## A Study of the 113th Congress as News Commentators on Twitter

Abstract

Pundits as well as members of Congress commentate on newsworthy events selectively based on their political positions, not only on broadcast media but also on social media outlets. In this study, I introduce a method to measure this selectivity using curated tweets of Congress members. I show that political groups of the monitored members of 113th Congress can be predicted with more than 95% accuracy. In order to do this, I first create a co-commentation network where the vertices are the curated members of 113th Congress and the edge weights are the number of common newsworthy events (headlines) that they have commentated on between January 2013 and January 2015 (i.e. during 113th Congress). Then, I detect the communities by using the weighted modularity algorithm implemented in Gephi (Blondel et al. 2008). Using this method, two groups are detected when the highest modularity achieved, and 62 of the 65 monitored Congress members are found to be in the same group as their co-party members. I also show the newsworthy tweet activity of congresspeople and political groups and introduce methods to measure the politicization and political polarity of events. Our entire dataset consists of 7,376 headlines (with 3-5 paragraph long news content) published between January 2013 and January 2015 on theplazz.com news site, as well as 156,480 commentary tweets of 1442 newsmakers on these news events. All the tweets are curated manually by theplazz.com editors. Among the monitored tweets, 65 of them are from congressional members (44 of which are Senators) and all of their curated tweets (4937) on 1916 headlines are included in this study.

