The Wilson Center

**SOCIAL MEDIA REPORT FOR
"CONNECTING GRASSROOTS TO GOVERNMENT"
SEPTEMBER 13-14, 2012**

**Commons Lab of the
Science and Technology Innovation Program**

**The Wilson Center
Ronald Reagan Building
1300 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC**

Social media was used extensively in the "Connecting Grassroots to Government" workshop, enabling feedback and participation from diverse locations. Two social media platforms were engaged to incorporate these voices: TechChange and Twitter. TechChange's platform allowed an online audience to watch the Wilson Center's live video broadcast, follow the Twitter feed for workshop hashtag #DG2G, and submit comments and questions for the panelists. Questions from viewers were sent to a designated email address, and while email is not a social media, these questions were re-posted on Twitter and read aloud in the workshop. Before the event our workshop was publicized on several popular blogs, which increased awareness and participation. Some 422 viewers from more than 30 countries also watched our live video feed. During the workshop over 1,510 unique tweets and 569 retweets were sent with our designated #DG2G hashtag.

Twitter Interaction

Participants' and viewers' contributions on Twitter ranged widely. Some tweeted summaries of what they heard.

Tim Brice @timbrice17   13 Sep
Professor Usery found that citizen input to OpenMapProject
was over 88% accurate #dg2g
Expand

Others publicized their participation to their networks.

HeatherLeson @HeatherLeson   13 Sep
my day - Work while listening to the "Connecting Grassroots to
Govt for Disaster Management Policy Roundtable": bit.ly/Nq2nrG
#DG2G
Expand

Questions – either meant to be asked of the panelists or mere ruminations – sometimes appeared. Panelists alternately answered questions from the in-person audience and those following online.

Patrice Cloutier @patricecloutier   13 Sep
@GeodataPolicy a question: would an national/international
digital volunteer accreditation system help ? with acceptance by EM ?
#smem
💬 View conversation

Many tweets were compliments or applause from those who found the workshop useful. Sometimes these tweets were addressed toward the workshop organizers, but others were directed at the panelists and moderators.

scott reuter (@sct_r)
9/13/12 3:18 PM
+1 MT @thefrewgroup: #DG2G @GeodataPolicy-thx all -useful 4 teaching #NDPTC
@fema #SMEM course. Addiltional 4 crisis mapping/crowdsource?

thefrewgroup @thefrewgroup   13 Sep
Great close by Eric R: "need reliable safe place to fail." Many
thanks to #DG2G community and @GeodataPolicy for informative
session.
Expand

thefrewgroup (@thefrewgroup)
9/16/12 8:20 PM
Thx-excellent! Next event? RT @GeodataPolicy: So glad you could join
@TheWilsonCenter @STIPCommonsLab remotely for #dg2g cc @TechChange

Some participants made announcements or pointed to resources that had some significance for the panel or the workshop.

Gus (@hashonomy_gus)
9/14/12 3:14 PM
Commons Lab releases report on liability for digital volunteers in disasters ...
hashonomy.com/Og3d/ #smem #dg2g (via @GeodataPolicy)

J. Chris Pires (@JChrisPires)
9/15/12 10:48 PM
"@paulblaser: Big Data, How to Detect Relationships Between Categorical Variables - ow.ly/1OvwE0"

Live Webcast Exposure

The live video feed was viewed extensively across the globe. Our media and technology partner, TechChange, enrolled the participation of about 150 students from 30 countries (Figure 1); these students submitted questions for the panelists via our designated email address.

Figure 1. Locations of students watching live video feed.

The widespread use of our video feed became more evident when technical difficulties occurred. Several tweets and comments reported their difficulties viewing the video.

Social Network Analysis

Three social network analyses have been posted since the workshop, which visualize and analyze Twitter-based participation in the workshop.

