

# Brandwatch Report/ The Twitter Landscape /2013/ UK

A study of the conversation and behaviour found on Twitter

We go beyond the limitations of brand-based keywords to analyse a large sample of randomly selected tweets



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# Brandwatch Report

## The Twitter Landscape /2013

### Why read this...

Twitter is no longer a platform exclusive to the pioneers and innovators of online business. Nearly every consumer brand and many B2B companies have realised the vast opportunities Twitter presents to grow and improve their organisations.

But, beyond the conversation directed at us and by those we follow, how much do we really know about the network and its several hundred million users? What do people talk most about? Do males and females behave differently? How are brands talked about more widely?

Here we take a fresh approach to answering these questions and provide a whole new range of insights to help you understand Twitter.

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# The Twitter Landscape /2013

## Introduction/

This study, conducted using data from a two-month period in late 2012, offers an overview of current trends in Twitter usage. The results, analysing brand mentions and consumer voice, are especially pertinent for businesses looking to understand and embrace Twitter as a communication channel.

Based on a corpus of 10,000 randomly selected tweets,  
our research provides insight into

1. Frequency of brand name mentions on Twitter.
2. Prominence of certain topics and themes, such as television, music, celebrity, sport, politics, literature and health.
3. How gender impacts conversation topics and branded conversation.
4. Twitter user segments most likely to mention particular types of brands.

View Brandwatch's extended research paper that informed this report.

# The Twitter Landscape /2013

## Background/

**As brands continue to increase investments in Twitter as a communication channel, increasing opportunities arise to learn from the activity taking place on the platform, and how to better use it to your advantage as a business.**

Limiting searches solely to brand names, products and channels ignores the vital importance of broader contextual knowledge. Much social media research starts out with this focal bias, thus failing to bring to light many of the rich insights social media can provide about consumer habit when a wider net is cast.

To this end, our report takes an inverse approach to that of studies before it, by beginning instead with a random sample of Twitter data (10,000 tweets). If this sample is then taken to fairly reflect the majority of Twitter usage, we can unveil, with unprecedented breadth, a fascinating view of the overall Twitter landscape.

# The Twitter Landscape /2013

## Key Findings/

Our research uncovered the following key findings:

- Twitter usage in the UK is approximately **62%** engagement, **38%** broadcast.
- TV/Film, Sport and Music are the most popular topics of Twitter conversation.
- **3.6%** of all tweets mention brands, more than the number discussing music or celebrities.
- Female authors are significantly more likely to tweet about “personal” matters.
- Twitter conversation displays similar gender-specific patterns to speech.
- Males complain more frequently, while females talk about purchase experiences and enter competitions more.
- Feedback on advertisements, particularly TV-based, is a regular theme for tweeters.

# The Twitter Landscape /2013

## Methodology/

A random sample of 1,000 UK Twitter accounts was selected for the study, using a random word generator. These were then split by gender.

Group	n	Number of Tweets		Other Users	
		Total	Per Day	Following	Followers
ALL ( $\bar{x}$ )	1,000	10,609	11.7	694.2	3,515.1
FEMALE ( $\bar{x}$ )	470	12,096	14.6	707.2	3,493.3
MALE ( $\bar{x}$ )	530	9,291	9.2	682.6	3,534.4

Each account was then allocated a starting date (between August and September 2012) and 10 consecutive tweets from each account were selected to create the corpus of 10,000 texts.

For a full methodology, please see the unabridged paper.

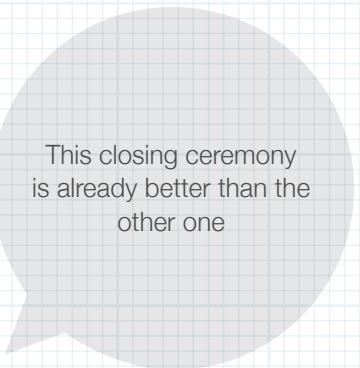
# The Twitter Landscape /2013

## Methodology/ cont...

All tweets were manually analysed by native English speakers and categorised in two parallel ways.



Twitter/ Solo



This closing ceremony  
is already better than the  
other one



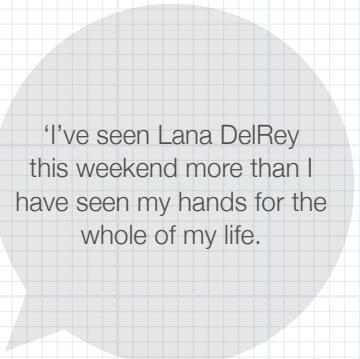
Twitter/ Tag



@\*\*\*\*\* haapppy  
birthday! Have a good day  
xx



Twitter/ Celeb



I've seen Lana DelRey  
this weekend more than I  
have seen my hands for the  
whole of my life.



Twitter/ Personal



That awkward moment  
when someone asks you  
what's wrong and they're  
the problem

### Post type:

This category identifies whether the tweet was solo, a reply, a tag (an @ mention of another user but not a reply) or a retweet.

### Topic:

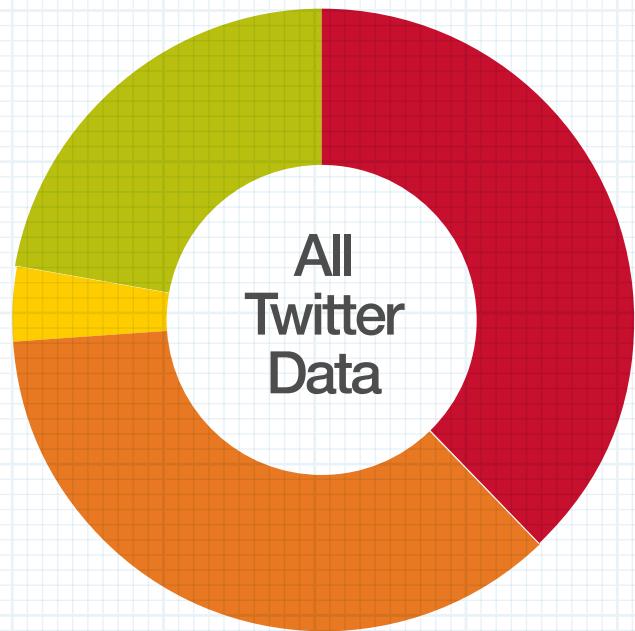
This category identifies the topic or subject of each tweet. These included: television, sport, music, celebrity, news, work, education, politics, gaming, health, religion, literature, venues, and any combination thereof.

When a tweet did not fit a predefined topic, it was assigned the topic category of "personal".

# The Twitter Landscape /2013

## Results/ Tweet Types

Twitter is approximately 62% engagement,  
38% broadcast.



- 38% Solo Tweets
- 36% Replies
- 4% Tagging
- 22% Retweets

Whilst replies and solo tweets are almost equal in number, retweets and other tags combined with replies show that the engagement aspect of Twitter dominates that of broadcast.

