



Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication

Reviews

Summary of reviewers notes and ratings on criteria.

Data Analysis with Topic Models for Communications Researchers

Unit / Sub Unit: Communication Theory and Methodology Division / Open Call Competition

Review Worksheet

Individual Submission

(3/3)

Review #1208681

Criteria	Rate
Clarity of purpose	3 / 5
Literature review	3 / 5
Clarity of research method	3 / 5
Appropriateness of research method	4 / 5
Evidence relates to purpose of paper	2 / 5
Evidence is presented clearly	3 / 5
Evidence supports conclusions	3 / 5
Writing and organization	3 / 5
Relevance of focus of Division	5 / 5
Significant contribution to field	3 / 5

Comments to the Author

This paper takes up the exercise of exploring the value of topic modeling for communication/journalism research. This is an important task, and it is also much appreciated that the author included the R programming needed for the analysis. A great thing to do. Overall, the paper would benefit by doing more to connect the technical discussion to a substantive example in the fields it is addressing. The format of the paper is somewhat outside the standard for our field—and that's ok with me, but the attention paid to the different sections of the paper was somewhat unequal. My biggest issue was in the discussion of the results. There is nothing about model fit or evaluation, or even about how the choice to fit a 20 topic model might have affected the results [earlier in the paper it would be great to detail your rationale for choosing this number, as opposed to fitting different numbers of topics]. And because the paper isn't working with a specific substantive example it is hard to know what we actually learn from the analysis. As you revise, I'd love to see you add a real example, one that would allow you to work through specific issues. For example, why take all tweets from a day, or all NY Times stories? In a real world example wouldn't you be more likely to start with the results of a keyword search, thereby limiting the possibility for the number of topics? And how about tweets vs retweets? A widely spreading retweet would likely dominant the results of the word clouds—making them less about topics and more about the virality of a single collection of words. Similarly, how did you take into account varying length of nytimes articles? There will be a lot of value to this paper once you find a better balance between the high level technical discussion and the "rubber meets the road" details of analyzing these kinds of data.

Review #1208683

Criteria	Rate
Clarity of purpose	4 / 5
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Evidence supports conclusions	4 / 5
Writing and organization	2 / 5
Relevance of focus of Division	3 / 5
Significant contribution to field	3 / 5

Comments to the Author

Dear Authors: I appreciate what this study has done on methodological end, which is useful for communication research. However, computational analysis does follow theories or method/data should be driven from theories. This is especially true for selecting news stories and tweets. I strongly urge authors to figure out what theories can guide your study and to elaborate on your methodology for not only descriptive analysis but also "predictive" analysis. Best of luck to your future endeavors!

Review #1208682

Criteria	Rate
Clarity of purpose	2 / 5
Literature review	1 / 5
Clarity of research method	2 / 5
Appropriateness of research method	3 / 5
Evidence relates to purpose of paper	2 / 5
Evidence is presented clearly	2 / 5
Evidence supports conclusions	2 / 5
Writing and organization	2 / 5
Relevance of focus of Division	2 / 5
Significant contribution to field	1 / 5

Comments to the Author
None.

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