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TUSCALOOSA— Denny Chimes rang its bells 11 times on a sunny Thursday on Nov. 6. Suddenly, the peacefulness on the campus of the University of Alabama was disrupted by blaring alarms. The university emergency notification stated that there were reports of an armed individual at the Phi Delta Theta fraternity house. Although students were on lock-down, most with a smart phone knew the gunman was the husband of the house cook before the university or news stations released the gunman's identity. Students stayed up-to-date of the situation because of Twitter.

Since Twitter's release in 2006, sharing information from one person to another has revolutionized. People can share information to a vast amount of people by simply clicking on the "tweet" button. With Twitter being accessible to everyone that has an Internet connection, news can be shared all around the world instantly. People can now get minute-by-minute news instead of having to wait for the evening news or the weekly newspaper.

The Capstone Agency, a student-run public relations firm, is familiar with the social media platform. Sam Nathews, director of media relations for Capstone Agency, believes that Twitter's instantaneousness has changed society and how people communicate.

"It used to be that when something happened to you or you had a thought, you had to wait until you got home or whenever you ran into your friends to share that with them," Nathews said. "Now, Twitter has made it where you can share it instantly to everyone who is connected to you."

Spreading news has become easier with the use of Twitter. Because of Twitter, family members of students attending the University of Alabama knew what was happening in Tuscaloosa when the tornadoes swept across the city in April of 2011. Tuscaloosa News tweeted about the situation in the city and won a Pulitzer Prize for effectively using Twitter.

Teri Henley, a public relations professor at the University of Alabama, stated that Twitter was a great place for to see what people are talking about. Henley credited Twitter's success to its 140-character limit.

“One of the things that I like about Twitter is that it forces you to be concise,” Henley said. “Some people tend to ramble on and on, but Twitter forces you to make the message quickly.”

Jennifer Greer, department chair of the journalism department at the University of Alabama, believed that Twitter was a good way to get news, but does have its flaws.

“One of the issues is that we can pick and choose what we know about the world, but that means we could never get anything about other topics,” Greer said. “We are losing that broad overview of the world around us.”

Greer discussed that people used to get their news from the same source, but because of Twitter and other online platforms, people narrowly define what they are interested in. In fact, Twitter handlers might have issues getting credible news sources with the people they follow.

“If you’re following people like Kim Kardashian, it’s just not going to work,” Greer said. “You have to go to branded news sites to get good news.”

Non-credible sources are the top accounts on Twitter. The most followed Twitter account is Lady Gaga with 31,858,771 followers while CNN Breaking News, the most followed news

account, only has 9,522,982 followers. In Greer's research, she found that the heavy following of non-credible Twitter accounts are causing people to receive news updates that are not credible.

In July of 2012, death of famous comedian Eddie Murphy was trending on Twitter. It was a hoax along with other celebrity deaths that trended on Twitter. During the Phi Delta Sigma incident, students received a few misleading tweets.

"I saw a few posts about a man on the roof shooting bullets in the air," said Cadence Jolly, a freshman at the University of Alabama. "But I finally found out the truth when the Crimson White officially tweeted the police report."

Teri Henley acknowledged the issues of people posting ideas on to Twitter that are false or done without thought. Henley said that Twitter has made it easier for people to say something stupid without thinking due to the lack of someone or something monitoring the tweets.

"Some people might say something brilliant," Henley said. "But typically it is something stupid."

Although Twitter has several clouds of negativity surrounding it, Twitter has allowed society to enter a new phase of telling the news. Nathews, Greer and Henley all admitted that Twitter has made a huge impact and revolutionized the way people communicate.

"Twitter is the total freedom of speech in a way that our founding fathers can never imagine," Henley said. "They used to stand on a corner and scream but now people can just sit and tap."