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## WHY TWITTER IS A BIG DEAL

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[Om Malik](#) is the most recent of many people to ask why Twitter is such a big deal.

The reason is that it's a new messaging protocol, where you don't specify the recipients. New protocols are rare. Or more precisely, new protocols that take off are. There are only a handful of commonly used ones: TCP/IP (the Internet), SMTP (email), HTTP (the web), and so on. So any new protocol is a big deal. But Twitter is a protocol owned by a private company. That's even rarer.

Curiously, the fact that the founders of Twitter have been slow to monetize it may in the long run prove to be an advantage. Because they haven't tried to control it too much, Twitter feels to everyone like previous protocols. One forgets it's owned by a private company. That must have made it easier for Twitter to spread.

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