Structuring a CMC corpus of political tweets in TEI: corpus features, ethics and workflow

Julien Longhi, Ciara R. Wigham

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The context of politweets: HumaNum_DJ

This work is part of the “Digital Humanities and Data Journalism” transdisciplinary project (funded by the Foundation of the Cergy-Pontoise University, France).

The purpose of this research was to take advantage of discourses produced on social media to leverage the semantics of discourses in relation to social issues. The corpus was built starting from seven French politicians from six different political parties. In order to generate political tweets, a set of lists citing these politicians was generated (7087 lists), and the lists that have at least 5 tweets and six for which the description contained the word ‘politic’ were selected (120 lists in total). Finally, 2394 tweets were recovered. In order to be sure that we selected politicians’ tweets (and not, for example, those of journalists), only the accounts cited in more than 12 lists were considered: 205 politicians were tweeting. We took the last 200 tweets of each of the 205 accounts on 27 March 2014 (34,273 tweets). This allowed us to recover data that focused on the period between the two rounds of the 2014 municipal elections in France.

Analyses have started to be carried out: some ideas have been launched in Djemli, Longhi et al. (2014) but further analyses must adhere rigorously to methodologies stemming from the natural language processing (NLP) field.

Including specific features of Twitter

The @: a reference to a user on Twitter

The #: a hashtag

The @: a mention of a user on Twitter

Type of material

Retweeted number of retweets

Ethical issues

On https://twitter.com/tos?lang=en we can read:

B. Restrictions on Content and Use of the Services

Please review the Twitter Rules (which are part of these Terms) to better understand what is prohibited on the Service. We reserve the right at all times (but will not have an obligation) to remove or refuse to distribute any Content on the Services, to suspend or terminate users, and to reclaim usernames without liability to you. We also reserve the right to access, read, preserve, and disclose any information as we reasonably believe is necessary to (i) satisfy any applicable law, regulation, legal process or governmental request, (ii) enforce the Terms, including investigation of potential violations hereof, (iii) detect, prevent, or otherwise address fraud, security or technical issues, (iv) respond to user support requests, or (v) protect the rights, property, or safety of Twitter, its users and the public.

Twitter does not disclose personally identifying information to third parties except in accordance with their Privacy Policy.

Except as permitted through the Services, these Terms, or the terms provided on dev.twitter.com, you have to use the Twitter API if you want to reproduce, modify, create derivative works, distribute, sell, transfer, publicly display, publicly perform, transmit, or otherwise use the Content through Services.

Twitter encourages and allows broad reuse of content. The Twitter API allows to enable this.

Conclusion and perspectives

In Djemli, Longhi et al. 2014, the main objective was to detect whether or not a tweet is an ideology tweet. We tested a system against a set of 20,000 tweets of French politicians in order to experiment rules implementation and their accuracy. The evaluation of the rules and their implementation gave us good results for the system accuracy since 66.66% of tweets identified as ideological were indeed so and 96.64% of tweets identified as non-ideological (after sampling) were validated as non-ideological by the expert.

Members of the CoMeRe project, working with other political partners, participate in the TEI CMC Special Interest Group. They are jointly working on a proposal for an extension to the TEI standard adapted to the particularities of a broad range of CMC genres.

Members of the CoMeRe project are organising the international research days (IDRs) on Social Media and CMC Corpora for the eHumanities to be held in Rennes, France on 23-24th October 2015. See http://idr-cmc-rennes-sciencesconf.org/