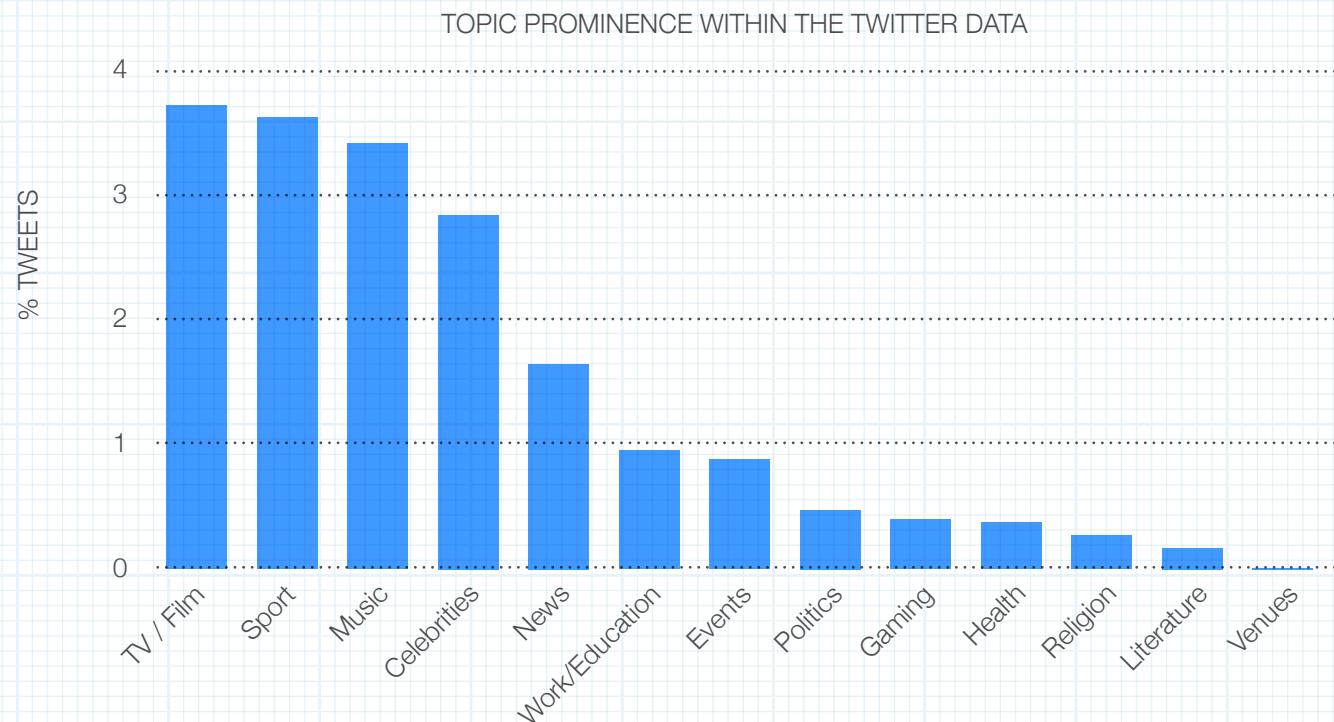
Our findings also showed female authors were 25% more likely to retweet than males but that replies were 18% more often authored by males.

# The Twitter Landscape /2013

## Results/ Conversation Topics

**TV/Film, Sport and Music were found to be the three most popular topics of conversation.**

Four in every five tweets were classed as “personal”, as they were not classified as matching one of the above topics. Many of these included mentions of birthdays, proverbs, horoscopes and dieting



Twitter/

### TELEVISION

This couple on super nanny USA let their kid play with a machete!!!'



Twitter/

### MUSIC

Now I'm purchasing Gangnam style, it will be my ultimate work out song'

# The Twitter Landscape /2013

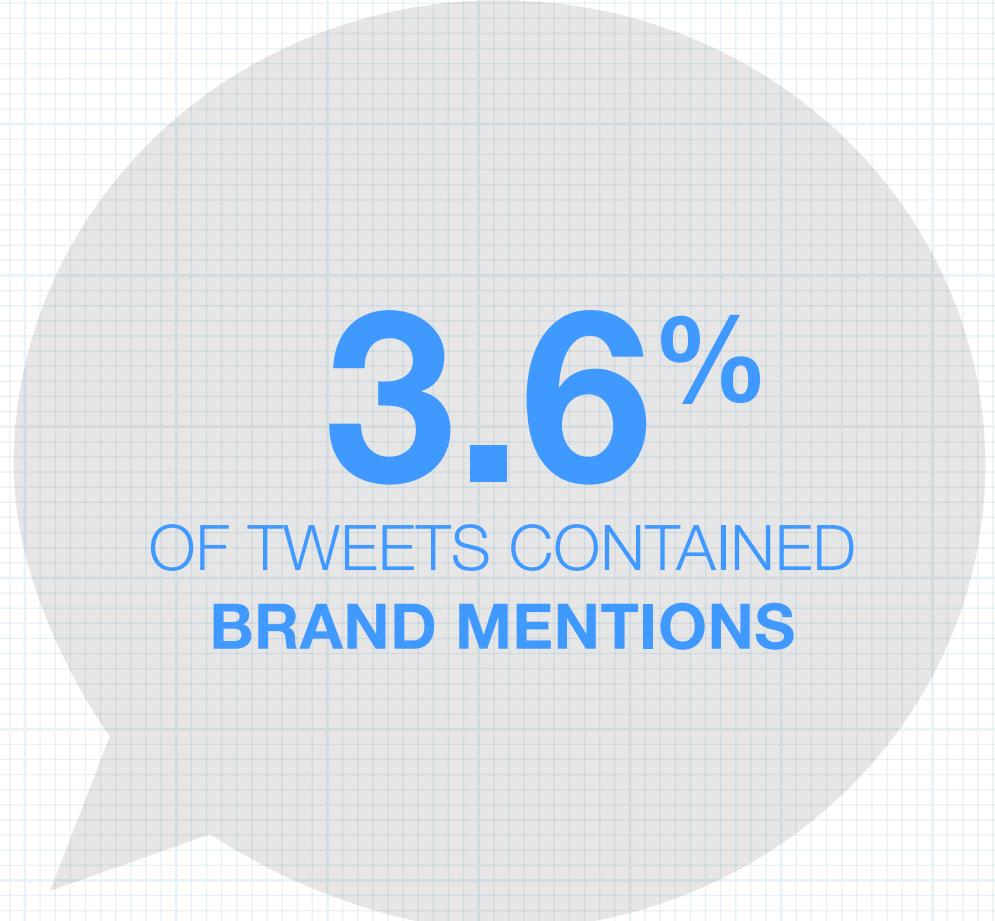
## Results/ Conversation Topics / cont...

### Brands are mentioned more than music or celebrities.

If 'brands' was taken as a separate topic, it would be almost as prominent as TV/film and sport, ranking above music, celebrities and all other topics predefined in our study.

If we take our 10k sample as reflective of Twitter in its totality, we can extrapolate that a staggering **12,600 tweets per minute mention brands\*** – no clearer indication is needed of social media's huge impact on business today.

