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Technology

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Half of Twitter tweets not in English, study finds

February 24, 2010 | 11:31 am

Twitter might be a U.S.-based service, but thanks to the company's efforts at expanding its footprint internationally, approximately 50% of all tweets are not in English, Web research firm SemioCast has revealed.

According to SemioCast, which examined 2.8 million tweets over two days in February, 50% of all messages sent on Twitter are in English.



Japanese, Portuguese, Malay, and Spanish follow English with 14%, 9%, 6%, and 4% of tweet share, respectively. Several other languages, including Arabic and Italian, make up the remaining 17% of non-English tweets.

SemioCast found that non-native English speakers tend to tweet in English, which helped the language dominate the social network. But the company was quick to point out that when it conducted a similar study in the first half of 2009, two-thirds of all tweets were in English, indicating Twitter is attracting an international user base.

Doing so hasn't come easily. Over the last few months, Twitter has inked several partnerships with mobile carriers around the world, allowing those companies' customers to text message tweets in their native languages.

The strong uptick in Malay speakers, for example, came after Twitter's announcement last year that it partnered with AXIS and 3, two mobile carriers in that country, to allow Malay speakers to send tweets via text messages. Earlier this week, Twitter announced that Haitians can now tweet for free through mobile carrier Digicel.

--Don Reisinger

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