

The Spookeybot Before Christmas: How My Twitterbot Came to Be

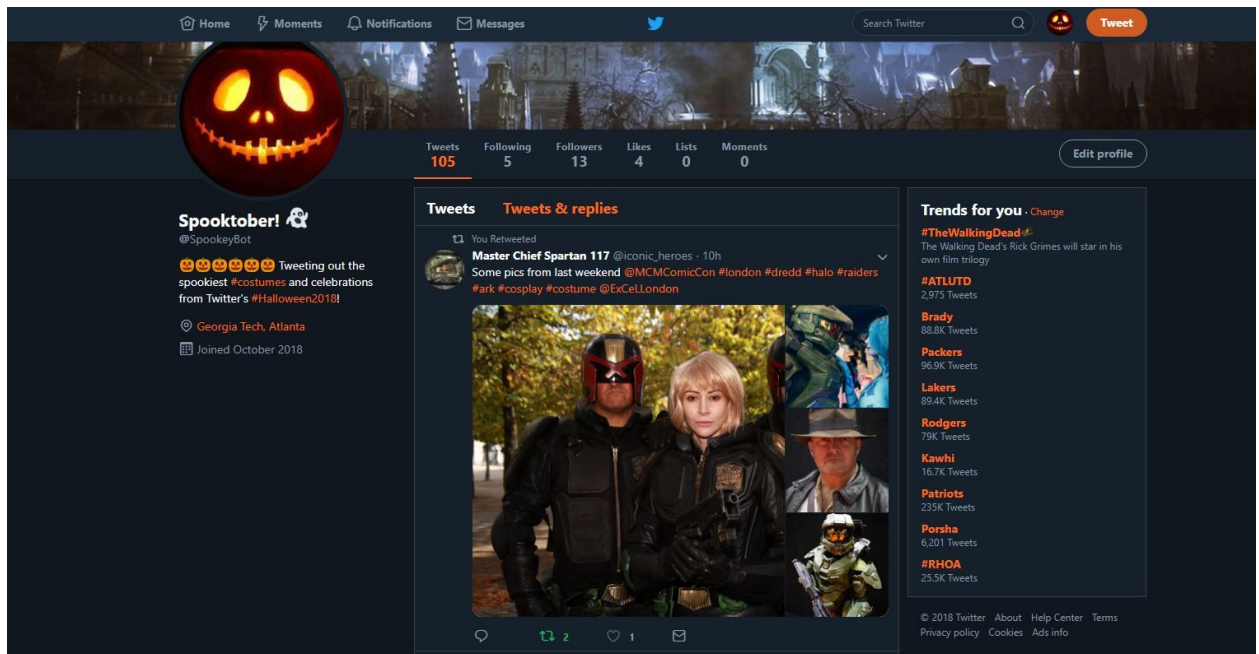
<https://twitter.com/SpookeyBot?lang=en>

Our fourth LMC 2700 project for the year tasked us with the fascinating challenge of creating and deploying a fully functional Twitter bot to interact with the Twitter community. Due to [recent changes to Twitter's stances on third-party API](#), this project took a bit longer and was more difficult than originally intended. However, it was still an enjoyable project that yielded satisfactory results in terms of content and engagement.

I initially idled on picking a theme for my Twitter bot, but I decided to make use of the holiday that fell firmly within the project's timeline - Halloween. I figured a Halloween-themed bot was a fantastic choice, as there is always an influx of Halloween traffic, content, and hashtags on Twitter. Throughout the week of October 31st, users from all over the world eagerly upload links and images of their Halloween costumes, movies, parties and celebrations. I decided to create a Twitter bot that would Retweet many of the submissions in Halloween-relevant hashtags, while also complementing submissions and following certain Retweeted users. Thus, "Spookeybot" was born, in the hopes of engaging what I saw as Twitter's annual, unofficial, ad-hoc community of Halloween celebrating users.

The main functionalities I sought for my Twitter bot were Hashtag searching, Retweeting, Following, and composing original Tweets. The latter of these two became harder for Twitter bots to implement after this summer's changes to third-party API; specifically, changes to Twitter's stream() function made "Follow trains" very difficult to implement, and Tweet composition more inaccessible than it previously was (but still easier to implement than Following). However, the Hashtag search and Retweet functions were both still accessible in their implementation. As such, I focused on those two first. The community hashtags I sought to engage were #halloween, #halloween2018, #halloween18, #costume, and #halloweencostume.

By modifying the provided example code, I created different functions and variables for each of these hashtag searches. The



Screenshot of SpookyBot active shortly after Halloween!