

# Current Bits



Brandon Janse Van Vuuren

## #WhatIsAHashtag?

The social media revolution has taken our age by storm; most people are hyper connected and receiving updates and tweets by the second. One of the newest inventions is that of the hashtag (#).

The hashtag, when referring to the internet, has been around for since 1988 according to about.com. The hashtag has been used for years in CSS, a styling language with regard to website design. Hashtags in CSS are used to identify an element on a website and apply certain styles to that element.

The hashtag we see more popularly today was first used by Nate Styles. This hashtag was used to inform people of the ongoing fires in San Diego, in August of 2007. There for promoting the use of #sandiegofire

According to techluddiets.com a hashtag is "...a way for people to search for tweets [in the case of twitter] that have a common topic" An example of this can be when watching Idols SA posting something like "That solo was amazing #IdolsSa".

This enables users to gather all post about Idols SA and see what other viewers are saying.

The hashtag has evolved even further. It is has been used lately as a tool to raise awareness for certain causes. A few months ago the #nomakeupselfie raised over 8 million pounds for cancer research according to Cancer Research UK. Hashtag are also being used to categorise post in a way that gives it special significance such as #tbt, throw-back Thursday. #tbt is used when a person posts an old photograph of themselves online.

Hashtags have transcended the original idea and is now also being used to express emotion. This turned a relatively emotionless sharing platform into a more expressive one.

The hashtag has been a saviour for some and a pain for other. It however testifies to one thing, today things move at a rapid pace! The things we are doing now will, within the next year, change completely.

#NowYouKnow