

# Title page

THESIS TITLE

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## Abstract

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<b>API</b> Application programming interfaces . . . . .	1
<b>LiU</b> Linköping University . . . . .	1
<b>NER</b> Named-entity recognition . . . . .	1
<b>NLP</b> Natural Language Processing . . . . .	2
<b>SMHI</b> Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute . . . . .	1



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# 1 Introduction

Earlier in this century, floods around Lake Vänern and Arvika have costed Sweden an estimate of 11.1 billions Swedish Krona for damages and repairs [16]. Counties of Dalarna and Gävleborg suffered from flash floods in 2021 disturbing the daily life of their citizens and damaging public and private properties [4]. Flooding is a devastating natural disaster that threatens the lively hood of people and the infrastructure of communities around the world [9].

To facilitate the process of emergency management during these hazardous events, early warning systems analyse their risk, monitor and warn the public while ensuring their readiness [3]. Traditionally, meteorologists forecast the weather by relying on tools such as gauges, satellites, and radars for data extraction. The emergence of social media platforms such as Twitter provide individuals with a public space to share their experience, effectively creating another potential source of data.

Researchers started harnessing this new wealth of information to aid the disaster management procedure. Twitter streaming Application programming interfaces ([API](#)) makes it possible to create a monitoring system for early event detection on a global [6] and local [2] scales. Another use for it would be identifying victims in real-time, locating their physical location, and communicating the information to rescue teams [18]. After the threat subsides, emergency managers can use relevant tweets to assess the impact and plan the recovery phase [2]. To prepare for future floods, authoritative entities can make informed actions by analysing historical data and determining the locations suffering from recurrent calamities. This newly acquired knowledge can augment weather warning systems' pipelines improving their accuracies such as Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute ([SMHI](#)), a Swedish expert authority with a global perspective and a vital task in predicting changes in weather, water, and climate [19].

This thesis project uses Swedish tweets to extract relevant knowledge about flood events in Sweden with the focus on answering the following questions:

1. What methods can be used to classify Swedish tweets related to flood events?
2. How to extract the locations mentioned in the tweets?
3. What visualizations can be used to represent the results?
4. What insights can be extracted by using text analysis on the tweets?

This thesis project is a part of a research project, AI for Climate Adaptation [12] at Linköping University ([LiU](#)) in collaboration with the [SMHI](#). It implements a pipeline that provides a visual representation of tweets related to flood events in Sweden. First, relevant tweets are pulled, processed, and classified from the Twitter API using data mining techniques. Second, physical locations are extracted from tweets mentioning flood events employing Named-entity recognition ([NER](#)) and gazetteers. Finally, the results are presented on a spatio-temporal visualization, and text analysis techniques are done on the tweets. For verification purposes, the pipeline is applied on a week worth of tweets after past flood events.

## 2 Literature Review

The massive and accessible volume of data that social media produces has attracted the attention of many researchers as a valuable data source for their research topic; however, collecting and processing data of this nature pose many challenges to extracting useful information. This section mentions what other researchers focusing on disaster management topics did to address these challenges while using Twitter; it also discusses the different approaches used for identifying relevant tweets, extracting geographical location from them, visualizing the results, and applying text analysis.

### 2.1 Data Collection

Twitter’s [API](#) enables developers to retrieve historical tweets using queries that are made of operators to match a variety of tweet attributes, such as a specific keyword, having a geotag provided by the user who created the tweet, and the language classified by Twitter. Users generate around 500-700 million tweets a day [10], making it necessary to limit the number of tweets to fetch using the [API](#) to reduce computational power and downtime. Feng and Sester [8] only fetches geotagged tweets and then filters necessary them using 45 keywords in 7 languages; this approach filters out a big chunk of relevant tweets since 1% of tweets are geotagged [11]. A better approach is to fetch tweets using keywords related to the topic of interest in different languages. de Bruijn et al. [6] uses over 40 keywords associated with floods in 11 major languages in the query to fetch tweets.

Most classification tasks require the tweets to be labelled to train a classifier. A straightforward approach is to manually label a sample of the tweets [6][2]. Petersen and Styve [15] use Crisilext6 [14], a crowdsourced labelled tweets, for training their classifiers that get evaluated on 88 million unlabelled tweets containing flood-related terms [5]. Feng and Sester [8] automatically label the tweets by checking if there is rainfall during the provided time and city location by using a weather [API](#)<sup>1</sup>; if there’s a rainfall, the tweet is labelled positive, the negative label otherwise

In addition to using textual data, some researchers use other types of data to enhance their pipelines. Some tweets contain media attachments, such as images and videos that are potential visual information for the concerned research topic [1][17][13]; search engines are another resourceful source for images as well [8]. When it comes to flooding events, hydrological information can be a valuable source of information that can be extracted from a global precipitation dataset based on tweets’ time stamps and location in the text [7]. Barker and Macleod [2] use Environment Agency flood-monitoring [API](#)<sup>2</sup> to get river gauge levels and flood warnings to identify at-risk flooding areas.

Processing text is a crucial part of any Natural Language Processing (NLP) pipeline to train an effective classifier. Research requires that the corpus is in multiple languages, so translating the text to one language (most likely English) is needed if the classifier can not handle multilingual data [18]. One of the most common text-processing tasks is removing unnecessary terms such as stopwords, Uniform Resource Locator URLs, numbers, and

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.wunderground.com/weather/api/d/docs>

<sup>2</sup><https://environment.data.gov.uk/flood-monitoring/doc/reference#flood-warnings>

punctuation marks. User mentions in tweets don't provide useful information, so pipelines often remove or replace them with a generic term such as "@user" [7]. The location of the flood event is an important piece of information that is extracted from a term in the tweet, making it a potential target that includes biases in the dataset by overusing it; de Bruijn et al. [7] replaces these terms by the country name that the location is located in; on the other hand, Petersen and Styve [15] replace the terms by the word "place" if they get mentioned more than 0.5% of the size of the data set. Another way to improve the performance of the classifier is to group the terms by converting them to lower-case and transforming them to their lexeme or word stem by lemmatisation or stemming respectively.

Some tweets are noisy or redundant, making them a target for filtering out. Retweets are identical to other tweets without additional context making them unneeded. Spam bots generate similar tweets for malicious reasons, such as spreading false content to manipulate the public; other reasons could be for utility reasons, such as creating a feed for users to check updates. These tweets introduce noise to the dataset that gets reduced by removing duplicate tweets. de Bruijn et al. [6] only considers one tweet from each user in the last 14 days mentioning a specific region; they also remove tweets containing more than five consecutive words that match with those in another tweet among the previous 100 talking about a location. Singh et al. [18] approaches this problem by only extracting tweets created from mobile phones and only considers tweets from users who have followers/following  $< 1$ .

## **2.2 Text Classification**

- Flood detection - transformers - CNN - word embedding

## **2.3 Location Extraction**

- Location specific or global - global, local - methods - markov chains using data from user profile and historical tweets - twitter info (geotag, entities, etc.) - 1% of tweets are geotaged [cite:@middletonRealTimeCrisisMapping2014]

## **2.4 Visualization**

## **2.5 Text analysis**

[Link to tentative notes for report](#)

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# Appendices

## A Dummy appendix

### A.1 Dummy appendix