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Social Bot
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Tweebola Tracker

The Tweebola Tracker is a social commentary on ebola paranoia in the Twitter environment. This bot creates a figurative disease called tweebola that a user catches if they tweet #ebola. The bot then tweets out its hourly analysis of the data it has collected: how many people are infected, how many countries and states are infected, and which region has the most cases of tweebola. The bot responds to mentions if they contain certain hash tagged keywords, and answers questions about what tweebola is, the user's infection status, and what the infected countries/states are.

The location data is gathered by collecting the user provided location data and then geocoding it using the Mapquest API. The location, along with the user's screen name, are stored in an array of InfectedTweeter objects, and the information is pushed to other appropriate storage arrays to allow for better data searching and manipulation. Each unique location is stored in an array with the number of people who share that location, and this array is traversed to determine the most infected region. As for the actual ebola statistics, those are hardcoded in using stats from ebolacount.com.

This bot is not really meant to be humanlike at all; in fact, the objectivity of it is what helps it achieve its effect. By providing hard statistics, it is proving its case that the people tweeting about ebola, and therefore contracting tweebola, are from countries where there have been few or no ebola cases. The Tweebola Tracker is meant to be an interesting aggregator of information that speaks to trends of sensationalization through social media.

As of writing this statement, there has been little interaction with the bot, other than friends posting to test it. A random twitter user did favorite one of the tweets, but there has not been extensive involvement with the bot. I intended the bot to be more of a passive source of information that can be interacted with rather than an active source that bombards people with information they may or may not want. I think this is a bot whose usage and popularity would spread more by word of mouth and eventually through the favorites, follows, and retweets that may come along with that.