The first analysis (Figure 2) visualizes the structure of the Twitter-based community of those who participated in the #DG2G hashtag. The size of the handle represents that person's number of followers. The colors represent different "communities" identified; there are seven total, but two dominate: disaster relief and crowdmapping. The Wilson Center tweeted from two accounts: Lea Shanley (@GeodataPolicy) and Ryan Burns (@ryanburns77)

Figure 2: Social media in emergency management (SMEM) community structure
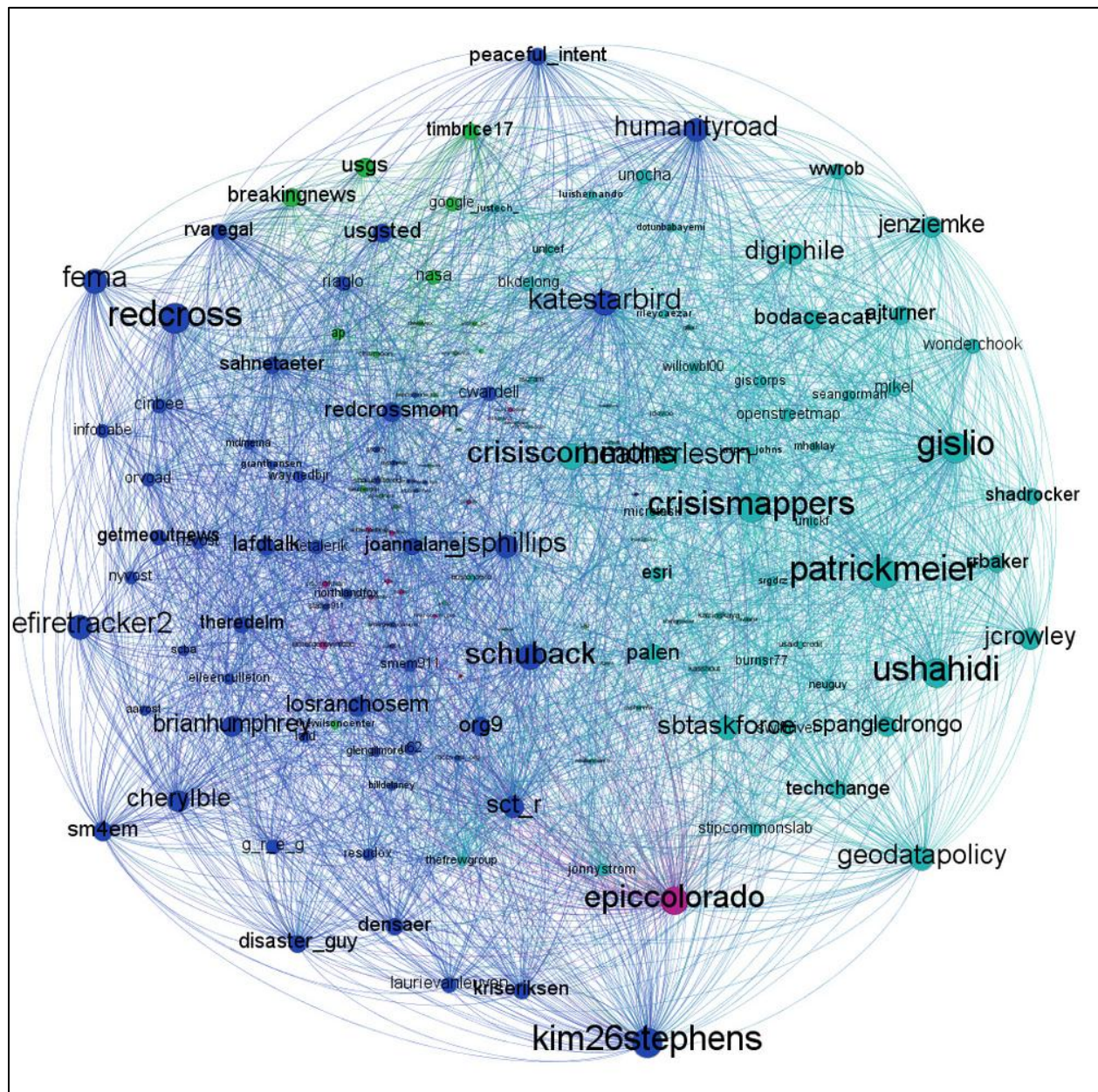
The second report provides more detailed statistics and analysis capabilities using the TAGSExplorer interface, which allows one to visualize several dimensions of the dataset. For instance, one can visualize the relationships within the corpus of tweeters and retweeters (Figure 3). One can also rank the tweeters by their number of contributions (Figure 4), find the most popular hashtags (Figure 5), and visualize the most prominent conversation-starters (Figure 6). By clicking on a user within this visualization, you can see their original tweets as well as their replies and mentions (Figure 7).

