

Don't blame social media

By [Steve Thorngate](#)

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Well, now we know: Rep. Anthony Weiner used Twitter to send a lewd picture to a young woman. He then lied about it repeatedly before finally confessing.

It's stupid and inappropriate behavior, and the congressman has no one to blame but himself for this humiliating episode. It's not clear whether Weiner broke any laws or violated congressional ethics rules, but that's about the extent of positive things to say about him in this situation.

[As before](#), however, I'm stuck on the inevitable "lessons about Twitter" media narrative. [The headlines are everywhere](#): social media isn't private! What a dumb thing to do on Twitter!

It'd be a dumb thing to do over the phone, too. In fact, it was--Rep. Weiner's flirtatious relationships included phone calls as well as social media exchanges. The one that broke the story was a Twitter message, but the image became public because Weiner mistyped the Twitter command, not because everything's public on Twitter.

A similar scandal would follow if Weiner said something lewd when he thought he was on a private call but was actually on speaker in a crowded room. Or if he tried to mail a dirty picture to an individual but accidentally sent it to a newspaper instead. True, those scenarios are less likely. Still, when a tool gets misused, it's not the tool's fault.

There's no excuse for what Rep. Weiner did. But the problem is his irresponsible and slimy behavior, not the fact that he used Twitter to engage in it.