

Twitter: An old friend dresses up for Halloween

The timing is auspicious...Twitter dons a new face just prior to Halloween. Linda looks at the results and asks...Is it a mask or for real?

Twitter: Trick or Treating?

The image below shows Twitter as it appears to anyone who hasn't signed in to Twitter as a user. I want to point out four areas for your consideration:



1. **A #New Twitter:** You might want to watch this [video](#), which I thought was a clever mix of...well, cleverness...and cliché. But, just cliché enough to bring a smile. If you're a designer, take a close look at all the items where the Twitter bird is shown (for example, a book for stargazing).
2. **Top Tweets:** Scrolling in real time, the Top Tweets is a mix of celebrity and the unknown...but take a close look at who is scrolling on your screen, because you may find them elsewhere (I'll show you below).
3. **Trending Topics:** Instead of looking for this topic in the right column once you log in, the trending topics now scrolls like a news ticker below the Twitter banner. You can click on any topic to view the trending Tweets – and, those Tweets do not necessarily carry [hashtags](#) (I'll also expand a bit on trending topics below).

4. **See Who's Here:** Well, gosh – just who is here? You'll find friends and “industry peers” that you know and businesses that you may frequent. Interesting, right? Twitter is tracking you, so be aware of your [privacy](#) options with Twitter, just like you would with [Facebook](#).

Now to expand on these topics to fill you in on how Twitter is going to alter your networking experiences.

But first, a look at the new double screen, this one from my Appomattox News Twitter account:

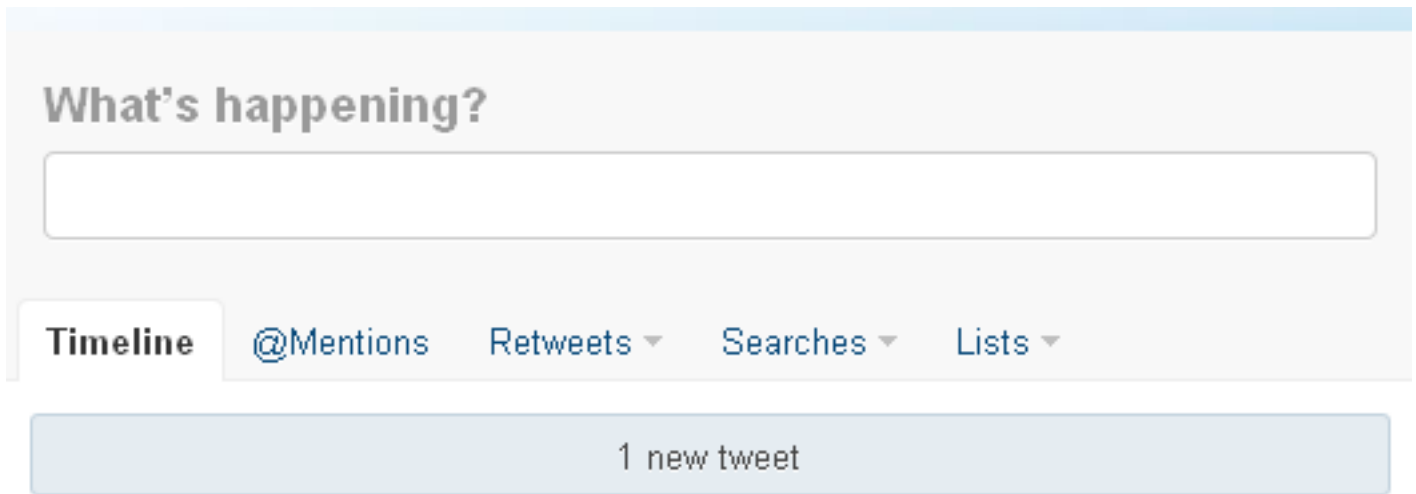


While the image above is difficult to see re: details, I'll bring those into focus below in the sections on “what's new” for Twitter users. Just note the big change – a double screen. Note that I'll focus on the details by mentioning the “left” and “right” sides of this double screen option.