\* In October 2012, Twitter reported a total of 500m tweets per day



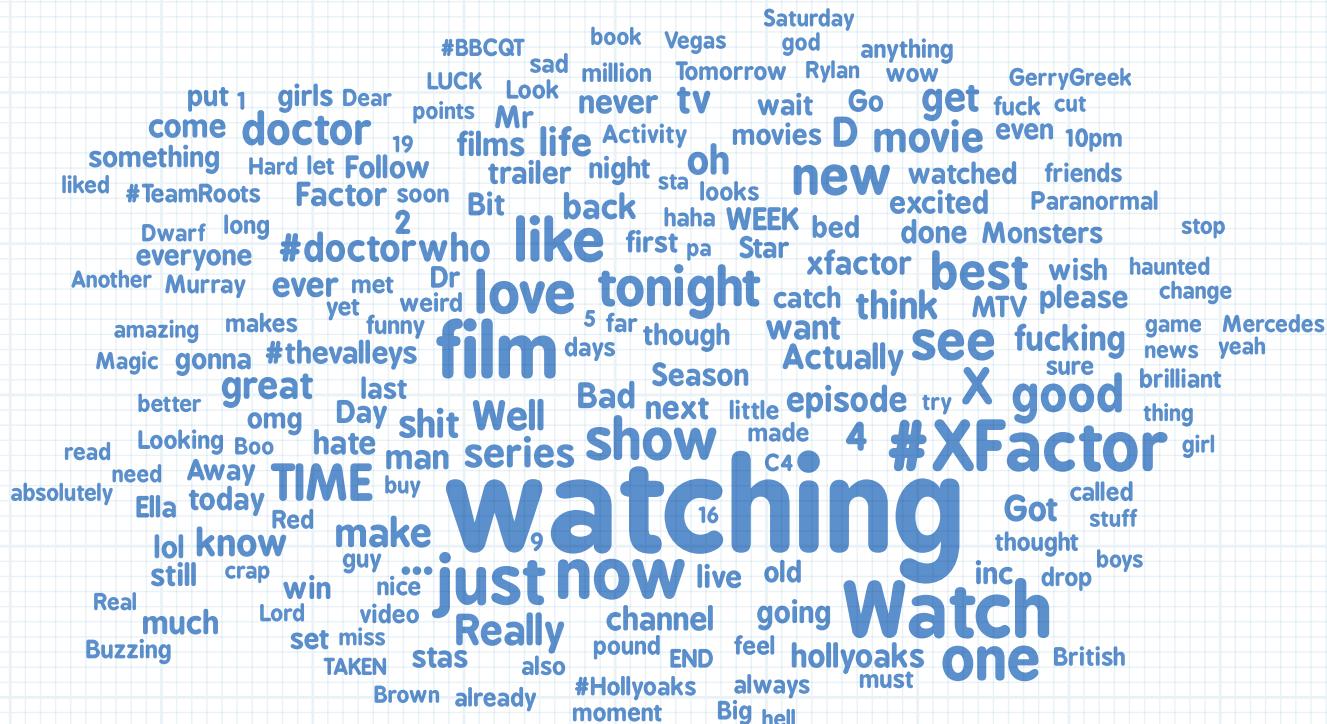
3.6%

OF TWEETS CONTAINED  
BRAND MENTIONS

# The Twitter Landscape /2013

## Results/ Top Topic (1)

TV tweets are dominated by comments about viewing experiences.



Notably, tweets demonstrated an immediate nature, by the prominence of the gerund form “watching”. This is evidence of the popularity of “live-tweeting”, where television viewers provide comment on particular shows during their broadcast.

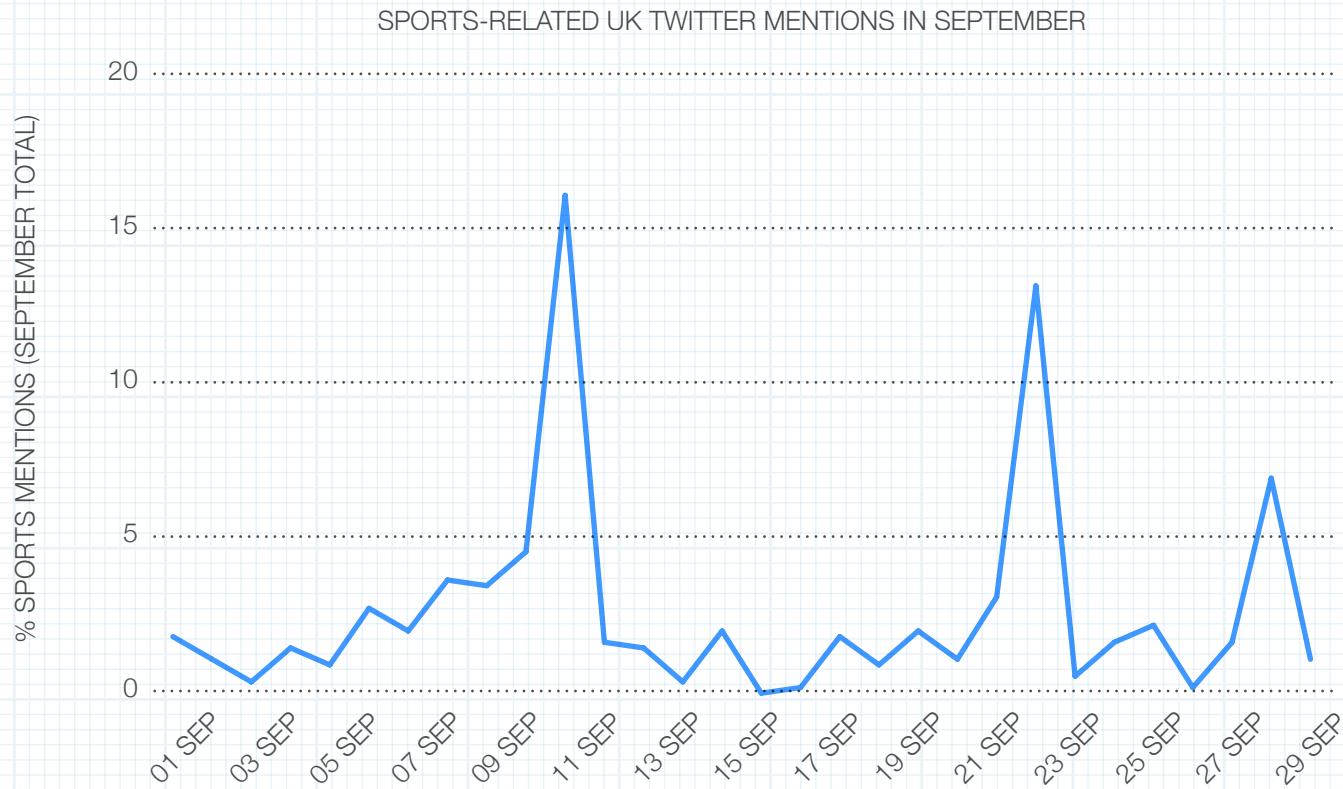
Shows promoting a hashtag get tweeted 63% more.

A separate Brandwatch study on “dual screening” found that shows promoting a hashtag get tweeted 63% more than those that don’t. Brands too are piggy-backing on the phenomenon, by running opportunist Twitter campaigns and competitions relating to the TV shows.

# The Twitter Landscape /2013

## Results/ Top Topic (2)

Sport conversation is male dominated and led by specific events.



Similar to tweets about TV, sport tweets clearly demonstrated a sense of 'live' reaction to events. Big sporting occasions attracted spikes in conversation and buzz was often related to viewing experiences, though less explicitly than with television.

### What does this mean for brands?

As well as indicating where and when to run promotional campaigns, there is also a clear, broader brand opportunity for organisations to capitalise on sporting events by taking part in supporting and commenting on them just like their target audience.

