Project #1: Microblogging/Social Networking for a Cause (15%)

Purpose

Many of you are already active users of social networking sites –
Pinterest, Facebook, MySpace, Instagram. You likely use these tools to communicate with your friends and family about the daily happenings in your personal lives.

Today, there are more than 240 million users on Twitter. In the 2012 presidential election season, users sent 10.3 million tweets during the 90-minute Jim Lehrer debate. This amounted to 160,000 tweets per minute, signaling both extreme *interest* in the political happenings and also enormous *influence*. The purpose of this assignment is to identify ways to harness this power and influence through social networking, so you can use the tool to make a difference on an issue about which you feel strongly.

Much like Facebook, which allows users to post mini updates (microposts), Twitter is a microblogging forum. Other microblogging forums you might be accustomed to using include text messaging, instant messaging, or email. In order to be effective in your foray into Twitter, you will want to familiarize yourselves with the lexicon.

Instructions

Using the cause you have selected to engage in, you will create a Twitter account and join the conversation. At first, you will be primarily a receiver of information, but through asking questions, sharing valuable information, retweeting other relevant tweets, and engaging with other Twitter users, you will begin to become acquainted with others who are engaged in this topic. That is, you will join the already engaged community surrounding your chosen issue.

Remember, there are differences between *causes* and *issues*:

> A **cause** is a topic of concern that requires action for the purposes of helping to raise awareness or funds to help find a solution to a problem.
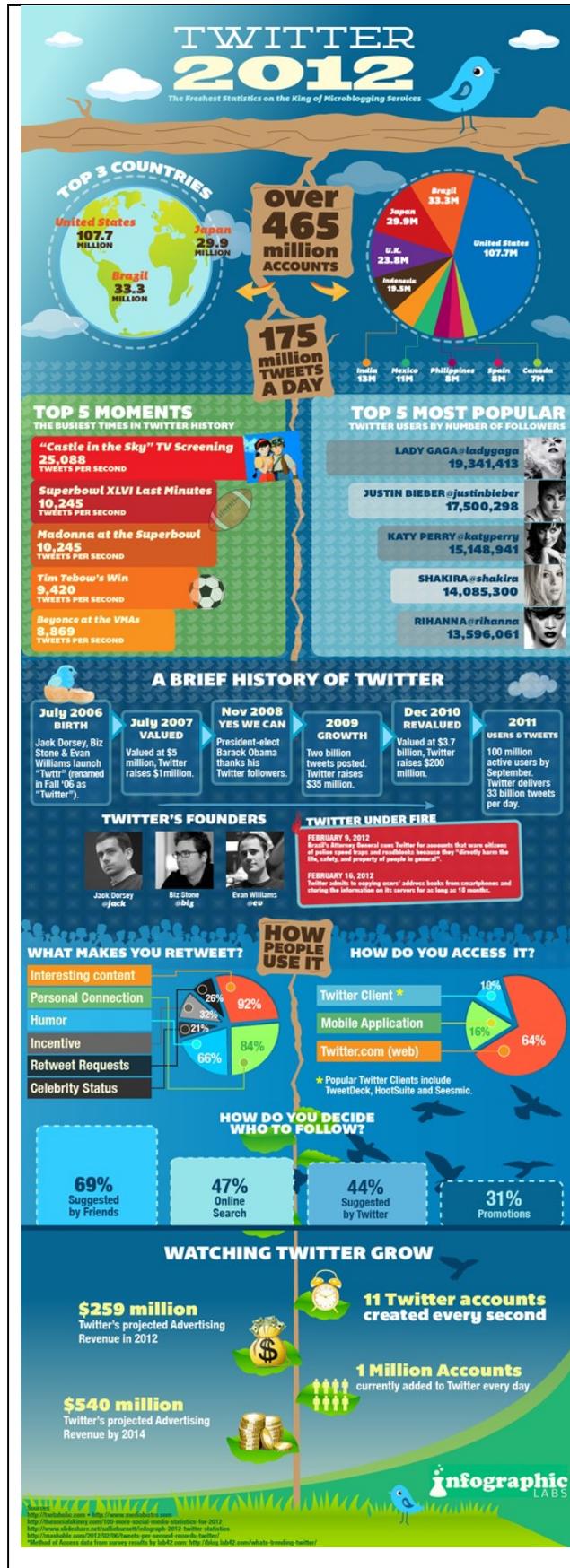>
> > Examples: Cystic Fibrosis, Autism, Domestic Violence, Homelessness
>
> An **issue** is typically something being debated (or that you think should be) in the political realm. Issue engagement generally surrounds activities such as education, lobbying politicians, and recruiting supporters.
>
> > Examples: Decriminalization of Drugs, Immigration Reform, Tax Policy Reform

