

Document 1 : The Origins of #blacklivesmatter

The phrase “black lives matter” was first used by a black community organizer [in a Facebook post](#) following the July 2013 acquittal of George Zimmerman in the shooting death of black 17-year-old Trayvon Martin. Despite its widespread presence today, the hashtag was slow to gain prominence: During the second half of 2013, it appeared on Twitter a total of just 5,106 times (or about 30 times a day).

Both the use of the hashtag and the influence of the broader Black Lives Matter movement accelerated greatly in August 2014 when [Michael Brown](#), a black teenager, was fatally shot by a white police officer in Ferguson, Missouri.

The #BlackLivesMatter hashtag appeared an average of 58,747 times per day in the roughly three weeks following Brown’s death. However, the use of the hashtag increased dramatically three months later when on [November 25](#), the day after a Ferguson grand jury decided not to indict the officer involved in Brown’s death, the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag appeared 172,772 times. During the subsequent three weeks, the hashtag was used 1.7 million times.

Since late 2014, #BlackLivesMatter has been a continuous presence on Twitter, but its use has increased around some specific events. These include:

- On Dec. 4, 2014, the day after a [New York grand jury](#) decided not to indict police officers in the death of Eric Garner, #BlackLivesMatter appeared 189,210 times – the most it was ever used in a single day.
- The Oct. 13, 2015, presidential campaign debate in which Senator Bernie Sanders [defended](#) the Black Lives Matter movement and decried institutional racism spurred the hashtag to appear more than 127,000 times on Twitter the following day as many users voiced support for Sanders.
- On the one-year anniversary of Brown’s death, August 9, 2015, the hashtag appeared 120,067 times as well as 98,518 times the following day. (...)

The #BlackLivesMatter hashtag has been used frequently in support of the broader social movement or to flag general racial issues, occasionally as a form of criticism

From its first appearance in mid-2013, Twitter users have utilized the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag for a range of purposes. Supportive or positive references to the broader movement are among the most common. But in some cases, people included #BlackLivesMatter in tweets to criticize the movement – or simply identify the subject matter of their posts and attach them to the broader discussion occurring around racial issues.

By [Monica Anderson](#), August 15, 2016 [Social Media Conversations About Race](#)
<https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2016/08/15/the-hashtag-blacklivesmatter-emerges-social-activism-on-twitter/>