

TWEET ME THIS, TWEET ME THAT

Q8Traffic

Accurate reports at your fingertips



A screen caption of reports and links from users on Q8Traffic

By Hussain Al-Qatari

Updating friends about the latest happenings in your life is only one of the many purposes you can use Twitter for. With Q8Traffic, users are now able to check traffic across Kuwait and contribute with their own traffic reports with pictures and videos.

To send a traffic report, users have to include the hashtag #Q8Traffic in the status update. Hashtags function as keywords which mark a specific topic or subject. They are usually one word preceded by the # symbol. When a tweet (or update) is categorized as a Q8Traffic update, it is immediately retweeted (or re-published) by the Q8Traffic main account to all the users who are subscribed to these updates.

They can also include pictures or videos by adding a link to them. Most Twitter clients make uploading pictures and videos an easy task as they provide built-in uploading services.

The man behind Q8Traffic

The Friday Times had a chat with Nasser Al-Hilal, an IT instructor who is behind Q8Traffic. His motivation for creating this Twitter for more than just status updates. "It was a very spontaneous project and was launched very quickly without very much planning or discussion," he said. To date, there are more than 7,500 users and contributors to Q8Traffic. Al-Hilal says that the number of followers continues to increase. "There are many users who engage with the service on a daily basis by sending short reports and updates. The service, in the end, is community-driven. With the strength of the community and the participation, the Q8Traffic service will grow stronger and flourish more," he says.

Setting up the service and launching it was not difficult at all, says Al-Hilal thanks to the simple platform Twitter provides. Maintaining it can be a challenge at times, since it is a community-driven service. The simple method for using the service made it very accessible to users. "Building the service on Twitter, an already existing and well-established platform gave the project a huge boost and allowed people to interact and be part of the community from Day 1," he explained.

He explained that Twitter works as a perfect platform for the service. "The limited characters of status updates and the intuitive platform, as well as the fact that the Kuwaiti community is also very active on Twitter, has helped the project a great deal," said Al-Hilal.

Time to expand

Currently, he is working on upgrading the service to include a bigger audience. "It is still built on Twitter, but I hope to enhance the service and adapt it to a website and hopefully get that integrated as well. There are a lot of ideas that I plan to implement to get this project up and running. My goal is to make this service useful to the fullest to those with and without Twitter accounts," he said.

Al-Hilal worked on numerous projects related to IT throughout his work, but sadly none of them are available to the public. "Most of the work I do is related to the companies which I have worked for. Q8Traffic is currently my own project, and I plan to make it grow and flourish. There are other ideas I plan to initiate once I get Q8Traffic to a stable stage. I'm very excited about this opportunity and seeing the community really gives a person confidence to build further" he concluded.



Washful thinking:
CAN cars be cleaned WITHOUT WATER?

By Ben Garcia

New research reveals that Kuwait has the highest rate of water consumption on a global scale - news that rang alarm bells for those spending summer in Kuwait. Approximately 500 liters of water are consumed per capita, the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) has found. Water is wasted in numerous forms - for brushing teeth, cooking, bathing, laundry to house and car washing. Imagine the waste. Now with summer around the corner, water consumption is set to increase to astronomical levels.

In fact, just by cleaning your average household sedan, you are already measured to have consumed up to 500 liters of water - our most vital natural resource. However, washing your car, nowadays, has eco-friendly and water-saving alternatives. Could waterless car wash products be the solution if not the answer to lowering water consumption in Kuwait?

In February this year, Wales Car Detailing and Protection Estate launched its eco-friendly car wash services in Al-Rai. The Wales, short for waterless car wash service, was introduced in Kuwait to help Kuwait become self-sufficient and environment-friendly. Seeing how much water is wasted in such a simple every day task, Ahmed Mansour, the owner of Wales, Kuwait said that the best thing he could do to help the country was to introduce a car wash that uses minimal amounts of water. "I found this eco-friendly solution and perhaps it's the best contribution I could ever be proud of for my country. I imported the 'Freedom Waterless Car Wash' products from the US after months of research and trials

before bringing them to Kuwait," Mansour said.

In his words, it is about time we made an effort to help the world conserve this valuable resource - water. He said, "If we don't do anything and leave this issue to the next generation we are in danger; we have to be proactive. Many organizations and concerned individuals have issued warnings about the escalating problem. So we have to act now."

Wales mission is to protect the environment and help the government preserve water resources. "I have seen every morning how much water is wasted just to wash a car. You see it mostly in high-density urban areas and in the suburbs. These people waste water without a care."

In comparison, Mansour claimed, "If a sedan consumes approximately 500 liters of water per car wash, with Wales 'freedom products,' only one liter of the product can clean up to ten sedan cars. Imagine the water we could conserve by using these products." The product was launched under Wales Detailing and Protection Estate in February 2011. Freedom products are liquid based from distilled water, 99 percent biodegradable, entirely chemical-free and promise to wash and shine each vehicle to its maximum potential. In addition to the liquid products, freedom International have also made a microfiber chamois (cloth) to polish and clean the surface of each vehicle to achieve the best results.

The microfibers absorb all dust and dirt from the surface as they contain natural super polymers and waxes that leave a natural repellent for your car. It is guaranteed to last three days, "We guarantee a mirror like finish after undergoing a water-less car wash," Mansour said.