



Software Engineering  
Biography of a Software Engineer:  
Jack Dorsey

Alex Smirnov  
15322057

Jack Dorsey is very well known as the man that is responsible for bringing us the social networking site Twitter. As early as his college years, Dorsey started web developing, eventually founding the site he is known for in 2006. He has served as CEO, chairman of the board and executive chairman of Twitter. He has received numerous prizes for his innovation, including being named to the MIT Technology Review TR35, making him the top 35 innovators in the world under the age of 35.

Born in St. Louis, Missouri, on November 19<sup>th</sup> 1976 to Marcia Smith and Tim Dorsey. At an early age, Dorsey was interested in communications and computers and began to program while still in high school. He was especially fascinated with dispatch routing, the technological challenge of coordinating delivery vans, taxi drivers and other fleets of vehicles that require constant real time communication. Still in school, Dorsey wrote an open source dispatch software that is still used by some taxicab companies to this day.

Dorsey began his college life by attending the Missouri University of Science and Technology before transferring to New York University. In the true computer science entrepreneurial spirit, he dropped out of college like many great software engineers before him and moved to Oakland, California to start a company offering his dispatch software. With his love of dispatch software, it was shortly after this time he had the idea for a website that would combine the wide reach of dispatch software with the simplicity of instant messaging. Dorsey approached the currently-defunct Silicon Valley Company Odeo, who were at this time interested in text messaging. Dorsey had a pitch along the lines of: "What if you could share your status with all your friends with ease, so that they know what you are up to?" It is clear to see that his youth involvement in dispatch routing was a key factor in the idea and design of the future tech giant Twitter. Out of this meeting, Dorsey, Stone and Odeo co-founder Evan Williams started the company Obvious, which would later become Twitter.

Within two weeks, Dorsey built a simplistic site that would enable users to instantly post messages of 140 characters or less, now famously called tweets. At this time Dorsey was CEO of the company and during his time at the position he oversaw the start-up through 2 rounds of funding by venture capitalists. Twitter was initially looked down upon as a tool for the egotistical self-centred, who used it to broadcast their insignificant minutiae to the world. However, when Twitter reached a wider audience, with the likes of celebrities and CEOs beginning to tweet, Twitter spawned and was at the head of the “microblogging” movement. In the 2008 U.S Presidential election, candidates Barack Obama and John McCain used the website as a method of updating their supporters while running their respected campaigns. The world now was aware of the potential a simple website like Twitter has.

Twitter made another significant leap in status after the 2009 Iranian presidential election, where opposition supporters of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad took to Twitter to keep up with live updates. This was the only way they were able to communicate as the government had blocked messaging and satellite feeds of foreign news coverage. Dorsey himself received an email from a US State Department official asking if he could delay a scheduled maintenance to the site so the protesters could carry on tweeting.

As Twitter began to grow, Dorsey believed that the improvement of uptime is its top priority, even over creating revenue that, at the time, Twitter had no way of earning. He believed that the commercial use of Twitter and its API are the two things that will lead to revenue. He describes his guiding principles, which are shared by the company, as craftsmanship, constraint and simplicity. Over the years theres has been many updates to the site, including being able to add pictures and videos along with your tweet, various emojis, linking websites and the recent

280 word cap on the tweet. Even to this day Twitter is finding new and exciting ways to connect people together.

Today Twitter is one of the big social media platforms in the world, alongside Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Whatsapp etc. Taking a relatively simple idea which had its roots in previous software and perfecting this idea, Jack Dorsey created a global phenomenon that averages at 330 million monthly users as of 2017. The genius of the man can be summed up with the simple quote “Make every detail perfect, and limit the number of details to perfect.” meaning no matter how simple a software is, if it is perfect it will be affective.