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Academic excellence assignment 1

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# Introduction

Inside this document contains a literature review regarding the topic of twitter bots.

This will be presented in a thematic style, the key topics will be understanding how the twitter platform functions, what popular bot accounts can be capable of, bot activity, plugins, aided systems, and bot spam. After this literature is reviewed, the discrepancy’s will be discussed, and a conclusion will be made.

# An understanding of how the Twitter platform functions

(Zi Chu, 2010)“Twitter is a popular online social networking and micro-blogging tool, which was released in 2006. Remarkable simplicity is its distinctive feature.”

#### Response

Here the author has explained the origins of twitter. Although they have mentioned the social media platform has unique features, it still has similar aspects to Facebook such as sending messages and following other users.

(Zi Chu, 2010)“Its community interacts via publishing text-based posts, known as tweets. The tweet size is limited to 140 characters. Hashtag, namely words or phrases prefixed with a # symbol” continuing on (Zi Chu, 2010) also states “#Haiti and #Super Bowl are the two trending hashtags on Twitter in January 2010. Symbol @ followed by a username in a tweet enables the direct delivery of the tweet to that user.”

#### Response

The author has displayed an excellent explanation of what the twitter platform is by giving an example. This text helps the reader understand to a basic level what hashtags are and how they are used on twitter, it also briefly explains the purpose of the AT symbol and its functionality.

# Bot popularity effects and what they are capable of

(Zi Chu, 2010)“tweets flow from the source (author) to subscribers (followers). More specifically, when a user posts tweets, these tweets are displayed on both the author’s homepage and those of his followers.”

#### Response

The author explains that an account with a vast amount of followers, the original source content will become more accessible to users. This also links into understanding twitter functions.

(Eunice Kim, 2014) “Retweeting demonstrates user engagement with a brand”

#### Response

This text explains another feature that can be used on twitter known as ‘retweeting’.

(Tucker Catherine, 2011) “Popularity can be driven by both quality and match, and a narrow-appeal product can be popular if its quality is believed to be high.”

#### Response

Demonstrates if multiple bots are to comment on a subject, with positive information it may spark interest onto the subject.

(Kelly Born, 2017)“Though spam is not always defined as a form of false information, it is somehow similar to the spread of misinformation which refers to the ‘inadvertent sharing’ of wrong information when users are not aware of the nature of messages they disseminate “

#### Response

The statement links alongside of Tucker’s as it has the simular theme of spreading missinfomation through the platform.

(Gianluca Stringhini, 2012)“The number of followers can also be inflated by robot’ (or fake) followers purchased to inflate a brand’s follower count”

#### Response

This statement supports that there are websites and services out there that provide ways to purchase follows via bot accounts.

(Soboleva, 2018)“Highlighting the importance of measures of follower engagement, rather than just follower numbers.”

#### Response

Sometimes regardless of the follower count, engaging with other users can also attract new followers.

## Bot activity

(Zi Chu, 2010)“less active during the weekend, Saturday and Sunday, bots have roughly the same activity level every day of the week.” Furthermore (Zi Chu, 2010) “the hourly behaviour of human is more active during the daytime, which mostly overlaps with office hours. The bot activity is nearly even except a little drop in the deep of night.” (Zi Chu, 2010) “advanced bots have the setting of only tweet from a time point to another” (Zi Chu, 2010) “they can tweet more in the daytime to better draw the attention of humans”

#### Response

All this information here shows us that bots, try to be mainly active when humans are most active on the platform, to create the most traction of what information they are spreading as well as this it also demonstrates how advanced bots have become and are becoming more harder to detect and notice.

## Bot aided systems

(Emilio Ferrara, 2016)“Although there are some recent reports that robot Twitter handles can be programed to retweet” (Soboleva, 2018)“retweeting is likely to largely reflect actual follower activity so is therefore a better measure of Twitter success than follower numbers, which may be inflated by inactive users or robot followers.”

#### Response

This supports the fact that the aim of a bot is to retweet mostly misinformation in hopes of its followers retweeting said tweet to cause users to believe the information provided.

(Zi Chu, 2010) “most social media sites like Twitter and Facebook allow bots to be used, which boost and enhance spamming or posting messages by repeatedly sending them to as many other users as possible” with applications such as. (Zi Chu, 2010)“Twitter Tools and Twitme for WordPress are popular WordPress plug-ins that integrate blog updates to Twitter. Assetize is an advertising syndicator mainly targeting at Twitter, and twitRobot is a bot tool that automatically follows other users and posts tweets.” As well as this (Zi Chu, 2010)“tools only require minimum human participation”

#### Response

By doing this twitter is getting more traction from the bots spreading information as bots do minimal work as possible due to tweeting tools assistances.

(Zi Chu, 2010)“humans tend to tweet manually, and bots are more likely to use auto piloted tools.”

#### Response

This further supports the fact that bots do minimal effort when deploying tweets.

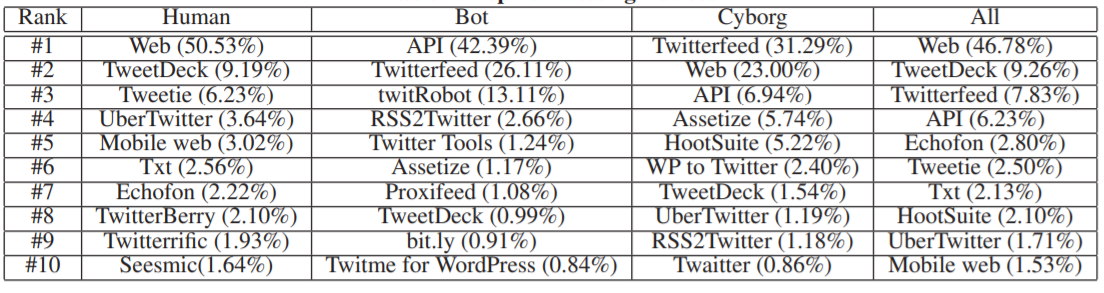


Table 1 Top 10 Tweeting Devices (Zi Chu, S. G. 2010).