Figure 3. Tweeters and retweeters using #DG2G hashtag
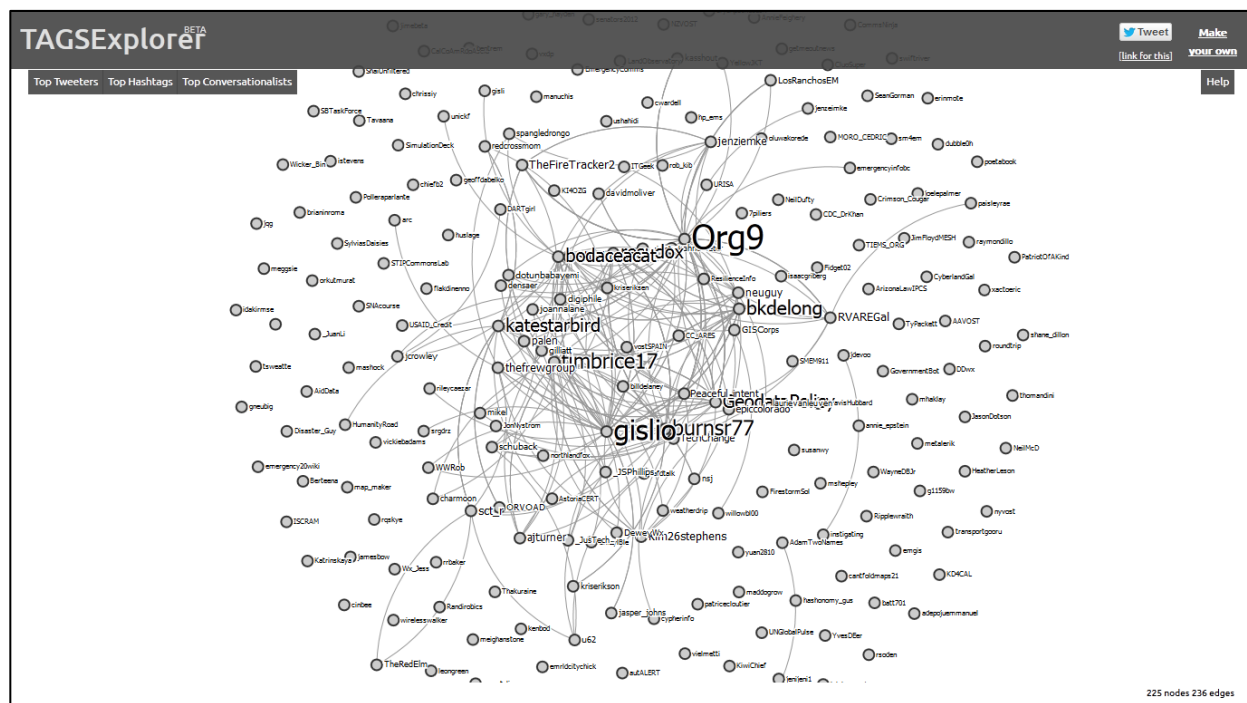
Figure 4. Users ranked by number of #DG2G tweets
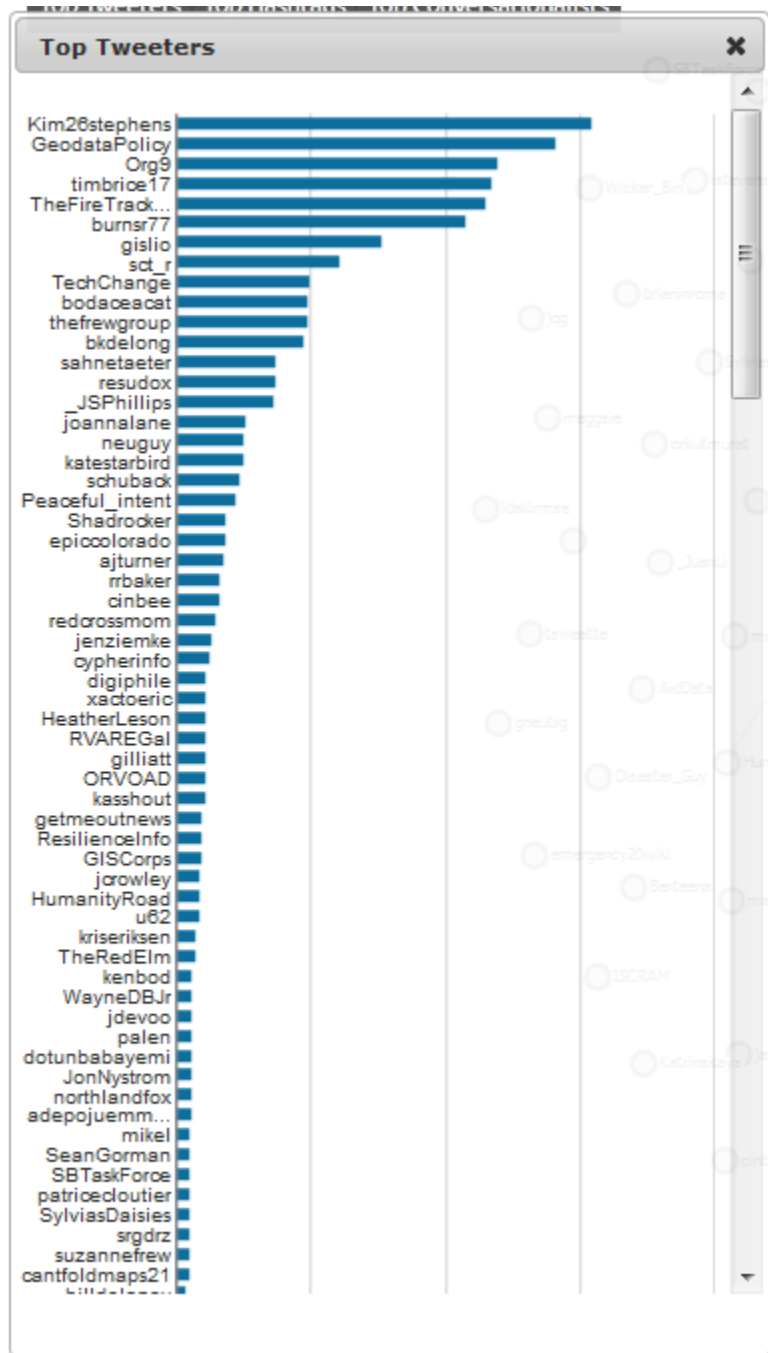
Figure 5. Hashtags used in conjunction with #DG2G.

