

## Matt Cooper tops #murraytweetindex for second year

- **Leading 100 Irish journalists on Twitter attract 3m followers**
- **Category winners include Dearbhail McDonald, Darren McCaffrey, and Fergal Bowers**
- **David McWilliams retains most followers and top columnist slot**
- **Fake followers and the role of influencers are amongst issues of controversy**

Today FM's Last Word Presenter, Matt Cooper, has retained his position as the most influential Irish journalist on Twitter according to the latest *#murraytweetindex*. TV3 political correspondent Gavan Reilly took second place, with Sunday World sports journalist Kevin Palmer in 3<sup>rd</sup>.

In the various category rankings, Sky News' Ireland correspondent Darren McCaffrey topped the news category. Independent News & Media's Group Business Editor Dearbhail McDonald stayed top in business, whilst Gavan Reilly topped the political category for the fourth consecutive year, followed by the Sunday Business Post's political correspondent Hugh O'Connell and RTE political correspondent Martina Fitzgerald.

In its 4<sup>th</sup> year of publication, the *#murraytweetindex*, compiled by communications consultancy Murray (@MurrayIRL), ranked over 720 journalists across six parameters\*, measuring popularity, quality of engagement and level of activity. A composite index was then created to rank overall positions; the top 20 journalists in the overall rankings were:

**TOP 20**  
**MOST INFLUENTIAL**  
JOURNALISTS ON TWITTER

1. @cooper_m Matt Cooper	11. @oconnellhugh Hugh O'Connell
2. @gavreilly Gavan Reilly	12. @DMcCaffreySKY Darren McCaffrey
3. @RealKevinPalmer Kevin Palmer	13. @sportsdes Des Cahill
4. @patkennynt Pat Kenny	14. @conor_pope Conor Pope
5. @boucherhayes Philip Boucher Hayes	15. @martinafitzg Martina Fitzgerald
6. @caitrioperry Caitríona Perry	16. @jenoconnell Jennifer O'Connell
7. @roisingle Róisín Ingle	17. @colettebrowne Colette Browne
8. @MrKeithMahon Keith Mahon	18. @harrymgee Harry McGee
9. @davidmcw David McWilliams	19. @amyohconnor Amy O'Connor
10. @unamullally Una Mullally	20. @franksuntimes Frank Fitzgibbon

[www.murraytweetindex.ie](http://www.murraytweetindex.ie) #murraytweetindex

**MURRAYTWEET INDEX**

The wide reach of Irish journalists using Twitter has continued to increase, with the Top 100 on the index having almost 3m followers combined, a 16% increase in the past year. The life time total number of tweets these journalists have generated on the platform is over 2.7m, and there were 29 new entrants in this year's Top 100.

In other major categories, David McWilliams retained the top columnist slot, Adrian Weckler stayed top for technology, and the Sun's Ken Sweeney retained his number one position in the entertainment category as did Irish Daily Star's Mick O'Toole in crime.

The full list of category winners follows:

## MOST INFLUENTIAL JOURNALISTS BY CATEGORY

### CATEGORY

NEWS

BUSINESS

SPORT

POLITICS

BROADCAST PRESENTER

CONSUMER/PERSONAL FINANCE

AGRICULTURE/FARMING

TECHNOLOGY

ENTERTAINMENT

COLUMNIST

HEALTH

FOOD & DRINK

PROPERTY

FASHION

EDITORIAL

BEAUTY

CRIME

### JOURNALIST

Darren McCaffrey @dmccaffreysky

Dearbhail McDonald @DearbhailDibs

Kevin Palmer @RealKevinPalmer

Gavin Reilly @gavreilly

Matt Cooper @cooper\_m

Conor Pope @conor\_pope

Suzanne Campbell @campbellsuz

Adrian Weckler @adrianweckler

Ken Sweeney @KenSweeney

David McWilliams @davidmcw

Fergal Bowers @fergalbowers

Keith Mahon @MrKeithMahon

Bernice Harrison @BerniceHarrison

Brendan Courtney @brendancourtney

Frank Fitzgibbon @franksuntimes

Laura Bermingham @berminghamlaura

Michael O'Toole @mickthehack

Analysing the results by outlet showed The Irish Times, at 18, with the most journalists in the top 100, followed by RTE with 15, Independent News & Media with 14 (17 if you include the Irish Daily Star and Sunday World), the Sunday Business Post with 9, Newstalk with 5, the Sunday Times/The Times with 4 and the Irish Examiner and TV3 with 3.



Compared to last year, the biggest gainer was Carl Kinsella from Joe.ie, up 198 positions to 77<sup>th</sup> place, one of the ten journalists reporting for online only publications who are in the top 100. Other gainers included sports journalist Miguel Delaney (up 136 places to 27<sup>th</sup>), Kildare FM presenter Shane Beatty (up 126 places to 80<sup>th</sup>) and Irish Times columnist Jennifer O’Connell (up 115 places to 16<sup>th</sup>).

