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Then Mention Me

Marketing within Twitter's 140 character limitation

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Abstract

Twitter has been proven to be a great marketing resource to get participating users, customers and website members. Large businesses use the social media platform by communicating with its customers, prior to simply pushing ad messages to target audiences. The social media influence on the internet makes communication an important and valuable asset. However, it requires a large budget and there are a limited amount of previous research available. With the use of *Then Mention me* [<http://thenmention.me>], a system to automate promotional messages, combined with a quantitative data collection example, this paper sets out to explore the possibilities of Twitter marketing and communication aspects. Is it possible to send pre-defined bulk messages to Twitter users, with the intent to promote a company, service or a product, without being treated as spam? The results show that if the tweets sent out include an understanding and knowledge behind Twitter lingo, culture, context and trust, receivers do not treat the messages as spam. The larger implications of the results discusses communication as one of the most important aspects of digital marketing, especially in the new social media landscape.

Keywords: Twitter, Social media, Web 2.0, Twitter marketing, Then Mention me, Communication, Twitter followers, social media marketing, marketing campaign, online marketing

1 Introduction

Social media has grown to define a generation of people. The way in which we, as a western society, interact and communicate with each other has changed because of the Internet's global impact. It's a statement which has become a cliché. But it's not only the interaction between people which has changed, our relationship with companies has also evolved.

An example of this is the second largest social media service next to Facebook, namely Twitter¹. With its 140 character per message limitation it has created a simple yet creative way to interact with such a vast and broad world that is the Internet. Similar to a blog you can express your thoughts publicly. And just like an email you are able to send and receive personal messages. But with Twitter you have to get your message across with only 140 characters - Whether it's about everyday mundane happenings or in-depth comments regarding serious topics.

But what is the relation between Twitter and marketing? Companies and organizations want to tap into the ever growing social phenomena that is Twitter. It's the perfect place to connect with a target audience or show trust and transparency as a company. Large organizations hire social media experts who manages to build a bridge and a relationship between a company and the public. This can involve creating events, contests or in some way creatively get people to participate and take part in a brand, product or a company. But sponsored events such as these are often expensive and exclusively performed by large organizations.

I propose that there are ways to use the impact power of social media to a company, brand or product's advantage - Without relying on a big budget. With this in mind I invented a concept which I call *Then Mention me* and to my knowledge there are no other similar concepts or tools freely available on the market which resembles it. A Twitter marketing strategy which uses inexpensive means to create automated and predefined messages, sent out in large numbers, without being treated as spam. While being able to reach a vast amount of Twitter users, its most important asset is communication.

¹ <http://twitter.com>

1.1 Purpose

This chapter is to give the read a short introduction, including the purpose and what the paper and research aims to cover. Covering the paper's aim and goal defines what the theoretical as well as methodology chapter needs to feature. This chapter also include a description of the marketing experiment which is to complement the theoretical studies. Combining the theory and the method makes the purpose of the paper possible.

My goal is to find out if its possible to make a substantial impact from a promotional and marketing aspect using Twitter, I need to send out pre-defined, bulk messages without spamming. I propose that with the use of theories on the subject of trust, internet culture and communication patterns combined with previous related research it is possible to perform a marketing campaign with the use of Then mention me.

This paper aims to discover what Twitter marketing is and to test out a marketing campaign. To fully grasp what Twitter marketing is there are a number of topics which needs to be covered. We start off describing *Then Mention me*, the marketing method which is one of the reasons behind this paper, and include previous studies. Then we move onto the Twitter fundamentals and communication theories which are needed to conduct the research.

Then Mention me's marketing strategy is built on communicating using one direction monologue-like messages. Since Twitter is a dialog heavy communication platform, this marketing method has a lot against it. That's why it is important to answer my main research question:

How do you send pre-defined bulk messages to Twitter users, with the intent to promote a company, service or a product, without being treated as spam?

In order to deploy and make Then Mention me's limited communication features work the paper aims to dive in and analyze the communication aspects of Twitter. By covering theories

surrounding communication and trust, internet culture, digital marketing versus old marketing and previous studies, *Then Mention me*'s automated message can be modified and fit to suit the Twitter platform - Without being treated as spam.

If proving a monologue-esque communication approach to Twitter is possible, within the confines of the marketing example and the theories presented, it opens up for further interesting discussions regarding internet culture, communication and digital marketing in 2012.

1.2 Then Mention me - A Twitter marketing campaign

Twitter has been proven to be a great marketing resource for companies and businesses². And as previously mentioned a very high percentage of both US and European companies use Twitter. But the most successful brands and marketing promotions are made by large companies³.

That's why I set out to see if it's possible, as an individual and without a budget, to make a substantial impact from a promotional and marketing aspect using Twitter. Since it would be time consuming for one person to tweet enough messages to really gain desired results, I make use of an application called *TweetAttacks 2*. It's an application from which you can automatically send tweets based on a set of variables and parameters. These parameters involve sending out pre-defined messages to Twitter users whose tweet contains certain keywords. The application is useful since it can operate several Twitter accounts simultaneously, sending out tweets and follow others automatically around the clock. The problem is that while it is able to react on keywords, it doesn't know the full context of the keyword. Therefore it's a high probability that the receiver will think of the sender as a bot or the message received as either spam or as aggressive and annoying promotion.

But by combining previous research, concerning what Twitter users value and communication

²Elowitz, Ben. "The Top 10 Companies on Twitter." CNBC. Web. 10 May 2012. <http://www.cnbc.com/id/36421561/The_Top_10_Companies_on_Twitter>.

³Rachael King. "How Companies Use Twitter to Bolster Their Brands" Bloomberg Businessweek. Web. 6 September 2008 http://www.businessweek.com/technology/content/sep2008/tc2008095_320491.htm

strategies, with TweetAttacks 2 power to reach a massive amount of users - A free marketing campaign could turn out to be a possibility. I decided to name the marketing concept *Then Mention Me* set up a website, <http://thenmention.me>, where visitors can read about the concept and what possibilities it has. There is also a video included, explaining and showing how *Then Mention me* operates. My goal is to make a Twitter marketing example with the use of *Then Mention me*, and see if it successfully does not get treated as spam. I will perform a marketing campaign where the goal is to get people interested in a website.

To better get a grasp on how *Then Mention me* works, I will provide an example where we want to market the University of Gothenburg. First off, we decide one or several keywords which *Then Mention me* is suppose to look for and react upon if someone were to use it in a Twitter message. In our example we will use “university” and “apply”. Once someone is using those two keywords, *Then Mention me* uses one of the Twitter profiles it possess and automatically tweets to that person. In the reply the account will mention the University of Gothenburg, hence the name *Then Mention me*.



Image #1A A screenshot taken from Twitter.⁴

In the screenshot above Laura Bradshaw is an example of a person using the word “university” and “apply”. Now *Then Mention me* will reply back to her using a Twitter account and mention, or market, Gothenburg University. However, how do we convince Laura we are not spamming her, since we are sending out pre-defined bulk messages? Then Mention me has a set of limitations which makes this a problem.

⁴ <https://twitter.com/#!/search/realtime/university%20apply>

1.1.2 Then Mention me's limitations

There are two big problems with *Then Mention me* and its purpose - Spam and its limited communication abilities. Spam is also something Twitter inc. is aware of and they have spent as much as \$700.000 to combat spammers⁵.

Since my system is based on automising a form of communication on Twitter, there are similarities between what spam is and what *Then Mention me* produces.

“Spam is the use of electronic messaging systems to send unsolicited bulk messages indiscriminately. While the most widely recognized form of spam is e-mail spam, the term is applied to similar abuses in other media”⁶

If my system were set to react every time someone on Twitter mentioned the electronics company *Apple* it would automatically try to tweet to hundreds of thousands of people every day. Twitter's anti-spam filter would most likely terminate the Twitter accounts sending out these messages within hours or minutes - But the process would still be considered as *spamming*. The messages sent out would include the three characteristics of spam; Twitter users would have received unsolicited bulk messages indiscriminately.

⁵Bronsin, Victor. "Twitter Spam: Company Sues Major Tweet Spammers." *The Inquisitr*. 6 Apr. 2012. Web. 10 May 2012. <<http://www.inquisitr.com/216715/twitter-sues-major-tweet-spammers/>>.

⁶"Spam." *Wikipedia*. Wikimedia Foundation, 05 Aug. 2012. Web. 10 May 2012. <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spam>>.



Image #1C An example of a spam Twitter account and the messages it sends out taken from a guide which helps users detect spam⁷. Note that the user's name is GeorEllen and her Twitter username is bact78e5

Ultimately it is the receiver of the message who decides if it's spam or not. If the messages are not seen as either unsolicited or indiscriminating the fact that they are sent in bulk shouldn't matter. Although it is, in some cases, arguably a thin line between "regular" advertising and spam. But if the receiver were to notice that the message they received was automatically sent to them, they could suspect that it was sent in bulk. This makes the sender less trustworthy, less discreet and possibly a spammer.

Then Mention me's system is also based on sending out messages, not receiving or replying. This makes the ability to open up a discussion, dialog, reply, feedback or comments impossible.

⁷ Adam Walker Cleavland. "5 TIPS TO DETECT YOUR TWITTER SPAM" September 9 2009. Web. <<http://pomomusings.com/2009/09/09/twitter-spam/>>

Without a dialogue, the marketing method needs to convey a message and enough trust to convince the receiver to take part of the promotion. This is especially difficult when Twitter only allows for 140 characters.

1.1.3 Then Mention Me's Question

The problems facing Then Mention me is reflected in the previously mentioned research question: How do you send pre-defined bulk messages to Twitter users, with the intent to promote a company, service or a product, without being treated as spam?

1.2 Previous Research

1.2.1 Purposive Sampling on Twitter: A Case study

Social media, like Twitter and Facebook, is currently a hot topic within communication research. Its vast impact on today's society, news forums and communities makes it a popular subject matter. But there's no case studies made which closely resembles the concept behind what Then Mention me is set up to explore. Twitter has their own case studies, but they are meant to highlight their own paid marketing service⁸. However, there is one interesting case study made at the University of Colorado Denver Business School. Conducted in 2007, the study titled "Purposive Sampling on Twitter: A Case Study"⁹, explores the possibilities of getting survey applicants by using Twitter. And while it is from 2007, it has significant importance to this paper. It is the only previous research conducted which resembles Then Mention me. And there are no significant changes made to Twitter and its functions from 2007 up to now which would arguably affect the research results.

"This research examines recruitment through Twitter's @reply mechanism and compares the results to other survey recruitment methods."¹⁰

Recruiting people to take a survey is similar or equivalent to getting people interested in a website. While the subject matter behind the survey is different from Then Mention me as a service or product, they both aim to deliver a tweet which makes the receiver go from using Twitter to actively interact with a website. The case study also makes use of Twitter's @reply mechanism, which also is referred to @mention, which is what Then Mention me also will use.

⁸Twitter Inc. "Case Studies." Twitter for Business. Web. 10 May 2012. <<https://business.twitter.com/sv/optimize/case-studies/>>.

