



# CS 4803 Social Computing: Overview of Social Media Sites

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“Why we twitter:  
understanding microblogging  
usage and communities”

- The first archival, peer-reviewed paper on Twitter
- Investigation of the purposes behind microblog use
- Findings:
  - Users with similar intentions and interests form communities, or are “clustered”
  - People either talk about daily activities, or seek or share information – finer roles were examined compared to the Naaman et al paper: Daily Chatter, Conversations, Information Sharing, News
- Twitter’s growth showed monotonic increase over time for the dataset analyzed, and its user retention was consistent
- Indegree and outdegree distributions followed expected power law distribution

“Is It Really About Me?:  
Message Content in Social  
Awareness Streams”

- Seems like this was the favorite paper of the class this week!
- Analysis of communication patterns on Twitter (tweet content analysis)
- Both qualitative (hand coding of messages) and quantitative methods used
- Findings indicate the presence of two kinds of individuals: “meformers” and “informers”
  - Meformers garner more mentions, informers garner more retweets
  - Informers have more followers, meformers are more women and mobile users

Your personal reflections...

Between 2007 when the Java et al paper came out and now, we have come a long way. What could be reason for widespread acceptability of Twitter?

Java et al. talk about Twitter's social network being clustered. What benefits does a clustered network bring to its members? What are its pitfalls?



Java et al. also talk about the different roles and intent of content seeking and sharing on Twitter. What are some of those intentions?

How appropriate is authors' (Naaman et al's) framing of Twitter as a "social awareness stream"?

After all, who are “meformers”? And who are “informers”? *Hint: later work found Twitter users to span different categories*

Why is it useful/important after all, for us to learn about different uses of Twitter? *Tip: think beyond viral marketing, advertising*

The paper uses a small dataset (350 users), what kind of biases can this potentially introduce in the categorization of “meformers” and “informers”?

How accurately do “meformers” and “informers” capture intent behind information sharing on Twitter? *Point to note: the paper is from 2010-11, could other intent have emerged over the years? Examples: media sharing, Q&A*

With the emergence of smartphones, Instagram etc., people are likely to take moment-to-moment pictures of things happening around them. Does it mean we are seeing emergence of information-sharing “meformers”?

Is taking “selfies” meforming?

We all are perhaps “meformers” and “informers” at different points in time—what factors influence this negotiation? *[Hint: people have social networks]*



Relatedly, the context of information sharing matters. An individual may consider a post to be meforming or informing, however readers may perceive it differently. Whose perspective is more valuable to consider and under what situation?

Over the years, have categories of users beyond reformers and informers emerged? If so, what are they?

Both papers posit Twitter as a medium of expression and information sharing. However we do see the platform as a place for conversations and social interaction. To what extent do you think Twitter facilitates such exchange? What are the challenges?

Twitter was, in a way, the first microblogging platform. Newer social media platforms have emerged ever since, and serve different purposes. Do you think the findings of the two papers might apply to these newer platforms like Instagram or Tumblr?