

# Upping the ante on social media

By  Grace Belger

1 Apr 2015

We are so proud of our "boytjie" Trevor Noah for taking over from Jon Stewart as the late-night television host on Comedy Central. 'The Daily Show' is one of the most prestigious television host spots in the US and Noah will become the first African ever as well as the youngest ever.

As young as he is, Noah knows the power of social media and how it drives his reputation. But perhaps he has forgotten that in cyber space his reputation is in the hands of untrained, uncensored, anonymous third parties who can spread negative, damning content as quickly as he can enhance his profile.



He is a comedian, and a really good one at that, so the volume and breadth of data about Trevor out there is staggering. Critical to his reputation, however, is that he has left a trail which never forgets and is open to the whole wide world - a world of instant gratification where people react before thinking.

And a world where the context of the tweet at the time is lost and unrecorded - posing the risk of historical data mining being easily misconstrued.

While twitter can raise your profile to new heights it can take you way under in nanoseconds. While the world and especially South Africa celebrates our protégé with:

**Mariana\_Atencio**  
@marianaatencio

Follow

Diversity wins!! So excited that 31year old South African @Trevornoah will be succeeding Jon Stewart

Retweet Favorite

### ‘Daily Show’ names its new host

Successor to Jon Stewart was born in South Africa and speaks 6 languages

BY DAVE IZZOFF

In December, Trevor Noah, a 31-year-old comedian, made his debut as a regular contributor on “The Daily Show With Jon Stewart,” offering his outsider’s perspective, as a biracial South African, on the United States.

“I never thought I’d be more afraid of police in America than in South Africa,” he said with a smile. “It kind of makes me a little nostalgic for the old days, back home.”

Now, after only three appearances on that Comedy Central show, Mr. Noah has gotten a big promotion. On Monday, Comedy Central announced that Mr. Noah would be the next host of “The Daily Show,” succeeding Mr. Stewart after he steps down this year.

The network’s selection of Mr. Noah comes less than two months after Mr. Stewart, 52, said on Feb. 10 that he was leaving “The Daily Show” after a successful 16-year run that transformed the show into authoritative, satirical comedy on current events. An exact timetable for Mr. Stewart’s departure has not been decided, Comedy Central said.

Mr. Noah, who spoke by phone from Dubai, where he is on a leg of a comedy tour, said he had been given a great opportunity as well as a significant challenge.

“You don’t believe it for the first few hours,” Mr. Noah said of learning about his new job. “You need a stiff drink, and

really exciting and new and different.”

In his stand-up routines, Mr. Noah comes across as a self-assured polyglot with an international perspective.

As he joked in a 2013 comedy set on “Late Show With David Letterman,” Mr. Noah said that he did not like being introduced as a comedian from Africa, as if he represented the entire continent. “They make it sound like a guy in leopard skin’s going to come running on the stage,” he said.

Mr. Noah said in his phone interview, “I didn’t live a normal life — I grew up in

Mr. Noah gave no formal auditions for the job, outside of his performances on “The Daily Show” and elsewhere.

Ms. Ganeless said the decision was made after she “buddied” with Don Herring, the president of Viacom’s entertainment group, and Kent Alterna, the Comedy Central president of content development and original programming, while Mr. Stewart acted as “a consigliere through the whole process.”

During this time, fan support emerged for other longtime “Daily Show” members, including Samantha Bee, 9

RETWEETS 5 FAVORITES 8



**Outside Fighter™**  
@i3dyf\_0y

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We gave the world Tata and now we're giving Amerika Trevor Noah.  
#ItsAXhosaThing

Retweet Favorite

Some old tweets are being dug up and are destined to haunt him:



Perhaps we should start a #whatshouldtrevordo? Essentially there is not much he can do in terms of the old tweets - they are not erasable.

Our advice: keep using social media to boost your own profile, but beware of the context they're posted in; that tonality is easily misinterpreted in text (not least in less than 140 characters); and that the elimination of those two is a critical risk to your reputational legacy when sarcasm and satire are your primary tools as a comedian.

Bottom line: social posts in writing are "publication in concrete" on a platform that never goes away. Be careful what you tweet - they could come back to bite you.

## ABOUT GRACE BELGER

Grace Belger runs the Meropa media training division and has conducted media training and crisis communication workshops for over 100 clients who have ranged from multi-nationals, listed entities, government entities, a rock band and a Kgosi.

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