⁹ Christopher Sibona, Steven Walczak, "Purposive Sampling on Twitter: A Case Study," hicss, pp.3510-3519, 2012 45th Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences, 2012

¹⁰ Christopher Sibona, Steven Walczak, "Purposive Sampling on Twitter: A Case Study," hicss, pp.3510-3519, 2012 45th Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences, 2012

The results from the case study proved to be successful and delivered the amount of survey applicants the sender wanted.

“A total of 7,327 recruitment tweets were sent to Twitter users, 2,865 users started the survey and 1,544 users completed it which yielded an overall completion rate of 21.3 percent. The research presents the techniques used to make recruitment through Twitter successful.”¹¹

The researchers picked the Twitter users by using the following criterias, similar to how Then Mention me picks users to reply to.

- Screened for certain terms which fit the research project.
- Only picked users who had written tweets in English.

Other criteria's, such as age and gender, were established at the website and not through Twitter. To increase the response rate the authors used theories regarding social exchange studies from “*Internet, Mail, and Mixed-Mode Surveys: The Tailored Design Method*”¹² by Dillman etc. The social exchange studies tell us that a person's voluntary actions (which are mentioned as *costs*) are often motivated by the return the actions will bring (the *rewards* for doing it). But how will the participants know if they will receive the reward? That's where trust plays an important role. Other important factors, in which the Colorado Denver Business School survey uses to increase participation, are as follows.

- Researches should provide as much information about the research as possible.
- Describe and be transparent concerning how the results will be used.
- Asking the participant for help or advice.
- Mention that the person's opinion is important.

¹¹Christopher Sibona, Steven Walczak, "Purposive Sampling on Twitter: A Case Study," hicss, pp.3510-3519, 2012 45th Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences, 2012

¹² Dillman, D. A., Smyth, J. D., and Christian, L. M. (2008). *Internet, Mail, and Mixed-Mode Surveys: The Tailored Design Method*. Wiley, 3rd edition

- Student surveys are often regarded as positive, if the participant is a student themselves.
- Designing the survey in an interesting way.
- Provide social validation that others have enjoyed participating.
- Provide social trust within the social exchange.

It should be noted that while the research sent out @mentions to Twitter users, they did so manually. Therefore the tweets were screened before they were sent out. This is something which Then Mention me can't do since it sends out tweets automatically.

1.2.2 The Microsoft study

Microsoft research has published a new study regarding credibility on Twitter. The study, titled “Tweeting is believing? Understanding Microblog Credibility Perceptions”¹³ was published in February of this year. The study discusses the necessity of assessing and judging credibility by Twitter users. While breaking news and other substantial content is being distributed on the social media platform, it offers limited amount of information about the source. It should also be noted that a Twitter user only spends 3 seconds reading any given tweet¹⁴. Users searching on Twitter to find news are forced to use unique means of evaluation, to see if the tweet content is trustworthy or not.

Twitter users value getting followers, something which will be discussing in-depth in the next chapter. One might assume that following others tweets would be the main form of digesting Twitter content. But as the Microsoft research study mentions, searching has become one of the most important ways for users to keep themselves updated on current events. Similar to following others tweet updates, search terms can be saved as a feed. This means that users can get an update every time their pre-set search term is mentioned.

¹³Meredith Ringel Morris, Scott Counts, Aaron Hoff, Asta Roseway, and Julia Schwarz, “Tweeting is Believing? Understanding Microblog Credibility Perceptions”, Carnegie Mellon University, February 2012, <http://research.microsoft.com/pubs/155374/tweet_credibility_cscw2012.pdf>

¹⁴ Counts, S. and Fisher, K. Taking it All In? Visual Attention in Microblog Consumption. ICWSM 2011.

“[...] consuming social media by searching for a topic rather than following an author is becoming increasingly prevalent. By June 2011, Twitter’s search portal [search.twitter.com] was already servicing over 1.6 billion queries per day [...]”¹⁵

The study let participants evaluate both tweet content and its source (the user who tweeted). There were three topics involved; Politics, science, and entertainment. They used 18 different tweets from three different users. Profile pictures and usernames were chosen to represent and cover common user types and settings. The results, which were confirmed by a follow-up study, made for some interesting findings. Among the findings, and of importance to my case study set-up, were the following.

The participants had a hard time judging whether or not the **tweet content** was trustworthy or not. Within the three seconds spent on each tweet, the users did instead rely on other factors. These cues are as follows.

- Username
- Followers/following ratio
- Profile picture
- Correct grammar
- Geographics

The **username** proved to have a large effect on the credibility scale. A username which was related to the tweet content proved to increase trustworthiness. Maintaining a topical focus and consistency seems to be of importance when gaining trust.

The **followers and following ratio** proved to be important to the user validating a tweet. If a user

¹⁵ Meredith Ringel Morris, Scott Counts, Aaron Hoff, Asta Roseway, and Julia Schwarz, “Tweeting is Believing? Understanding Microblog Credibility Perceptions”, Carnegie Mellon University, February 2012, <http://research.microsoft.com/pubs/155374/tweet_credibility_cscw2012.pdf>

followed more people, in relation to the users following, the tweets were less credible.

Using the default **Twitter profile avatar** lowered the credibility rating. There were no major differences when using female, male or a generic avatar. However, if the avatar was topical, there was a slight difference. As an example, if a news tweet used a news related icon, the content was slightly more trustworthy.

If a tweet included **grammatical errors** it lowered the credibility. The report mentions that the 140 character limitation isn't an excuse to make grammar errors. "[...] users are encouraged to use standard grammar and spelling despite the space challenges of the short microblog format[...]"

Geographical aspects were also brought up. If a user reported a breaking story and where located close by, the tweet was regarded as more credible.

Maintaining a topical focus and consistency seems to be of importance when gaining trust. And judging by the study, consistency is of great importance not only to the tweets content but the context of the account, such as the profile picture and username. The mentioned five factors will be a great asset to complete a successful campaign using Then Mention me since they are able to be implemented to the messages and profiles which are going to be used.

1.3 Purpose summary

Combining previous studies with Then Mention me's marketing power is part of this paper's purpose and helps answer the main research question. However, a background to Twitter along with complementary theories are needed before the marketing test is executable. The messages which are sent out needs to be constructed with, not only previous studies in mind, but with theories as well.

Feature	Credibility Impact	Attention Received
non-standard grammar/punctuation	2.71	1.46
default user image	2.87	n.a
cartoon/avatar as user image	3.22	n.a.
author is following many users	3.30	1.29
logo as user image	3.37	n.a.
contains shortened URL	3.39	1.89
customized Twitter homepage	3.41	1.22
author location near you	3.43	1.34
contains hashtags	3.48	2.05
contains a URL	3.50	1.91
author tweets frequently	3.52	1.68
contains complete URL	3.57	1.80
near top of search result list	3.58	1.66
posted recently	3.59	2.10
is a reply	3.61	2.09
author has many followers	3.65	1.56
author bio suggests topic expertise	3.66	1.60
is a retweet	3.66	2.17
username is related to topic	3.67	1.85
author location near topic	3.67	1.34
author often mentioned/retweeted	3.69	1.66
personal photo as user image	3.70	n.a.
many tweets w/ similar content	3.71	2.07
author often tweets on topic	3.74	1.96
account has verification seal	3.92	1.83
author is someone you've heard of	3.93	2.37
contains URL you clicked thru to	3.93	2.20
author is someone you follow	4.00	2.40
verified author topic expertise	4.04	1.84
is a RT from someone you trust	4.08	2.43
user image, generally	n.a.	1.75

Table 1. Mean ratings for tweet features' perceived credibility impact (5-point scale; higher = more credibility) and attention typically allotted (3-point scale; higher = more attention).

Image #1 A chart made by Microsoft which indicates credibility impact and attention received. These are divided into several tables, including the cues mentioned. Note that the table which represents Attention received will be excluded and disregarded in this study.

2 Background

While Twitter is a relatively new online social based platform it has already established itself as a vital and important part of the Internet. This chapter includes an introduction to Twitter and its connection with both regular people and businesses. This background chapter will also cover the most common uses of Twitter as a marketing tool online.

2.1 What is Twitter?

Twitter was introduced as a micro-blogging and social network service in 2006. Its creator, Jack Dorsey, wanted to bring an SMS-like services where messages were limited by the amount of characters used. Messages, also referred to as updates, are known as tweets on Twitter and are text messages limited to 140 characters. The limitation was initially created to make Twitter compatible with SMS services, but the 140 characters boundary was never abandoned and is now seen as an integral and important feature. The music and tech festival *South by Southwest* held in Austin Texas 2007 was an important event as it increased the number of 20,000 tweets per day to 60,000¹⁶. By using a 60-inch screen, placed at the festival, users could see their tweets being posted live. Social software researcher Danah Boyd said that the medium “own[ed]” the festival. Social media bloggers took a liking to its networking and communication capabilities and helped spread the word.

In 2007 *Twitter inc.* was formed in San Francisco. Since its beginning that year the social network has seen a rapid growth. In 2009 the site was already the third most popular social networking site¹⁷. And by 2011 Twitter had over 300 million users with about 300 million tweets sent out per day¹⁸.

¹⁶Douglas, Nick. "Twitter Blows up at SXSW Conference." Gawker. 12 Mar. 2007. Web. 10 May 2012. <<http://gawker.com/243634/twitter-blows-up-at-sxsw-conference>>.

¹⁷Kazeniak, Andy. "Social Networks: Facebook Takes Over Top Spot, Twitter Climbs." Social Networks: Facebook Takes Over Top Spot, Twitter Climbs. 9 Feb. 2009. Web. 10 May 2012. <<http://blog.compete.com/2009/02/09/facebook-myspace-twitter-social-network/>>.

¹⁸Twitter Inc. "Your World, More Connected." Official Twitter Blog. 1 Aug. 2011. Web. 10 May 2012. <<http://blog.twitter.com/2011/08/your-world-more-connected.html>>.