### Sport Peaks Explained

10th/ Andy Murray wins US open after beating Novak Djokovic

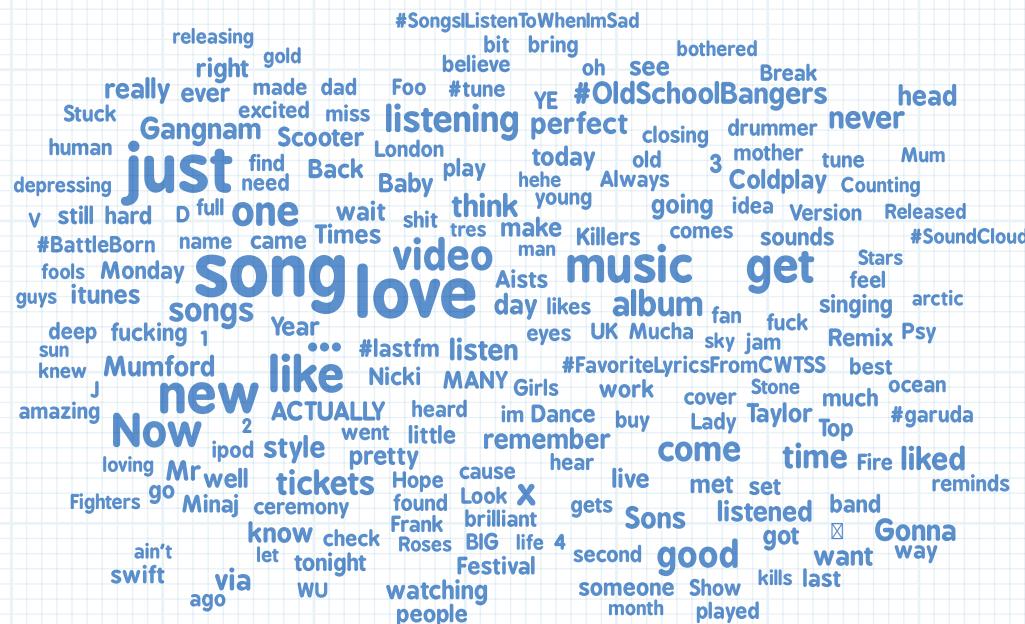
23rd/ Formula 1 grand prix  
Premier League game  
(Liverpool & Manchester United)

# Results/ Top Topic (3)

# Music is the most emotive conversation topic.

Keywords such as ‘love’, ‘like’, ‘perfect’, ‘think’ and ‘feel’ reflected the strongly evaluative nature of tweets about tracks and artists.

Tweets about music also frequently included phrases that indicate purchase intent, providing a great deal of potential for further analysis.



# Twitter/



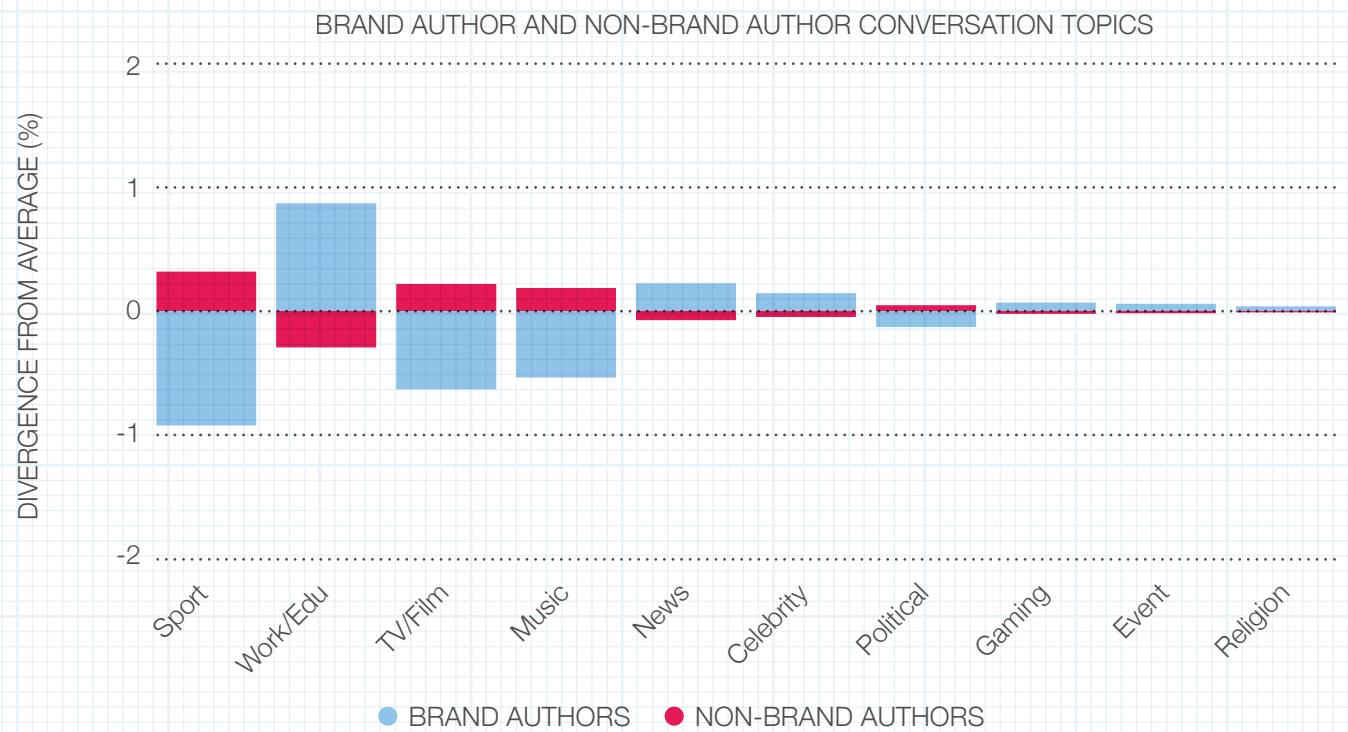
My Top 3 #lastfm  
Artists: Joni Mitchel,  
Terror Danjah &  
Royal-T

My dad just said  
he's gunna buy Mumford &  
Sons new album when  
it comes out

# The Twitter Landscape /2013

## Results/ Brand Author Analysis

Here we focus on the conversation that mentioned brands, to understand more about how and why people tweet about companies and their products and services