To get started, you will need to create an account. Who to connect with:

- Prominent people already working on behalf of the issue or cause already
- Sources of research/data relating to the issue or cause
- Existing organizations already advocating for the issue or cause
- Congressmen and women and/or leaders in the community who can affect change (perhaps through legislation, funding)
- People in your personal social circle with whom you are willing to share your advocacy and possibly recruit to join the effort.
- Bloggers/pundits/civic leaders from whom you can learn

TWITTER 2012

The Freshest Statistics on the King of Microblogging Services

TOP 3 COUNTRIES

United States 107.7 MILLION
Japan 29.9 MILLION
Brazil 33.3 MILLION

over **465 million** ACCOUNTS

Brazil 33.3M
Japan 29.9M
U.K. 23.8M
Indonesia 19.5M
United States 107.7M

India 13M · Mexico 11M · Philippines 8M · Spain 8M · Canada 7M

175 million TWEETS A DAY

TOP 5 MOMENTS
THE BUSIEST TIMES IN TWITTER HISTORY

"Castle in the Sky" TV Screening
25,088 TWEETS PER SECOND

Superbowl XLVI Last Minutes
10,245 TWEETS PER SECOND

Madonna at the Superbowl
10,245 TWEETS PER SECOND

Tim Tebow's Win
9,420 TWEETS PER SECOND

Beyonce at the VMAs
8,869 TWEETS PER SECOND

TOP 5 MOST POPULAR
TWITTER USERS BY NUMBER OF FOLLOWERS

LADY GAGA @ladygaga **19,341,413**
JUSTIN BIEBER @justinbieber **17,500,298**
KATY PERRY @katyperry **15,148,941**
SHAKIRA @shakira **14,085,300**
RIHANNA @rihanna **13,596,061**

A BRIEF HISTORY OF TWITTER

July 2006 BIRTH — Jack Dorsey, Biz Stone & Evan Williams launch "Twttr" (renamed in Fall '06 as "Twitter").

July 2007 VALUED — Valued at $5 million, Twitter raises $1million.

Nov 2008 YES WE CAN — President-elect Barack Obama thanks his Twitter followers.

2009 GROWTH — Two billion tweets posted. Twitter raises $35 million.

Dec 2010 REVALUED — Valued at $3.7 billion, Twitter raises $200 million.

2011 USERS & TWEETS — 100 million active users by September. Twitter delivers 33 billion tweets per day.

TWITTER'S FOUNDERS
Jack Dorsey @jack · Biz Stone @biz · Evan Williams @ev

TWITTER UNDER FIRE
FEBRUARY 9, 2012 — Brazil's Attorney General sues Twitter for accounts that warn citizens of police speed traps and roadblocks because they "directly harm the life, safety, and property of people in general".

FEBRUARY 16, 2012 — Twitter admits to copying users' address books from smartphones and storing the information on its servers for as long as 18 months.