#VOST stands for Virtual Operations Support Team
#HMRD stands for Humanity Road, one of the volunteer groups
#whredcross stands for a concurrent White House event on safety data
#smem, #sme and #smemchat stand for social media and emergency management
#sbtf stands for Stand By Task Force, one of the volunteer groups

Figure 6. Users ranked by the number of people retweeting them.
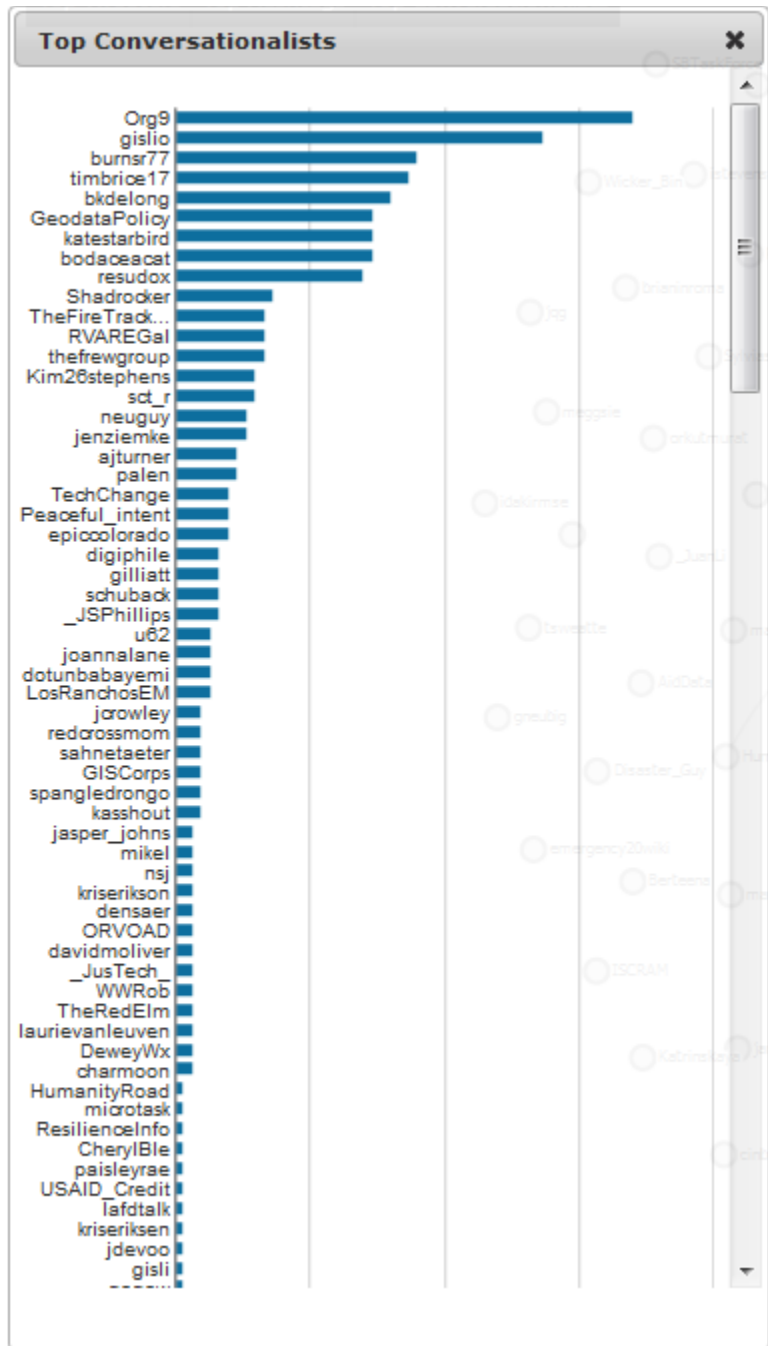
Figure 7. Users' tweets can be seen by clicking on the user in the graph.
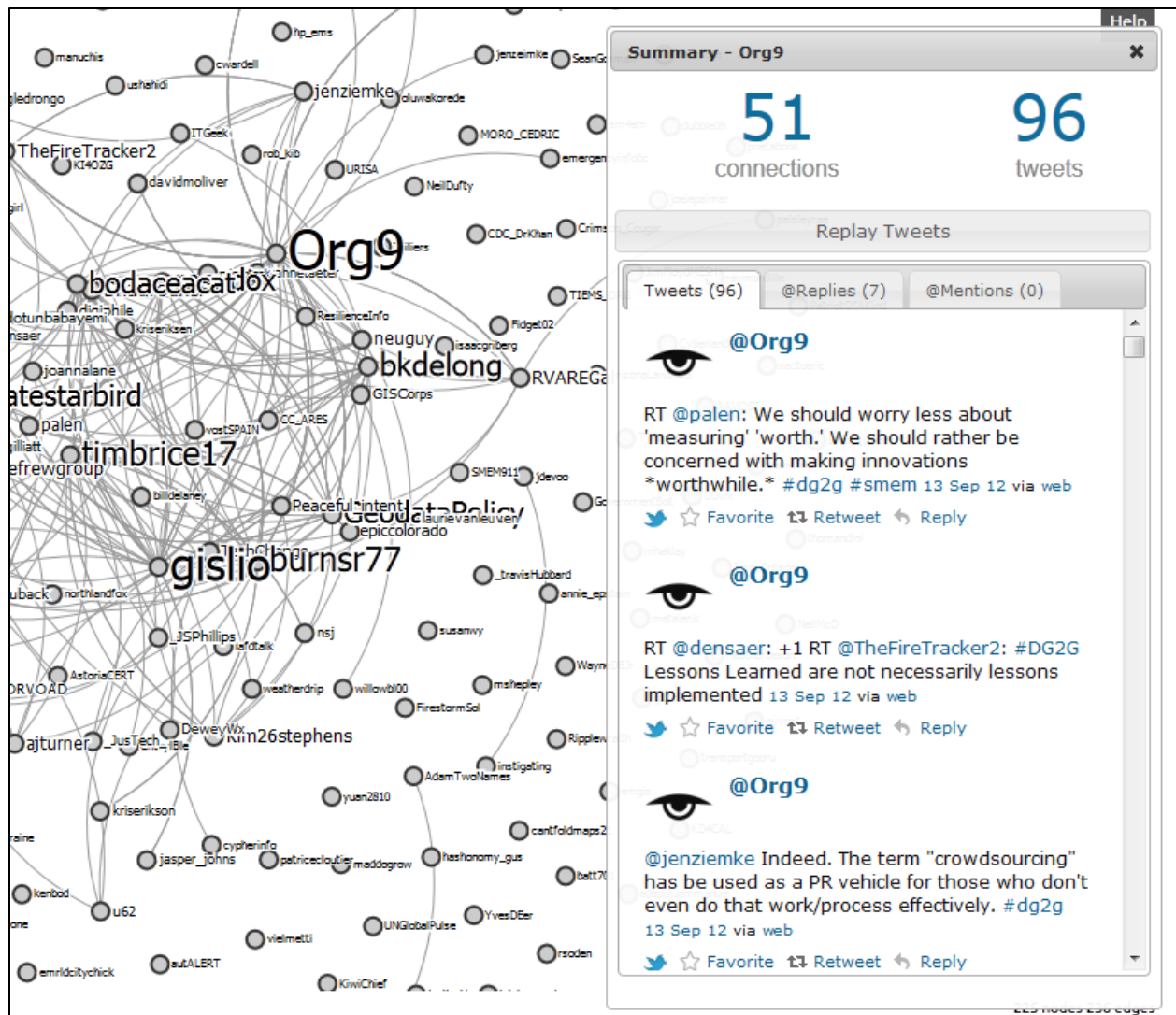
Exposure via Twitter