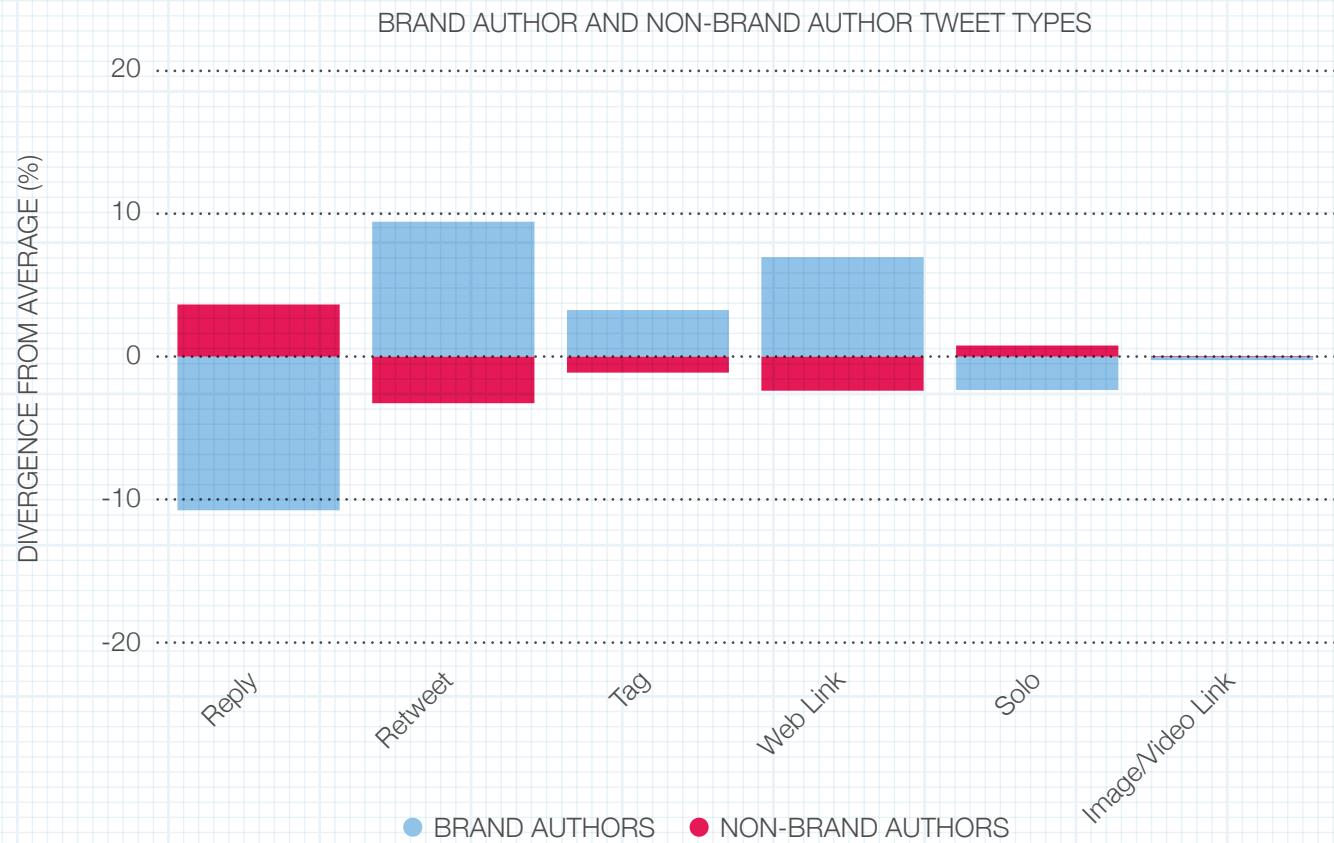


Authors mentioning brands were significantly more likely to also include work or education in their tweets than authors who didn't mention brands, and less likely to comment on sport, music and television.

# The Twitter Landscape /2013

## Results/ Brand Author Analysis/ cont...

Other attributes of brand vs non-brand tweeters included less inclination to tweet replies, lower overall tweet frequency and lower followers on average.



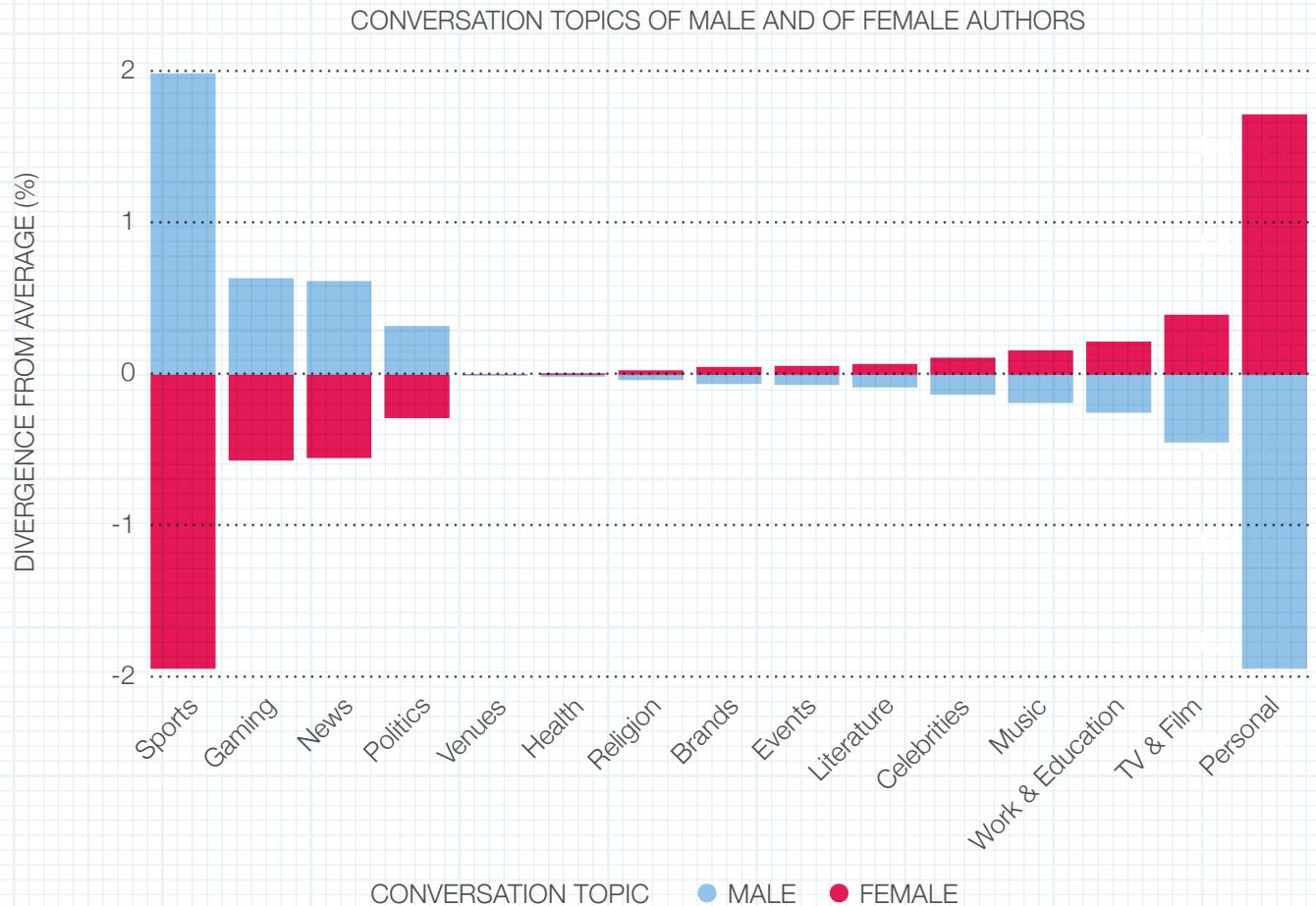
Brand mentions were more likely to be retweets than replies, suggesting that users were more inclined to publicise brands passively rather than actively creating content.

However, the above average level of web links and tags did indicate that authors were bringing brands to the attention of other, specific users and that this process was well-integrated with online content elsewhere via inclusion of URLs.

