ruby language by Dorsey and his colleagues. In the beginning tweets were stored in MySQL databases that were split based on posting time. After a while this led problems when or reading or writing to these databases.

From 2007-2008, Starling was used, a Ruby persistent queue server. More recently it has been replaced by software written in Scala. The switch resulted in an increase in request per second by 5000% (from 200-300 per second to 10,000-20,000 per second). The constant growth and development of the platform has also involved a change from monolithic development of a single app to an architecture where different services are built independently and joined through remote procedure calls. By 2010 twitter had grown from just a few thousand users to 100 million new members.

With the success of twitter Dorsey became more interested in other ventures. He founded Square, with Jim McKelvey, a platform to accept debit and credit card payments on mobile devices. The service was intended to reduce merchant costs for small and new businesses and provide an easy set up process for receiving payments. The service was launched in May 2010. The company grew from only ten employees 2009 to over one hundred by 2011.

Impact

Twitter plays a vital role in contemporary politics. More recently, the platform was utilized by parties in the 2020 US election to provide information and update to supporters.

In the realm of science Philip James, senior lecturer at Newcastle University, explains that “Twitter data opens up new horizons for scientists, both as a rich data source in its own right but also a way of gathering information from the public.”

Additionally, Twitter created two-way communication between firms and their customers. It is easier for the customers to complain to a company, doing so publicly. It is also relatively easy for companies to reply and resolve a problem reducing customer support costs significantly.

Dorsey’s early idea of a real time messaging app with close friends has become perhaps one of the most influential social media platforms of the century, with over 300 million active users.

Bibliography:

1. “Jack Dorsey.” *Forbes*, Forbes Magazine, www.forbes.com/profile/jack-dorsey/?sh=506bdfd52372.
2. Wpengine. *Eight Famous Software Engineers*. 26 Aug. 2019, online.husson.edu/famous-software-engineers/.
3. Square. *About Square*. squareup.com/about.
4. BusinessWeek (March 26, 2007). "Tech's Next Gen: The Best and Brightest".  *BusinessWeek*. The McGraw-Hill Companies.
5. AstrumPeople. *Jack Dorsey Biography: Success Story of Twitter Co-Founder*. astrumpeople.com/jack-dorsey-biography-success-story-of-twitter-co-founder/.
6. Sharon Coen Senior Lecturer in Media Psychology, et al. *Six Ways Twitter Has Changed the World*. 15 May 2019, theconversation.com/six-ways-twitter-has-changed-the-world-56234.
7. *Buy a Vowel? How Twttr Became Twitter*, money.cnn.com/galleries/2010/technology/1011/gallery.Startup\_Domain\_Names/.
8. Dorsey, Jack. *Twttr Sketch*. 5 July 2006, [www.flickr.com/photos/jackdorsey/182613360/in/photostream/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/jackdorsey/182613360/in/photostream/).
9. *Profile Twitter Founders: Jack Dorsey, Biz Stone and Evan Williams*. 29 Jan. 2009, www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/twitter/4388880/Profile-Twitter-founders-Jack-Dorsey-Biz-Stone-and-Evan-Williams.html.