TWITTER 1: BAD GUYS 0

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Twitter: internet fad or revolutionary new way of communicating? Last week, history was made when the high court served an injunction on an anonymous person using twitter. Today, twitter scored an even bigger coup when it helped overturn a restriction that had been placed on reporting on Parliament.

MP Paul Farraley had posted a question to the Secretary of State for Justice asking for information on Trafigura (the company responsible for dumping toxic waste in Abidjan) and their libel lawyers Carter-Ruck. However, Carter-Ruck didn't like the idea of the Guardian (the newspaper who did most to investigate the toxic waste issue) reporting on the parliamentary question, so they got a court order banning the Guardian from reporting on the question itself or for mentioning the MP who had asked it. Unfortunately for Trafigura and Carter-Ruck the information was still available on the internet and in other news sources. Twitter went bonkers! Even in my small circle of twitter contacts there were bishops, vicars, housewives, business women and students complaining about what Carter-Ruck had done. By late afternoon they backed down, and the Guardian is once again free to report on the proceedings of the British Parliament. Read the story here.

A few thoughts from this story:

- I don't think this means that Twitter is here to stay. Twitter is just the latest in a line of internet tools and it will be replaced. But, this does, perhaps, indicate that the internet is giving a voice to the citizen which allows us to confront big corporations when they step out of line.
- It is rather nice to see that the British tradition that newspapers can report on Parliament can be upheld, even if it is by twits and bloggers.
- It is also very nice to see that Trafigura can't sweep their nasty, polluting business under the carpet.
- But, for me, the best bit about all of this is that my friends in Abidjan who were poisoned by Trafigura are not being forgotten.

If you want to follow what I am saying on Twitter, my name is @kouya. I suspect that in a year or two, twitter will be replaced by a different social networking site, but I hope the internet continues to allow ordinary people to hold powerful interest to account.