

Competitive Analysis.

In this section we will analyse what we feel are the main competitors to our app currently available to download. Our focus will be on dedicated second screen and companion apps but we will also explore existing visualisation tools.

Competitor Name	Ref
Zeebox	1.1
Hootsuite	1.2
Status Board	1.3
Storyful Heatmap	1.4

1.1 Zeebox

Link: <http://zeebox.com/uk>

Price: Free

Platform: iPad/iPhone, blackberry, android, blackberry , web

Feature set

Feature	Description	Comment
Zeetags	Contextual information generated from a shows subtitles or from listening to the audio, a la Shazaam.	
TV Remote	Gives limited remote functionality to your mobile device .	Device dependent
Social Interaction	Deep integration with Facebook and twitter, allows the user to chat and tweet directly from within the app, follow hashtags on twitter and invite friends to "viewing parties"	
Audience Buzz	Visualises the "buzz" surrounding a show on a bar graph ranging from "cool" to "hottest" . Based on twitter activity.	Extremely basic visualisation of twitter activity.
TV guide	A guide to currently playing and upcoming shows on the TV provider of a users choice (sky, UPC, etc).	
Rooms	Chat rooms for specific shows .	Little or no activity.

Analysis .

Zeebox markets itself as a TV "sidekick" and as such presents a wide feature set ranging from the ability to control your TV to utilising subtitles to gather contextual information about the show and generate links to Wikipedia and IMDB, the apps tag line of "Zeebox is everything" gives a sense of the scope the app is aiming for.

Despite a massive advertising campaign (Zeebox sponsored the Simpsons on Sky1 for a number of months) the app doesn't seem to have reached a critical mass of users yet (at least in Ireland), apart from the ability to post directly to your social functions were reliant on people in my social network also using the app (none were). The rooms feature which aims to create a more traditional chat room or message board environment around a particular show sparsely populated with little very little interactions or discussion happening within, even for shows generating a massive amount of online discourse such as XFactor. It is worth In our initial surveys of Irish twitter users we found no users of Zeebox. [\(link to surveys\)](#)

The non social features worked well, the Zeetags feature being particularly impressive, giving Wikipedia links to topics and locations being discussed in real time and giving IMDB profiles of actors/presenters. The TV guide was intuitive and useful, allowing a user to filter by genre or view a full guide. The app offers "suggested viewing" but these are based purely on the twitter "buzz" surrounding a show and is not based on the viewers information.

The attempts to cover all bases in terms of features left the UI of Zeebox quite cluttered on smaller screens, phones in particular suffer.

1.2 Hootsuite

Link: <http://hootsuite.com/>

Price: Basic version free rising to €8.99 per month for use of analytics

Platform: iPad/iPhone, android, web

Feature set :

Feature	Description	Comment
Social Network Management	Display and use multiple social streams from one screen (up to 5 in the free version)	
Custom analytics	Twitter analytics give an overview of your twitter account by tracking number of followers, lists, mentions, keywords, reset . Results are presented in a customisable graph and can be shared, printed or saved (web version)	Pay wall to access analytics feature
Scheduled tweeting.	Allows user to schedule tweets or other social messages in advance.	

Hootsuite is aimed at business users managing multiple social media accounts. Depending on the type of plan the user has subscribed to they can manage Facebook, LinkedIn, twitter and even Wordpress sites from a single dashboard.

Hootsuite is arguably the app with the feature closest to our proposed feature set, having both multiple streams and some sort of visualisation tools, however Hootsuite's dashboard is presented very much as a commercial tool rather than a secondary affordance, commanding the users full attention.

1.3 Status Board

Link: <http://panic.com/statusboard/>

Price: Basic version €9.99, rising to €29.98 for the version with TV out

Platform: iPad

Feature set :

Feature	Description	Comment
User generated graphs and tables	Converts users data(JSON, CSV) to graph or table form display	Data needs to be parsed in a format readable by status board, may need custom scripts .
TV out	Connects iPad to Tv to create a digital display	Optional in-app purchase (€19.99)
DIY panels	Web view panels to display user created content	

Analysis

“Just one look at your iPad and you're up to speed” – Status Board website

Status board sets out to present data in a visual manner on a number of customisable panels. With the addition of the optional TV out status board becomes a (relatively) cheap dynamically updatable digital display system.

