Speaking Truth to Twitter

Team 3

Hertie School of Governance

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Outline

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Main changes

- We only focussed on Trump, not Clinton
- Our sample was drawn from unconnected accounts which had recently liked a Trump tweet (4420)
- We randomly assigned 1000 accounts to our treatment group and 3420 to our control group

Implementation

- We created 5 similar Twitter accounts (**@twi_truth, @truth_to_twitt, @truthToTwitt, @SpeakingTw, @facts_for_twitt**) - see figure 1
- We regularly created Twitter Apps for each account. Robots used these to automatically tweet the treatment groups
- We sent nearly 7000 tweets over 19 days (see table 1)
- Our server automatically monitored our observation group, recording 1,475,347 tweets and 170,516 likes
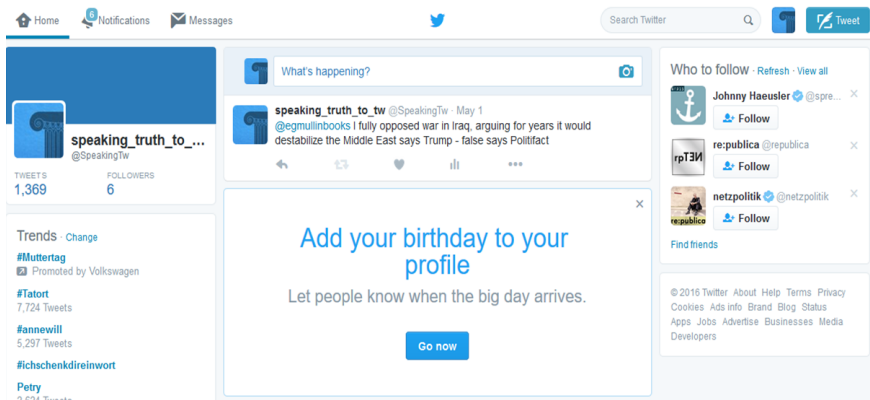
Implementation

Figure 1 :   Example Twitter profile

Implementation

| Tweet number	Text	Truth	Start date
1	@LostinMemphis Trump says most wire transfers to Mexico from undocumented immigrants- half true says award-winning website Politifact	0	2016-04-14
2	@LostinMemphis Trump says his deficit to Clinton much smaller than Reagan's against Carter- false says award-winning website Politifact	-2	2016-04-20
3	@LostinMemphis Trump says Ted Cruz is mathematically out of winning the race - mostly true says politifact	1	2016-04-22
4	@LostinMemphis Trump says PA lost 35%, and Harrisburg 40%, of manufacturing jobs since 2001 - Mostly true says politifact	1	2016-04-25
5	@LostinMemphis Trump says football coach Rex Ryan won championships in NY twice - false says Politifact. He never did	-2	2016-04-27
6	@LostinMemphis Trump says ISIS makes millions of dollars a week by selling Libyan oil - false says Politifact	-2	2016-04-29
7	@LostinMemphis Trump says he fully opposed war in Iraq arguing for years it would destabilize the Middle East - false says Politifact	-2	2016-04-30

Table 1 : Example tweets

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Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean		Median		SD	
	Control	Tweetment	Control	Tweetment	Control	Tweetment
Avg tweet "Trump"	2.46	2.41	1.000	0.857	0.076	0.132
Avg likes	0.575	0.569	0.143	0.143	0.18	0.034
Avg #MAGA	0.215	0.186	0.000	0.000	0.10	0.015
Avg mentions	1.43	1.41	0.571	0.571	0.048	0.088
Avg retweets	0.595	0.587	0.000	0.000	0.033	0.062
Followers	121	113.	55.0	51.0	3.06	5.50
Following	211	202	93.5	91.000	5.90	11.1

Descriptive Statistics
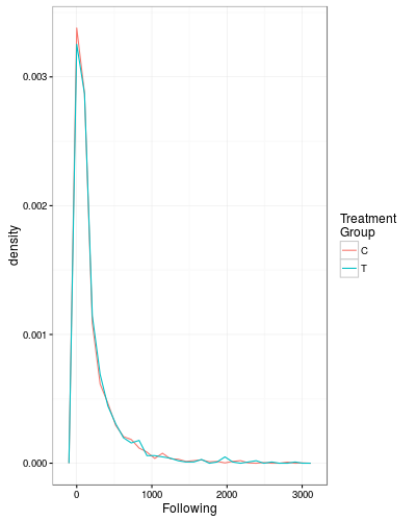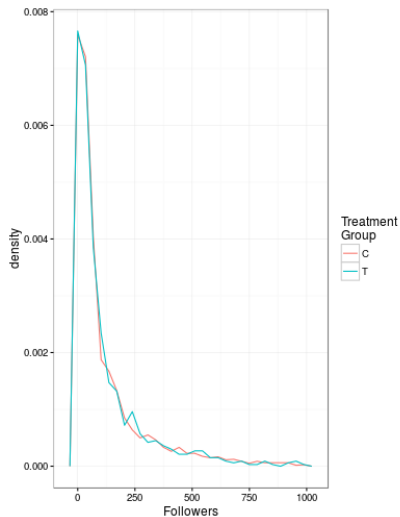
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Results: Data and Dependent Variables

From the like and tweet data we collected, we used the following as dependent variables (all per user per day) - tweet data excludes replies to our tweets

- number of likes of tweets by Donald Trump
- number of retweets of tweets by Donald Trump
- number of tweets using the hashtag "#MakeAmericaGreatAgain"
- number of tweets including the key word "Trump"

Outline

Results: Data and Dependent Variables
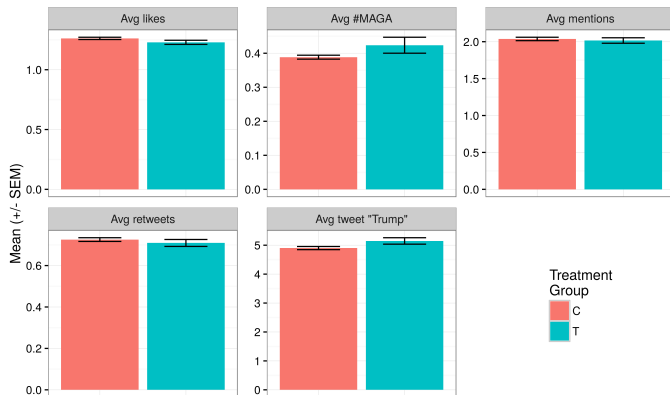
Figure 2 : Per user per day means of each dependent variable in treatment and control groups during the treatment period

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Limitations

- Self selection in the sample: *Only active trump followers were selected in our study* and *People had the option to opt-out*
- 10 individuals asked to be withdrawn during treatment. Effect measured thus ITT effect
- Being recognized as a robot
- Bias from manipulation of the twitter feed
- Outcome is **likes** or **tweets** per day while the tweeting has been done at a certain time during the day...
- Collinearity of variables in case of the lasting turn-on model!

Interesting

Figure 3 : Some interesting comments