# TOP 5 GAINERS VS 2016

		PLACES GAINED
1	<b>Carl Kinsella</b> @TVsCarlKinsella News, Joe.ie	198
2	<b>Miguel Delaney</b> @MiguelDelaney Sport	136
3	<b>Shane Beatty</b> @ShaneBeattyKFM Broadcast, KFM	126
4	<b>Jennifer O'Connell</b> @jenoconnell Columnist, Irish Times	115
5	<b>Gavin Sheridan</b> @gavinsblog News	102

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Twitter's role as a news source continues to be the subject of controversy, with major issues in the last 12-18 months including:

- The New York Times exposing the practice of some journalists boosting their Twitter profile through paying for extra followers on Twitter. So-called "juicing" of social media profiles has resulted in several US media organisations issuing guidelines to ensure journalists aren't distorting their prominence by buying fake followers\*\*  
<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/01/27/technology/social-media-bots.html>
- Recent research published by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) showing that fake news is disseminated more quickly, and ultimately reaches more people, than verified true news stories <http://science.sciencemag.org/content/359/6380/1146>
- Whilst Twitter is widely used by media organisations as a way of building their brands and driving online traffic, some media outlets are giving more formal guidance on what their reporters can tweet about. In October 2017 the New York Times addressed how their journalists use Twitter by cautioning them against expressing opinions or party-political views: "our journalists should be especially mindful of appearing to take sides on issues that The Times is seeking to cover objectively" <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/13/reader-center/social-media-guidelines.html>

**Commenting on the #murraytweetindex, Doug Keatinge, Director at Murray, who led the research said:**

*“It’s no surprise to see Matt Cooper taking the top spot again this year, but the 29 new entrants in the top 100 list are a healthy sign of the fresh blood in the social media activity of Irish journalists. The reach of Irish journalists on Twitter continues to surge with the top 100 journalists listed having a combined 3m followers, up 16% on last year.*

*“2017 was a year which saw some major changes in the world of both journalism and Twitter, with growing criticism of the grey area of paid social media influencers now facing closer scrutiny.*

*“Trust has also been a cause for concern in terms of followers on Twitter, with increasing scrutiny of the proliferation of fake accounts and bots which may see some users overstating their real presence. More recently we have also seen research issued by MIT with the worrying finding that ‘fake news’ travels further and faster than the truth does on Twitter.”*

**Pat Walsh, Managing Director of Murray said:**

*“It is revealing that at a time of fake news and declining trust in social media, Twitter is being turned to by an increasing number of mainstream journalists to signpost their news, views and analysis on more trusted and expansive platforms.*

*“Coming in the top 100 of the #murraytweetindex isn’t the measure of a journalist but it is a practical measure of relative influence amongst users of this noisy, citizen-journalist platform. That is important in our view in diverting eyeballs to more reflective, professional and standards-driven journalism.*

*“Given influence brings responsibility, it is interesting to note the New York Times’ decision this year to caution staff against expressing opinions or party-political views. One wonders if other media houses will exert more control over how their staff use social media, and whether that will be seen as sensible or censorship.”*

In addition to the overall results and news category winners, the research looked at how journalists performed in each of the parameters by which they were measured. David McWilliams retained the position of having the most followers on Twitter, adding over 35,000 since last year. Sports journalist Miguel Delaney remains the most prolific Tweeter with an average of 59 tweets per day, closely followed in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> position by Ewan McKenna (52 tweets per day) and Newstalk presenter Dr Ciara Kelly (49 tweets per day).

The top-ranking journalists for each parameter are as follows:

# WINNERS OF THE 6 PARAMETERS MEASURED

## MOST FOLLOWERS

David McWilliams  
[@davidmcw](#)  
Columnist

233,604

## MOST TWEETS PER DAY

Miguel Delaney  
[@MiguelDelaney](#)  
Sport

59.26

## MOST RETWEETS

Matt Cooper  
[@cooper\\_m](#)  
Broadcast, Today FM

1,601

## MOST FAVOURITES

Matt Cooper  
[@cooper\\_m](#)  
Broadcast, Today FM

2,761

## HIGHEST % RETWEETS

Darren McCaffrey  
[@DMcCaffreySKY](#)  
Broadcast, Sky

78.99%

## HIGHEST % FAVOURITES

Gerry Thornley  
[@gerrythornley](#)  
Sport, Irish Times

93.91%

[www.murraytweetindex.ie](http://www.murraytweetindex.ie) [#murraytweetindex](https://twitter.com/murraytweetindex)



The top 100 [#murraytweetindex](#) performers are displayed on an interactive website designed by Murray Creative, a division within Murray focussed on supporting clients' digital and social media needs: [www.murraytweetindex.ie](http://www.murraytweetindex.ie)

### **ENDS**

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## **Methodology**

\*The study was based on the analysis of the Twitter handles of over 720 journalists carried out in November and December 2017. Using the analysis tool Twitonomy, we gathered the following data for each of the journalists:

1. Total Number of Followers	30%
2. Total Number of Retweets	25%
3. % Retweeted	15%
4. Total Number of Favourites	15%
5. % of Favourited	5%
6. Tweets per day	10%

The data was based on the previous 3,200 tweets that the user had made (or if the user had yet to make 3,200 tweets then all their tweets to date). To calculate the overall rankings we attached a weighting to the users' ranking in each of the individual parameters. The percentages shown above indicate the weighting each parameter was given in the overall score. The factors that influence the overall ranking are:

- A person's absolute popularity on Twitter (as measured by number of followers)
- The quality of engagement the user has with followers (as measured by the absolute number of retweets and favourites, and the percentage of these in the tweets analysed)
- The level of activity on Twitter (as measured by Tweets per day)

\*\*The index has taken every journalists' Twitter followers at face value as recorded by Twitonomy. We have not come across a reliable method to ascertain with certainty if someone has acquired fake followers and therefore do not believe we can make that judgement call.

**For comments or suggestions on the methodology, or to suggest a name that was not included and should have been, please email us at [tweetindex@murraygroup.ie](mailto:tweetindex@murraygroup.ie)**