WHAT MAKES YOU RETWEET?
Interesting content · Personal Connection · Humor · Incentive · Retweet Requests · Celebrity Status

26% · 32% · 21%

HOW PEOPLE USE IT
92% · 84% · 66%

HOW DO YOU ACCESS IT?
Twitter Client ★ — 10%
Mobile Application — 16%
Twitter.com (web) — 64%

★ Popular Twitter Clients include TweetDeck, HootSuite and Seesmic.

HOW DO YOU DECIDE WHO TO FOLLOW?
69% Suggested by Friends
47% Online Search
44% Suggested by Twitter
31% Promotions

WATCHING TWITTER GROW
$259 million Twitter's projected Advertising Revenue in 2012
$540 million Twitter's projected Advertising Revenue by 2014
11 Twitter accounts created every second
1 Million Accounts currently added to Twitter every day

infographic LABS

http://feltabulm.com · http://www.methlabsled.com
http://theocosalnthny.com/100-mecc-social-media-statistics-for-2012
http://www.slideshare.net/soSadbarnett/infograph-2012-twitter-statistics
http://mashable.com/2012/02/06/tweets-per-second-records-twitter/
*Method of Access data from survey results by lab42.com: http://blog.lab42.com/whats-trending-twitter/

Required Tasks

- Engage: Create an account (bio, handle, avi)
- Link to a cause
- Download the Twitter for iPad app and use it
- Tweet frequently (at least every other day)
- Make connections: Find people to follow who are connected to your cause (*Tools: WeFollow, Listorious, Twibs*)
- Join the conversation: Identify 5 related hashtags and use those to engage in the dialogue
- Make an impact: Set a goal to earn 100 new followers during the project period
- Get active: Share related news stories, videos, statistics
- Reflect on your experience: Write a 2-page reflection essay where you explain why you've chosen the cause you have; discuss your prior knowledge and acquired knowledge (i.e., learning curve); assess the impact you have had on the issue; and evaluate the value of this activity.

Recommended Tasks

- Manage Your Account: Join a dashboard management service that tracks and analyzes activity (*Tools: TweetDeck, HootSuite, ManageFlitter*)
- Measure Your Influence: (*Tools: Klout, PeerIndex, Twitter Grader, TweetLevel, or use a recommended Twitter Analytics tool*)

Learning Objectives

- Demonstrate the critical thinking skills involved in exploring, limiting, and focusing the subject.
- Demonstrate writing style that is appropriate for the audience and assignment.
- Demonstrate an ability to communicate a meaningful thought with brevity and precision.
- Demonstrate competency in tools and technologies of new media.

Image source: http://pelfusion.com/twitter-2012-latest-statistics-infographic/

Rubric for Project #1: Microblogging/Social Networking for a Cause

Student: **Twitter Handle:**   **Cause/Issue:**

Evaluation Criteria	Points Possible	Points Earned
IDENTIFICATION • Clear articulation of **purpose** and identify accomplished through Twitter name, handle, avi, bio, use of header image, initial tweet/statement of purpose • Use of **hashtags** to link to existing conversations on your cause or issue	20	
ACTIVITY • Links to reliable, informative **sources** (including current news stories and relevant research) • Tweets include a balance of **external media** (images/memes, videos, graphics/infographics/charts • Volume and frequency of tweeting demonstrates consistent engagement, awareness of audience and peak times for activity on Twitter [# of **substantive tweets** (Goal = 100)] • All activity is consistently linked to your identified **cause/issue**	40	
INFLUENCE and IMPACT • Evidence of an **earned audience** (determined by # of followers, # of RTs, # of Favorites, # of interactions and mentions in other people's timelines) • Tweets include a **Call to Action**, prompt engagement from your followers, appeal to emotion	20	
REFLECTION • Write a 2-page reflection essay where you explain why you've chosen the cause you have; discuss your prior knowledge and acquired knowledge (i.e., learning curve); assess the impact you have had on the issue; and evaluate the value of this activity.	20	
Additional Comments and Screenshots:	Total: 100	Grade:

Project #2: Blogging for a Cause (25%)

Purpose

A blog is "a type of website that is sometimes compared to online journaling. Blogs come in many varieties, but most incorporate an interactive element such as comments and are comprised of posts, rather than static pages" (Wordpress.com Lexicon).

