



United Airlines Controversy Crisis Communication

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Introduction



United Airlines Controversy

- United Airlines had a bad month.
- Their airline officials and airport security dragged a doctor named David Dao off of an overbooked flight.
- A bunch of passengers have been speaking up about their terrible United experiences, and finally it became international news.



United Airlines Controversy Timeline

- **Sunday, April 9:** A 69-year-old doctor named David Dao was forcibly removed from United Airlines Express.
- **Monday, April 10:** Video of the incident recorded by passengers **went viral on social media**, resulting in outrage over the violent incident. Politicians expressed concern and called for official investigation. United Airlines issued its [first response](#) to the incident via Twitter. Apologize for having to re-accommodate customers. The internet went wild over Munoz's use of the word "re-accommodate."
- **Monday, April 10:** Later on April 10, in an e-mail to employees, [Munoz praised and defended the crew's actions, while claiming the passenger was "disruptive and belligerent"](#)

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Oscar

2万

3.1千

4.9千



United @united · 4月10日

United CEO response to United Express Flight 3411.

翻译自英文

This is an upsetting event to all of us here at United. I apologize for having to re-accommodate these customers. Our team is moving with a sense of urgency to work with the authorities and conduct our own detailed review of what happened. We are also reaching out to this passenger to talk directly to him and further address and resolve this situation.

- Oscar Munoz, CEO, United Airlines

7万

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7.9千



United @united · 4月9日

11.3万 推文

#fintech

2.5万 推文

Conventus Law

Le Pen

35.2万 推文

#TrumpsDay100Songs

3.57万 推文

#sanctuarcities

2.64万 推文

Ted Cruz

2.23万 推文

#jbfa

Marlins

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Michael Del Moro

@MikeDelMoro

ent Producer @GMA. @TuftsUniversity
mer. Daywalker. Insta: @mikedelmoro.
ot endorsements

ew York, NY

ocnews.go.com

入于 2009年4月



Michael Del Moro

@MikeDelMoro

正在关注

United CEO email to employees obtained by ABC's @Shahriar44R: "there are lessons we can learn from this experience"

翻译自英文

headed from Chicago to Louisville. While the facts and circumstances are still evolving, especially with respect to why this customer defied Chicago Aviation Security Officers the way he did, to give you a clearer picture of what transpired, I've included below a recap from the preliminary reports filed by our employees.

As you will read, this situation was unfortunately compounded when one of the passengers we politely asked to deplane refused and it became necessary to contact Chicago Aviation Security Officers to help. Our employees followed established procedures for dealing with situations like this. While I deeply regret this situation arose, I also emphatically stand behind all of you, and I want to commend you for continuing to go above and beyond to ensure we fly right.

I do, however, believe there are lessons we can learn from this experience, and we are taking a close look at the circumstances surrounding this incident. Treating

3411 was fully boarded, United's gate agents were approached by crewmembers that were told they needed to board the flight.

- We sought volunteers and then followed our involuntary denial of boarding process (including offering up to \$1,000 in compensation) and when we approached one of these passengers to explain apologetically that he was being denied boarding, he raised his voice and refused to comply with crew member instructions.

- He was approached a few more times after that in order to gain his compliance to come off the aircraft, and each time he refused and became more and more disruptive and belligerent.

- Our agents were left with no choice but to call Chicago Aviation Security Officers to assist in removing the customer from the flight. He repeatedly declined to leave.

- Chicago Aviation Security Officers were unable to gain his cooperation and physically removed him from

转推

420

喜欢

350



下午4:26 - 2017年4月10日





United Airlines Controversy Timeline

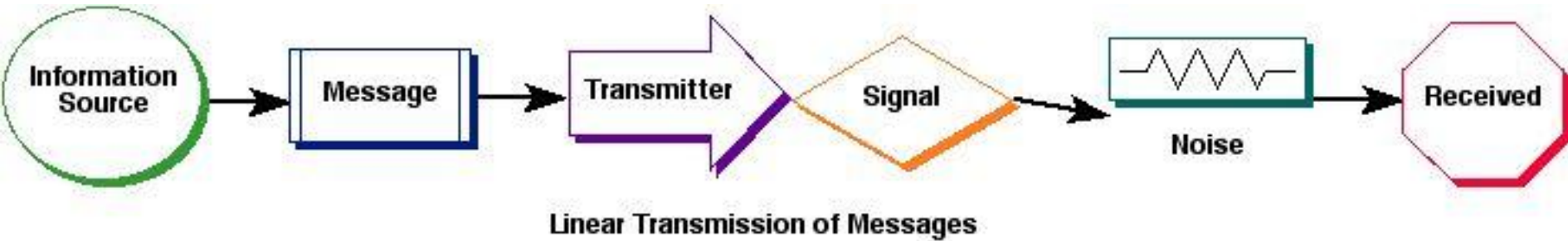
- **Tuesday, April 11:** Social media spawned some creative new slogans for the embattled company. Meanwhile, shares plunged nearly seven percent.
- **Tuesday, April 11:** CEO issued yet another statement regarding the incident [in which he took "full responsibility" and pledged to "make it right."](#)
- **Wednesday, April 12:** The victim filed a "bill of discovery" against United Airlines in court.