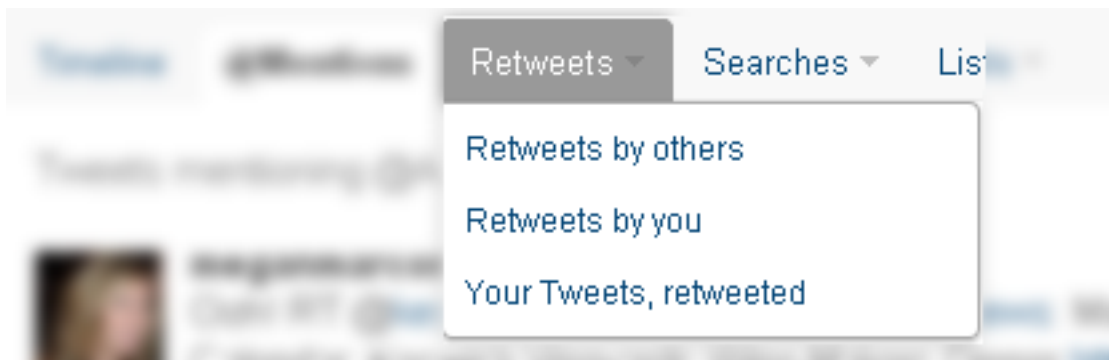
A #New Twitter

First, you will find @mentions, retweets, searches, and lists just above your timeline, which creates a single, streamlined view on the left of the new double screen. On the right, you can see the features you're familiar with, including whom you recently followed and who recently followed you, favourites and Trending Topics.

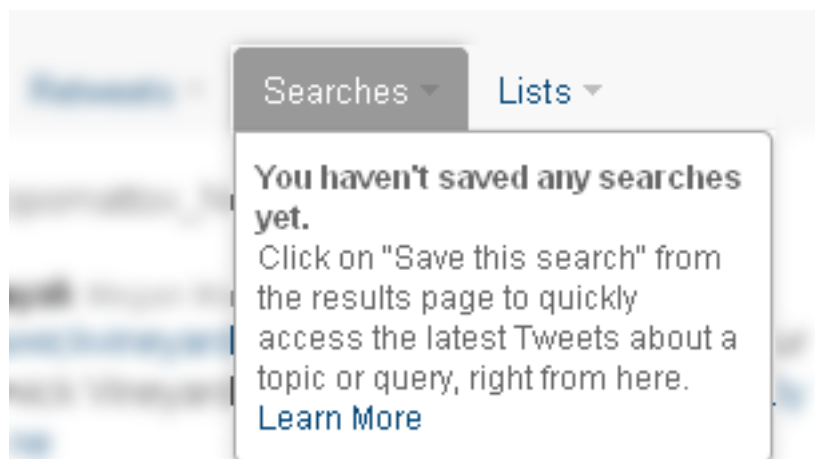
Left Screen



The @Mentions is just that – a way to view other Twitter users who have mentioned your account. Retweets looks like this:

