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CART 351 Reflection: *Objects of Intense Feeling: The Case of the Twitter API*

*Objects of Intense Feeling: The Case of the Twitter API* is an article by Taina Bucher examining the API from a social point of view, of not just how APIs function and are used but why they are used and by whom. The API, as described by Bucher, is a protocological object that mediates interaction between third-party developers and the media the API is for. In addition, its origin is in ensuring cross compatibility between systems. The Twitter API in particular has been a site of contention, with it serving as a way for Twitter to regulate what can be done with its service, and what third-party developers can do with it.

These third-party developers are a focus of the article, as are their experiences working with Twitter's API. While some developers working with Twitter's API use it just to learn more about programming, others hope to turn a profit off of it. Twitter has been aware of the third-party development ecosystem from the start, and Bucher describes how they used third-party applications to get a presence on mobile devices before having an in-house mobile development team. This culture of entrepreneurialism, the same that spurred Twitter's creation, is core to a lot of the stories that come from the developers that Bucher interviewed. The API is fickle and working with it is risky, since Twitter is constantly renegotiating its relationship with developers. This is why it's an "object of intense feeling", the communities that form around the API have a sense of urgency, and hoping that their application will "make it", their projects living or dying based on what features Twitter deems acceptable for third-parties to use.