♥ 4.9千



2

Research Question



Research Questions:

- What's information source of this crisis? What people create for message? How they create?
- What are differences between transmitters? How they transmit this crisis?
- How users encoded this news? How they feel?
- What's the noise in this processing?
- What measures do company take? Does them work?
- **All in all, we want to analyze the whole communication of this crisis and give some advices.**



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Data Gathering

PART 1

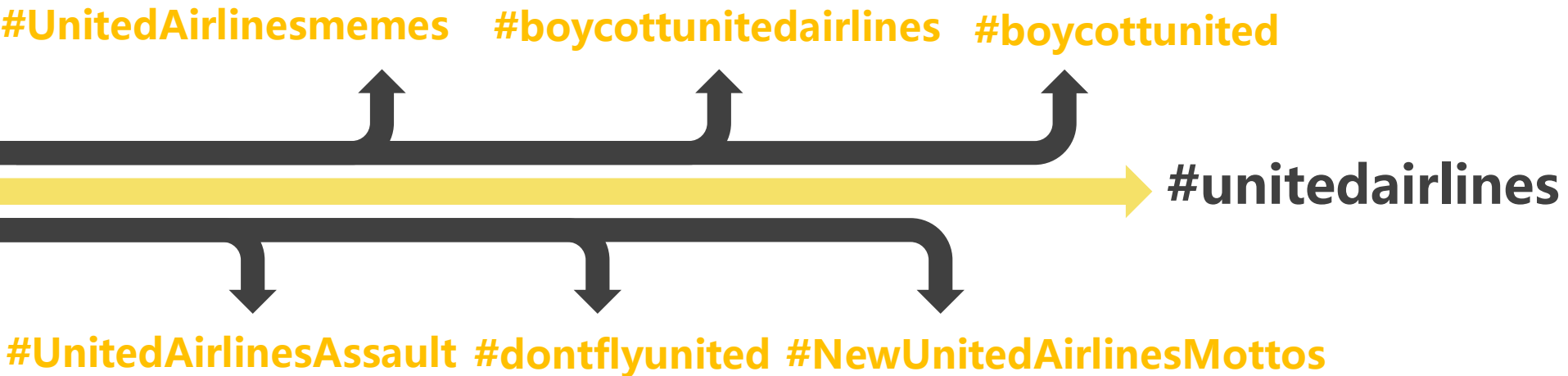
News Media Data



- After using Selenium in python to scrape JS page, we got all news links from those websites.
- Save it to a url lists.(Selenium is a browser simulator which helps me to paginate and get JS content)
- Then using Rvest to scrape the content, title and time of the single page.

PART 2

Twitter Data



60,000

Set up Twitter API, using direct authentication.

Collect tweets by searching hashtags.

From April 10th to April 18th



4

Analysis

- **Topic Model Building**
- **Wordcloud Plot**
- **Sentiment Analysis**
- **Social Network Analysis**

