CHALLENGE #2

Summary
A news organization with close to 190,000 Twitter followers is looking for ways to monetize this loyal and growing audience.

Challenge:
The Columbus Dispatch has built an audience of nearly 190,000 Twitter followers. More than 28,000 are those who have signed up for “Dispatch Alerts,” a service that tweets headlines. In addition, more than 60 Dispatch staffers have active Twitter accounts with a combined total of more than 160,000 followers. The Twitter feeds of sports reporters are especially popular. For example, the reporter covering the Columbus Blue Jackets hockey team has about 22,000 followers. The lead reporter covering Ohio State football has more than 14,000.

Yet the links provided in Dispatch tweets are not often clicked on. Instead, Twitter followers merely take the scant news that is on the tweet and move on. And as newspapers like the Dispatch increasingly move to paywalls or metered websites, even fewer will click on those links in tweets.

The challenge: How can the Dispatch make money off of the time and effort its staff spends on Twitter?

Deliverables:

- A summary of the problem within its context
  In order to ensure your solution is truly innovative, you need to investigate the problem. Are there any existing similar technological approaches to what you propose? If so, how does your solution try to recreate, improve on or differentiate itself from a previously successful approach? What observations, studies, industry research, or communication best practices support your approach to the problem?

- A viable solution
  Since this innovation challenge is being proposed by The Columbus Dispatch, the idea(s) you offer should be targeted to potential revenue streams from distinct groups of Twitter followers devoted to what the Dispatch covers (example: those who follow Ohio State football).

You may offer a single idea or a series of ideas – everything from selling products to Twitter followers to using information about users’ location and interests to offer products, services or deals.
- **A workable business model**
  In addition to explaining how your idea will produce revenue, your proposed solution must address the cost associated with development and implementation. For example, you should estimate the cost of time and labor in terms of market research, digital development, testing and implementation.

- **A strategy for reading diverse audiences**
  Special attention should be paid to innovative solutions that target underserved and underrepresented audiences of Twitter followers.

**Resources:**
A simple Google search shows there is no shortage of ideas about how to use Twitter to make money.

These links may help get you started:
- http://www.inc.com/twitter
- http://www.jeffbullas.com/2012/05/24/5-ways-to-make-money-with-your-twitter-account/