2.1.1 Twitter features and functionality

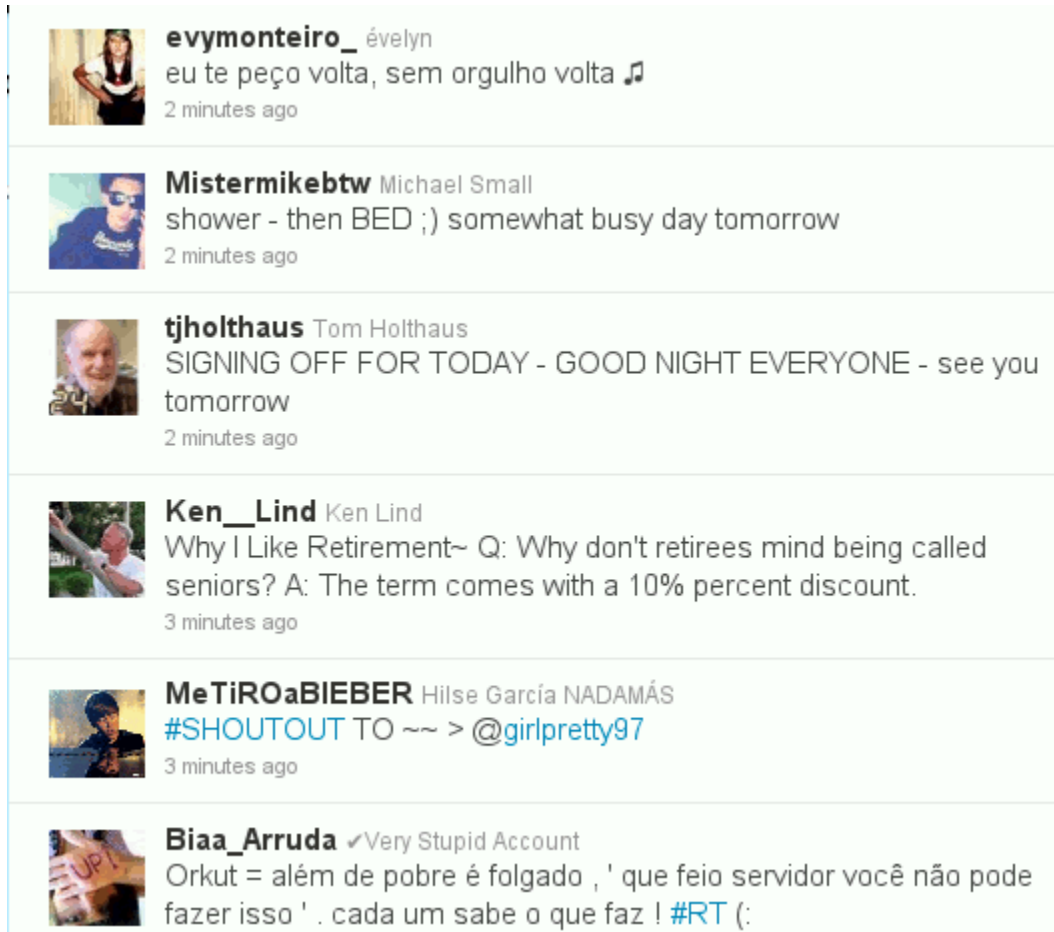


Image 1C A screenshot showcasing a few examples of tweets.¹⁹

Twitter has a number of features from which users can tweak and catalogue their own and others tweets. The following are common features and are part of the Twitter everyday lingo. When signing up you register a username of your choosing. Usernames are used to contact other Twitter users by using *@username* in a tweet. Using an *@* symbol next to a username are called *mentions* and automatically alerts the mentioned user. A tweet can include text, links, location, mentions and *hashtags*.

¹⁹ <http://twitter.com>

The # symbol is called a hashtag and are used to mark keywords and to set topics in a tweet. It makes searching and filtering out tweets easier. An example of this would be when a topic is *trending*. Trending topics could involve popular live events, happenings and world news. When the earthquake hit Japan in 2011, the hashtags #japanquake, #tsunami and #prayforjapan trended. Thousands of tweets per second, which made use of these hashtags, were sent out during the event²⁰. By searching for these hashtags Twitter users could follow and keep up to date with the news flow during the catastrophe.

But there are other uses of the hashtag. In 2012 an article in The New Yorker examined the different uses of hashtagging and tweets²¹. Hashtags can either work as commentary, disclaimers or as layers. A commentary tag would look similar to the following tweet:

“Republicans are ahead in the polls #letshopetheyloose”

In the example above, the hashtag is no longer used because of its sorting or indexing capabilities. As a disclaimer, the use of a tag is similar to an emoticon or a smilie. In some ways it makes up for the emotions which usually gets left out during a text conversation. An example would be:

“@JohnDoe should we really stay friends after this? #kidding”

The layering capabilities of a hashtag has many uses. It’s a way for the messenger to almost whisper, mutter or use another voice. It’s also a way to expand and make use of the 140 character limitations. Below is an example of a multi-layered message.

“I’m going to steal your husband! #kidding #hewishes #likeIwouldadmititanyway”

²⁰ Kiesow, Damon. "Social Media Resources for Japanese Earthquake, Tsunami Coverage | Poynter." *Poynter*. 11 Mar. 2011. Web. 10 May 2012. <<http://www.poynter.org/latest-news/media-lab/social-media/122986/social-media-resources-for-japanese-earthquake-coverage/>>.

²¹ Orlean, Susan. "Free Range: Hash : The New Yorker." *The New Yorker*. 29 June 2009. Web. 10 May 2012. <<http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/susanorlean/2010/06/hash.html>>.

It's almost as if "kidding" was uttered by mistake or as if "he wishes" was whispered.

A *retweet*, or *RT*, is when a user re-posts another person's message. This way the person who retweets the message shares it with its followers while the original poster gets credited. A retweet has the original content but with an included "retweeted from @username" included at the bottom of the message.

This could also be used to comment another ones tweet publicly. An example of this would be:

"Like that's going to happen RT Yes we can! retweeted from @ObamaCampaign"

If a user wants to send another user a private message there is *direct messaging*. While these messages are still limited to 140 characters they are sent privately to and from users, similar to emails. But to prevent spam you can only send direct messages to users who follow you.

Followers and the following functionality is one of the most important aspects of Twitter. If a user want to read and get updated with another user's tweets, it signs up as its follower. That way a user is constantly updated with a flow of tweets by following others. And much like following, users can save a search phrase, and every time the saved keyword or phrase is mentioned the user gets updated.

To get a better understanding of the content on Twitter, the most followed users on Twitter are celebrities and news outlets. A typical follow list also contains friends and persons with similar interests. As of March 2012 the most followed persons on Twitter is the singer Lady Gaga, with a record number of over 20 million followers. The highest ranking non-artist is President Barack Obama at number 8. The most popular news source is CNN Breaking news which is placed at number 29²².

2.1.2 Twitter message content

²² Twitaholic Inc. "Twitaholic." Top Twitter User Rankings & Stats. 02 Apr. 2012. Web. 10 May 2012. <<http://twitaholic.com/>>.

While you are able to direct message other users and get updated with others tweets, Twitter's main use is to let users express themselves using messages limited to 140 characters - Without having a specific respondent. To examine what Twitter messages usually contain, market-research Pear Analytics examined 2000 tweets and divided them into six categories in 2009²³.

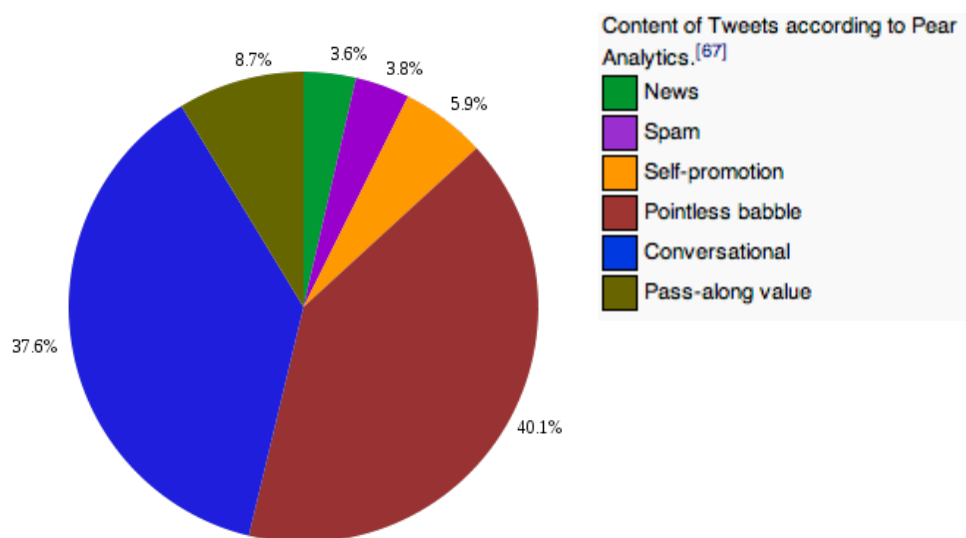


Image #2 Table of tweet content according to Pear Analytics²⁴

As noted by the study, the biggest category belongs to *pointless babble*. This could be noted as a rather derogatory term to describe communication content. Danah Boyd, a Research Assistant Professor in Media, Culture, and Communication at New York University, wrote an article which opposed the use of the term *pointless babble* and the study results²⁵. She argues that this is to be referred to as part of our social nature and to our use of phatic communication. Boyd finds

²³Pear Analytics. "Twitter Study." Pear Analytics, 2009. Web. 10 May 2012. <<http://www.pearanalytics.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/Twitter-Study-August-2009.pdf>>.

²⁴Pear Analytics. "Twitter Study." Pear Analytics, 2009. Web. 10 May 2012. <<http://www.pearanalytics.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/Twitter-Study-August-2009.pdf>>.

²⁵ Boyd, Danah. "Twitter: "pointless Babble" or Peripheral Awareness + Social Grooming?" Zephoria. 16 Sept. 2009. Web. 10 May 2012. <http://www.zephoria.org/thoughts/archives/2009/08/16/twitter_pointle.html/>.

that the term *social grooming*²⁶ is a better way to describe the most common form of content on Twitter.

“[...] online, we have to perform each and every aspect of our interactions. What comes out may look valueless, but, often, it’s embedded in this broader ecology of social connectivity. What’s so wrong about that?”²⁷

Retweets are a big part of what is being said on Twitter since it’s a form of repeating what someone else has said. A study show that 92% of the retweets sent out are because users think it’s interesting. Close to that comes humor at 84% and personal connection at 66%. Due to different promotional campaigns 32% of retweets are made because of incentives. An example of this would be an artist offering a music download in exchange for a retweet.

2.1.3 Twitter demographics

Since its launch in 2006, Twitter has grown at a tremendous rate. From 5,000 tweets per day in 2007 to 200 million tweets per day in 2011²⁸. The company isn’t particularly transparent when it comes to the amount of users they have and how actively they interact and participate. However, there are a large amount of marketing firms who have conducted independent statistics research studies.

As an example, in 2011 a total of 20.6 million Americans logged in and used the social media network at least one time per month²⁹. That’s 8% of the US internet users. And even if not

²⁶ In social animals, including humans, social grooming or allogrooming is an activity in which individuals in [cont] a group clean or maintain one another's body or appearance. It is a major social activity, and a means by which animals who live in proximity can bond and reinforce social structures, family links, and build relationships. Social grooming is also used as a form of reconciliation and a means of conflict resolution in some species. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_grooming

²⁷ http://www.zephoria.org/thoughts/archives/2009/08/16/twitter_pointle.html/

²⁸Gervai, Anna. "Updated Twitter Statistics." Marketing Gum. 7 July 2011. Web. 10 May 2012. <<http://www.marketinggum.com/twitter-statistics-2011-updated-stats/>>.

²⁹Alex, Anson. "WorldWide Twitter Demographics." Anson Alex. 7 June 2011. Web. 10 May 2012. <<http://ansonalex.com/technology/worldwide-twitter-demographics-infographic/#infographic>>.

everyone in America has access to the internet, 87% of all American are aware of Twitter. There's also slightly more women in the states who use Twitter, making up for 52% of its members.

While early adopters to blogs and Facebook were mostly consisting of younger people, Twitter found its install base within the twenty plus audience. This is still prominent since in 2011, 30% of Twitter users were between the age of 26 to 34. Only 13% were between 18 to 25. While these statistics are based on US demographics alone, Twitter is a global phenomena³⁰³¹.