# The Twitter Landscape /2013

## Results/ Gender Analysis

### Topics



Male-dominated topics:

- Sport
- Gaming
- News
- Politics

Female-dominated topics:

- Television
- Work
- Education
- Music

# The Twitter Landscape /2013

## Results/ Gender Analysis/ cont...

### Female authors are significantly more likely to tweet about ‘personal’ matters

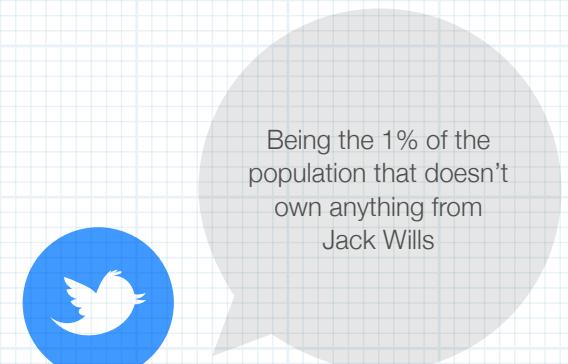
Our topic analysis showed ‘personal’ tweets to be the most female-dominant topic. Furthermore, by studying pronoun frequencies, we can see that males and females post a similar amount of tweets using the 2nd person ('you', 'your' etc) and 3rd person ('they', 'their' etc) but that females use the 1st person substantially more than their male counterparts.

### Twitter conversation displays similar gender-specific patterns to speech.

This self-orientated stance of female Twitter usage, compared to the more detached tone of male usage, aligns with past studies done on the role of gender in speech and language. Consequently, powerful inferences can be made about gender-specific online behaviour matching that of the offline world.



Twitter/ Female 1st Person



Twitter/ Male subject omission

# The Twitter Landscape /2013

## Results/ Gender Analysis/ cont...

### Females were more likely to mention brands with language in the 1st person than males.

Though rare, the first person register was associated with the richest sources of consumer voice. These were the comments most likely to be valuable both from a publicity viewpoint and for understanding consumer behaviours.

This finding revealed a divide between two types of Twitter behaviour: the first, characterised by a lack of personal pronouns, was more likely to be male. The second, rarer type of author was more likely female and discussed brands and products in relation to their own offline experiences, i.e. in the first person.



Twitter/

I love the way my hand thinks I have disposable income and accidentally orders a new dress and jacket from River Island today... #oops'



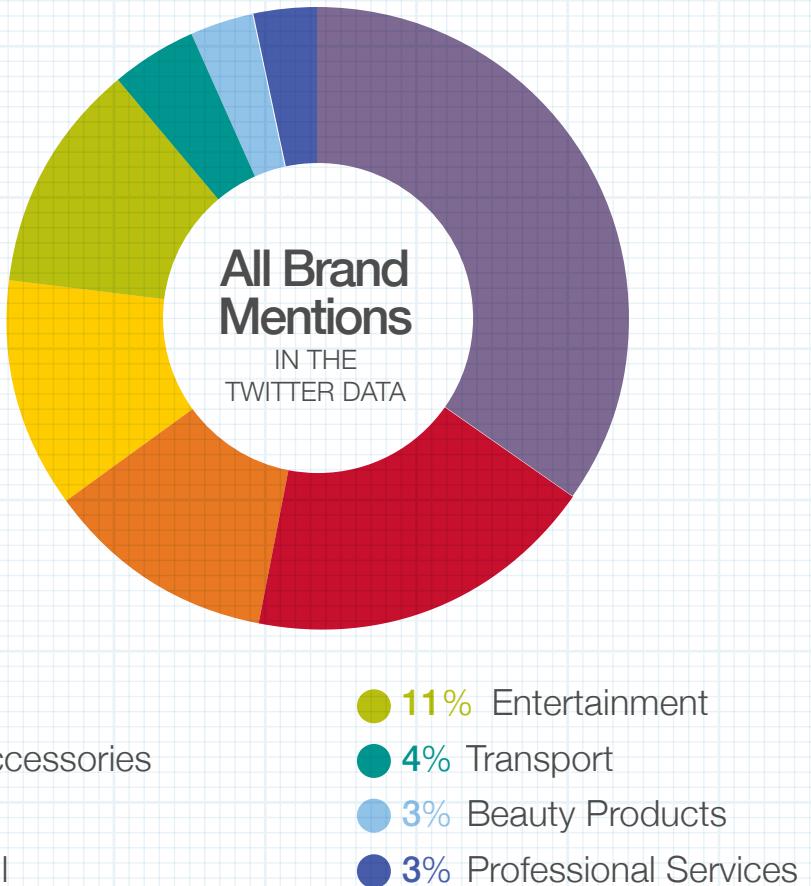
Twitter/

First time I've ever had pop tarts. They're so sweet I feel sick!

# The Twitter Landscape /2013

## Results/ Brand Focus

### Overview



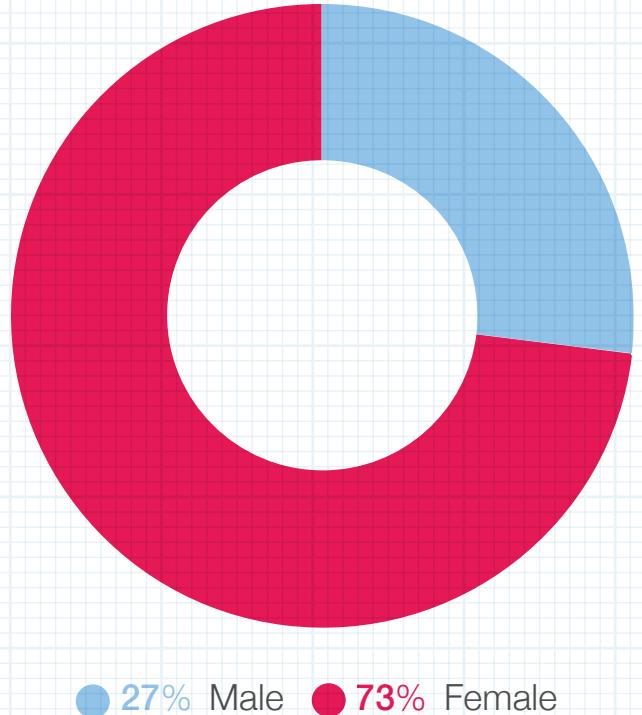
Brands mentioned ranged from large names such as Amazon and Ford to smaller companies like Azendi and Micro Scooters.

Equal numbers of products and services were mentioned, suggesting no bias to secondary or tertiary sectors. B2C brands were though, unsurprisingly, far more prominent than B2B equivalents.