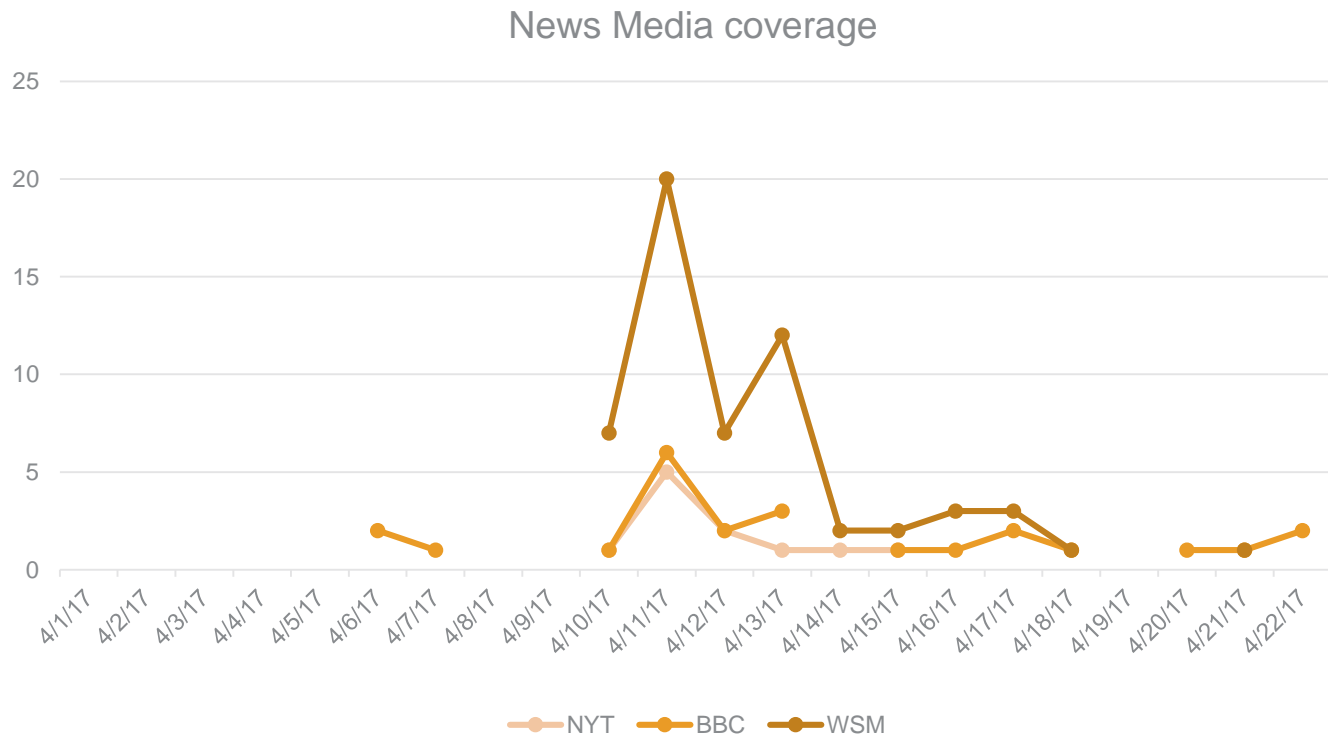




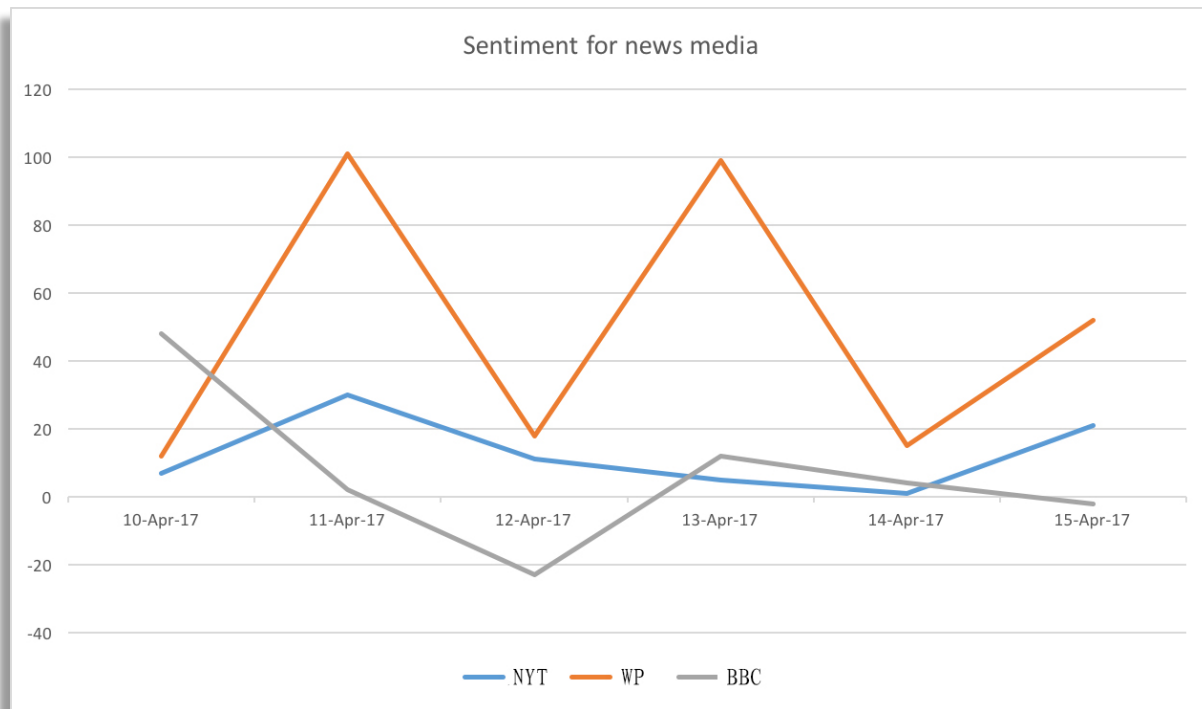
5.1

Mass Media Website

News Media Coverage



News Media Sentiment



Sentiment of articles by Washington Post and New York Times are volatile. Compared to them, BBC treated it as a foreign business, so the fluctuation of sentiment of it was shown more flatten.

Word Clouds & Topics

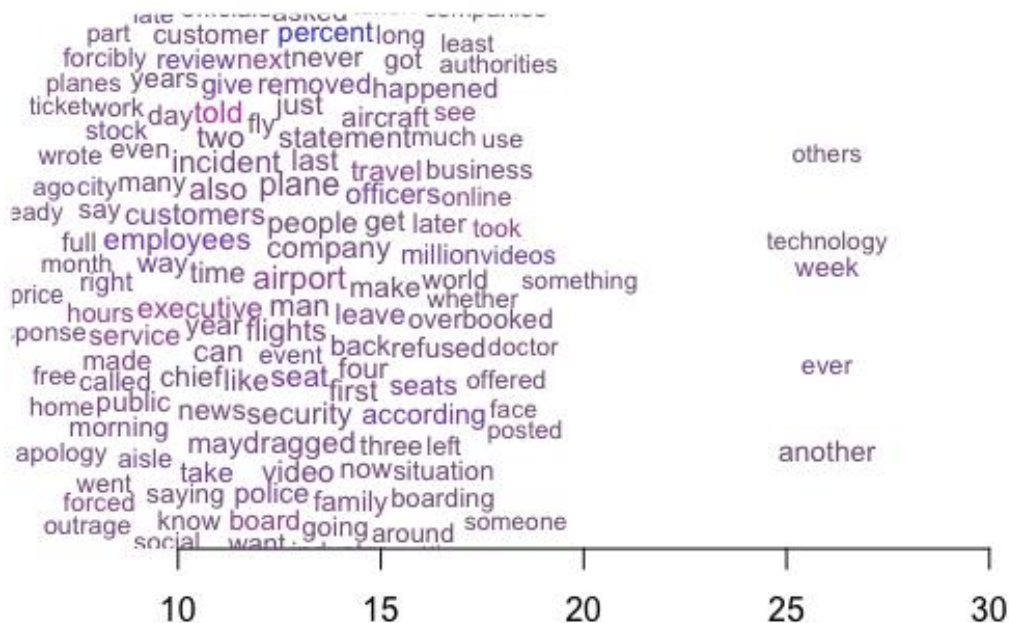


New York Times

	Topic 1	Topic 2	Topic 3	Topic 4	Topic 5	Topic 6	Topic 7	Topic 8
1	page	mike	former	someone	dress	plane	dr	demetrio
2	twitter	nicole	port	brand	leggings	seat	dao	never
3	like	week	authority	saw	code	man	chicago	going
4	just	get	chief	another	gate	employees	munoz	airline's
5	york	now	executive	way	company	get	also	asked
6	people	car	samson	everyone	pass	leave	department	offered
7	think	farhad	officials	law	ms	customer	louisville	lawyer
8	dragged	sure	jersey	show	employees	bridges	monday	likely
9	us	feel	filing	anything	want	bumped	full	city
10	customers	uber	chairman	society	social	officer	tuesday	leave

- Emphasize the process of this
- *David Dao has been dragged out of the plane*
- Airport issues, Racist issues.

Topic Overtime



New York Times

- Emphasized the process of whole incident.
- And in the follow-up stories they began to dig the deep reasons of things happened.

