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# Trump might find it harder to use Twitter once he's president

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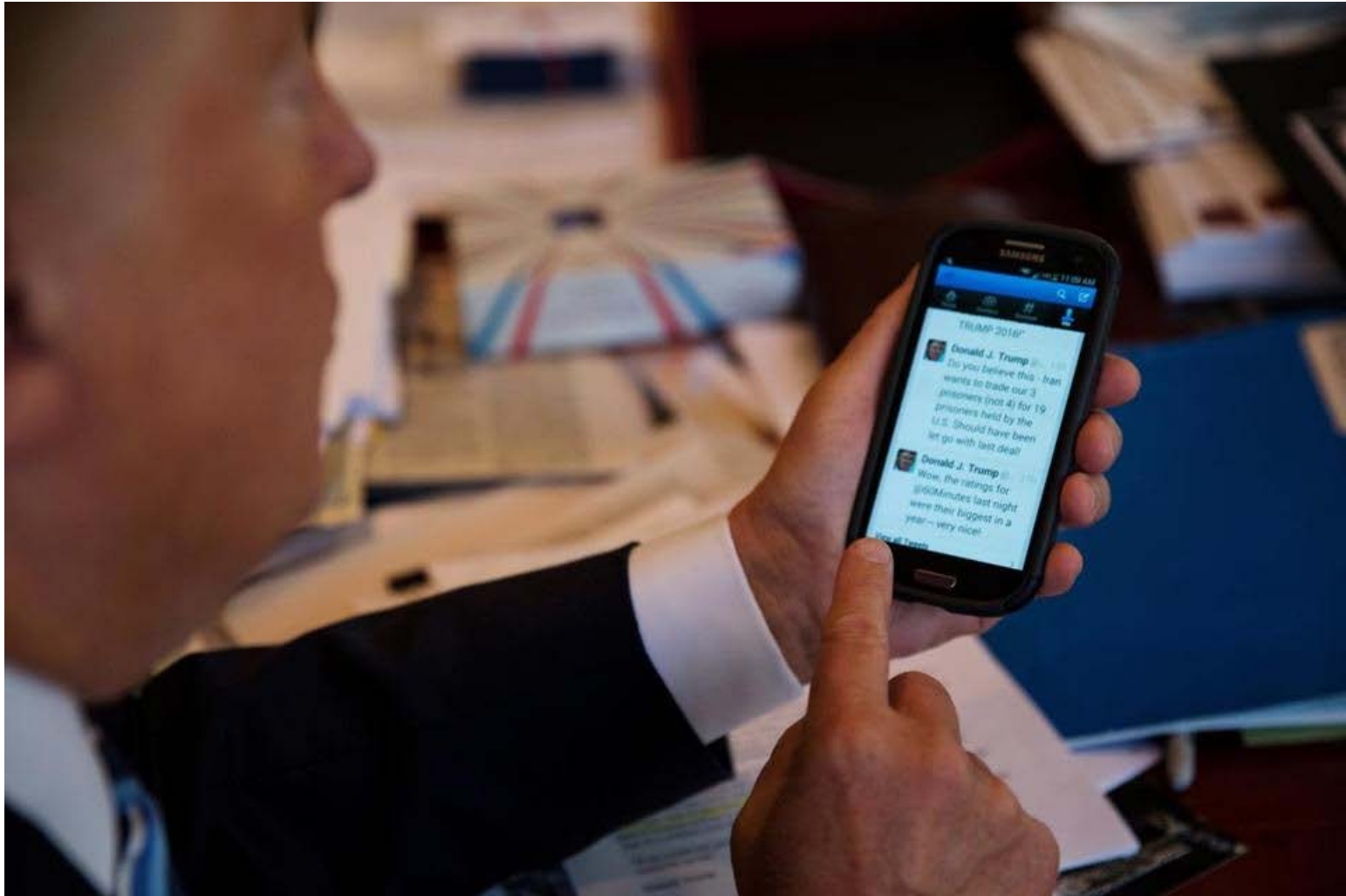
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JOSH HANER/THE NEW YORK TIMES/FILE

**Donald Trump demonstrated the Twitter app on Samsung phone in his New York office in 2015.**

**By Matt Rocheleau**

GLOBE STAFF NOVEMBER 14, 2016

If President Barack Obama's mobile communication privileges are any indication, Donald Trump,

once he takes over as the world's most powerful leader, may no longer be able to use Twitter via cellphone as easily as he can now.