# The Twitter Landscape /2013

## Results/ Brand Focus/ cont...

### Food & Drink



#CadburyHeroes  
coffee UK18ends235911Sep  
brother sickhttp://instagrampTXXmyXMs  
#silverpubes advising shellthorpe  
McCoy's brother #Tesco peri supply excellent  
rehearse  
#perigood £50 fave good Fanta  
yes price reclassified  
2 amy Tips sweet phish Hersheys  
work PE include Golden everything  
give Nice Deep omg Gold must  
voucher mmmm couldnt informative  
need just sat hot Gatorade Sausage  
really gotta muffin girl  
agent #gotitfree mind old  
hash MADE McDonald's Nutella  
interesting Mc cookie popcorn small order hungry away makes  
pictwitter.com/duggGZz something closes bar make ice onion  
#TwiceAsEpic pop £1 delicious flavour Mars food  
#YeahBuddyyyyyy £1.00 look nandos heaven best milles  
socially Twix adve fucking beforehand  
BEAUTIFUL time sugar spos chocolate  
awkward trying tas Cream ever Pls free year's  
#grampsgrabber run box whoever 18 late Liverpool  
Ridged Miguel #LoveJaffa TCS munch Thanks tag  
personalised fish feel God #dogged fancy night #omg  
cakes New get 10am ben FIVE pa medium ManageratNandos  
#lame San #Joyville First puppies it'd  
Science feast McDonalds love  
pringles cups #San prides day slush KFC class jerrys  
#lame San #Joyville First puppies it'd  
Science feast McDonalds love  
favourite Institute bought Mauled want  
bunny starbucks hooked Even malteaser  
#poweredbycoconuts Breakfast machine  
drives bars slush love  
style  
Cadbury proud chance KFC class jerrys  
pringles cups #San prides day slush KFC class jerrys  
#lame San #Joyville First puppies it'd  
Science feast McDonalds love  
Institute bought Mauled want  
bunny starbucks hooked Even malteaser  
#poweredbycoconuts Breakfast machine  
drives bars slush love  
style

With strongly female-skewed authorship, food and drink tweets were notably almost exclusively related to snack or fast food brands, reinforcing the notion of Twitter as an on-the-go network.

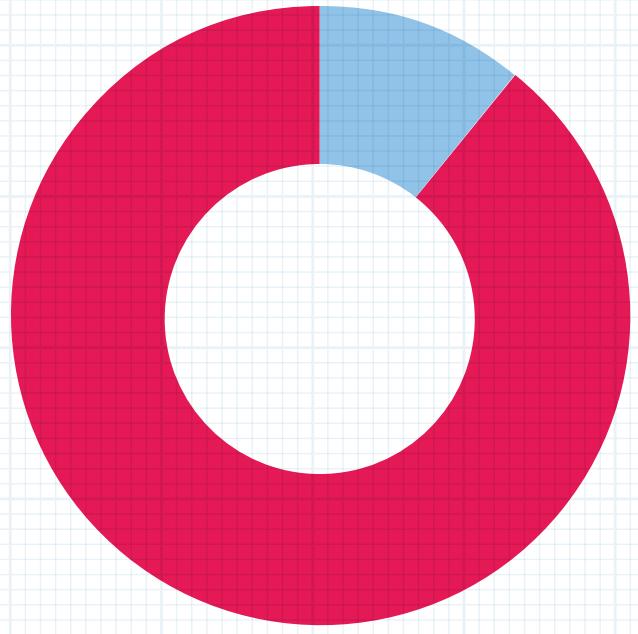
**The first thing many people do during a break is tweet.**

The disproportionate volume of tea brands mentioned demonstrated the tendency of authors to tweet during breaks and to discuss their immediate surroundings; the dominance of fast food brands also reflects this immediacy.

# The Twitter Landscape /2013

## Results/ Brand Focus/ cont...

### Clothing and Accessories



● 11% Male ● 89% Female



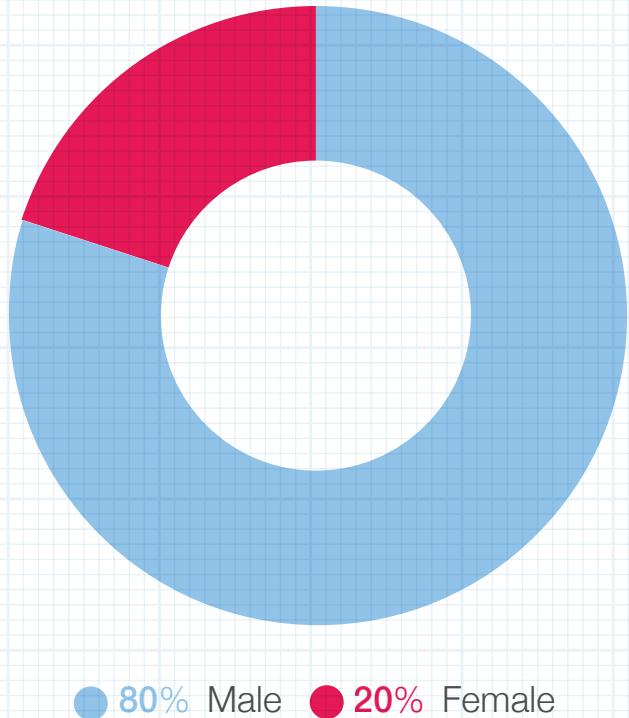
Again, this topic was much more female-oriented than those of other industries. The single biggest driver of this conversation was Twitter competitions, accounting for the dominating phrases 'RT', 'enter' and 'win' in the topic cloud.

A notable tendency amongst clothing conversation was to express mental tension between the intent to purchase and apparent deterrents, such as the shopping environment, brand reputation or expense.

# The Twitter Landscape /2013

## Results/ Brand Focus/ cont...

### Technology



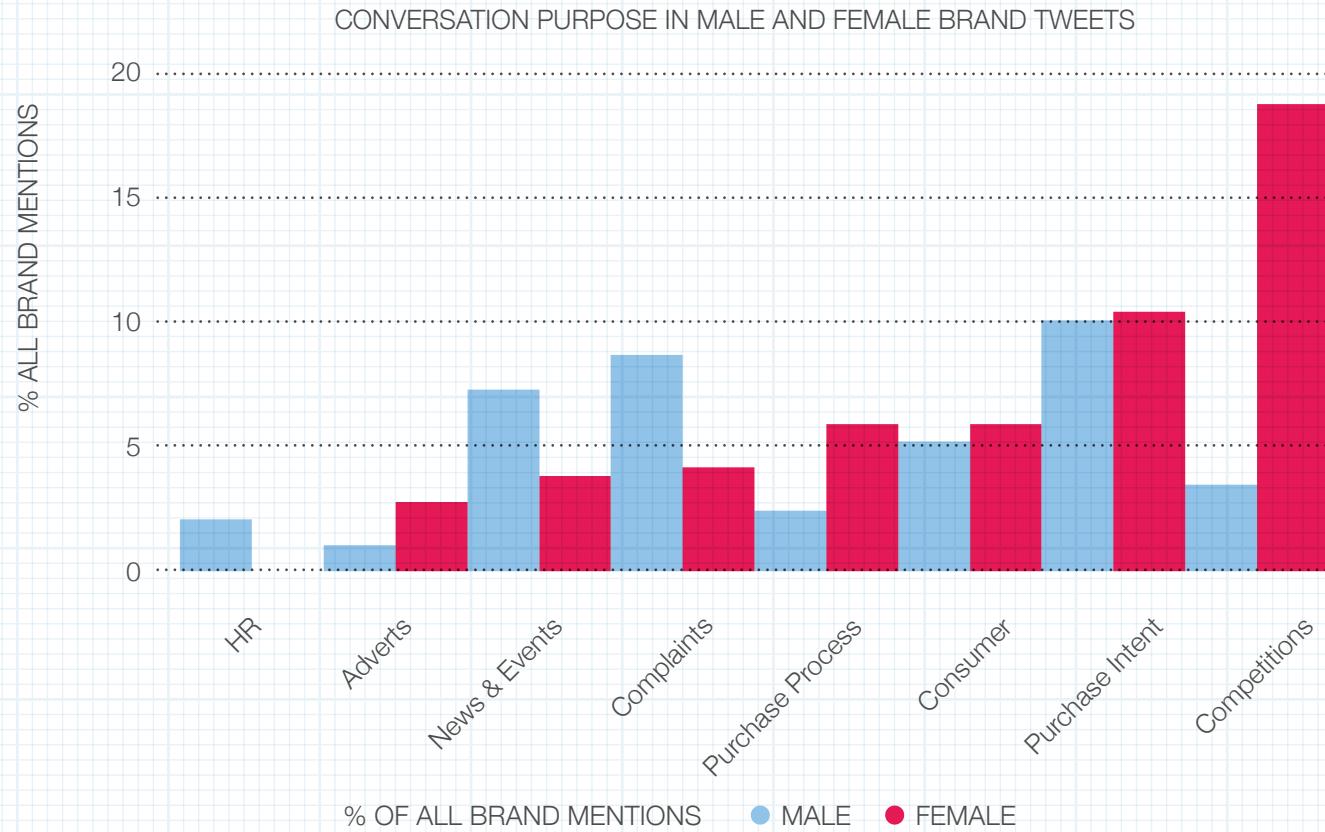
In contrast to the other major brand types, technology brand conversation was male dominated. The dates of the analysed corpus correlated with the release of the iPhone 5, which naturally triggered substantial online buzz.