As of March 2012 Alexa, who is a well respected web information company, placed Twitter as the tenth most popular site in the world³². Google, Facebook and Youtube are currently holding the top three rankings. Among the top countries who use the social media service are European countries such as the UK, Germany, India, Brazil and Australia. A country like Japan often use their own Japanese alternatives to search engines or networking sites such as Google and Facebook. But with Twitter it's different as Japan makes up of 7.1% of the network's total traffic³³.

2.2 Twitter as a marketing tool

One of the most interesting findings when analyzing Twitter's demographic is the way in which members are connected to companies. In 2010 a total of 25% of the users from the US, followed

³⁰ Red Orbit. "The Global Twitter Phenomenon" July 2008. Web <http://www.redorbit.com/news/technology/1677093/the_global_twitter_phenomenon/>

³¹ Digital Spy. "Social networking now 'global phenomenon', says Ofcom" Andrew Laughlin. Dec 14 2011. Web. <<http://www.digitalspy.co.uk/media/news/a355939/social-networking-now-global-phenomenon-says-ofcom.html>>

³² Alexa Inc. "Top Sites." Alexa Top 500 Global Sites. 10 May 2012. Web. 10 May 2012. <<http://www.alexa.com/topsites>>.

³³Gervai, Anna. "Updated Twitter Statistics." Marketing Gum. 7 July 2011. Web. 10 May 2012. <<http://www.marketinggum.com/twitter-statistics-2011-updated-stats/>>.

a brand³⁴. But what is the incentive to follow a company or a brand? And how do companies integrate Twitter and its uses?

2.2.1 Businesses and Twitter

Back in 2010 72% of all US companies had at least one Twitter account and in Europe, that percentage amounts to 83% of all companies³⁵. Clearly businesses are seeing potential in using the social network and the importance to at least have an account. What started of as employees tweeting about their business has evolved into support services, internal communication, communities and marketing strategies.

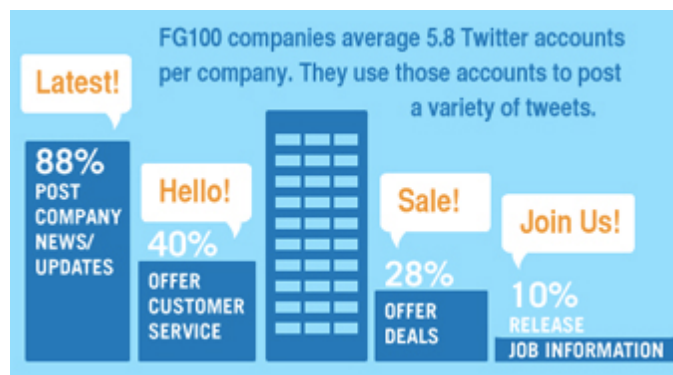


Image #3 An infograph featuring companies Twitter usage in the US³⁶

A study has shown that companies tend to use Twitter in four different ways; direct, indirect, internal and as inbound signaling³⁷. The direct method uses Twitter as an extension to a corporate blog. These accounts usually provide news, press releases, business accomplishments

³⁴DigitalSurgeons.com. "Facebook versus Twitter." Digital Surgeons. 2011. Web. 10 May 2012. <<http://www.digitalsurgeons.com/facebook-vs-twitter-infographic/>>.

³⁵ DigitalSurgeons.com. "Facebook versus Twitter." Digital Surgeons. 2011. Web. 10 May 2012. <<http://www.digitalsurgeons.com/facebook-vs-twitter-infographic/>>.

³⁶ DigitalSurgeons.com. "Facebook versus Twitter." Digital Surgeons. 2011. Web. 7 May 2012. <<http://www.digitalsurgeons.com/facebook-vs-twitter-infographic/>>.

³⁷ Pattey, Christy. "Gartner Highlights Four Ways in Which Enterprises Are Using Twitter." Gartner Highlights Four Ways in Which Enterprises Are Using Twitter. STAMFORD, Conn., 26 Mar. 2011. Web. 10 May 2012. <<http://www.gartner.com/it/page.jsp?id=920813>>

and links to promotional sites. This types of accounts are the most straightforward and common Twitter accounts among organizations. But since Twitter is originally based on peer to peer communication it could harm the companies name if these accounts are used extensively. Web analysts and marketers warn that the Twitter community isn't prone to like and spread content from accounts which only serves as self-promoting and self-serving tweets³⁸. Users tend to follow and support Twitter users with a more personal touch. This could explain why celebrities personal accounts have the most followers³⁹.

Using this direct form of communication via Twitter also includes replying to messages. Not all companies tend to do this, but those who do have an opportunity to strengthen their public relations. An example of this is the computer company Dell who has created several Twitter accounts to actively meet their customers different needs and requests. They have several support accounts, one account which alerts followers about Dell's deals and a social media team which follows events on Twitter, blogs and other social media sites. One of those accounts from Dell is run by Richard Binhammer. He describes his role within Dell as "...no title. for the past two years I have been focused on listening, learning and engaging with blogs and others in social media."⁴⁰ Binhammer's account has his own face as the Twitter profile picture, with the Dell logo included. This is common among similar corporate Tweet accounts, which to other Twitter users is described as something positive.



³⁸Perez, Sarah. "How Companies Use Twitter." ReadWriteWeb. Web. 10 May 2012. <<http://www.readriteweb.com/enterprise/2009/03/4-ways-companies-use-twitter-for-business.php>>.

³⁹ Twitaholic Inc. "Twitaholic." Top Twitter User Rankings & Stats. 02 Apr. 2012. Web. 10 May 2012. <<http://twitaholic.com/>>.

⁴⁰ Van Grove, Jennifer. "Featured in Social Media." Mashable. 21 Jan. 2009. Web. 10 May 2012. <<http://mashable.com/2009/01/21/best-twitter-brands/>>.

Image #3B A screenshot of Comcast's Twitter account⁴¹. Note that his name is Bill Gerth and his username is comcastcares.

“[Regarding Comcast⁴² support Twitter account] what I personally like about their profile is the real person photo instead of the company logo.”⁴³

The second method in which companies tend to use Twitter is the *indirect* use. An independent company, which doesn't have the budget to dedicate a person or team to handle public relations or social media, could strengthen its communication channels by letting employees use Twitter. When the employees use Twitter to enhance their own personal reputation, the company as a whole could benefit from this. Satisfied employees who are expressing themselves via Twitter gives the company a good reputation for free. The downside is the opposite phenomena - The employees have the power to give the company a bad reputation. An example of this is back in 2008 when the internet company Yahoo fired 1500 of their employees. One of them were Yahoo employee and Twitter user Emily West who expressed her anger toward the company throughout the ordeal⁴⁴.

The third method is the use of Twitter *internally*. Personnel could enable Twitter as a quick way to reach other employees or departments. It could also work as a managing tool, overseeing the internal communication by looking what the tweets contain. The problem is the lack of security, even if Twitter allows for people to send and receive tweets privately. Therefore the use of Twitter as a internal communication method is rare, especially among larger companies.

Inbound signaling is the fourth form of Twitter usage. The previous methods have been focusing on using Twitter to communicate a message, but inbound signaling is when you use the social

⁴¹"Comcast Official Twitter Account." Twitter.com. 10 Apr. 2012. Web. 10 May 2012. <<http://twitter.com/#!/comcastcares>>.

⁴²"Comcast Official Twitter Account." Twitter.com. 10 Apr. 2012. Web. 10 May 2012. <<http://twitter.com/#!/comcastcares>>.

⁴³Smarty, Ann. "16 Examples of Huge Brands Using Twitter for Business." SEJ. 7 Oct. 2008. Web. 10 May 2012. <<http://www.searchenginejournal.com/16-examples-of-huge-brands-using-twitter-for-business/7792/>>.

⁴⁴Carlson, Nicholas. "Yahoo Employee Twitters Through Layoff (YHOO)." Business Insider. 10 Dec. 2008. Web. 10 May 2012. <<http://www.businessinsider.com/2008/12/twittering-the-yahoo-layoffs-yhoo>>.

media to listen instead. Keeping track on what is being said about your company, brand or competitors is easy using the Twitter search engine or following hashtags. Companies invested into this method are able to detect problems, concerns or other form of buzz from existing or possible customers. It also makes the very difficult, but profitable, trend predictions easier.

2.2.2 Common marketing methods using Twitter - Follow me and I'll follow you

The most popular method to attract attention, and to use Twitter as a marketing tool, is getting as many followers as possible as evident when using Google Adwords. As of February 2012, the phrase “get twitter followers” is being searched 165 000 times per month using Google’s search engine⁴⁵. Having many followers gets the word out and helps spread messages. But there are a number of problems when trying to market via Twitter by getting followers.

Since it’s the most popular method it’s highly saturated. When searching on Google there are thousands of websites which sell followers. One example is from the market place Fiverr.com where sellers offers thousands of followers at a standard rate of \$5. An example is a seller from India who claims to “[...] add more than 15,999+ twitter followers maximum in Few hours”⁴⁶ for only \$5. While the seller most likely will provide the followers, they are either bots or fake accounts. Even if the followers weren’t made up of fake accounts, the chances of them being active Twitter users, or actually interested in the niche they are following, is slim to none.

Twitter has also numerous rules and algorithms to ban accounts which either follows too many or gets too many followers in a short period of time. Twitter calls this “aggressive following” and is mentioned in their “Following Rules and Best Practices”⁴⁷.

⁴⁵ "AdWords." Google. 10 Apr. 2012. Web. 10 May 2012. <<https://adwords.google.com/>>.

⁴⁶"I Will Add More than 9999 Twitter Followers Maximum in Few Hours, WITHOUT Needing Your Password for \$5." Fiverr.com. Web. 10 May 2012. <<http://fiverr.com/buyyoutube/add-more-than-15999-twitter-followers-maximum-in-few-hours-without-needing-your-password>>.

⁴⁷Twitter Inc. "Following Rules and Best Practices." Twitter Help Center. Web. 10 May 2012. <<http://support.twitter.com/articles/68916-following-rules-and-best-practices>>.

“If some accounts are aggressively or indiscriminately following hundreds of accounts just to garner attention, it makes Twitter a less-nice place to hang out.”⁴⁸

Twitter users also tend to use The follow-back principle to gain more followers. This is when users simply follow others and hope that those users will follow back. If they aren't following them back they simply unfollow and the process is repeated. Twitter is aware of this and employ secret algorithms and moderators who prevent this from happening. Still, Twitter can't ban the technique completely since a large portion of the community uses the follow-back principle. There's even a common hashtag called #teamfollowback which users place in their profile description or in tweets to indicate that they will follow back, if you follow them⁴⁹.

While placing the hashtag #teamfollowback or advocating the follow-back principle might be suitable for a person using Twitter, it's not suitable for businesses using Twitter. One of the main reasons is that it doesn't allow for natural interaction. There's no incentive to the follower other than getting a follower in return. Following other people to gain more followers could possibly hurt your brand as well. An official business Twitter account which follows thousands of users doesn't look legitimate to a somewhat experienced Twitter user. Therefore credibility gets lost if someone thinks a business is falsifying or modifying its statistics. And as we're about to learn, trust is the most important factor on Twitter.

