Tracking and analysing social media enables city governance to respond and interact with its citizens faster and with more accuracy. Trending subjects and discussions can provide information about both areas of improvement as well as successful policies and municipal projects. It is also a tool for bringing governance and citizens closer, enhancing democracy and involvement throughout society. Our vision is to aggregate and represent relevant data from social media in way that will provide new insights with regards to what is mentioned above, but also by combining it with data from other sources.

In our feasibility study we looked at the technical possibilities of extracting social media-data. Both Instagram and Twitter have well documented API-libraries which seem promising. They do require authentication and registration of your application but that should not pose a problem. We also investigated the possibilities of extracting data from blogs, though unfortunately we didn’t find any specific tools for this. Unless we are able to spend more time on investigating blog-data extraction this will be excluded from the application.

A key technical aspect is how to store and process the data. Both Instagram and Twitter provide means to subscribe to data and so once the application is setup data will be continuously updated. Depending on how we choose to filter the data we might end up with rather large quantities that will demand appropriate storage. The processing and mining of the data will require efficient programs and thus the programming team will most definitely find this challenging.

The key in adding value to the social media-data is to represent and combine it in a unique way that cannot already be found in each of the different medias existing platforms. We believe and hope that new ways of visualizing and combining the data can provide demographic, social and economic insight specific to the Uppsala-region. Considering this the design team will play a vital role in being able to achieve a valuable representation and visualization.