A workshop participant also created an interesting analysis on TweetReach. During the first day of the workshop, the #DG2G hashtag was exposed to more than 91,000 Twitter users. Two days after the workshop, the conversation continued with over 32,000 users since the analysis began, even with a mere 50 tweets over 5 days (Figure 8).

Figure 8. Post-workshop TweetReach report showing exposure through followers of tweeters.
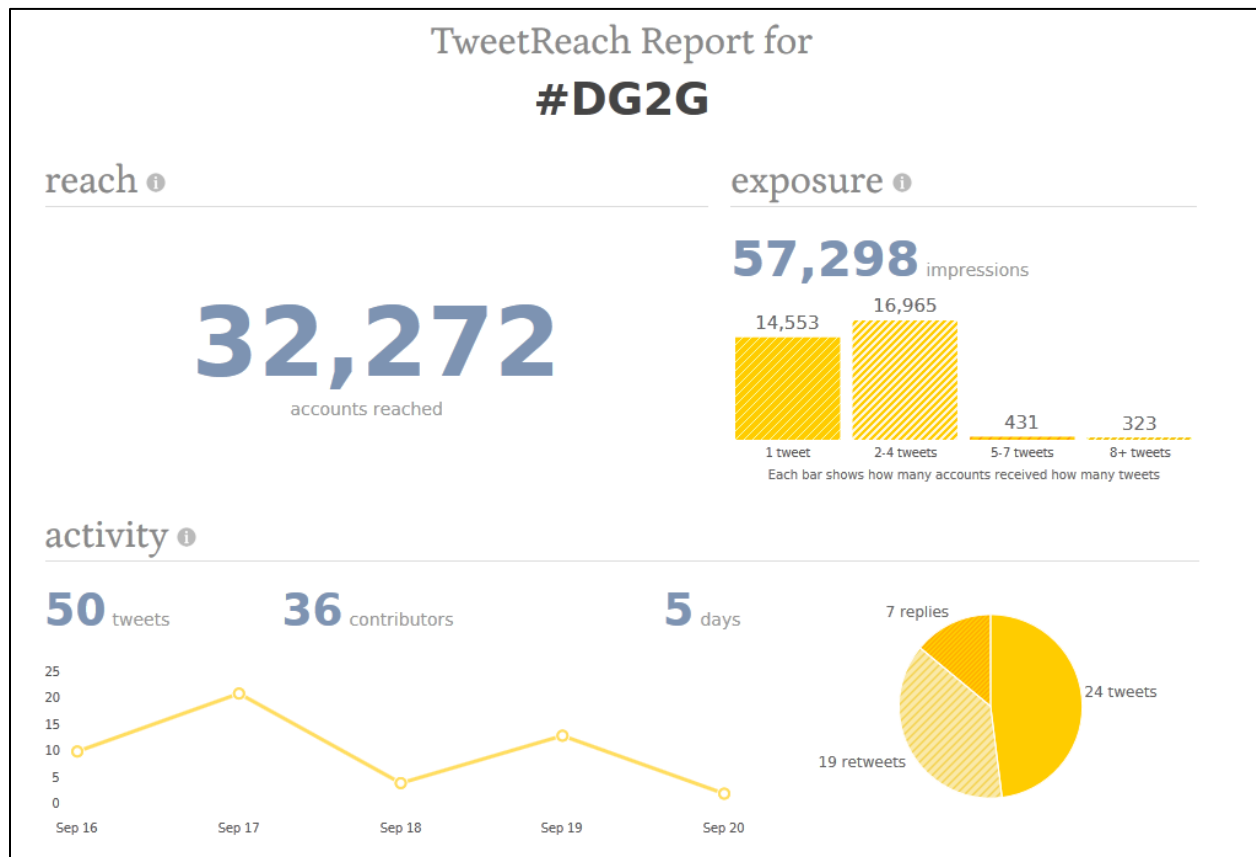
Storify Twitter Timelines
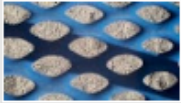
Interestingly, some who participated in a related event, which used the twitter hashtag #smemchat, also used the #DG2G hashtag (Figure 9). This indicates the workshop is gaining exposure in the broader conversations targeted.