Word Clouds & Topics



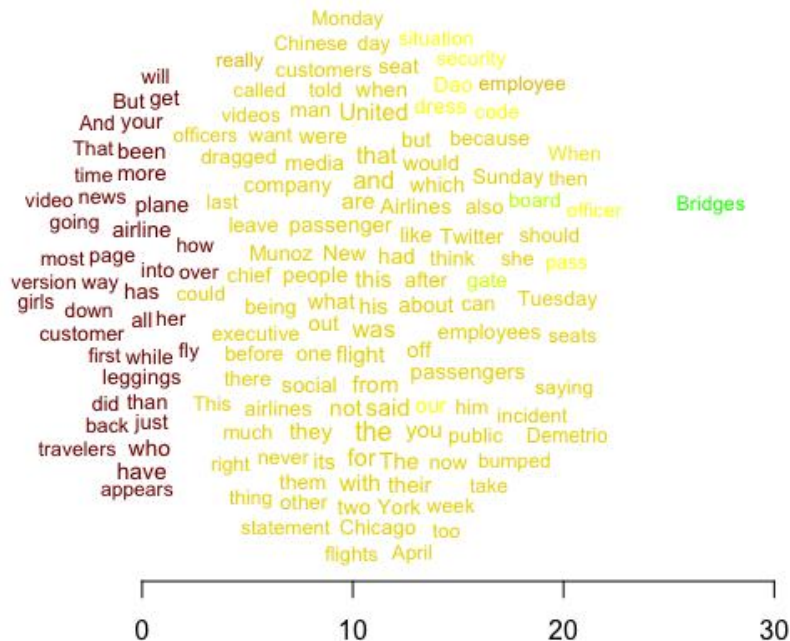
Washington Post

	Topic 1	Topic 2	Topic 3	Topic 4	Topic 5	Topic 6	Topic 7	Topic 8
1	munoz	can	plane	company	airport	just	security	food
2	dao	goldman	man	percent	dulles	united's	us	fuel
3	chicago	knee	bridges	million	2016	follow	system	meals
4	incident	american	back	u.s	newark	percent	customers	almanac
5	april	defender	pilot	sales	washington	can	take	also
6	dragged	according	according	samson	travelers	people	customer	mcloughli
7	plane	leggings	seat	share	flights	customers	statement	renewable
8	employees	state	told	year	airports	first	flights	crew
9	associated	rights	post	federal	service	last	situations	family
10	press	u.s	get	holdings	travel	industry	business	tj

- Emphasize litigants including CEO and David Dao.
- David Dao has been dragged out of the plane.
- Human rights issues and company's issues.

Topic Overtime

Washington Post



- Emphasized litigants
- There are reports citing about what twitter users said in internet.

Word Clouds & Topics

BBC News

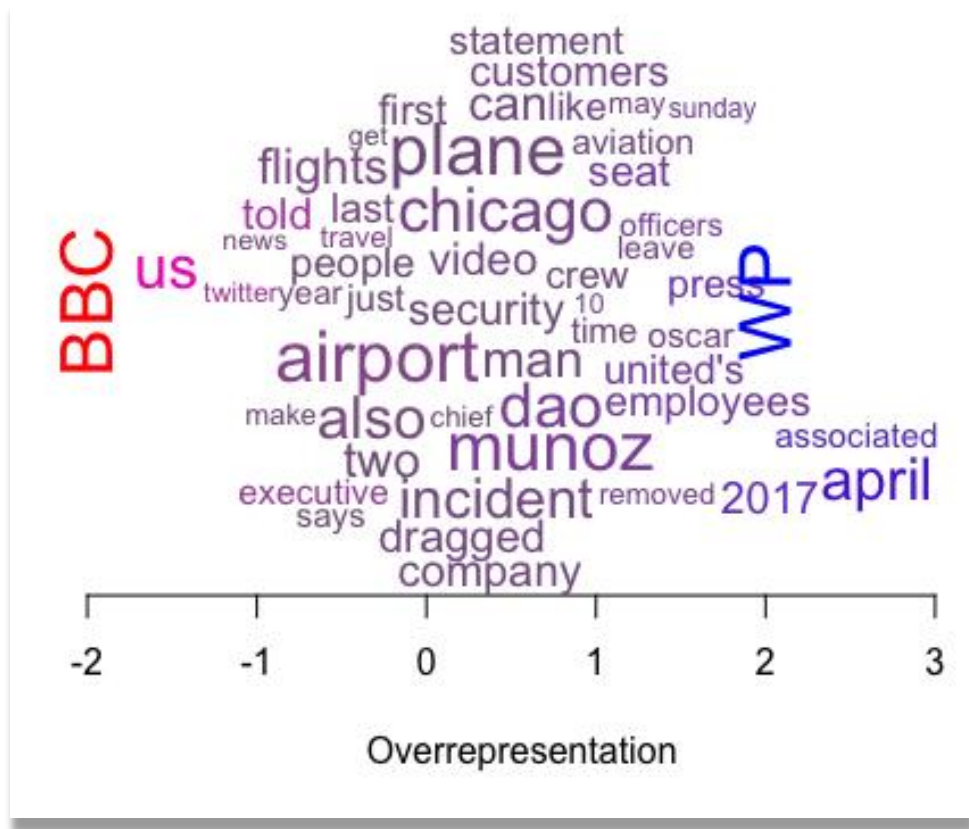


	Topic 1	Topic 2	Topic 3	Topic 4	Topic 5	Topic 6	Topic 7	Topic 8
1	told	pilot	us	palmer	incident	ireland	deal	twitter
2	air	emergency	ban	arnold	dao	airport	executive	also
3	canada	airport	batteries	first	dragged	route	money	muslim
4	travel	alcohol	devices	golf	chicago	belfast	hamilton	us
5	says	na	uk	simone	munoz	northern	commission	travel
6	images	licona	told	fisher	device	service	public	can
7	rights	air	flights	golfer	unsupported	york	two	women
8	since	roberts	security	star	playback	economy	aid	says
9	get	landing	cargo	four	family	flights	simon	social
10	government	second	put	chicago	man	keddie	value	legging

- This news is generally a foreign business.
- Former faults of United Airlines made in UK.
- Airport security issues, Racist issues.