#### Response

This table shows information on what plugin’s most frequently used to post.

## Bot spam

(Zi Chu, 2010)“Unsolicited tweets make bots unpopular among the human world.”

#### Response

Some twitter users don’t support bots as the information they spread clog’s up there timeline.

# Conclusion of literature review

In conclusion, although all the information provided discusses false information on twitter and how bots provide it, there is a lack of information on how this effects humans. Therefore, there is room for more research regarding this topic and possibly asking humans if they have ever believed false information. This could be carried out with the use of a questionnaire and possibly some examples to provide them during it. On the plus side the literature is very easy to follow and understand.

# Task 2 – understanding of Qualitive and Quantitative methods

## Introduction

Throughout this document will be explanations of different possible methods of gaining research information these will be sectioned into qualitative research sources and quantitative research sources, after this the importance of these forms of data will be discussed as well as the issues that can arise when gathering information.

# Qualitive

(Aspers, 2019)“Qualitative research is multimethod in focus, involving an interpretative, naturalistic approach to its subject matter.” Expanding on this, qualitative research is carried out by collecting and analysing data that is non-numerical, such as video, audio, or text. This data is then used to understand a lot more about various problems and to assist in figuring out new ideas for research.

### Ethnography

Ethnographic approaches are a research methodology where, against a theoretical context, you look at individuals in their cultural climate, with the intention of creating a narrative account of that specific culture.

### Narrative

Narrative research is a term that subsumes a category of methods that in part rely on individuals' written or spoken words or visual representation. Typically, these approaches concentrate on people's lives as told by their own stories.

### Grounded theory

Grounded theory is a formal approach that has been primarily, though not necessarily, extended to social scientists' qualitative studies. Via data collection and analysis, the approach requires the creation of hypotheses and theories.

### Case study

A Case study is a tool for analysis, commonly used in the social and life sciences. A case study may be defined as an extensive study of an individual, a group of individuals or a unit aimed at generalizing over many units.

# Quantitative

Quantitate research is the opposite to qualitative research as it is the process of collecting and analysing numerical data. The data found can be used to make predictions, find averages and patterns etc. (Allen, 2017)“The purpose of quantitative research is to generate knowledge and create understanding about the social world. Quantitative research is used by social scientists, including communication researchers, to observe phenomena or occurrences affecting individuals.”

### Experiments

Experiments are carried out by people taking various tests. Participant’s tests results are then compared with other peoples who participated. This will then gather overall results and you will be able to compare them with one another.

### Surveys

Surveys are conducted by lots of different ways such as, phone call, paper based or an online forum. They collect information from groups off people by asking them questions on a subject matter.

### Casual-Comparative

When an intervention or occurrence has already happened, a causal- comparative design is a research design that aims to find relationships between independent and dependent variables. It seeks to create a relationship of cause and effect between two or more variables.

### Correlational

Correlational analysis is a type of non-experimental study in which two variables are measured by the researcher and the correlation between them is calculated with little attempt to monitor international variables.

# The importance of qualitive data

Qualitive data gives us more of an understanding on the findings than quantitative as it

(Institute for Work & Health (IWH), 2011)“uses words and images to help us understand more about “why” and “how” something is happening” this is supported by (Rust, 2017)“Qualitative methods are important to gain a deep understanding of complex problems and poorly researched areas.”

# The importance of quantitative data

Quantitative data is extremely important because it provides a detailed breakdown of the research at hand. This is excellent at bridging gaps in the research and supporting findings. Relevant questions are discussed in detail. When collecting the information, it is vital for the researcher to explain how they carried out there research and what tools and methods they used to do this.

# Issues that can arise when doing research

## Lack of motivation

When conducting research, you may find it difficult to maintain insured or motivation to complete the task at hand. To get past this you could set yourself some short-term goals so that you can continue to make progress again. For example, work for an hour or so and then make a cup of tea.

## Poor time management

Try to spend time organizing, making sure you are making time to complete the activities you are doing and then review how things are progressing. When your goals are not reached, think about why and make an improvement.

## Lack of self-confidence

People may struggle to complete task set to them do the bad feedback in past. This can make them feel like they are bad at the subject and do not want to carry on.

## Lack of focus or direction

You may also struggle to complete tasks due to a lack of focus. To help stay focus you first need to find the things that can keep you focused. For some sitting in a quiet room helps but for other listening to other music may help. Other people keep focus by coming back to the task at hand every so often. So, for example they may complete a few tasks and then move away from the task for ‘x’ amount of time. This helps people to not over stress on the task and keep their head clear.

# The uses of research sources

The two main uses of research sources are known as primary and secondary research.

## Primary

Primary resources provide first-hand data, which means that you are reading the author's own account of a particular subject or case in which he/she participated. Examples of primary tools include papers, books, and diaries for academic study. Primary references, such as academic journals, frequently do not clarify in depth the terms and scientific concepts.

## Secondary

Secondary sources define, outline, or address material or facts initially provided in another source meaning that the information is second hand. This type of source is written for a general audience and may contain descriptions of particular terms of discipline, subject-specific history, essential ideas and concepts, and summaries of significant studies/events related to the subject.

# The importance of primary information sources

You are brought into contact with first-hand accounts of incidents by primary sources. They then help you connect to events in the past in a personal manner and encourage a greater view of history as a collection of human events.

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