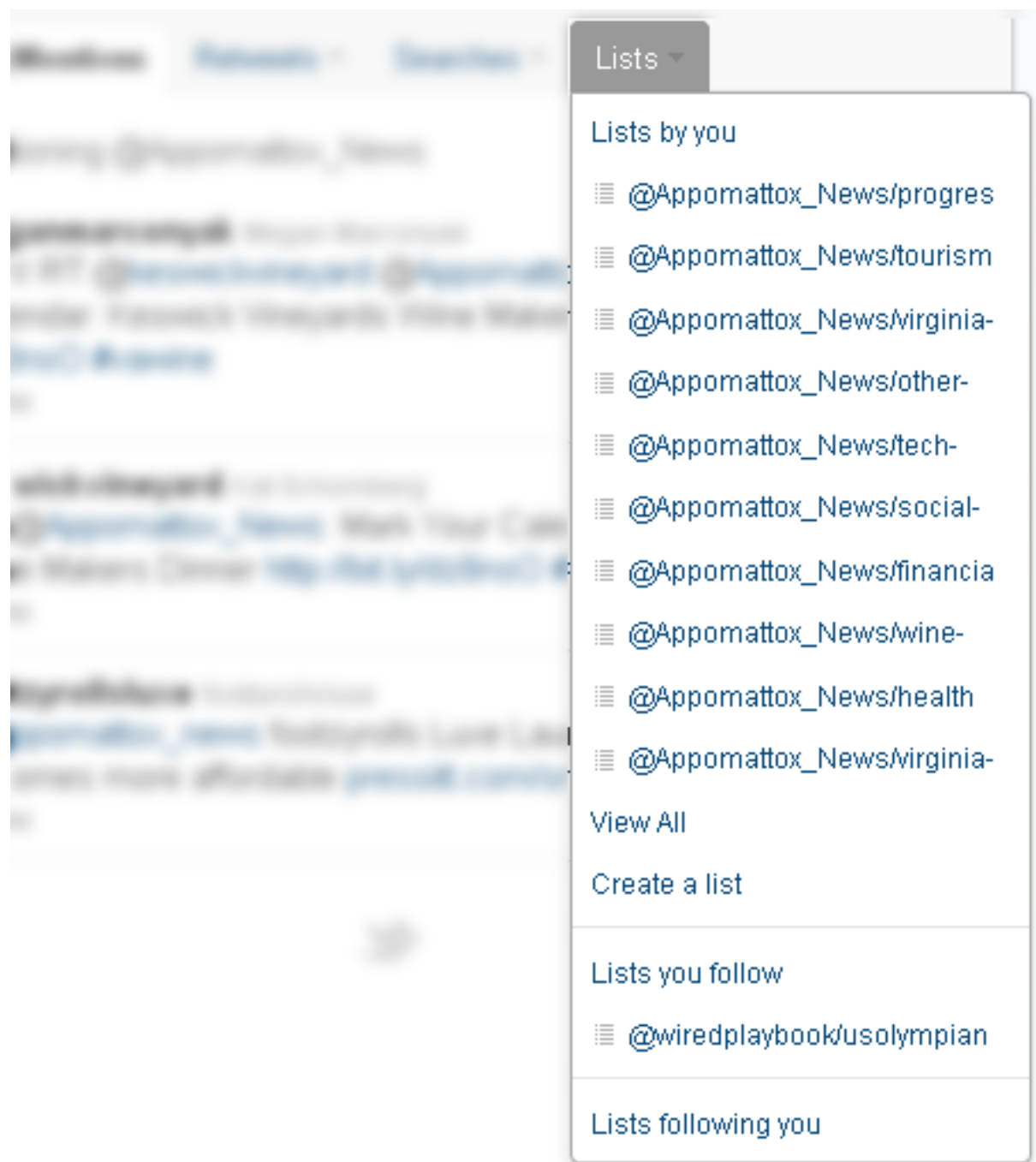


Now you'll have a way to easily view retweets by others, by you and your Tweets that have been retweeted (yes, that would have been a very interesting sentence had it been written a decade ago). You can now save your searches, too. When you save a search, you can always come back and get the latest results for that query, without ever having to type in the same words.



To learn more about saving searches, visit the [Twitter instructions](#) on this topic.

I'm ashamed that I'm following only one list with my Appomattox News account, but there you go...now that I've shamed myself, I'll change my ways. Beyond this, the List option on the left side of the screen above your timeline shows your created lists, lists you follow and lists that mention you:



That is the end of the new features for the left side of your new Twitter two-page spread, except for some special features offered in the Timeline. I'll focus on those momentarily, after showing off the right side of this spread...