Keywords Comparison

Washington Post VS BBC news



Some Conclusions

Common points

All medium mentioned that video which recoded policemen re-accommodated that passenger , and several important public relationship measures by United Airlines

All medium avoided to use those words with Intense feeling. However, they described people are “outrange” and emphasized misdeed of United Airlines. Though they **didn’t comment about what United did to deal with public relationship**, their report gives me a impression that they **treated their “crisis” pretty causally.**

Different points

In content they have different choice

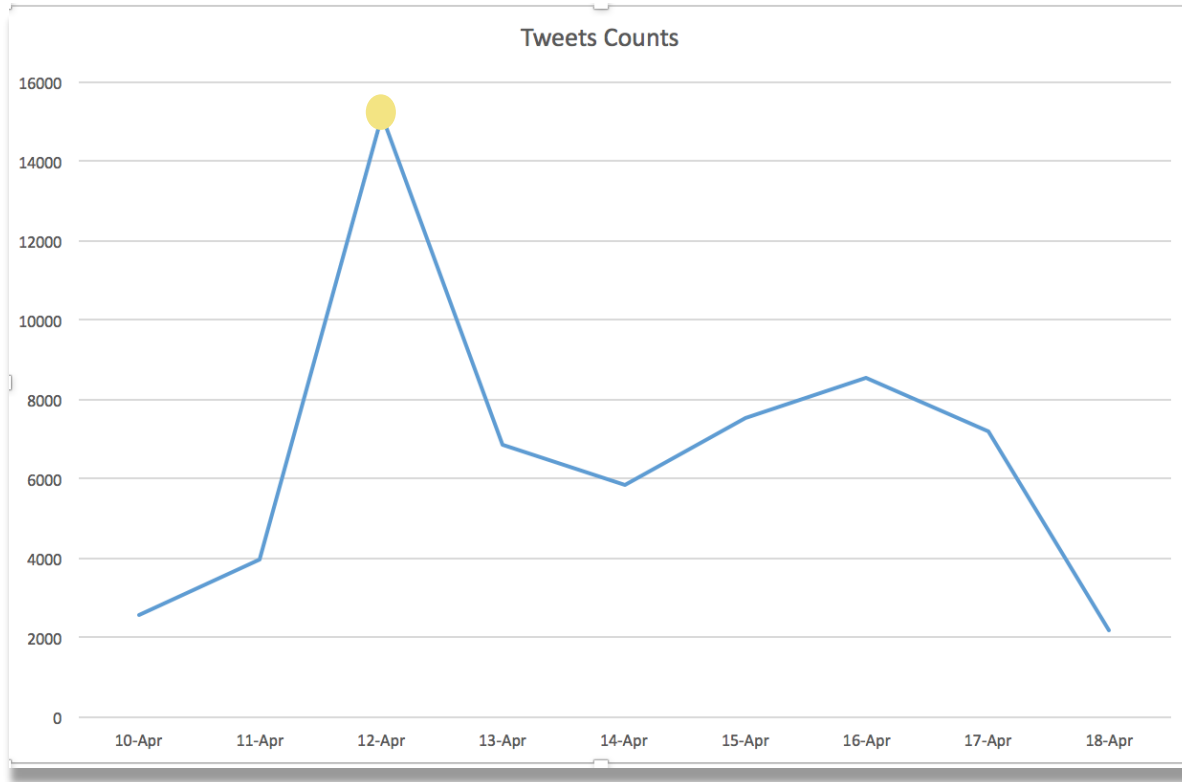
BBC just saw this as a foreign news



5.2

Twitter

Twitter Count Changes



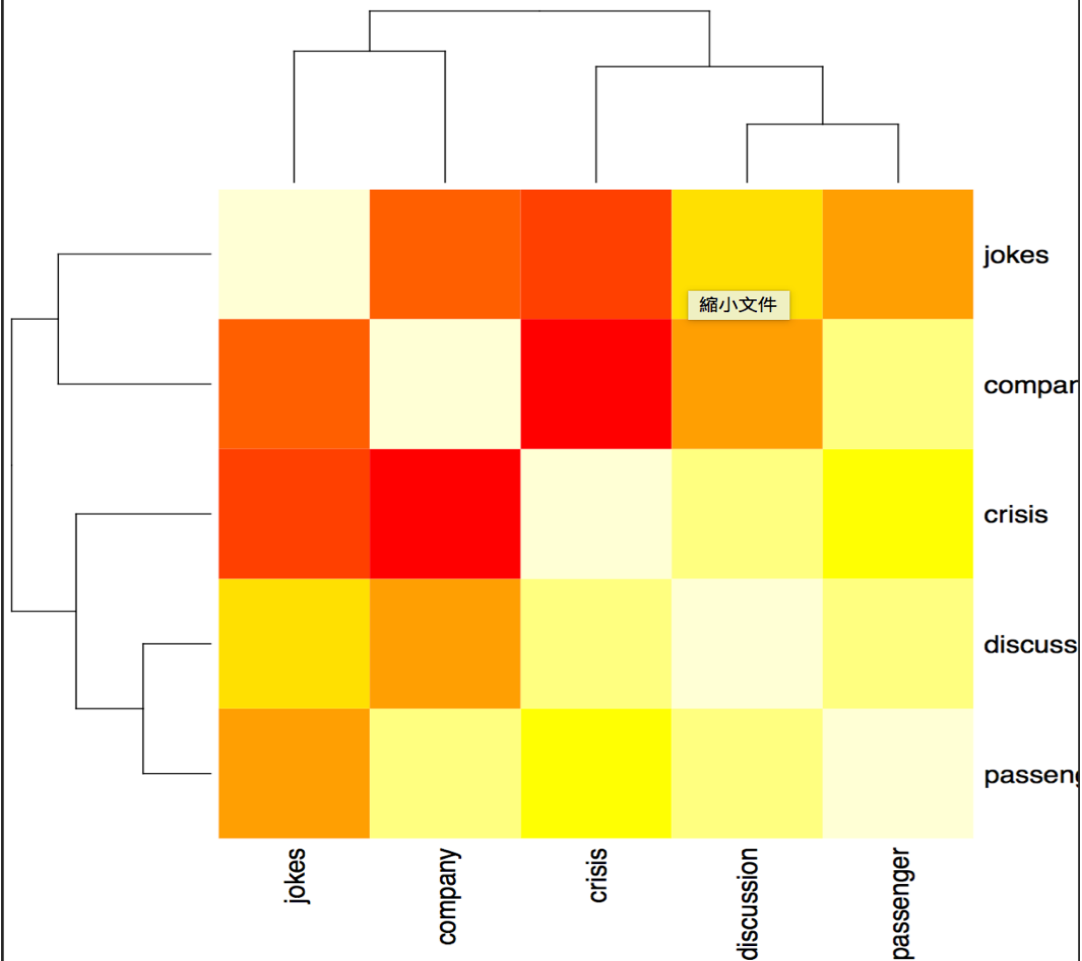
- We collect 60,000 tweets by searching hashtags about United Airlines, and this line chart shows the distribution of tweets counts from April 10-18.
- On April 12, the discussion on Twitter reached a peak.