Technology brand tweets were markedly more comparative in nature with authors reviewing and discussing competing products, unlike fashion brands tweets which demonstrated greater brand-loyalty and fewer comparisons.

# The Twitter Landscape /2013

## Results/ Brand Focus & Context

Males complain more frequently, while females talk about purchase experiences and enter competitions more.

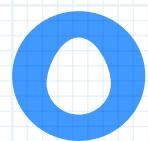


# The Twitter Landscape /2013

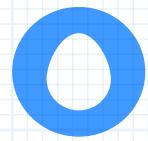
## Results/ Brand Focus/ Competitions

**Retweet competitions are a particularly common but not necessarily effective form of promotion on Twitter.**

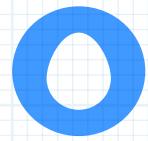
Below is an example of an account used only for Twitter competitions.  
The profile has been anonymised in accordance with the methodology.



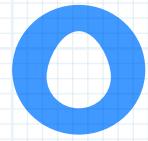
Follow [@cultboxtv](#) and RT for a chance to win a 'Lord of the Rings & The Hobbit Collection' boxset – More info: [bit.ly/XECwkj](http://bit.ly/XECwkj) #LOTRCB



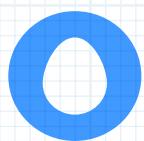
We've got a fabulous advent Christmas giveaway for you. To WIN 2 advent candles & holders just RT & follow. Ends 12pm 29th Nov! Good luck



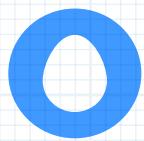
#win a prize from This is Nessie on the [@Mummyvwork](#) Christmas countdown. 1 new giveaway a day!! #Competition [mummyvwork.co.uk/2012/11/christ...](http://mummyvwork.co.uk/2012/11/christ...)



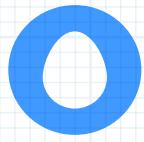
#win a copy of Prima Princess on DVD on the [@Mummyvwork](#) Christmas countdown. 1 new giveaway a day!! #Competition [mummyvwork.co.uk/2012/11/christ...](http://mummyvwork.co.uk/2012/11/christ...)



#win some funky wellies from [@poconido](#) on the [@Mummyvwork](#) Christmas countdown. 1 new giveaway a day!! #Competition [mummyvwork.co.uk/2012/11/christ...](http://mummyvwork.co.uk/2012/11/christ...)



#win a Christmas gift from [@hallmarkUK](#) on the [@Mummyvwork](#) Christmas countdown. 1 new giveaway a day!! #Competition [mummyvwork.co.uk/2012/11/christ...](http://mummyvwork.co.uk/2012/11/christ...)



#win a Christmas gift from [@GreenPeopleUK](#) on the [@Mummyvwork](#) Christmas countdown. 1 new giveaway a day!! #Competition [mummyvwork.co.uk/2012/11/christ...](http://mummyvwork.co.uk/2012/11/christ...)

The most drastic gender split was found in those entering competitions via Twitter. Many of the tweets driven by competitions came from hollow accounts that were used solely for this reason and posted tweets of no other kind.

Twitter competitions are often targeted with increasing the brand's social reach, but a high proportion of retweets (the most frequently used form) come from those with few or no followers. This limitation on the effectiveness of such promotions can even have a negative impact on brand image if hollow/spam accounts become associated with the competition.

# The Twitter Landscape /2013

## Results/ Brand Focus/ Ad Response

Feedback on advertisements, particularly TV-based, is a regular theme for tweeters.



Twitter/

'That Twix advert really makes me want a Twix, must say excellent advertising'



Twitter/

'The new @ marksandspencer advert is really good, I can imagine sales increasing.'



Twitter/

'Have the Olympics finished yet? If they have, can McDonalds please take down those piss-weak [...] posters at Euston?'



Twitter/

'Rachel's Organic Yoghurt advertisers take note: having a woman with a sultry voice saying "slips" over and over will not make yoghurt sexy.'

In the hundreds of tweets about TV/film (3.75% of the total dataset), many expressed opinion about ads – some just passing commentary, some direct responses to the brands:

# The Twitter Landscape /2013

## Recommendations for Brands/

**Twitter is a substantial source of opinion and experience about brands – it needs to be analysed, understood and acted upon accordingly.**

Brands were mentioned in 3.6% of all tweets, making the topic more popular than music or celebrities.

**Engage with Twitter in a similar manner to your audience in order to maximise authenticity and develop a human persona.**

For example, comment and take part in big cultural and sporting events and, where appropriate, talk personally, about experiences and immediate surroundings.

**Clear differences in the behaviour of males and females should be accounted for when running campaigns and measuring brand performance on Twitter.**

Males complain more frequently, while females talk about purchase experiences and enter competitions more. This requires brands to be cautious when comparing the customer service or promotional performance of brands with differing target audiences.

# The Twitter Landscape /2013

## Recommendations for Brands/ cont...

**Traditional (i.e. offline) understanding of gender-specific behaviour should be acknowledged in Twitter research and communication.**

Our findings show that males and females demonstrate similar differences in behaviour and language on Twitter compared with the spoken word.

**The limitations of promotions such as retweet competitions should be recognised and measurements sufficiently robust.**

Many accounts on Twitter have no followers and exist purely for entering competitions, thus potentially artificially inflating retweet numbers making them a poor reflection of success. Reach metrics that also account for the number of followers each retweeter has can start to give more accurate insight.

# Brandwatch Report

## The Twitter Landscape /2013

### Thank you /

We hope you enjoyed The Twitter Landscape: 2013 and have taken some useful things away from our analysis. Brandwatch is an incredibly powerful tool for understanding large datasets whether on Twitter or further afield in blogs, forums, review sites, news and more. We also conduct special reports for clients on an ongoing basis, so please get in touch to dicuss your specific needs or book a live demo of Brandwatch.

### /about Brandwatch

Brandwatch is one of the world's leading social media monitoring tools, with offices in the UK, US and Germany.

Innovative brands and agencies all over the world use Brandwatch for:

**Research** – Understanding the market

**Sales** – Identifying leads

**Customer Service** – Responding and engaging quickly

**Marketing** – Targeting new networks

**Reputation Management** – Limiting negativity and building on positivity

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