Right Side

If you want a quick view of you Tweet numbers, Twitter will offer this information at the top of the right-hand column in this new layout:

Your Tweets **5,501**



41 minutes ago: Mark Your Calendar: Oystoberfest <http://bit.ly/bnbMrn>

Following **1,218**



Followers **1,298**



I can see, from the information noted above, that I have created over 5,000 Tweets, that I'm following over 1,200 Twitter users and that over 1,200 Twitter users are following Appomattox News. I found the last number interesting, as the only connectivity in Appomattox County is within Appomattox proper. So, while the county holds over [14,000 residents](#), only [1,761 people](#) actually have direct access to the Internet in their homes. I know, also, that while county residents come into town to tap into the Internet at the library, not everyone in town has a computer, let alone follow Twitter.

So, I know without using any Twitter apps or by searching through my followers that not all of them live in Appomattox. But, I digress – perhaps in the near future I'll focus on how to discern your marketing through Twitter in another article. For now, I'm moving down the right side of the new Twitter layout to show you what to expect...

To provide you with more clues on how to discern your Twitter marketing, take a look at what Twitter is offering below the stats shown above:

Favorites 19

★ **teedubya** Green Tweets: 75+
Environmentalists to Follow on
Twitter <http://is...>

Listed 33

☰ Recently listed in: [Companies](#),
[Lynchburg](#), [local](#), [Media](#), [USA-CAN](#)

I wish that "Favorites" meant other folks' favourites, but it doesn't...this is a list of all the Twitter Tweets that you have starred over time as your favourites. But, at right, you can see all the lists where you are listed on Twitter, starting here with the most recently listed. If you click on the numbers next to "Favorites" and "Listed," you can see pages with those lists expanded on the right side, where your timeline normally resides.

At the bottom of the right side on this new Twitter layout, you'll see this information:



Very simple – you have access to trends on Twitter, information for [Twitter-for-Android](#) and the usual links for Twitter's about, help, blog pages and other helpful information.

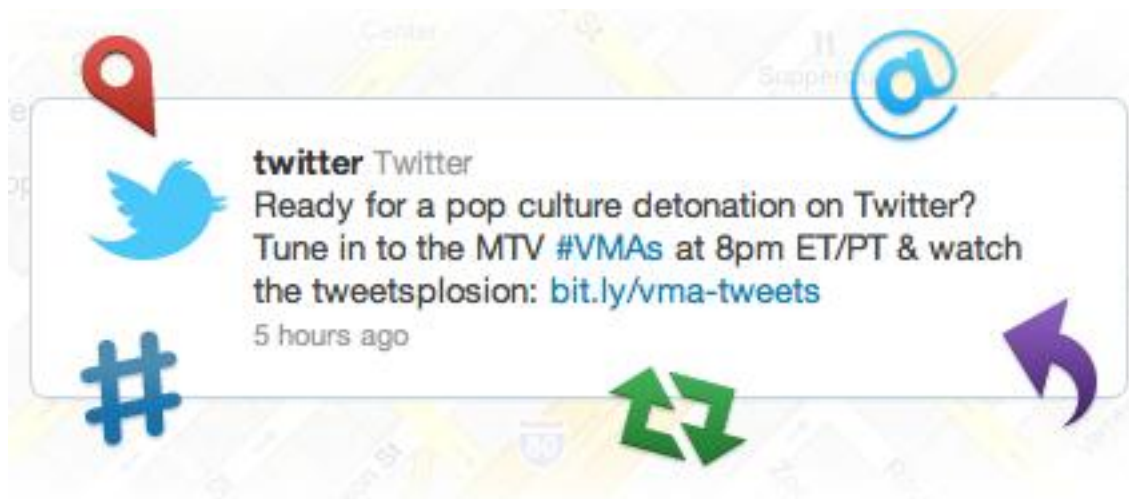
That's all, folks, for the new layout. Now to share news about the other #New features...

Other #New Details.

For the first two following details, I'll need to show illustrations provided by Twitter. One reason behind this Twitter art use is that – while some folks can preview the new layout – not all the options are available yet. But, those options, as mentioned in the conclusion below, should be available to everyone by mid-month.