It is important to note that having followers is still a very important factor when marketing via Twitter. If the author of a tweet is someone you follow, it is the third most important factor when trying to gain credibility on Twitter⁵⁰. But gaining followers, by using incentives such as

⁴⁸Twitter Inc. "Following Rules and Best Practices." Twitter Help Center. Web. 10 May 2012. <<http://support.twitter.com/articles/68916-following-rules-and-best-practices>>.

⁴⁹"Definition of Teamfollowback." What Does Teamfollowback Mean on Twitter or Google ? Web. 10 May 2012. <<http://tagdef.com/teamfollowback>>.

⁵⁰Sonderman, Jeff. "Study: The Most Credible Tweets Come from People We Trust, Follow." Poynter. 15 Mar. 2012. Web. 10 May 2012. <<http://www.poynter.org/latest-news/media-lab/social-media/166612/study-the-most-credible-tweets-come-from-people-we-trust-follow/>>.

#teamfollowback, is often not recommended by web marketers⁵¹.

The information used in this chapter will be applied to Then Mention me and its marketing campaign study. It is important to avoid common marketing methods used on Twitter and maintain Then Mention me as a unique marketing method, thereby bridging the gap between simple spam marketing and Then Mention me.

⁵¹ KJ. "4 Reasons Your Brand Should Avoid #TeamFollowBack Like the Plague." H1GHER LEARNING. Web. 10 May 2012. <<http://tinyurl.com/bp2ueow>>.

3 Theories

3.1 Digital Marketing

Digital marketing is evolving in a fast pace. Since the Internet revolution in the '90s we've seen web based sites, services and systems come and gone. But there a few key developments which has had a long term effect on how we use the web and digital marketing.

One of the most important contribution to the internet evolution is Web 2.0, also known as the social web. Previously the web was based on a hierarchical one-sided communication tool⁵², where websites were the one providing information to the user. With the introduction of blogs, Facebook and Twitter the emphasis is on the user interactions and participation.

The changes made to the web have not only affected how sites are created or how users interact with content, it also affected the role of the marketer. Prior Web 2.0, information was *pushed* to the key demographics and markets, but now users have more control and empowerment when it comes to information. Since sharing is a big part of the web nowadays, the communication models aren't monologue based, where one company informs many. Instead, it's based on dialogue, where one-to-one communication and many-to-many plays important roles⁵³. Another way of describing this is by how the market role has changed from audience targeted to participant targeted. Facebook *likes* is one example of this, where users vote whether a product, service or company is good. This is done by adding their "like" and letting their fellow Facebook friends know what they like and dislike⁵⁴.

Before, awareness was a key factor to a successful offline campaign but it was a factor which didn't translate well to the online business. And while it is still present in online marketing, the challenge is now to engage online. And for a marketer it's difficult to actually purchase

⁵²Judy Motion, (2001) "Electronic relationships: Interactivity, Internet branding and the public sphere", Journal of Communication Management, Vol. 5 Iss: 3, pp.217 - 230

⁵³ Paul Baines, Chris Fill, Kelly Page, *Marketing*, Oxford University Press, UK, 2011

⁵⁴ How stuff works. Garth Sundem. "How to Use Facebook" Unknown date. Web. <<http://computer.howstuffworks.com/internet/tips/how-to-use-facebook.htm>>

engagement, since you need unique and creative methods. An example of this is growing a brand's social capital. The capital is based on the relations between individuals. And there are studies which have shown that there is a connection between online social capital, such as Facebook usage, and offline, such as individual social capital⁵⁵. This proves that the offline and online environment are integrated with each other. Therefore you need to take considerable risks when building a brand, both online and offline, since social networks and how they interact with each other can't be controlled. One example of this is McDonalds who promoted and engaged people to share their thoughts about their foods on Twitter. In January of 2012 the company asked people to share fond memories about McDonalds using the Twitter hashtag #McDstories. It was an attempt to get people engaged naturally and organically in order to get a viral campaign on the social network. This failed miserably as the hashtag became subject of people telling horror stories from past McDonalds experiences. The company pulled down the campaign, two hours after it had begun, but since a hashtag can't be owned or controlled on Twitter, the use of the hashtag continued.⁵⁶

To deal with the difficulties of market something via social media platforms, companies tend to hire social media experts. Even bigger companies also use in-house teams, especially dedicated to social media platforms - As evident in the previously mentioned Dell Twitter accounts.

There is said to be four key features attached to social web marketing⁵⁷, which is vastly different from other online marketing areas. The first, *sharing control*, is what McDonalds was affected by when their promotional campaign couldn't be controlled. Users in a computer based network are free to share and modify content in any way they desire. A brand manager's role has been downgraded to be a co-creator and co-owner of the brand.

A second important factor to social web marketing are user-generated and co-created content. User-generated web platforms are common since the Web 2.0 introduction. Youtube, the video

⁵⁵ Paul Baines, Chris Fill, Kelly Page, *Marketing*, Oxford University Press, UK, 2011

⁵⁶Biddle, Sam. "McDonald's Twitter Marketing Turns into Disgusting Customer Revolt." Gizmodo. 24 Jan. 2012. Web. 10 May 2012. <<http://gizmodo.com/5878938/mcdonalds-twitter-marketing-turns-into-disgusting-customer-revolt>>.

⁵⁷ Paul Baines, Chris Fill, Kelly Page, *Marketing*, Oxford University Press, UK, 2011

sharing site, and Flickr, the photo sharing site, are both examples of user-generated content. Since computer software, such as photo editing programs, are relatively cheap and targeted to both professional and novice users it's easy to create promotional content. Fans are now able to create, publish and promote their own ads about a product or company. There is also co-created content where users collaborate to achieve and produce content. Wikipedia is the best known example of this. However, a marketer would be able to study these types of creations and could analyze and reveal users perspective on products and brands. There's also a great opportunity to increase brand followers and have users sharing their appreciations to others.

The third is community and social media. As previously mentioned, it's a way to connect and build relations between people. Unlike before, the relations are creating a "small world" phenomena and mentality. One examples of this is how individuals and companies now have an easier and better way to connect to each other. It's important to note the fact that people do not use social media platforms because they either want ads or promotional information from companies. The main reasons are because of the connectivity abilities between friends and colleagues⁵⁸.

The fourth major difference between social web marketing and regular offline marketing are conversations and dialogue. Before social media became an important part of business culture, the one-way communication style rarely had to have a dialogue with its audience. With a social media platform like Twitter the conversation and dialogue is key. It's usually not enough to start a Facebook group or a Twitter account and connect it to a company profile. There has to be an interactivity aspect where the accounts are used and open for discussion with individuals.

3.2 Communicating trust

As witnessed in the previous research, credibility and trust are of great importance on Twitter. But what is trust and how is it gained according to communication theories? This is an important

⁵⁸TweetPoll.com," What Is Your Main Use of Twitter?" Web. 10 May 2012. <<http://twtpoll.com/lxgrkz>>.

part of *Then Mention me* since it needs to convey trust when replying and marketing to a person. It would also help *Then Mention me* to not resemble spam.

3.2.1 Trust as a construct

Trust is often used as a construct according to Dr. Duane C. Tway, Jr. in 1993. He declared that the construct of trust was "the state of readiness for unguarded interaction with someone or something"⁵⁹. A statement which has since lived on and is common among business descriptions.

Others describe trust as a cooperation. It's a way for individuals to engage and agree to a similar goal thus creating a cooperation. But for the individuals to engage and be confident regarding a possible cooperation the communicators need trust. Beforehand we often detect and analyze the risks whether or not to engage in a cooperation. Therefore trust and detecting risks are related. Usually there are risks involved, especially when a proposal is made. But with the use of trust the participants could be willing to engage in the cooperation. There might be many obstacles the participants are aware of before starting up a communication - But with trust you are willing to take the risk. And as noticed in the Microsoft research, Twitter users detect risks by using the cues; Username, profile picture, location and so on.

So what is the relation between communication and trust? Often we can build trust by communicating. As an example, there might be huge risks in the beginning of a company start-up, but along the way and with communication, the trust engages the participants to continue reaching goals. Intentions, expectations and the violations of these are often unavoidable to a certain degree. Discussing these problems often builds trust - Knowing that nothing is kept secret from each other. The "worth" of each other grows with these types of communications, creating *trustworthy* relationships.

There are interesting factors and terms which have a strong connection to cooperations,

⁵⁹ Susan M. Heathfield. "About: Human Resources" Unknown date. Web. <<http://humanresources.about.com/od/glossary/g/trust.htm>>

communication and trust. The following four are, in my opinion, important to establish before conducting the marketing case study. They are often based on dialogue and since it is an important part of Twitter, there are similarities between offline business and social environments, with an online business and social environment. The factors are included in Robert Axelrod's "The Evolution of Cooperation"⁶⁰.

Reciprocity

The level of trust is often revealed in how you respond to one and other. Reciprocity deals with the amount of value you answer the initiator. It might be difficult to always measure but it's an important factor in a cooperation nonetheless⁶¹.

Labels

If a business is divided into different groups they are easily labeled. Teams with an organization might be labeled as a group in which you either belong to or to avoid. These labels are often built on stereotypes.

Reputation

Trust can involve a certain amount of reputation. If the cooperator invites others to participate with her or him, this person builds a trustworthy reputation. A free-rider is the opposite, a person which has the reputation of being a defector.

Territoriality

Trust and cooperation has a territoriality aspect to it. The closer we are, both in territory and in culture, the more we tend to trust and cooperate with that member. This also involves different thoughts concerning ideas, perspective, attributes and so on. A good example of this is concerning where members are on the political scale. If they share a common belief the willingness to trust and cooperate becomes larger.

⁶⁰ Robert Axelrod. "The Evolution of Cooperation" New York: Basic Books. 1984.

⁶¹ James C. Cox "How to identify trust and reciprocity". Department of Economics, 401 McClelland Hall, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ 85721-0108, USA. Received 12 April 2001 <<http://econ.ucsd.edu/~jandreon/Econ264/papers/Cox%20GEB%202004.pdf>>

As previously mentioned, these four factors are common among larger businesses. But you can grasp or sense that these are also related to social media communication structure as well. Reciprocity has an important role when replying and mentioning others on Twitter. Twitter users also label themselves and their tweets using hashtags. Reputation is arguably represented in the followers/following ratio, where the user has gained a reputation represented in the number of followers. And territoriality is also represented, as mentioned in the research results where geographic factors played an important role when building trust.

3.2.2 Trust and co-operation

Sometimes we are forced to trust one and other. It's simply better to do certain things in a group because it will be better executed. The goal or idea might need a firm decision making and the workload need to be divided. There is also an emotional reward which comes from communicating within teams or groups. There's a greater sense of satisfaction when a cooperation has reached its goal, at least in supportive team works. Support is an important factor since it also reduces stress. It can also help reduce negative feelings or emotions towards others as well as the cooperation as a whole. As always, communication, coordination and trust plays a big part in making these mentioned factors successful and working.

Matt Ridley has a similar list of keywords⁶² to the one we previously mentioned. But there are interesting differences and he also includes the "there are things we cannot do alone" aspect as well. In his list of six factors he declares corporations and trust as something selfish.

"It is selfish to cooperate"

As mentioned before, there are things we do better if we are a group. Ridley says this is due to selfishness because a person realizes he or she is better off if they cooperate with others.

