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worker thinks about the latest CNN article, smoke might come out my ears. Stop the madness and shut down, I thought. That is until I did a little more research. This Twitter thing may be time-consuming. It may be in your face 24-7. It may be, along with everything online, changing the way we process information. But, it could also be good for business.

As I was looking for information on Twitter, I found article after article, in magazines from *Wired* to *Business Week*, about how Twitter can help your business. Companies such as JetBlue, Dell and H&R Block have employees dedicated to watching “tweets” for their company’s name, then problem-solving or answering questions when necessary. For example, a person having trouble with their cable can tweet about it, and more than likely a Comcast representative will see that message and respond with a solution—in as little as five minutes. As long as you’re not trying to sell something, but are genuine in your desire to help and build relationships with your customers, being on Twitter can be a huge advantage. On his Web site, our Podium (p. 32) guest columnist, Chris Brogan, lists 50 ways to use Twitter for business, such as sharing the human side of your company, using it for an opinion poll, building a community with your customers and studying your critics.

*Pioneer Press* tech reporter Julio Ojeda-Zapata also took a hard look at Twitter this past summer and wrote *Twitter Means Business: How Microblogging Can Help or Hurt Your Company*. In his book, Ojeda-Zapata studies how companies such as Zappos and Whole Foods, as well as PR agencies, use Twitter to their advantage. In a podcast interview, Ojeda-Zapata also described how the *Pioneer Press* used Twitter throughout the Republican National Convention, following the tweets of protestors and communicating instantly the happenings of the convention back to the newspaper’s home page. While, in this case, Twitter was used from a media standpoint, its possibilities during any event seem endless. Ojeda-Zapata (handle: @jojeda) boasts 1,000 Twitter followers himself, and he uses these relationships to generate story ideas, ask advice and opinions, and tap into wisdom that he wouldn’t have such immediate access to any other way.

More than 4 million people and companies currently tweet from computers or cell phones, and the messages seem to be about much more than what they’re eating for dinner. If blogs and current affairs weren’t enough to keep up with, now I’m convinced our magazine needs a Twitter account. We could tweet for sources for articles, tweet from the events we attend and tweet about industry news that we forget to put on our blog. What a great idea! I better write it down before I forget. ■■

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# Tweet, Tweet

I’VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT MY ATTENTION SPAN LATELY.

I seem to have a hard time focusing. Plus, I used to remember everything. Ask anyone I know and they’ll say I have the best memory: I remember exact dates from years ago, conversations word-for-word, schedules for not only myself but everyone around me—and not on paper, but in my head. Well, things have changed. In the past several months, I’ve forgotten promises I’ve made, friends’ birthdays and phone calls I need to return. As someone who’s always been proud of her memory, this has been frustrating. I blame our current culture of constant interruptions and multitasking.

Not only are our brains already packed with information, we’re inundated with new pieces every few minutes. Our e-mail bongs with new messages, our phone rings off the hook, our co-workers pop over the cube wall with questions. In fact, according to a 2005 study by the University of California, Irvine, titled “No Task Left Behind? Examining the Nature of Fragmented Work,” workers are interrupted every 11 minutes, and in some cases perform up to two other tasks before resuming the interrupted activity. (Case in point: Due to impediments of my own, it took me all morning to write that sentence.) And that’s just the beginning. We follow RSS feeds to keep up with breaking news. E-mail isn’t fast enough, so we instant message each other. And now, this thing called Twitter is all the rage.

For those of you who don’t know what it is—or if you’re like me and just pretend it doesn’t exist for your own sanity—Twitter is a “microblogging” service that allows users to send and read 140-character, text-based updates to and from other friends, colleagues or strangers. As I was forming my thoughts for this column, I was prepared to bash Twitter. Who needs this extra distraction? If I start following what my friends are eating for lunch, what my favorite bloggers have to say about their dogs, and what my co-