

Tech news sites quietly rely on this word to create drama in headlines, analysis reveals

BY TIM ELLIS ([HTTPS://WWW.GEEKWIRE.COM/AUTHOR/TIMOTHY-ELLIS/](https://www.geekwire.com/author/timothy-ellis/)) on October 29, 2017 at 12:00 pm



(<https://flic.kr/p/8zKm9r>)

Paul Mison Photo, via Flickr (<https://flic.kr/p/8zKm9r>).

GeekWire has quietly performed a detailed analysis of one of the most overused words in tech news. See if you can find the common thread in these headlines ...

- **TechCrunch:** Facebook quietly launches Mac and PC Workplace Chat apps with screen share (<https://techcrunch.com/2017/10/05/facebook-screen-sharing/>)
- **Mashable:** Google quietly removed smartwatches from its online store (<http://mashable.com/2017/10/05/google-quietly-removed-smartwatches-from-its-online-store/>)
- **Engadget:** Comcast quietly introduces Xfinity Instant TV streaming beta (<https://www.engadget.com/2017/09/27/comcast-xfinity-instant-tv-beta-streaming/>)
- **The Verge:** Nintendo quietly added wireless USB headphone support in the last Switch update (<https://www.theverge.com/circuitbreaker/2017/10/20/16507816/nintendo-wireless-usb-headphones-switch-update-firmware>)
- **VentureBeat:** Google Hire is a job site that Diane Greene's Bebop has been quietly working on (<https://venturebeat.com/2017/04/13/google-hire-is-a-job-site-that-diane-greenes-bebop-has-been-quietly-working-on/>)
- **Ars Technica:** Some iPad Pros cost \$50 more today as Apple quietly ups prices (<https://arstechnica.com/gadgets/2017/09/some-ipad-pros-cost-50-more-today-as-apple-quietly-ups-prices/>)
- **GeekWire:** Amazon quietly starts using Stripe to process some e-commerce transactions (<https://www.geekwire.com/2017/amazon-quietly-starts-using-stripe-process-e-commerce-transactions/>)
- **Gizmodo:** Netflix Has Quietly Been Throttling Mobile Video for Years (<https://gizmodo.com/netflix-has-quietly-been-throttling-mobile-video-for-ye-1766991862>)
- **Recode:** Ad tech firm Verve has quietly cut staff in a 'rightsizing' that includes its sales VP (<https://www.recode.net/2017/8/24/16200964/verve-wireless-layoffs-sales>)
- **WIRED:** Airbnb Is Quietly Building the Smartest Travel Agent of All Time (https://www.wired.com/2014/07/airbnb_recommendations/)

Have you quietly come to the conclusion that "quietly" might be a bit overused in tech headlines? Apparently whenever a tech company does anything without publishing a press release and running ads during Monday Night Football, tech news sites have decided that the best word to describe it is "quietly."

In order to (quietly) quantify this phenomenon, I created a new Twitter account @TechNewsQuietly (<https://twitter.com/TechNewsQuietly/>), and used it to retweet every tweet from ten tech news sites that described a company, group, or individual as

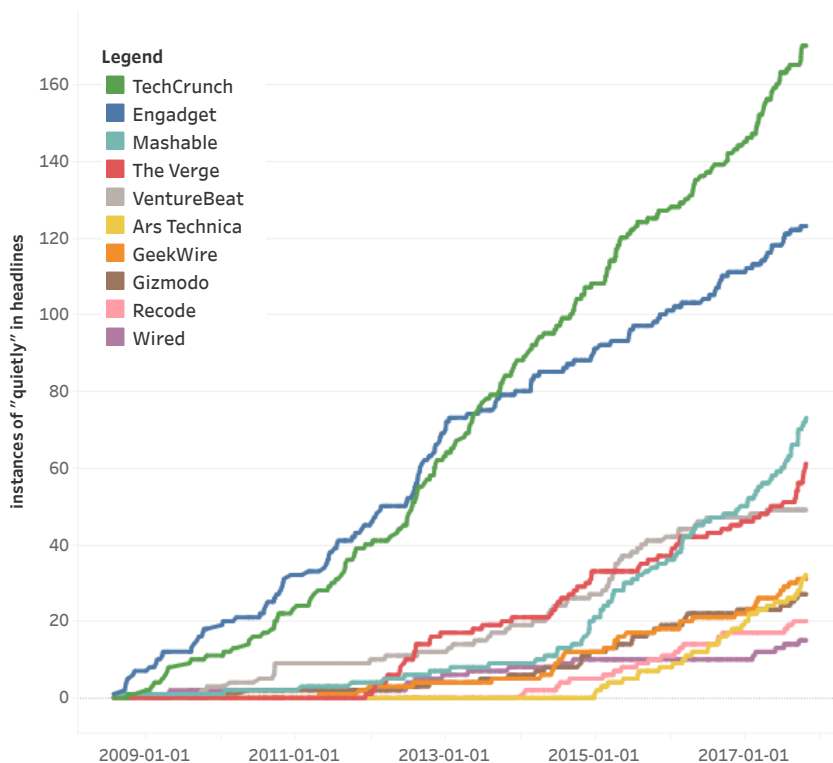
doing something “quietly.” When the same story was tweeted multiple times, I only included the first tweet. There are a few limitations to this method: Sometimes the tweet doesn’t exactly match the headline, and not every outlet has been tweeting every story for more than a few years. However, the 612 tweets that I collected data on were more than enough to perform some meaningful analysis.


Sonific Quietly Adds Network to Music Widget Service (<http://tinyurl.com/267sat>)

— Mashable (@mashable) June 15, 2007 (https://twitter.com/mashable/status/106119892?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

TechCrunch is far and away the heaviest user of “quietly” in headlines. Averaged across the last five years, TechCrunch tweeted headlines with the word “quietly” nearly twice a month. The other two top offenders were Mashable and Engadget, who both used it more than once a month. The Verge, VentureBeat, Ars Technica, Gizmodo, Recode, and Wired all managed to keep their usage to less than once a month. And yes, even GeekWire is guilty, averaging one story every other month with “quietly” in the headline.

Tech News... “Quietly”



GeekWire Cumulative uses of “quietly” in headlines by tech news sites, via Tweets collected at @TechNewsQuietly, 2007-present. 

I also took a look at the companies most frequently mentioned as doing things “quietly” by the tech media. Here are the top ten:

Top 10 companies that do things “quietly”

Rank	Company	Instances
1	Apple	76
2	Google	69
3	Amazon	51
4	Facebook	34
5	Microsoft	20

Rank	Company	Instances
6	Twitter	17
7 (tie)	Sony	8
7 (tie)	Uber	8
9	Samsung	7
10 (tie)	Snap Inc.	6
10 (tie)	HP	6
10 (tie)	Nintendo	6

Nearly two hundred different people or entities were reported to have done things “quietly” since the first recorded tweet in 2007. Some of my favorite things that were only once reported as doing something “quietly” include The Large Hadron Collider (<https://twitter.com/arstechnica/status/751079914770759680>), the video game voice actor strike (<https://twitter.com/arstechnica/status/912790895338061824>), an oil spill (<https://twitter.com/Gizmodo/status/589207290059816962>), and The Planet of the Apes series (<https://twitter.com/verge/status/807282292494401536>).

It will be interesting to see whether or not tech news sites decide to tone down their usage of “quietly” in headlines after this analysis. If they do, I have a feeling that they’ll probably do it ... quietly.