⁶² Matt Ridley. "The Origins of Virtue" Penguin Press Science. 1997. <<http://www.amazon.co.uk/exec/obidos/ASIN/0140244042/thegreatdebat-21>>

Division of labor

As Ridley often speaks in terms of "I am", he also explains the division of labor as something selfish. If I'm specialized or good at something special, others can be specialized in something too. And this *something* is different from mine we could complement each other.

Gifts and obligations

If a member of a cooperation gives another member something, the member has to give something back of equal worth. It has to do with contributions, not gifts, and makes the strive for a common goal easier.

The selfish group

Similar to his statement that "it is selfish to cooperate" he mentions that we are better off as a group if we cooperate. This also involves groups competing against each other.

Trust and social capital

Trust is a form of social capital. And this is similar to money which is a financial capital.

Hashtags on Twitter is one example of a co-operation, where a network of individuals establish what is to be included in the information stream. On the other hand, the followers and following-ratio has a individualistic or selfish approach to it as well - To gain a great number of followers could be related to social capital. The more followers you have, the bigger impact your messages have.

3.3 Internet culture

While Twitter's demographic statistics reveal some of the cultural aspects of the social network, it's vital for the case study to get a broader grasp of internet culture. Is the internet its own culture for which everyone has to adjust to? Or are there cultural clashes happening, just like in real world practises? Since the case study is set to target a broad audience, it's important to know if we're dealing with one or several cultures.

“Technological reality is not a truly human order because there are no subjective qualities involved: no love, no beauty, no poetics, no art and no intrinsic value.”⁶³

The internet is for many people a part of the modern societies daily routines. Its vast selection of uses makes it a part of our reality, either as a complementary tool or as a direct method to interacting with the world. The quote above was written by Peter Raine, and focuses on his thoughts on the limitations of which the virtual internet world possesses and creates. Raine states that we are naive and can't see the negative impact the virtual worlds have on our cultural backgrounds and world view. And while the quote might seem harsh and provocative, there are evidence to be found, with both positive and negative cultural impact factors surrounding the globalisation caused by the net.

As previously mentioned, the internet and Twitter brings cultures closer together. It lessens

⁶³ The Internet: Intercultural Communication and the Idea of Sustainability, Peter Raine, International Honours Program USA, 2002, <http://www.irma-international.org/viewtitle/24635/>

the disparity between cultures, especially with its use of English as its main language. The anonymity of the medium also lessens racial, gender and stereotype problems often related to cultural clashes. Another aspect would be to explore different personalities which had hitherto gone unexpressed. This could be related to suppressed characteristics of some cultures, where a person gets the chance to live more freely. The anonymity has its positive feedback due to people exploring other cultural and gender roles. This is witnessed in studies where online role playing gamers seems to explore other roles which are different to its real life persona. One examples of this would be when a person fakes its real gender, not to harm or deceive, but to explore a world with new eyes and characteristics.

In these studies the web is described as monolithic, a one giant cultural community. There is evidence of this in the beginning of the 1990s when the computer connections became more and more public. Prof. Brenda Danta of Sociology & Communication spoke about these occurrences in a lecture from 2002:

“In some respects it was probably justified to speak in monolithic fashion of "Internet culture" or "virtual culture" in the late 1990s. To some extent, so-called "Netizens" did come increasingly to share some elements of a common way of life--common jargon, attitudes, skills, and practices [...]"⁶⁴

But what are the downsides to having a monolithic cultural community? Previously I mentioned that disparity among cultures lessened with the internet globalisation, but that's not entirely true. It also has the opposite effect since its the wealthy cultures which has access to the web. One article describes this effect as “Universal access does not automatically mean universal power [...]"⁶⁵. The power over the internet is controlled by the users who uses it and creates its content. So one way of looking at it is - the more the web increases in size, the more control its users has, and the users comes from the wealthy cultures.

⁶⁴ Communication and culture on the internet, Brenda Danet, European Union Summer School, University of Rome, June 2002, Lecture I. Page 11 <http://pluto.msc.huji.ac.il/~msdanet/papers/comm-cult.pdf>

⁶⁵ Technology of Inter-cultural Communication, Unknown author, <http://www.bowneglobal.com/latest/technology-of-inter-cultural-communication.html>

Since most of the studies concerning cultural aspects of the net and Twitter are relatively new it is interesting to witness new forms of concepts emerging. I stumbled upon one which was particularly interesting, titled “equal digital opportunities”⁶⁶. It explains the problem at hand rather well since opportunities are lost from those cultures which aren’t able to keep up with the modern societies development. Primarily because the internet is itself a spatial, ever evolving product and the tools to interact with it are still subject to cultural and economic constraints.

3.4 Summary

To summarize, the key elements to take into consideration when creating accounts and predefined tweet messages for Then Mention me would be; The new digital market, trust in communication and internet culture. These are three factors which I believe spam does not incorporate on Twitter.

However, regarding the digital marketing revolution and how it has changed from pushing a message to opening up a dialog, is something which can’t be implemented in the Then Mention me method. Since the automated system can’t reply back or communicate it has to convey and push all of the needed promotional information in one message. The effects of this will be discussed in the study case analyzation chapter.

To gain trust the credibility impact factors, mentioned in the Microsoft study, will be incorporated. Contextual profile pictures will be used, as well as using invitations which was mentioned in the reciprocity section. Labeling correctly, based on the Twitter lingo, will also be used to strengthen the trust factor. Reputation was also mentioned as an important aspect and this will be incorporated with the use of a positive follow and following ratio. Meaning that the accounts used for the Then Mention me process will have a larger amount of followers than users it is following.

Treating the Twitter platform as a monolithic culture, centered around one common culture, will

⁶⁶ Technology of Inter-cultural Communication, Unknown author, <http://www.bowneglobal.com/latest/technology-of-inter-cultural-communication.html>

be incorporated. Therefore participants will not be divided into or treated as originating from different countries.

4 Method

In this method chapter I'll aim to test the marketing potential of *Then Mention me*. Its main purpose is to support an answer given to the main research question:

How do you send pre-defined bulk messages to Twitter users, with the intent to promote a company, service or a product, without being treated as spam?

My case study is based on a quantitative data collection approach. I've chosen this approach since I measure and separate my target audience into two categories - If they treat my messages as spam or not. Since the messages are sent out as predefined bulk messages, it is fitting to make use of the quantitative methodology approach since mass amounts of participants is a key factor. Especially since the process have similarities with spam in regards to bulk messages sent out in large quantities.

4.1 Data collection

My primary data collection source is a survey limited to one question, with a yes or no answer. This is made to keep the study results as transparent as possible and to avoid the common problems when using a survey, such as response rate and design problems⁶⁷. The survey question is: "Did the Twitter message which brought you here bother you? - Yes or no."

The click-through-rate (CTR⁶⁸) will also be measured and collected. The CTR data will reveal and enable comparison between the number of messages sent out and how many participants

⁶⁷Unknown Author. "Primary Data Collection Methods." Brent.tvu.ac.uk. Web. 10 May 2012. <<http://brent.tvu.ac.uk/dissguide/hm1u3/hm1u3text3.htm>>.

⁶⁸Drolias Dr. B. 2007. Pay-Per-Click: The Complete Guide, London: Lulu. Page 33 <http://books.google.se/books?id=edp0ukH_2yoC&dq=Pay-Per-Click:+The+Complete+Guide&hl=sv&source=gbs_navlinks_s>.

who actually clicked on the link included in the message. If the CTR results are low it will show that there are impact factors which are affecting the results. This is common among paid for campaigns when marketing on the internet⁶⁹. My secondary data is limited to previous studies, the mentioned theories as well as any replies or comments made by the participants. This is used to explain the outcome and findings.

4.2 Structure and approach

I have created and set up a membership website titled *All that is art*. The website is made exclusively for the case study and is located at <http://allthatisart.com>. The site's main function is to serve as an example of an interactive online service. The site targets urban art collectors and describes itself as “*All that is art* is for sharing yours and others art collection.”⁷⁰. Similar to other websites, All that is art favors people who register and becomes a member of the site. Membership is free and has no purpose or function to it while the case study is performed. Neither does any other site functionality or service work properly except the survey section. Registrations or any other site activity is recorded but not monitored. This is due to the complexity of the site itself as well as its own social functionality and target demographic.

Since the study has to market something in order to answer my request question, I use *All that is art* and try to promote it to Twitter users by using my *Then Mention me* system.

First off I decide which Twitter users to market to. Since the website is about art, I want to target those Twitter users which are interested in art. Therefore I select an artist which is often discussed on Twitter. I choose an artist by the name of Brian Donnelly, who is often referred to as “KAWS”⁷¹. Using a name as unique as KAWS allows me to easily find people who discusses the artist on Twitter and making sure I do not reply to someone out of context. I've

⁶⁹ Drolias Dr. B. 2007. Pay-Per-Click: The Complete Guide, London: Lulu. Page 33 <http://books.google.se/books?id=edp0ukH_2yoC&dq=Pay-Per-Click:+The+Complete+Guide&hl=sv&source=gbs_navlinks_s>.

⁷⁰ <http://allthatisart.com>

⁷¹ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/KAWS_\(artist\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/KAWS_(artist))

made sure “KAWS” isn’t used or referred to as anything else than the artist Brian Donnelly. This allows me to further distance myself from spam, since this allows *Then Mention me* to automatically reply to persons who mentions the artist named KAWS. With the right context I’m able to create pre-defined messages while lessen the risk of having my messages treated as spam.

4.3 Selection

Everyone, within a specific time frame, who mentions the urban artist named “KAWS” will be automatically tweeted with a pre-defined message. Picking the participants are therefore random since it tweets live, during a specific time period, to everyone who mentions the name.

Then Mention me checks for new messages on Twitter containing the word “KAWS”, “kaws” or “Kaws” every two minutes. It then automatically response within five to ten minutes, with one of the three accounts picked at random. However, there are some limitations and filtering. Tweets are only sent out to people with a custom profile picture, tweets in English and didn’t included a link in their last tweet. This is done to avoid tweeting to Twitter bots⁷². The campaign is conducted within a 24 hour time frame, during April 9th and April 10th.

4.4 Preparations

I created three different Twitter accounts who all target the one keyword. I used three accounts since a single account might run into technical difficulties and therefore not work properly. Note that the username and profile pictures are chosen to be contextual with regards to the messages it sends out. The profile picture consists of artwork which the artist KAWS has made. All three accounts also have more followers than following. These preparations are made to establish a context, thus gaining trust and not having the pre-defined messages regarded as spam.

⁷² Twitter bots are automated profiles which tend to send out messages containing links.

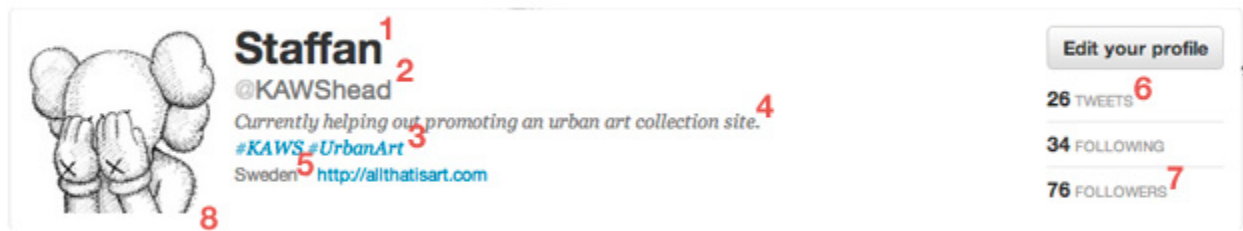


Image #6 A screenshot of the Twitter profile “KAWShead”⁷³ Includes annotations.