Now you'll be able to see embedded photos and videos directly on Twitter, thanks to partnerships with [DailyBooth](#), [DeviantART](#), [Etsy](#), [Flickr](#), [Justin.TV](#), [Kickstarter](#), [Kiva](#), [Photozou](#) (from what I understand, offered only in Japanese), [Plixi](#), [Twitgoo](#), [TwitPic](#), [TwitVid](#), [USTREAM](#), [Vimeo](#), [yfrog](#), and [YouTube](#). Please note that Twitter offered that lineup in alphabetical order, which I thought was quite diplomatic.

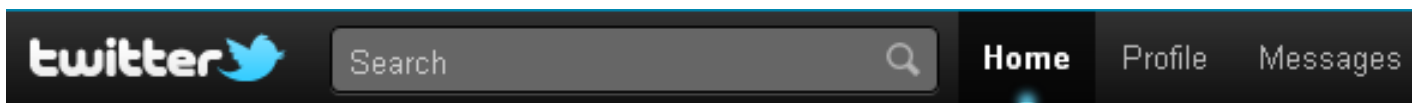
When you click a Tweet, the details pane shows additional information related to the author or subject. Depending on the Tweet's content, you may see: @replies, other Tweets by that same user, a map of where a geotagged Tweet was sent from, and more:



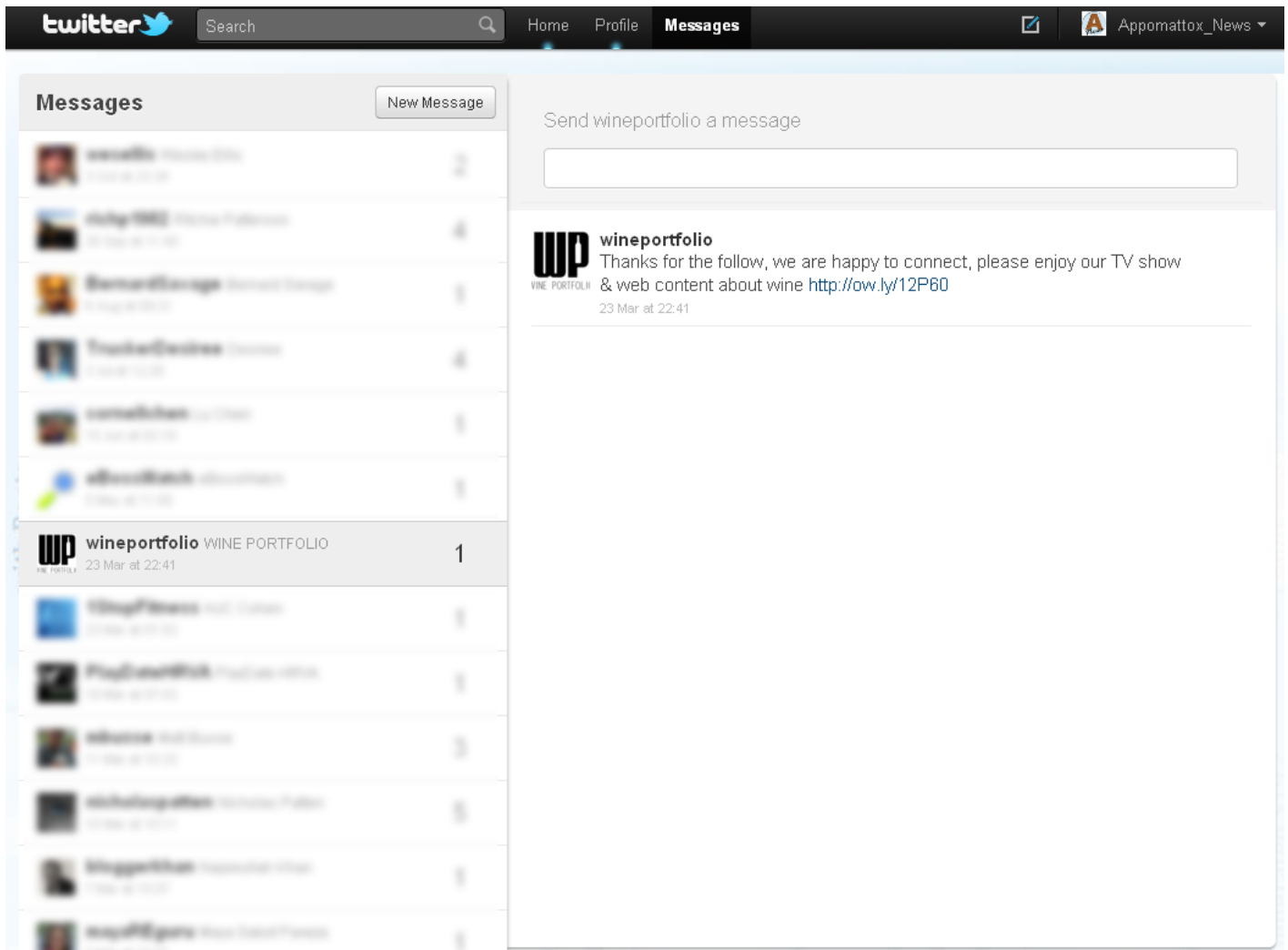
You can click a **@username** to see a mini profile without navigating from the page, which provides quick access to account information, including bio and recent Tweets:



