

What's Everyone* Talking About?

Exploratory Topic Modeling in Two Political Subreddits

Phil Cork Fall 2022

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What did we learn and what can we do with it?



★ 01 ★RESEARCH QUESTION(S)

Are political subreddits talking about the same things? Are they talking about them in different ways?

★ 02 ★BACKGROUND



A forum-based social media platform with more active monthly users than Twitter



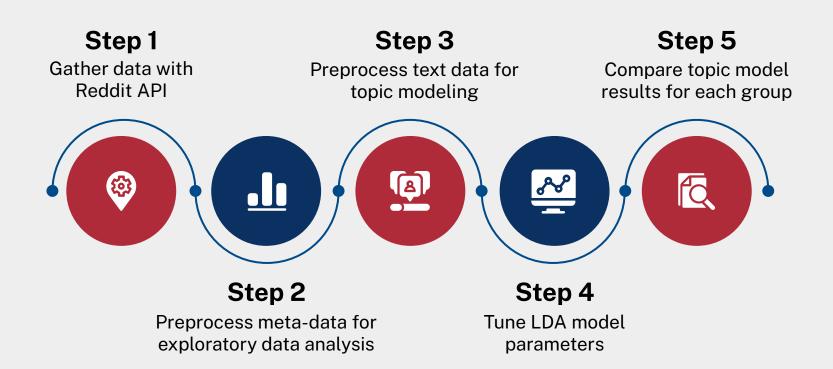
Topic-specific forums or communities where content is posted and shared





	Posts	Subscribers	Avg. Comments	Avg. Upvotes
r/Conservative	910	1.1m	33.3	208.5
r/Democrats	713	430k	26.3	215.8

★ 03 ★METHODOLOGY





Topics	Terms
D1	vote, 2022, walker, say, abortion , herschel walker , herschel, man, think, year
D2	obama, fetterman , oz , michigan, pete, woman, florida, debate , georgia, million
D3	trump, judge , fraud , jan, donald, donald trump , order, video, men, violence
D5	pelosi, attack, early, news, security, social, cut, home, social security, nancy



Topics	Terms
C 1	fetterman, senate, race, debate, senate race, oz, win, calls, john, john fetterman
С7	white, joe, house, biden, joe biden, inflation, fight, tweet, white house, getting
C8	pelosi, paul, paul pelosi , attack , cnn, kanye, west, woke, kanye west , nancy
C13	twitter, musk, elon, elon musk, fired, daily, daily wire, wire, report, takeover



Are political subreddits talking about the same things?

Both subreddits feature topics that mention many of the same public figures

Both reference similar current events

Overlapping topics and terms across both subreddits

Are they talking about them in different ways?

Both subreddits mention opposing leaders in opposite sentiments

News events appear with different terms

r/Conservative's topics are typically more specific, r/Democrats more broad





Limitations

Only two subreddits considered

Only one month worth of posts

LDA not always as effective on short-form content

Conclusions

Political communication appears interconnected with overlapping topics, mirroring reality

The medium impacts the message, highlighted in how the community's range of topics differ



Thanks! Questions?

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