1. **How did this project come about? Who did you work with at Twitter on this?**

We were approached by Twitter and specifically worked with Simon Rogers and James Buckhouse.

1. **What’s the goal of TwitterReverb? How is it different from some of the other Twitter visualization tools that exist?**

Twitter’s goal was to develop an authoring tool that could be used by journalists to detail how conversations and news events can be amplified (and evolved) through the use of Twitter. They wanted a tool that could ultimately be used by the general public as a story-telling device using Twitter data. The ability to author TwitterReverbs is in private beta right now.

There are two components: 1) a backend authoring tool that enables searches of any topic within the last 30 days, with an interface that allows authors to add tweets to a timeline, add annotations, title cards, and other “contextual” information. 2) The public-facing visualization.

1. **Were there any important constraints? Technical? Timing? Data?**

We had several constraints. The first was to develop a tool that could be used for the World Cup. (We got started in late February and had about 3 ½ months to develop both the backend and frontend.)

The second was that one of the original goals for the project changed half way through when we realized that the available data would not enable us to show how stories evolved, or were influenced by individual tweets. Much of our time was spent developing strategy for how to “easily” convey connectedness and volume at a glance.

We used GNIP and the Twitter REST API to source tweets, but were only able to access 30 days of historical data. Additionally, the need to return results within a relatively small window (2 minutes or less) meant that we had to use sampling and rely on the feeds for significant results, not a more sophisticated culling. In the end, neither of these sources could return the information we hoped, so we needed to adjust our expectations and designs.

1. **Can you walk me through some of the process and the design decisions that got you to the final?**

We spent 3-4 weeks developing strategy and wireframes, iterating with client feedback. We then evolved the work with visual design when we felt we had client approval and a good idea of what we could expect from the data sources.

After reviewing a couple of rounds of visual design compositions and proof-of-concept interactive models Twitter decided to complete the designs in-house, using a couple of aspects from our work as inspiration (the concentric rings, the overlay panel). They then asked us to develop the tool to match their updated designs.

In the end, they felt the emphasis should be placed on the simplicity of a visual story, rather than a deeper exploration of nuanced data.

1. **Were there any earlier versions you considered (other visual representations, chart types)**

There were many. We spent a lot of time working through time series of emanating concentric rings, streamgraphs, mirrored horizon plots, and abstracted versions of other blended data presentation methods. One of our challenges was Twitter’s desire to make the final piece be “cinematic” while also telling a complex story quickly.

1. **Any other insights or details you want to relay would be greatly appreciated.**

Many ideas and features were moved to “Phase 2” in an effort to deliver a product that could be used during the World Cup. We’re planning to revisit these ideas in the coming weeks to see if we can evolve the technical underpinnings, as well as the visual design in future versions.