Topic Model

	crisis ↕	passenger↗	company↗	discussion↗	jokes ↕
1	drag	passeng	fli	genius	first
2	plane	seat	dontflyunit	whoever	new
3	passeng	overbook	never	dontflyunit	simpson
4	class	treat	ever	disgust	ascaniospread
5	guy	beat	airlin	absolut	beingfarhad
6	asian	want	custom	behaviour	footag
7	new	dontflyunit	like	internet	disturb
8	use	see	ceo	now	insid
9	ordinari	human	market	train	ceo
10	asian-look	drag	passeng	best	oscar

Topic Heat Map

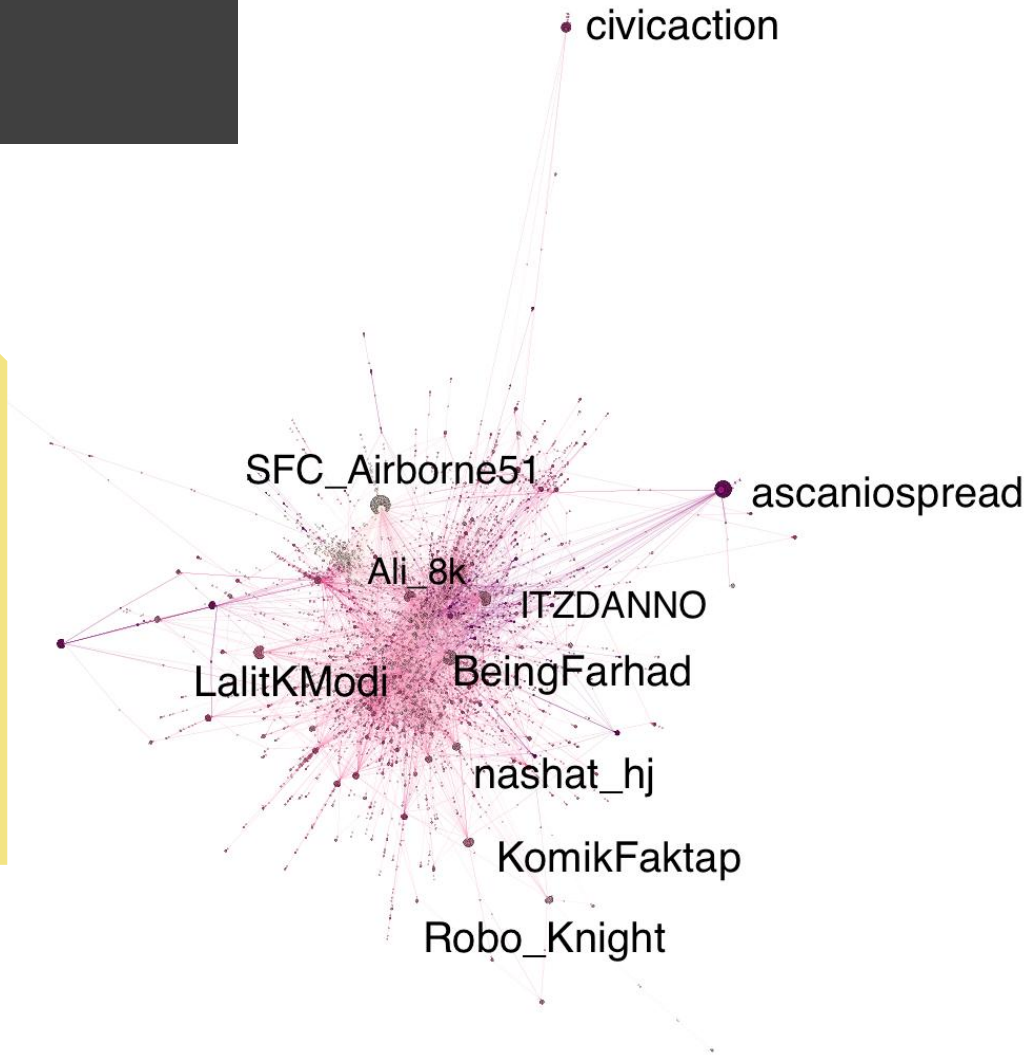
The heat map revealed the relation between 2 topics, the most heated relation was between company and crisis, while users also made jokes with the United Airlines company.



Repost Network

41103 Retweets

- Gephi: Force Atlas
- Average Degree: 1.224
- Diameter: 6
- Dense Network



Repost - Symbolization

Spoof Video

@SFC_Airborne51

@ITZDANNNO

@Ali_8k

- Post a video spoof using United Airlines' advertisement
- Whoever made this is genius
- United Airlines new ad

Comics

@ascaniospread:
Simpsons did it first

@Robo_Knight:
When the Megazord is
overbooked and
#unitedairlines wants you
off



Repost – Negative Emotion

Disgusting

@civicaaction:

Hey @United, when you treat your passengers as if they aren't even human, WE SEE YOU

@LalitKModi: Absolutely the most
#disgusting #behaviour by
@united #unitedAIRLINES

