IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COUNTER ISIS INFORMATION OPERATIONS ON TWITTER

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Goals

- Determine variables that are likely to influence a Tweet's resonance within a target audience:
  - Determine what types of content resonate most with target audience.
  - Determine best time to conduct messaging, based on target audience activity.
  - Determine what hashtags are influential within the observed conversation.

Attaining the Data

- Multiple options:
  - API Call
    - Set the call to search for unique terms (mainly pro-ISIS hashtags) within a set time range
  - Social Media Monitoring Tool
    - Download the data using a social media monitoring tool, using a Boolean query to set the search parameters.

Cleaning the Data

- "Interaction Rate": Standard engagement rate does not properly measure a Tweet's resonance.
  - Beyond the standard engagement measures, any "significant clicks" must be measured, including:
    - Embedded video clicks, photo enlargements, URL clicks, profile link clicks, "Read More" clicks,
  - Therefore, the columns containing each of these measures must be added together.
  - Then, the sum of all interactions must be divided by the number of actual impressions that the Tweet received.
  - Once these two steps have been taken, we will have our interaction rate for every post.
  - We then sort the data by this measure, from highest to lowest, showing us which Tweets were the most effective.

Analysis

- Run decision trees to determine the factors that most frequently appear in the most popular Tweets within the observed conversation.

- Sort the various posted times of all of the tweets and group them into 30 minute or one hour blocks, in order to determine which blocks would be the best times to post messages.

- Still need to decide how to calculate the influence of a hashtag
  - High frequency of usage does not indicate influence.

What comes next?

- The results of this project will allow me to begin crafting a set of guidelines that will likely increase the resonance of issued Tweets.
- Map social networks of pro-ISIS users
  - ID influential users and the roles they play within the conversation
    - Bridges, recruiters, etc.
- ID top narratives and begin developing counter messaging.
  - A/B testing
    - What images work best?
    - What key words work best?
    - Using cultural analysis, determine the themes that messaging should be wrapped in.
- Research what technological factors have an effect on our messaging tactics.
- Repeat this entire project, but narrow the focus to one language, region, country.