Image #6 includes eight annotations which are numbered to describe how the previous studies and theoretical chapter has helped define the Twitter profiles created. As mentioned in the theory chapter which covers trust - The state of readiness is of great importance when constructing trust.

1. My real name is used. By using my real name I’m using transparency to create trust similar to large businesses who use Twitter (See image #3 and chapter 3.2.1 - Regarding businesses and Twitter).
2. The username is directly related to the Twitter messages which are sent out. This is mentioned as a high impact factor when users choose to trust a messag. (See image#1 - Regarding the importance of usernames context).
3. The profile description includes hashtags to cover Twitter lingo. (See chapter 5.4 - Strengthening messages with Twitter lingo).
4. Similar to using my real name I’m direct and honest as to what the purpose of the account currently is. It also makes sure to use correct language and not shorten words or sentences if not needed. (See 7.3 - Regarding language practises)
5. Since the artists KAWS is originally from the US⁷⁴, it might be better if I would describe myself coming from the same country. But since Twitter is a monolithic culture it should not matter. (See chapter 5.3 - Regarding internet culture)
6. The Twitter account has been tweeting messages before and is therefore not strictly and only promoting. (See chapter 3.2.2 - Regarding experienced Twitter users)

⁷³ <http://www.twitter.com/kawshead>

⁷⁴ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/KAWS_\(artist\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/KAWS_(artist))

7. Another trust factor is the follow and following ratio. This is created by making sure that my profiles are all having a greater amount of followers than it is following. (See image#1 - Regarding trust impact factors and how the follow ratio is of high importance)

8. Being contextual to the messages is important, therefore I've made sure to use a profile picture which is a sketch by the artist KAWS. (See image#1 - Regarding the importance of contextual profile pictures).

The usernames for the three used accounts are:

KAWSfanatic with 83 following, 142 followers

KAWSfan with 1893 following, 2104 followers

KAWShead with 34 following, 76 followers

All three accounts have the same profile description, which is "Currently helping out promoting an urban art collection site. #KAWS #UrbanArt". Below is the automatic message which the user automatically will tweet. It's written in spintax-format, which means that the words and characters inside the { } bracket will be picked at random. This is made to prevent duplicate messages and not to break any of Twitter's guidelines.

The automatic tweet which is sent out is generated from the following spintax: {Hi|Hey} {! |,} {Fan of|Are you a} {fan of KAWS|KAWS fan} {?!?!} {Would you mind|Mind} {checking|checking out} {this site|my site} {?!?!} <http://allthatisart.com/welcome> {Thanks!|Appreciated ;)} {!}}

The landing page (<http://allthatisart.com/welcome>) includes a survey which the participants are asked to answer and contains the following information.

Art collecting is a term which for a long time have been associated with pretentious and exclusivity, aimed towards an older generation. With the urban art community rapidly evolving we've seen a generation of people appreciating new forms of artistic expressions. Street art, designer toys, installments, illustrations and paintings. Banksy,

KAWS, Shepard Fairy might be a few of the most famous artists, but there's much more to discover.

Did the Twitter message which brought you here bother you? - Yes or no.

Answers are collected anonymously for my thesis project at the University of Gothenburg. If you have any questions or concerns, you can e-mail me at staffan.vilhelm@gmail.com

Once the question is answered, the participants were asked if they would like to register as a member on the site. This is optional and does not affect the survey.

4.5 Reliability and validity

When performing a survey study, dropouts are a common problem⁷⁵. This is a problem since Twitter users who doesn't want, are able or choose to participate is of high value to the research made. It begs the question: Would the users who thought the tweet message was bothersome click on the link included? The answer is most likely no and makes the answers collected less valuable and reliable. To compensate for the people who doesn't participate, the click-through-rate is compared to the survey answers. This will result in more accurate and valid results.

To further strengthen any claims made based on the study results, previous research is compared to. Pragmatic validation will be ensured due to the fact that the study is performed with real life Twitter users. It should also be noted that any technical terms or Twitter lingo will be explained.

4.6 Uses of the study

⁷⁵ Abramson, J.J. and Abramson, Z.H. (1999). Survey Methods in Community Medicine: Epidemiological Research, Programme Evaluation, Clinical Trials (5th edition). London: Churchill Livingstone/Elsevier Health Sciences

The study results proves that there's a way of getting a substantial marketing impact with the use of Then Mention me, it will help answer my main research question as well as help define communication in an environment such as Twitter. It also sheds light on discussions and topics regarding; Spam versus natural communication, importance of context and the ability to level with big companies budgets using communication, trust, context with Then Mention me.

Further research could also be made with the use of any conclusions found, especially in areas such as spam, marketing and internet culture. Twitter is also a relatively unexplored social environment.

4.7 Criticism of sources

Upon examining and drawing conclusions from the data collected, previous research and theories mentioned, is taken into account. It should be noted that the social media phenomenon on the internet is relatively new. The research field, at a university level, lacks up to date information and it is difficult to keep up with the constant changes which affect both social media and Twitter usage. The study by Microsoft, which this research paper heavily relies on, is paid for by the computer company. Microsoft is somewhat of a competitor to Twitter inc. since it operates and competes for similar internet demographics and market share.

However, it is conducted recently and therefore up to date on the current social media climate. And even if it was paid for by Microsoft it was conducted by an independent research team. It is also important to note that while the theories brought up and used might be outdated it holds relevant information in regards to communication. This includes the trust factor which is a common occurrence and have similarities both in a online and offline context. Digital marketing has arguably also sustained itself as a reliable and researched platform as a whole, since it has

been around for almost fifteen years. Segments of the theories and previous studies are used to prepare, conduct and analyze the data collected. And any changes made since the theories and research were conducted has been taken into account. See *6.4 Additional notes* for more information.

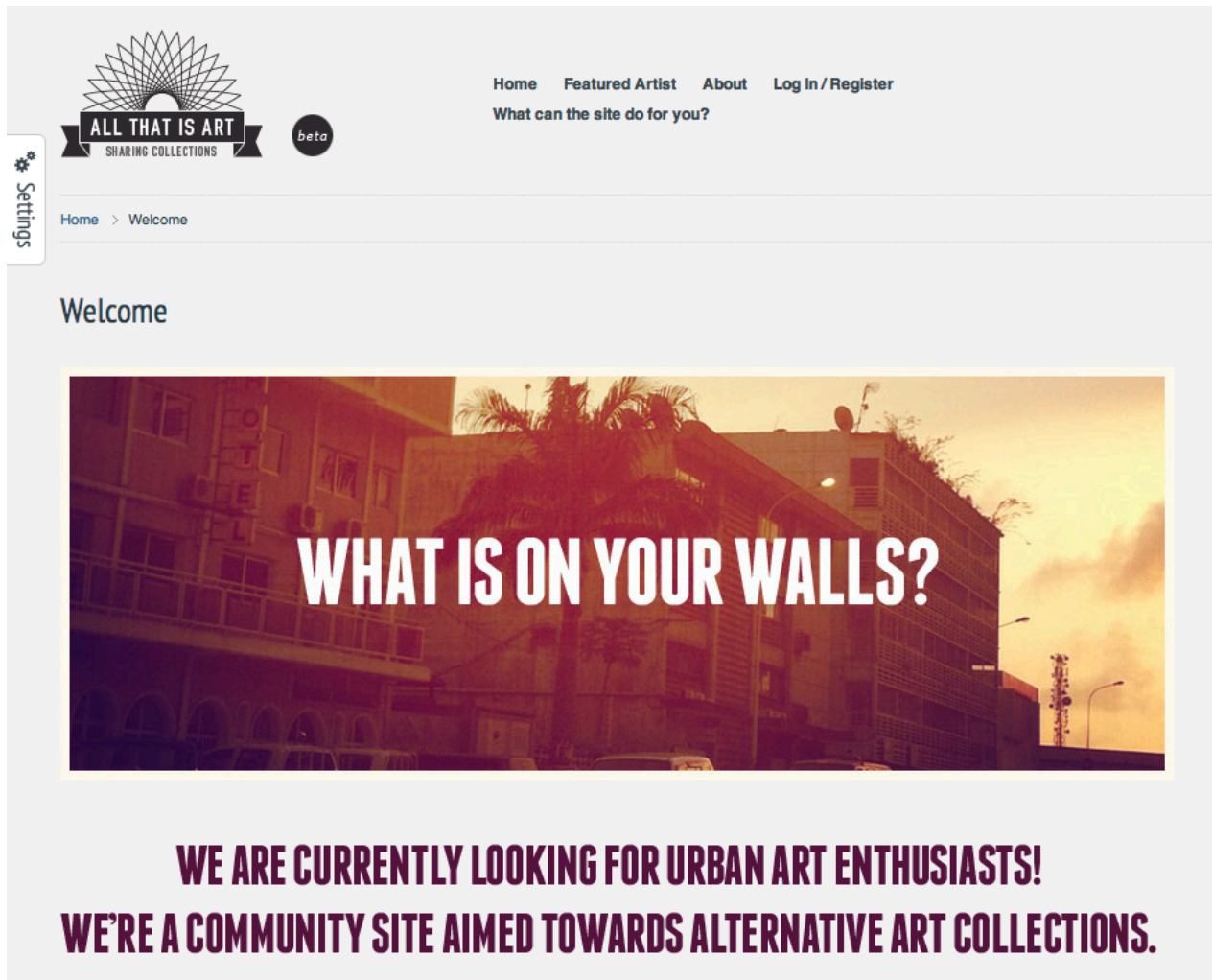


Image #7 A screenshot of the website All That is Art⁷⁶

⁷⁶ <http://allthatisart.com/welcome>

3 new Tweets



Staffan @KAWSfan

2m

@Thomasminchin Hey,Fan of **KAWS** fan?! Would you mind checking my site? allthatart.com/welcome Thanks!

← In reply to Tom Minchin



Staffan @KAWSfan

2m

@SparksInspive Hey,Fan of **KAWS** fan? Mind checking out this site?! allthatart.com/welcome Thanks!!

← In reply to SparksOfInspiration



Staffan @KAWSfan

2m

@LucasBlaine Hi,Fan of **KAWS** fan? Would you mind checking this site?! allthatart.com/welcome Appreciated ;)!

← In reply to LucasBlaine



Staffan @KAWSfan

3m

@El_ignantPundit Hi,Are you a fan of **KAWS**? Would you mind checking my site? allthatart.com/welcome Appreciated ;)!

← In reply to Drew Williams



Staffan @KAWSfan

3m

@AyyyeJack Hi,Fan of fan of **KAWS**?! Mind checking my site? allthatart.com/welcome Thanks!

