

What's in a Twitter Handle?

- By Jessica Smith
- CQ Roll Call Staff

Even on Twitter, Washington speaks an insider language.

Some local Twitter handles make perfect sense inside the Beltway but might not translate as well throughout the rest of the country.

[@ArticleII](#) is the handle for an account for a blog about the presidency, which is outlined in Article II of the Constitution.

[@2usc138](#) gets even wonkier, referring to the section of U.S. Code that specifies that the Library of Congress' law library must stay open when either chamber is in session.

[@joshualyman](#) refers to a character on the TV show "The West Wing."

Rep. [Jason Chaffetz](#) (R-Utah) tweets as [@jasoninthehouse](#), a reference to the House that comes off sounding more like a 1990s sitcom.

Caitlyn Korb, a spokeswoman for the libertarian Cato Institute, goes by

[@CatoCaitlyn](#) online, a homophone of Kato Kaelin, the house-guest-turned-witness in the O.J. Simpson trial.

"It's a hit or miss for the millennial generations," Korb said. "Anyone in their 50s absolutely cracks up about it, but the interns don't seem to get it. ... It's more about the age difference."

Others use only-in-Washington Twitter handles to get some attention.

About a year ago, political analyst John Pile was trying to get more attention for his commentary — the kind of attention that comes naturally to respected analyst Larry Sabato.

So Pile signed up for the handle [@SonsOfSabato](#).

“I’m not a rock star, I’m not an athlete, I’m just an amateur political analyst looking for some Twitter attention,” he said. Still, the strategy has its limits. He said people outside the Beltway “don’t seem to get it.” But for his target audience, it’s worked.

“Here, I’ve never come across someone [who does] not know about the source of the handle,” he said. “I’ve had people mention the Twitter handle, calling it nerdy, geeky and Beltway-ish. I call that an accomplishment because that’s exactly what I was going for.”