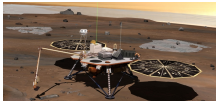


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By: Dan Talpalariu, Science Editor



NASA's Phoenix  
Twitter initiative was a  
big success  
Universe Today

## [Phoenix's Twitter Messages](#)

*NASA's Twitter initiative was highly successful*

New communication alternatives should be explored by the technology and scientific colossi, as recently demonstrated by NASA's collaboration with the Twitter service that allowed subscribers to receive short memos on the Phoenix Mars Lander's state. This is also an outstanding example of openness to the public and a great idea of sharing information very fast and in a way that people would understand it.

NASA, through the person of Veronica McGregor, the Jet Propulsion Laboratory News Services manager, has succeeded in making the Phoenix Lander a popular character for some 40,000 people using Twitter. The service allows people to send or receive "tweets" (text messages of maximum 140 characters) via phones or personal computers, which let their friends know how they're doing. McGregor chose to use the same thing in order to inform the public over the week-end of NASA's Phoenix legendary touchdown of Martian soil. "The fact that Twitter could send messages right to people's cell phones - it seemed like a good idea to let people know about the landing," shared McGregor, quoted by [Discovery](#). "I dig Mars!" was among the first of the Lander's Tweets, while the ice-discovery event-related message ended with "w00t!!! Best day ever!!!". This type of language is common for young, regular Internet users and it helped the blog distinguish itself and resist, thinks Twitter co-founder Biz Stone. "It was the way she chose to send out the updates - in the first person and anthropomorphizing the Lander - that really made all of the difference. As a result, NASA gets a level of engagement with citizens they didn't have before," explained Stone. "There was a certain joy and exuberance that came with every day, and every sight it was seeing," added McGregor. "I think people really related to that." Who knows, perhaps in the long run, repeated attempts of this kind may even attract more and more youngsters on the bumpy road of science. When the energy received by the lander was too little and it became obvious that it would soon succumb to the Martian winter, the farewell tweet that was sent on its behalf read, "I should stay well-preserved in this cold. I'll be humankind's monument here for centuries, eons, until future explorers come for me".