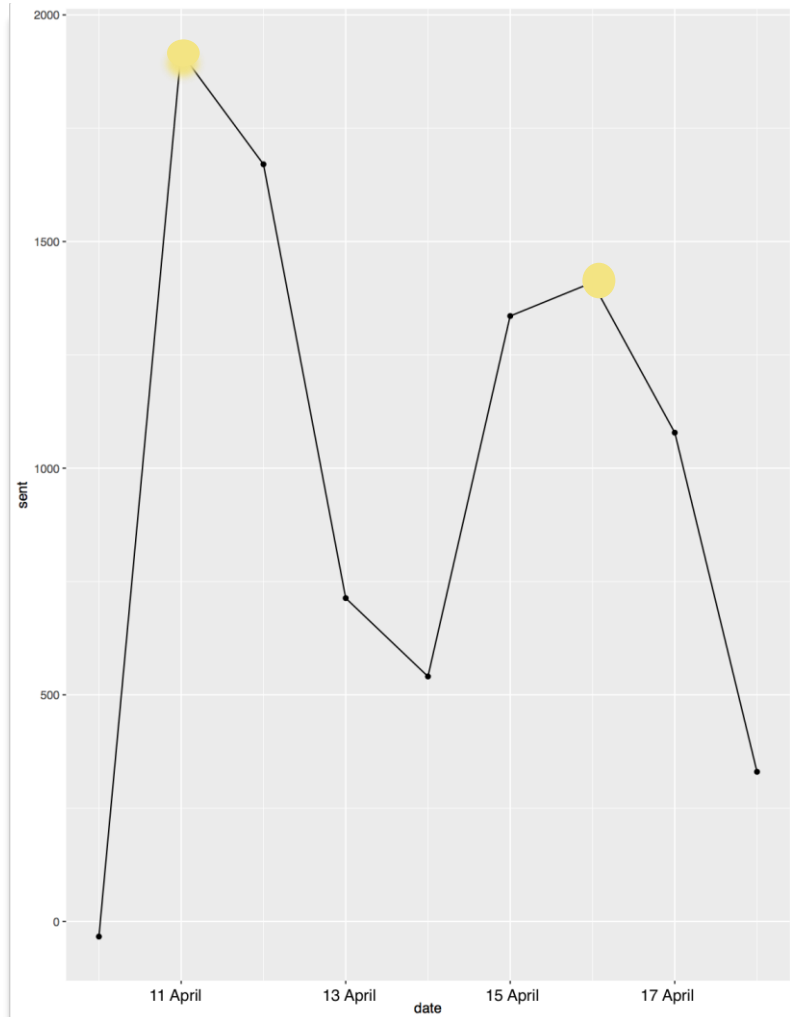
Worst

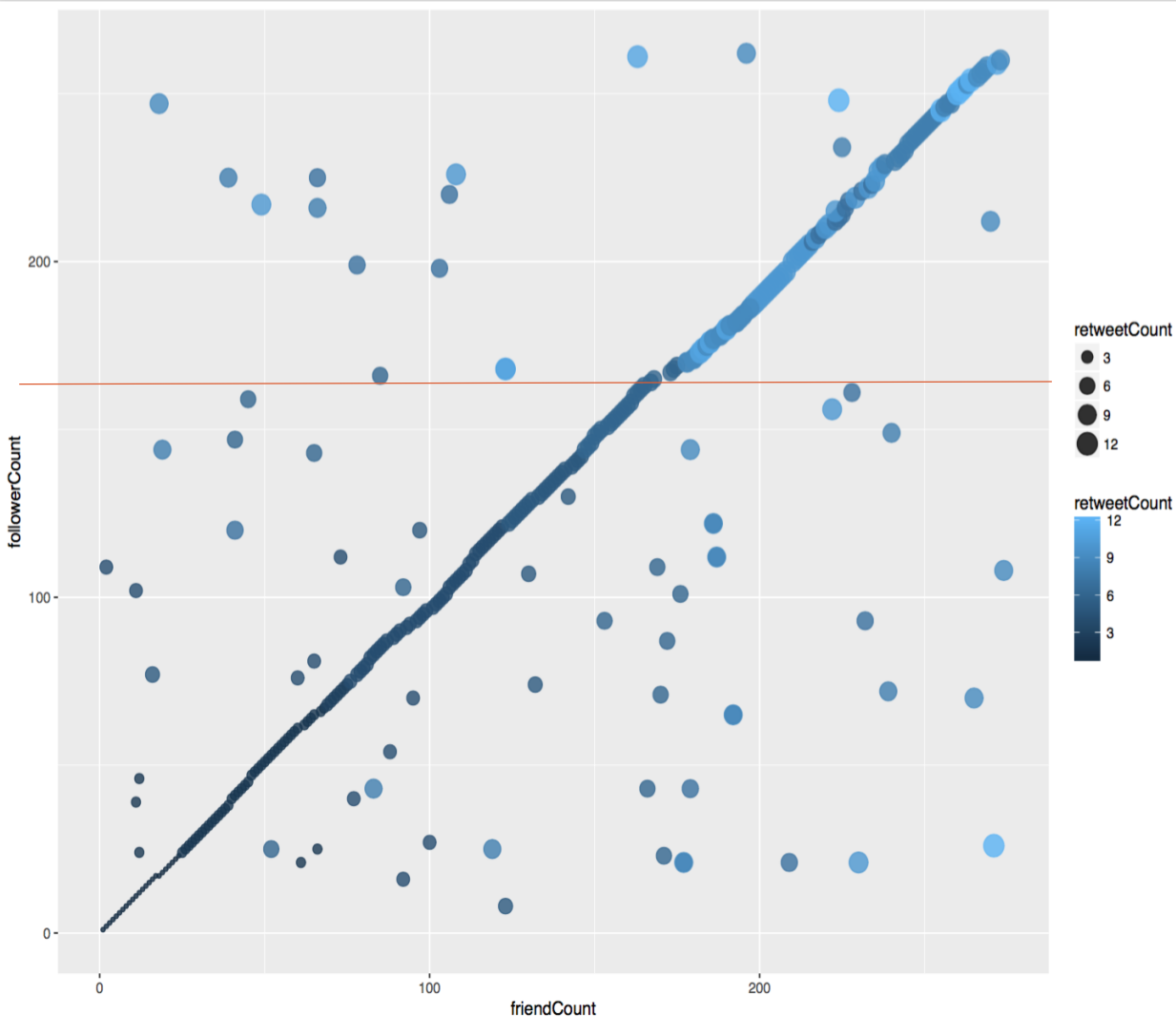
@BeingFarhad:

#BoycottUnitedAirlines
Shame on you
#unitedAIRLINES! Your
airlines should be shut
permanently! #worstairline

Twitter Sentiment Changes

- On April 11, the United Airlines released an official statement about the flight 3411, by the CEO, so the trend of tweets sentiment turns positive.
- `#NewUnitedAirlinesMottos` From April 15-16, some videos spread quickly on Twitter, most videos are joking videos, for example, making new advertisements for UA with beating passenger's video.