You can search, gain access to Home, Profile and Messages from the top Twitter banner once you're logged in:

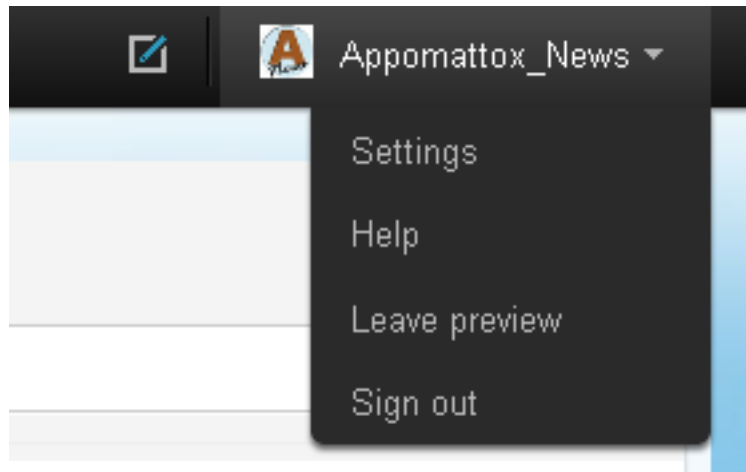


Messages are DM, or Direct Messages, and you can view them and respond to those messages when you click on the Messages link in that banner shown above. The page looks like this:



Notice that you can respond directly to the person or entity who sent the original DM straight from the Web page shown above to the right.

The right side of the banner currently includes a shortcut to write an update (the box with the blue pencil shown below) and a way to enter your settings, get help, leave the preview or sign out.



Conclusion

These changes will roll out as a preview over the next several weeks for Twitter users. I have several Twitter accounts, and only my most active account did not contain an option to use the preview...at least, not yet. And, as I mentioned earlier, my Appomattox News account did not contain all the #New options.

If you have access to the preview, you'll be able to switch back and forth so you have time to grow accustomed to the way things work. Eventually, everyone will have the updated version of Twitter.com – and the rollout currently is scheduled for mid-month, or sometime during this week (October 13th, is the word).

I have no clue if users can retain the old layout once everything is in place. However, with the options provided above, this new layout sure makes it easier to use Twitter on the Web, rather than through a third-party app. If you have the ability to try the double-spread layout now, give it a shot to get used to it, as I doubt there will be any turning back. So, it will be "boo" for some users, "boo-hoo" for other users, and a treat for many other users...just in time for Halloween, too.