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A mirror of our world

Urban social media data as a reflection of the evolution of cities

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The use of social media has become an integral part of many people's lives. It provides a unique view into their minds, their worries and aspirations, often linked to a particular time and place. As part of this research project, RSM has acquired a data set of all geo-referenced tweets sent in London, Amsterdam, and Rotterdam between 2011 and 2019, more than 100 million messages in total. Based on this dataset, we seek to investigate whether the spatial, temporal, and content analysis of social media messages allows stakeholders—governments, businesses, and citizens—to observe the evolution of a city in near real-time. As opposed to backwards-looking socioeconomic indicators, this enables users to act proactively instead of reactively. Businesses can identify up-and-coming neighborhoods early on and city governments can design targeted interventions to prevent urban decay and revitalize threatened areas, ultimately benefiting and increasing the quality of life of people living in the city.

The project started in July 2019 and as part of this talk, first impressions from the data set are planned to be provided. Furthermore, while we pursue certain research questions as part of this project, this unique data set is certainly rich enough to investigate a variety of phenomena. The objectives of the talk are to engage IS scholar and pick their brains for potential research avenues as well as to establish contact for research collaborations to tackle these questions.