

Have You Ever Wondered Where Those Deleted Tweets Go?

Just in time for the homestretch to the first U.S. presidential primaries and caucuses, a popular archive of sometimes-misguided or embarrassing tweets that have been deleted by politicians and their staff has been resurrected by Twitter.

Politwoops had been a popular social media destination for political junkies and others looking to unearth social media gaffes by politicians.

But in a move widely lambasted by open-government advocates, Twitter effectively shuttered Politwoops last summer when it revoked access to its interface by the government accountability watchdog, the Sunlight Foundation, that had developed the tool and had been publishing the tweets.

On Thursday, Twitter said it had reached a deal with Sunlight and another organization, the Open State Foundation, to restore the tool.

“Politwoops is an important tool for holding our public officials, including candidates and elected or appointed public officials, accountable for the statements they make, and we’re glad that we’ve been able to reach an agreement with Twitter to bring it back online both in the U.S. and internationally,” said Jenn Topper, communications director for The Sunlight Foundation.

While the announcement was a victory for government-transparency advocates, it could prove to be a setback for politicians hoping to avoid the social media rumpus that can accompany an ill-timed tweet or misconstrued online musing.

The deal comes as the clock ticks closer to the first vote

casting in the 2016 U.S. presidential campaign. The Iowa caucuses will take place on Feb. 1, followed by the first primary in New Hampshire on Feb. 9.

The resurrection of Politwoops was promptly cheered in a flurry of tweets.

“Twitter will restore tool that archives politicians’ deleted tweets. They won’t hide anymore!” said a post from Twitter user Miguel @mglkrm.

(Editing by Bernadette Baum)

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