333 Important Opinion Leaders

- Retweets count large than 10000
- Normalized retweet count(10000 is 1)
- High influence users have high friends count or high followers count or both

An abstract geometric diagram on a yellow background. It features a central circle containing the number '06'. Radiating from this circle are several thin, light-yellow lines that connect to various points, forming a network of triangles and polygons. The points are small, dark grey dots. The overall shape is irregular and somewhat symmetrical, resembling a stylized star or a complex web structure.

06

Conclusion

PART 1

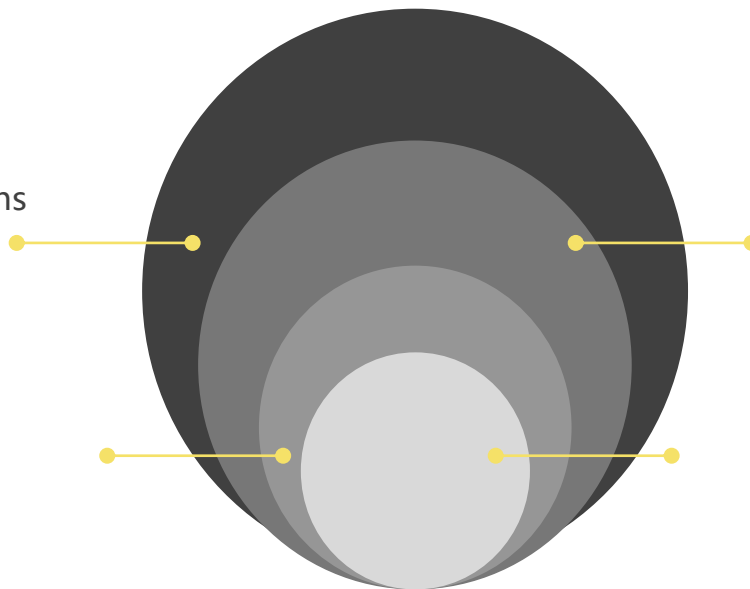
Stages of Crisis Management

4 Solution

We will give some solutions

2 Crisis Breakout

- Breakout on Apr. 9th
- Excuse: deny and shift the blame to litigant

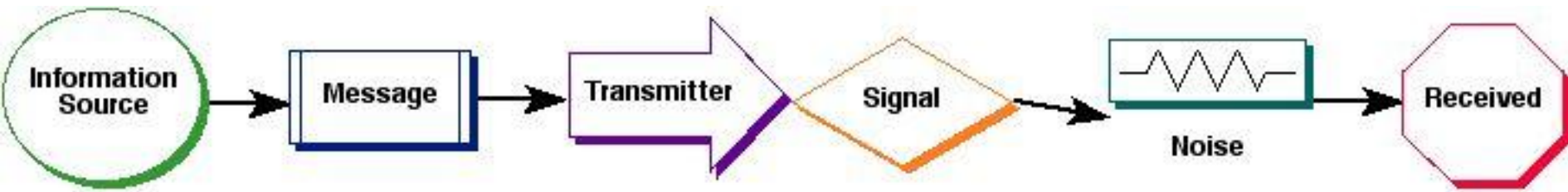


3 Chronic

- Litigation occurs, media exposes are aired
- Full apologize and corrective action

1 Prodromal

- Negative impression(from 2016)
- No crisis management



Linear Transmission of Messages

Information

News Media: Neutral and objective, tell what happened.

Twitter: Boycott United Airlines with strong emotion.

Transmitter

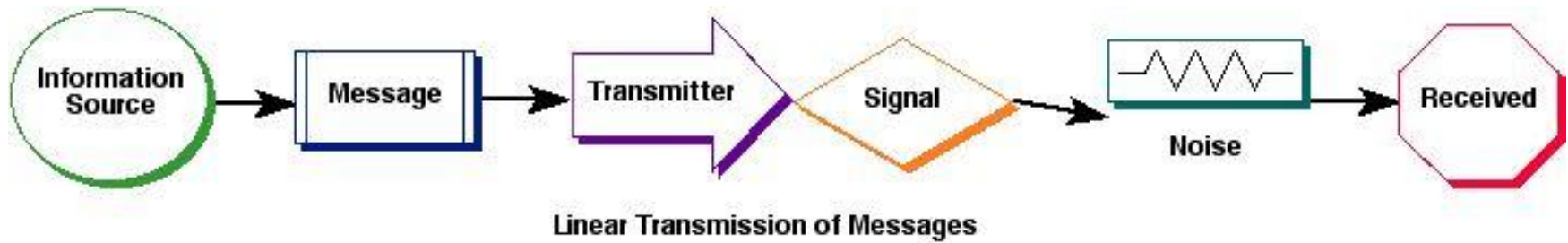
News Media: Text, pictures and video.

Twitter: Text, tags, photos(gif), comic and video.

Two-step Flow

Re-creation and Infotainment.

These two media have some interactions.



Receiver

KOL has great influence: High influence users have high friends count or high followers count or both.

Sparse network in Twitter: Not every one can be noticed and have a voice.

Herd Behavior(noise): Express negative emotion followed the masses.

PART 2

Improvement

- 1. United Airlines should release news more timely, the video about policemen dragging that doctor was release at 9th April in twitter. However the apologetic letter was released at 10th April, **it's too late. Leave the time for negative opinion spreading.**
- 2. Public opinions & emotions were arouse after the first apologetic letter realised. It proves that the content of first apologetic letter should be altered. **We need to apologize more sincerely rather than "denying" it by using words like "re-accommodation".**
- 3. By using some communication strategies like **attacking the accusers** (those policemen in airport), **drowning the negative information** by paying money to opinion leaders. We might get better results.
- 4. We can use characteristics we have analyzed to find out opinion leaders.



Thanks