When Obama's presidency began in 2009, some of his advisers, White House lawyers, and Secret Service officials urged him to go without a cellphone, for security reasons and so that his personal communications wouldn't be the target of public records requests or subpoenas, [the New York Times reported then](#).

However, [Obama pushed back, and won — kind of](#). He reached a compromise in which he was allowed to continue using a BlackBerry, the brand of device he'd grown obsessed with, the Times reported. But he had to use a [specially-made device](#) that came with beefed-up security [courtesy of the National Security Agency](#). There were also severe restrictions on how the device could be used.

Earlier this year, Obama revealed in a television interview that he'd upgraded to a new smartphone. But again, the device's capabilities were severely limited, for security purposes.



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“I was this cool high-tech guy when I got there, right. And I was the first president to have a BlackBerry,” Obama said during an [appearance on The Tonight Show with Jimmy Fallon in June](#). “Finally, this year, they said ‘Good news, Mr. President, we’re going to give you a smartphone instead of a BlackBerry.’”

“I get the thing and they’re all, like, ‘Well, Mr. President for security reasons — this is a great phone, state-of-the-art — but it doesn’t take pictures, you can’t text, the phone doesn’t work, you know, you

can't play music on it," Obama added. "So basically it's like, does your 3-year-old have one of those play phones?"

But were Obama's no-frills phones capable of tweeting?

It's not entirely clear.

In May 2015, when Obama [sent out the inaugural tweet](#) from the [@POTUS](#) handle, he used a different cellphone than the one he was regularly using at the time, [BuzzFeed reported](#) then. But it was unclear why he used a different phone, and White House officials declined to say specifically what features Obama's mobile phone was equipped with, including whether it was capable of sending tweets.



At least some tweets from the [@POTUS](#) handle recently have come from mobile devices, including cellphones and tablets. Perhaps those are Obama's devices, perhaps they belong to his aides, or are shared among staffers in the office. It's not clear.

Tweets from Trump's handle [@realDonaldTrump](#) have also come from phones. Trump has [tweeted](#) that he uses smartphones and [he told CNN in April](#) that his tweets are his own words, noting that sometimes he actually types the tweets himself and other times he has staffers do it.

In an interview with [the New York Times last fall](#), Trump demonstrated his mobile tweeting skills. However, a [report by Bloomberg](#) in June said that he doesn't carry a mobile phone with him.

It's possible that Trump will curtail his Twitter use, anyway. He told "60 Minutes" in an interview that aired Sunday on CBS, "I'm going to be very restrained, if I use it at all, I'm going to be very restrained." At the same time, he hailed Twitter as a "modern form of communication," and said it was "tremendous" and gave him a "method of fighting back" against what he feels is negative or inaccurate coverage in the media.


Trump will be inaugurated Jan. 20, and when that happens existing social media accounts now run by Obama and his staff, will be made available to Trump and his team. The [@POTUS](#) Twitter handle,

for example, will retain its more than 11 million followers but start with no tweets on the timeline, [White House officials said recently](#). Tweets from the Obama administration will be archived on a new handle, [@POTUS44](#).

Questions about the digital communication restrictions that presidents face, including ones about Obama and Trump, were referred by a Secret Service spokesman to the White House. A White House spokesman referred questions to Trump's team, as did a spokeswoman for Twitter. Officials from Trump's team, as well as from the NSA, did not respond.

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