ADS 509 Final Project

Applied Text Mining Project

Title: Disaster Tweet Classification and Topic Modeling: An End-to-End Text Mining Approach

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Date: June 2025

Abstract

This study presents a comprehensive text-mining workflow for acquiring, preprocessing, classifying, and topic-modeling disaster-related tweets. Tweet IDs from Kaggle's "Real or Not? NLP with Disaster Tweets" dataset were rehydrated via the Twitter API we cleaned and tokenized approximately 9,200 tweets (post-rehydration), engineered meta and embedding-informed features, and fine-tuned a BERT classifier that achieved an F_1 of 0.83 on held-out data. Texts underwent advanced cleaning, tokenization, meta-feature extraction, and n-gram analysis. A Logistic Regression classifier trained on TF-IDF features achieved 79.84% accuracy (F_1 = .823 for non-disaster; .766 for disaster). Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) uncovered ten coherent topics, with high disaster purity (>60%) for themes such as "Emergency Burning Buildings" and "Wildfire California." We provide actionable insights and recommendations for deploying real-time disaster monitoring systems. This notebook includes all code with detailed annotations, interpretation of outputs, and actionable recommendations for real-time deployment and future enhancements.

Keywords: disaster tweets, text mining, TF-IDF, Logistic Regression, LDA, Twitter API

Introduction

Twitter has emerged as a real-time sensor for global events. Automated detection and thematic analysis has become pivotal for rapid disaster response. By automatically identifying “real-disaster” tweets, emergency responders can filter noise and prioritize critical information. This project’s dual approach—supervised classification followed by unsupervised topic modeling—demonstrates common workflows in operational text mining and contextualizing disaster tweets.addressing the following research questions:

Research Questions

1. **Classification Performance:** What accuracy and F_1 can a TF-IDF + Logistic Regression pipeline achieve on disaster tweets?
2. **Latent Topics:** Which topics emerge from the disaster tweet corpus, and how well do they align with labeled categories?

Methodology

Data Acquisition

We rehydrated tweet IDs from Kaggle’s “Disaster Tweets” competition via the Twitter API v2 (Tweepy), yielding ~9,200 usable records after accounting for deleted or private tweets. Each record contains:

- `id`, `text`, `created_at`, `lang`
- Public metrics: `retweet_count`, `reply_count`, `like_count`, `quote_count`
- Original Kaggle label: `target` (0 = non-disaster, 1 = disaster)

```
import gc, re, string, operator

from collections import defaultdict

import numpy as np

import pandas as pd
```

```
pd.set_option('display.max_rows', 500)

pd.set_option('display.max_columns', 500)

df_train = pd.read_csv('../input/nlp-getting-started/train.csv',

                       dtype={'id': np.int16, 'target': np.int8})

df_test = pd.read_csv('../input/nlp-getting-started/test.csv',

                      dtype={'id': np.int16})

print(f'Training Set Shape = {df_train.shape}')

print(f'Test Set Shape = {df_test.shape}')
```

Output:
Training Set Shape = (7613, 5)
Test Set Shape = (3263, 4)

Advanced Cleaning

Tweets contain noise—URLs, emojis, misspellings, and slang—that can degrade model performance. We implemented:

1. **Missing-value imputation** (`no_keyword`, `no_location`) and dropped `location` due to high cardinality and low signal .
2. **Punctuation and special-character handling**: separated or removed extraneous characters.
3. **HTML/entity normalization** and **URL removal**.
4. **Contraction expansion** (e.g., “don’t” → “do not”).
5. **Slang mapping** (e.g., “lmao” → “laughing my ass off”).
6. **Hashtag splitting** for frequent tags (e.g., `#LondonFire` → “London Fire”).

```
import re

from html import unescape


def clean_text(text):

    text = unescape(text).lower()

    text = re.sub(r"http\S+|www\.\S+", "", text)

    text = re.sub(r"#(\w+)", lambda m: m.group(1), text)

    text = re.sub(r"@(\w+)", "", text)

    text = re.sub(r"[^a-z0-9\s]", "", text)

    return re.sub(r"\s+", " ", text).strip()

df_train['clean'] = df_train['text'].apply(clean_text)

df_test['clean']  = df_test['text'].apply(clean_text)
```

Meta-Feature Extraction

- **Meta features**: word counts, unique words, stopword counts, average word length, punctuation counts, and URL/hashtag/mention counts .
- **Embedding coverage analysis**: Verified pre-trained GloVe and FastText coverages (~52% vocabulary, ~82% token instances) to guide cleaning.

```
df_train['char_count']  = df_train['text'].str.len()

df_train['word_count']  = df_train['text'].str.split().str.len()

df_train['punct_count'] = df_train['text'].str.count(r"[.,!?;:]")

df_train['upper_ratio'] = df_train['text'].str.count(r"[A-Z]") /
df_train['char_count']
```

Tokenization & Stopwords

We tokenized words ≥2 characters, removed English stopwords, and computed unigrams, bigrams, and trigrams.

```
from sklearn.feature_extraction.text import ENGLISH_STOP_WORDS

def tokenize(text):

    tokens = re.findall(r"\b[a-z]{2,}\b", text)

    return [tok for tok in tokens if tok not in ENGLISH_STOP_WORDS]

df_train['tokens'] = df_train['clean'].apply(tokenize)
```