← In reply to sus king



Staffan @KAWSfan

3m

@Geoffrobro Hey,Are you a **KAWS** fan? Mind checking my site?! allthatart.com/welcome Thanks!

← In reply to Great Googly Moogly



Staffan @KAWSfan

4m

@Teddykreuger Hi,Fan of **KAWS** fan?! Mind checking out this site? allthatart.com/welcome Thanks!

← In reply to Teddy Altifois



Staffan @KAWSfan

4m

@gregbkrw Hey,Are you a **KAWS** fan? Mind checking my site?! allthatart.com/welcome Thanks!

← In reply to greg

Image #8 A screenshot from the study showing the @KAWSfan account automatically tweeting out messages to users who has mentioned the word “KAWS”

5 Empirical results and analyzation

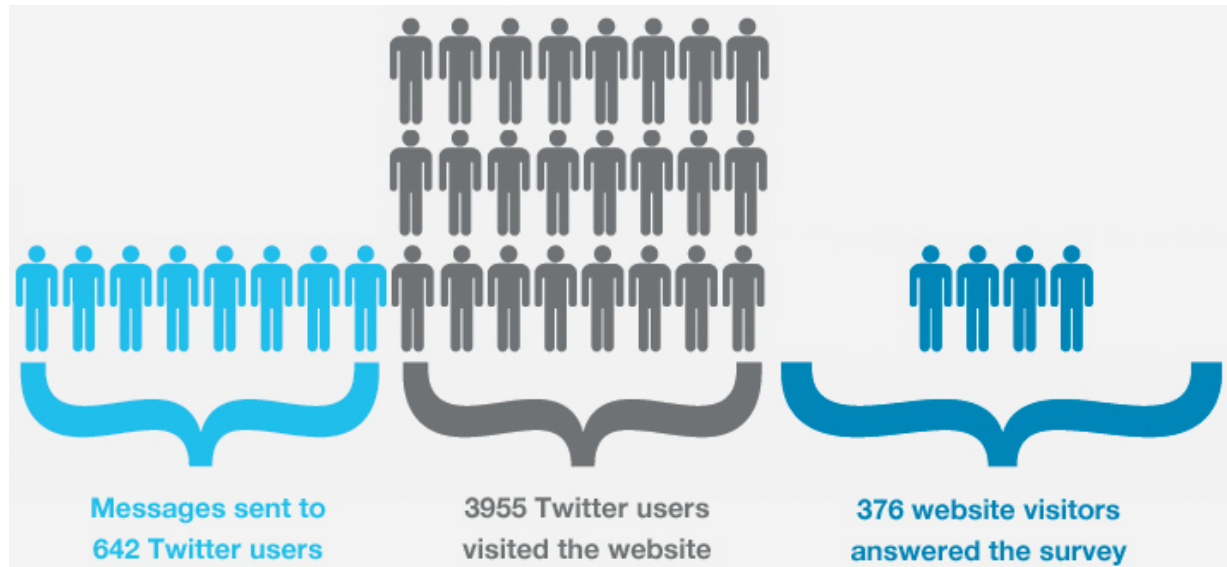


Image #9 Illustrated results. 642 persons mentioned KAWS while the case study was conducted, thus resulting in replying a message to.

5.1 Results

During the 24 hours the case study was conducted, the three accounts sent out a total of 642 messages to different Twitter users, all of which mentioned the word "kaws". The keyword was primarily used among US citizens, due to the artists KAWS being from Brooklyn in New York. The 642 messages generated 3955 unique visitors to the website. This was mainly due to users retweeting the message to their followers, or by other ways of recommending it to others. Therefore it is difficult to measure the actual click-through-rate since the number of visitors are greater than the number of messages sent out.

The three accounts wasn't monitored live but once the study was conducted and completed, the response rate proved to have been fairly low (less than 10% replied to the message received). Only two messages were negative, one exclaiming a simple "No." (a response to the "are you interested in...") and one other contained the message "'? What'" (possibly confused as to why he

or she was sent the a message, which might have been out of context).

Most of the messages were positive and often included a "thank you". 54 positive or neutral messages were received, excluding the messages which recommended the tweet to others. And out of the 3955 people who visited the website, 376 of them answered the survey question. All of the 376 persons who decided to answer the survey, picked "No" as the answer to the question: Did the Twitter message which brought you here bother you?

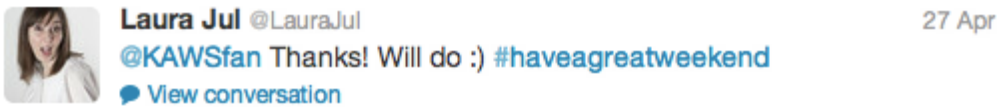


Image #10 An example of a response from a Twitter user.



Image #11 An example of a response from a Twitter user.



Image #12 A user Re-Tweeting the message sent, including an added "Thanks!!" note.

5.2 Analysis

While the click-through rate issue caused problems, since it is problematic to analyze exactly how many of the 642 people clicked the URL they were sent, the study was ultimately successful in achieving what it was set out to do. With only two negative responses, it proves that the messages which were sent out was treated, as either spam or bothersome, by none to a few users. Most of the users, who replied back, treated the messages as something positive. Some of which were enthusiastic and thankful - While not indicating that they in some way questioned the tweet source or content. The secondary data, such as replies and retweeted recommendations, proved to be much more valuable than the actual survey question. This is evident in the 100% positive

survey statistics.

But how come only 376 of the 3955 participants answered the survey, when they had clicked on the link in the tweet? One possible explanation would be that the web page they went to didn't fully resonate with what was promised or mentioned in the tweet. The users did get a website which was related to the topic of the artist KAWS, but were also greeted by an unexpected survey - This could have been considered a deal breaker and a trust issue for a lot of participants.

As mentioned previously, the membership registration data was not to be included or analyzed. However, since the survey results are obviously skewed, the number of registrations reveals how interested the 3955 participants were in the site's subject. While only 376 of the 3955 participants took part in the survey - 2056 users became a member of the site. This reveals that a large percentage of the participants, who clicked on the tweeted link, were interested in the site and its functionality, and avoided to answer the survey question even if it only included one short question.

It should be noted that no other traffic source was used except for Twitter. All of the participants came from Twitter and none of the site's visitor, during the 24 hour campaign, were from any other site or traffic source.

5.3 What does this mean?

How do you send pre-defined bulk messages to Twitter users, with the intent to promote a company, service or a product, without being treated as spam?

Using Then Mention me 672 people were marketed to because they mentioned KAWS on Twitter during the 24 hours the case study was active. Similar to spam all of the messages were pre-defined and sent in bulk. But unlike spam Then Mention me used communication aspects such as trust, an important factor as to why I believe it was a successful marketing campaign.

The system and process itself, sending out pre-defined, automated bulk-messages, share the

same principle as spam. But by implementing a set of rules, the participants have not treated my messages as spam. In my opinion, the following has collectively made the case study successful.

A program which automates the process.

It needs to operate several Twitter accounts at the same time, use spintax formatted text, not send messages to one user twice, target language specific users and be able to react on a set of specific keywords.

Understanding and incorporating the Twitter lingo.

Understanding and making use of such things as retweets, hashtags and other language practises.

Treating Twitter's user base as a monolithic culture.

While a lot of different countries and cultures are using the social network, Twitter is also one culture which everyone has to adopt to.

Establishing trust

While the message itself is restricted to 140 characters, it is surrounded by important cues such as username, profile picture and follow ratio. Therefore it is not only the message text which is important when building trust, it's also its context. And while knowing how to establish trust is important, it is also vital to know the niche you're marketing. From there on a context can be understood and constructed into trust.

I believe that by following these rules it's possible to send pre-defined bulk messages to Twitter users, with the intent to promote a company, service or a product, without being treated as spam. This goes against what was being said with regards to digital marketing in the theory chapter. There it was mentioned that with the introduction of Web 2.0 you aren't able to push

products, services or branding via monologue based communication. But Then Mention me and its marketing method is strictly built on not having any dialogue with its participants.

I would also argue that all of the eight annotations mentioned in image #6 is of great importance and has affected the study results. Most of them were used to establish trust and none of them were mentioned by participants as being an issue. An example of this is how no one commented the fact that the profile was active in Sweden while the artist and its fans are commonly from the US.

5.4 Additional notes

Tweet Attacks 2, the application which helps automate the tweet processes, was sued and ultimately shut down by Twitter inc. in April⁷⁷. Twitter inc. and its legal team claims that the developers promotes the application as a way to spam Twitter. This renders the application to not work properly since Twitter inc has since updated its website and functionality to combat automated software. However, Then Mention me still operates since it now relies on a custom written application.

5.5 Further studies

To further establish findings made, a comparison study would be of much help. Setting up different accounts, but with slight modifications to its message context and sending out tweets, would result in an easier way to measure the impact factors for different cues. It would also establish further proof of findings made in the study conducted in this paper. It would also be interesting to see which annotations, which were mentioned in image#6, has the biggest impact on the results.

⁷⁷ McGee, Matt. "Twitter Takes Five Alleged Spammers To Federal Court". April 5, 2012. Web May 21 2012. <<http://marketingland.com/twitter-takes-five-alleged-spammers-to-federal-court-9522>>

The impact factor of the subject of art in relation to the allthatisart.com website isn't measurable either by the study which has been conducted. It would be interesting to compare how the art demographic, which this study targeted, and how other forms of subjects would have resulted in. Due to this paper's research limitation this was not possible.

5.6 Recommendations

It is very easy to use a program such as Tweet Attacks to send out spam. I would strongly recommend sending out a few messages, with the included trust and communication aspects mentioned in image #6, before attempting to do more than 50 messages. Interact and talk to the participating users when doing test runs before attempting to mass market via Twitter in a grander scale. A program such as TweetAttacks also has a very steep learning curve and might be illegal to use as Twitter inc. changes its terms of agreement frequently. Breaking Twitter's terms of use is strictly prohibited and could lead to serious legal actions related to missusage and spam.

5.7 Final thoughts

Marketing a website, which could be a product, service or company, in a social environment, such as Twitter, has a lot of advantages when compared to other forms of marketing. A company doesn't necessarily have more power than a regular person on Twitter. And by using that statement you could argue that the social platform creates the ability to level yourself and compete with large companies budgets. As we've seen, on Twitter the best marketing asset isn't necessarily money - But communication, trust and creativity. However, it's not cheap to have a staff of people constantly listening and socially engaging with a 350 million large community of people.

Then Mention me is able to gain 2000 new members per day for a website using three Twitter accounts, for free. On one hand it's a simple, blind and deaf computer program. But when it's being fueled with knowledge about communication, culture, research and trust it is able to do what only the big companies are able to afford.

It took five months to produce the marketing method, set up the two websites, prepare and conduct the study as well as write this paper. It's the power that the social web services, like Twitter and Facebook, say that their users have - The potential to communicate with millions of people. But in actuality they need to limit users to stop spammers and sell the marketing abilities for profit. And those who manage to break the restrictions resort to mindless spamming, as evident in the Tweet attacks lawsuit. But intelligent, creative and non-intrusive communication has the ability to give something back to the person you're asking or requesting help, time or money from. Combining the power of a massive amount of people with the intelligence of communication, trust and context and you have limitless potential in a 140 character restricted world.

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