Figure 9. Some involved in #smemchat also tweeted the #DG2G hashtag.
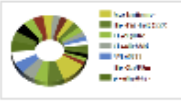
A second Storify built by TechChange was viewable by the public, particularly by the group's 101 subscribers (Figure 10).

Figure 10. TechChange created a Storify dedicated to the #DG2G hashtag.

#DG2G Tweet Database

Finally, one participant proactively collected all the tweets containing the workshop hashtag #DG2G, archived them, and made them available to the public. This will serve as productive material for future analysis and reports. This also included graphics of tweet volume over time (Figure 11) and top tweeters (Figure 12). The live video feed went down in mid-afternoon of the first day, which may account for the fewer tweets the second day.

The link for the tweet database is:
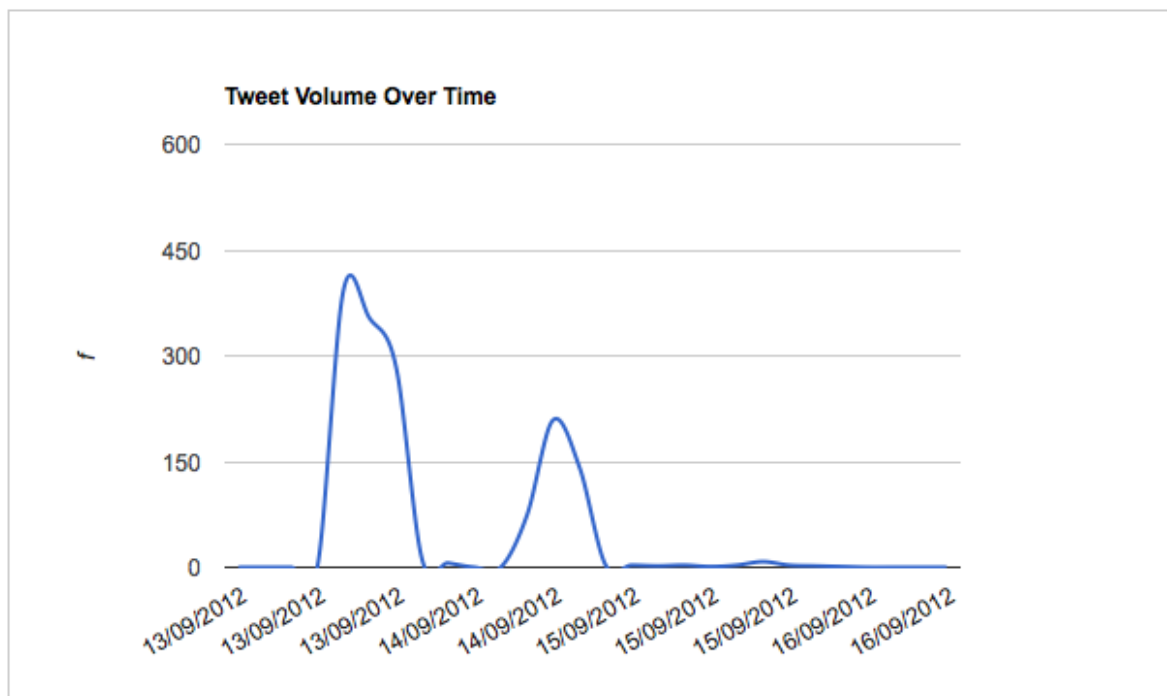https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/pub?hl=en_GB&key=0Agv4Epc567okdHlNdE5xRzhOODM4Y3diMVh6dUg3aUE&hl=en_GB&gid=36

Figure 11. Tweet Volume Over Time

Figure 12. Top Tweeters using hashtag #DG2G