The app seems to be aimed tech savvy users as the apps website makes it clear making your own graphs and data from JSON will often requires a script to parse the data into a usable format. Similarly the DIY panels simply offer an web view that would require a web developer to actually build something inside, Some 3rd party apps and websites offer data in a status board ready format providing functionality such as crash reporting to iOS developers, sensor warnings etc. The built in twitter functionality of Status board included a feed ticker and a panel to chart tweet volume. Presumably more in depth visualisation apps would be possible utilising status board but at the time of writing none seem apparent.

Status board in its current format lies somewhere between an consumer tool and a developer dev kit, one could imagine a future as a free to download with an its own in app market place for panel functionality but in its current incarnation it would seemed quite limited for the average user.

1.3 Storyful Heatmap

Visualisation tool developed in-house at Storyful monitoring and displaying activity on Twitter over time.

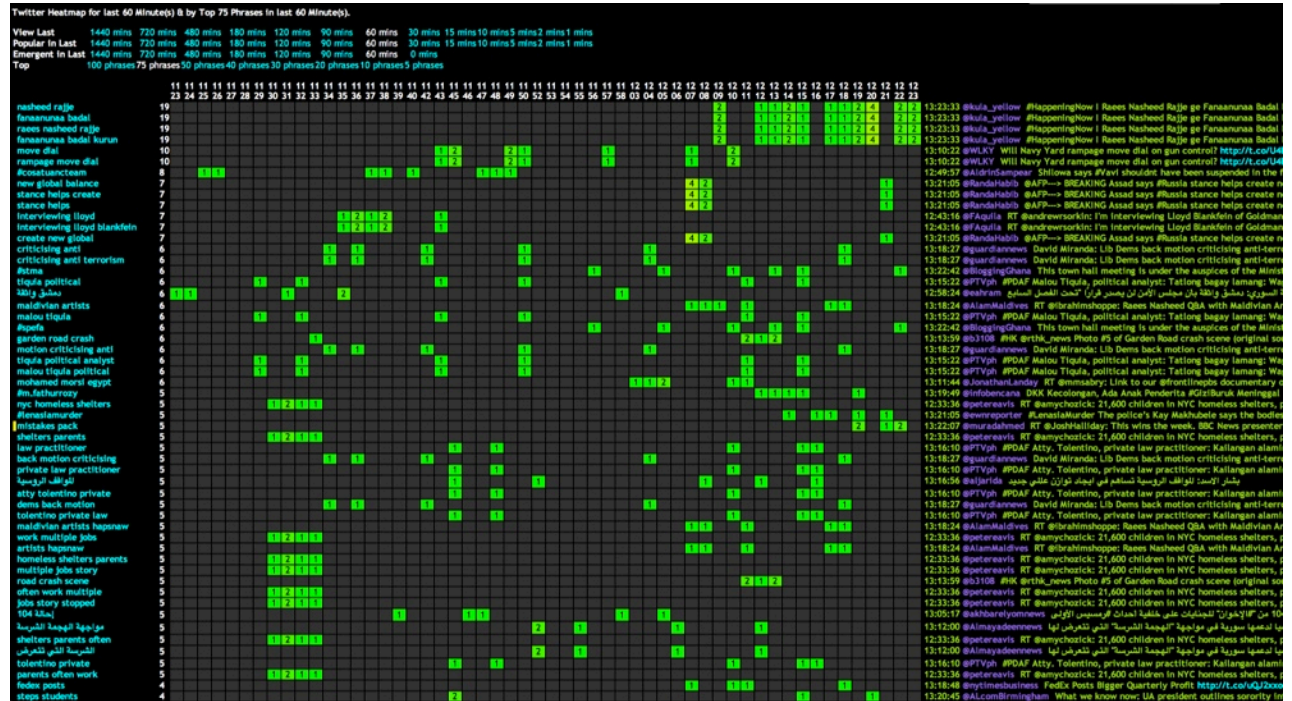


Fig 1.0 Screen Capture of Storyful's Heatmap application – Home Screen

Platform: Desktop

Feature	Description	Comment
User options	Time based options to narrow or expand results	Maybe a search input might allow for more expansive results
Dynamically generated lists of keywords / phrases from the Twitter API	Returns a list of phrases mentioned on Twitter.	Functional and useful, but can be difficult to read
Activity grid	Highlights activity surrounding phrases	Functional and easy to understand, but visually unappealing
Display Tweets	Displays the tweets behind the activity including timestamp.	As above. It does exactly what it's supposed to do, but one has to ask if there is a more visually impactful way of displaying the information.

