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UA Twitter Accounts: Twitter Engagement Analysis

**Introduction**

Twitter was founded in 2006 and since then, it has become a booming social media platform that currently has over 330 million users (Stancheva). In today’s digital age, social media platforms have become a useful tool for colleges to market themselves to future students and provide a sneak-peek into what campus life might be like. Colleges also use their social media accounts to stay connected with students, offer real-time communication, as well as notifications of important information. However, an online presence is not enough, college accounts should strive to increase their engagement with their student body and grow their influence and popularity. In this project, we will analyze what factors contribute to more engaging posts and study what makes a tweet popular. Based on that, we will evaluate what would be the best factors to focus on to improve the account’s tweet popularity. We will also compare the data between three college accounts: @UarizonaCast, @uarizonaonline, and @uarizona to see which one has the most engaging posts.

**Project Objective**

The importance of online communication and engagement became more apparent when the COVID-19 pandemic caused college campuses to close in-person instruction and limit access to on-campus services. Social media became a way for colleges to keep students up to date on the unpredictable changes in guidelines and new developments. However, a college should not stick to only being a virtual bulletin board, but instead try to engage with and interact more with their student body.

The following research questions to address are:

1. How have UarizonaCast, uarizonaonline, and uarizona engaged with the student body?
2. What is the most influential factor for a college user’s popularity?
3. How can a college user improve their engagement with the community and students?

The goal of this research project is to gain a better understanding of social media between these three college twitter accounts. The change to distance learning left many students disconnected and limited the social interactions college campuses typically foster. Learning about engagement can give insight to how college accounts could improve their performance and fill the social gap this pandemic has created. This project will also give us an opportunity to synthesize everything we have learned this semester and utilize the skills and knowledge in a practical real-world application.

**Project Design**

The primary research method for this project is data collection from tweets and statistical modeling. First, we will use our Elevated Access from the Twitter Developer API to collect data from our chosen college accounts. The variables we intend to explore are:

* Usage of hashtags recommended by the University of Arizona’s social media
* Frequency or consistency of posts
* Time of day of posts
* Follower count
* Retweet count
* Number of likes and shares.

Code will be constructed to fetch the desired data metrics, store the data, and then analyze the data. The Twitter library we plan to use to interact with the Twitter API is Tweepy. Statistical measurements and analysis will include various inferential statistics and multiple regression analysis. Graphed models will be built and evaluated to reveal which variables affect a college user’s popularity. After comparing all the accounts, the lowest performing account will be provided recommendations on how they could improve their engagement. The Twitter data collection process will be from May 2021 and March 2022.

**Project Timeline**

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| Week 11 | Complete Project Proposal |
| Week 12 | Build code and begin collecting data |
| Week 13 | Finish collecting data |
| Week 14 | Analyze data and begin building models |
| Week 15 | Finalize models and draft Jupiter Notebook document |
| Week 16 | Finalize project and submit |

**Project References**

Stancheva, Terry. “Crucial Twitter Statistics, Facts and Predictions in 2022.” *Review42*, 7 Mar. 2022, review42.com/resources/twitter-statistics/.