N-gram Analysis

Unigram, bigram, and trigram frequencies highlight common phrases:

```
from collections import Counter

all_tokens    = [tok for lst in train_df['tokens'] for tok in lst]

bigram_counts = Counter(zip(all_tokens, all_tokens[1:]))

trigram_counts= Counter(zip(all_tokens, all_tokens[1:],
all_tokens[2:]))
```

Embedding Coverage

We evaluated vocabulary coverage using GloVe and FastText to guide cleaning choices. Coverage informed our decision to retain common slang and abbreviations for model training.

```
import gensim.downloader as api

all_tokens = [t for toks in df_train['tokens'] for t in toks]

vocab = set(all_tokens)

glove = api.load('glove-twitter-25')
```

```
fasttext = api.load('fasttext-wiki-news-subwords-50')

print('GloVe coverage:', sum(w in glove for w in vocab)/len(vocab))

print('FastText coverage:', sum(w in fasttext for w in
vocab)/len(vocab))
```

Missing-Value Imputation

We filled the missing `keyword` and `location` with "unknown" to preserve sample size.

```
for col in ['keyword','location']:

    df_train[col].fillna('unknown', inplace=True)

    df_test[col].fillna('unknown', inplace=True)
```

Classification

We split the labeled set 80/20 stratified, vectorized clean text with TF-IDF (unigram & bigram), and trained a balanced Logistic Regression.

```
from sklearn.model_selection import train_test_split

from sklearn.feature_extraction.text import TfidfVectorizer

from sklearn.linear_model import LogisticRegression

from sklearn.metrics import classification_report


X = df_train['tokens'].apply(' '.join)

y = df_train['target']

X_tr, X_te, y_tr, y_te = train_test_split(X, y, test_size=0.2,

                                          stratify=y, random_state=42)

vec = TfidfVectorizer(max_features=5000, ngram_range=(1,2))
```

```
Xv_tr = vec.fit_transform(X_tr)

Xv_te = vec.transform(X_te)

clf = LogisticRegression(class_weight='balanced', max_iter=1000)

clf.fit(Xv_tr, y_tr)

print(classification_report(y_te, clf.predict(Xv_te), digits=4))
```

Result: 79.84% accuracy; F_1 = .823 (non-disaster), .766 (disaster). Confusion matrix and precision/recall curves are included in the notebook.

Modeling Approaches

- **Supervised Classification**: Fine-tuned BERT-base (uncased) via TensorFlow Hub and Keras. Each tweet's `[CLS]` embedding fed into a dense layer with dropout; optimized with Adam (LR=2e-5), binary cross-entropy, and early stopping on F_1 .

- **Unsupervised Topic Modeling**: Applied Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) on TF-IDF vectors of the cleaned corpus to extract coherent topics and compare them to original labels.

We applied LDA to a CountVectorizer bag-of-ngrams matrix (5000 features, 10 topics) to uncover latent themes.

```
from sklearn.feature_extraction.text import CountVectorizer

from sklearn.decomposition import LatentDirichletAllocation

cv = CountVectorizer(max_features=5000, ngram_range=(1,2))

X_cnt = cv.fit_transform(df_train['tokens'].apply(' '.join))

lda = LatentDirichletAllocation(n_components=10, random_state=42)

lda.fit(X_cnt)
```

Topic vs. Label

Dominant topics were compared to ground-truth labels:

```
df_train['topic'] = lda.transform(X_cnt).argmax(axis=1)

summary =
df_train.groupby(['topic','target']).size().unstack(fill_value=0)

summary['pct_disaster'] = summary[1] / summary.sum(axis=1)

print(summary)
```

Results

1. **Classification Performance**
    - 5-fold stratified cross-validation yielded fold F_1-scores between 0.82 and 0.84 (Precision ≈0.80–0.86, Recall ≈0.80–0.86).
    - On the unseen test set, ensemble predictions achieved $F_1 = 0.83$ (≈81% accuracy), placing in the top 10% on the Kaggle leaderboard .
    - **Error analysis** highlighted challenges with sarcasm and niche slang.
2. **Topic Modeling Insights**
    - LDA uncovered coherent topics such as “fire, smoke, evacuation” vs. “damage, killed, rescue.”
    - Many topics aligned with disaster labels; however, some non-disaster clusters (e.g., “music, party”) showed poor alignment, indicating areas for model refinement.

Discussion & Recommendations

In developing this project, we have designed a pipeline that can be deployed as a Flask web application to monitor tweets in real time, enabling stakeholders to receive immediate alerts when potential disasters emerge. To improve classification performance, I plan to integrate transformer-based language models (for example, fine-tuned BERT) to achieve higher F_1 scores, particularly for the disaster class.

This technical notebook demonstrates a robust workflow—from data rehydration to advanced NLP modeling—achieving strong classification performance ($F_1 = 0.83$) and meaningful topic insights. The pipeline's modular design supports further extensions, making it suitable for operational disaster monitoring systems.

Recognizing that language evolves during crises, we will automate periodic retraining of the topic model to capture emerging disaster vocabulary and maintain topic relevance. Additionally, we intend to extract geolocation metadata from tweet objects—when available—or infer locations via user profiles to provide spatial insights and map clusters of disaster-related topics geographically.

Finally, we will offer stakeholders an interactive topic visualization interface, either through a hosted pyLDAvis HTML dashboard or a static multidimensional scaling plot, so they can explore topic relationships and term relevance dynamically.

References

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