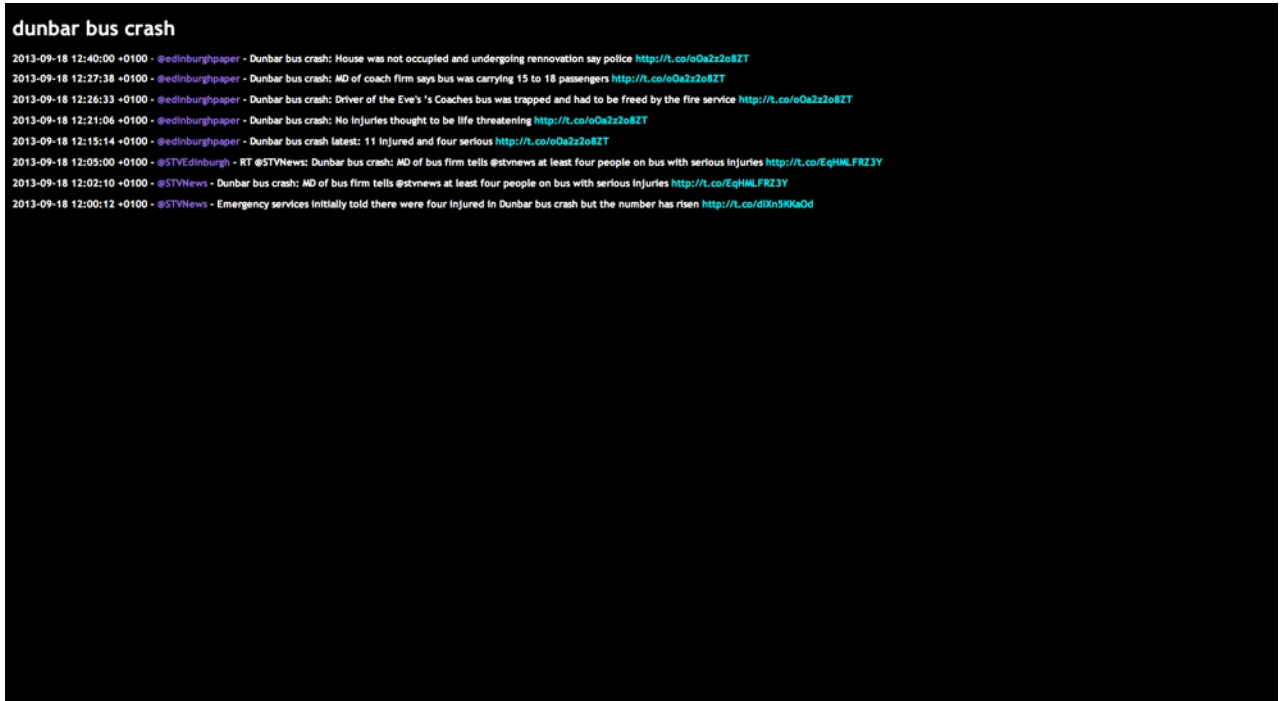


Fig 1.2 Screen Capture of Storyful's Heatmap application – Phrase Screen

Analysis

From the home screen (Fig 1.0), users may select from times ranging from the last 1 minute to the last 1440 minutes, under the following criteria:

- View Last: View all tweets in the selected time range.
- Popular in Last: View most popular tweets in the selected time range.
- Emergent in Last: View all tweets emergent in the selected time range.
- Top: Specify the number of phrases to return in the left hand column.

The left hand side of the screen lists the top phrases returned by the selected parameters, as well as the tweet count. The grid displays clusters of activity surrounding the key phrases and number of mentions. The right hand margin displays actual tweets including timestamp, user handles and any associated urls.

The green boxes on the grid indicate activity surrounding a particular phrase, so one can see which topics are generating the most buzz.

Each phrase in the list in the left margin can be clicked on, opening a page displaying all of the tweets containing the selected phrase (Fig 1.2).