Blogging can be a form of entertainment, reflection, or it can serve the purpose of arguing, persuading, analyzing, commenting on a situation or event. For the purposes of this assignment, we will use our blogs as a vehicle to communicate ideas and motivate others to engage in our efforts.

To see how influential the blogosphere can be on issues that matter, read about

- **Blog for America** – In the 2004 election, candidate Howard Dean ran the first ever campaign blog. As a result, he experienced phenomenal grassroots fundraising results, but most importantly, he was able to disseminate his message through 3,066 original blog posts, a message the mainstream media was all but ignoring.

- **The "Citizen Journalism Revolution"** – Led by the late Andrew Breitbart, this is a movement whereby amateurs (non-professionals) use videos, images, and mini newspieces to tell angles and dimensions of stories that might not otherwise be covered in the mainstream media. It is also called participatory or public journalism. Incidentally, the citizen journalism movement has been rejected by professional journalists, and ultimately led to the #JustABlogger resistance.

This background knowledge is relevant, because it shows both the value of blogging and also the controversy that still surrounds the medium. I share this information not to discourage you from using the tool, but to offer some insight into how politically charged activism on social media can be. You've no doubt run across some of that in your Twitter activity.

Instructions

For this assignment, you will be required to create a blog using Wordpress. To get started, create a free account at wordpress.com. Like you did for the Twitter activity, you'll want to review the Wordpress lexicon, so you can understand the language of the medium you are going to be writing in.

Begin by reading <u>"What Do Bloggers Do: An Average Day on an Average Political Blog"</u> by Laura McKenna and Antoinette Pole.

Tasks

- Choose a title for your blog that is both catchy and also meaningfully related to your cause – or one that speaks to a general personal motto (composingyourself.wordpress.com, for example, is the title of a blog kept by an English teacher), and create your account.
- Choose a template, one that is functional and stylistically appropriate for your subject matter.
- Once you've created your blog account, be sure to install the Wordpress app on your iPad2. You will be able to create and edit new blogs directly from your device. More complex blog posts (those with embedded links, videos, and images) will need to be done on the computer.
- Create an *About* and *Bio* link. In this, you'll explain a little about you and why you are engaged in this cause/issue.
- Make sure you have *Share* capabilities (Facebook and Twitter at a minimum) and allow commenting on your posts.
- Keep your content fresh, tasteful, and do your best to limit all posts to 400 words or less.
- Blog twice a week (Tuesday and Saturday, for a total of 8 posts).
- Once your blog is published, share it. You will use your previously established Twitter handle to share your posts, invite people to follow your blog, and promote your blog posts using hashtags you've identified as meaningful on the issue/cause.

Learning Objectives

- Demonstrate the critical thinking skills involved in exploring, limiting, and focusing the subject in order to produce a thesis statement appropriate for the audience and assignment.
- Demonstrate an ability to communicate a meaningful thought with brevity and precision.
- Demonstrate competency in tools and technologies of new media.
- Demonstrate ability to evaluate and incorporate sources into written work (quotes, paraphrased material, borrowed images, videos, graphs/charts).

Project #2: Wordpress/Blogging for a Cause Rubric

Student: Blog Title: Link to Blog:

	Evidence	Indicators	Points Possible	Points Earned
Alternative Use/Call to Action	Report Research Design (plans) Research Memos (results) Project Logs Final Product(s)	• Project designed to look for alternative use • Data on alternative use • Alternative use design specs • Alternative use supported in final product(s) *For example, the blog that includes information that will help users make informed decisions or join the efforts/take action.*	25	
Technical Literacy for Inquiry	Report Final Product(s) Usability Evaluations	• Data on technical literacy in evaluations • Technical literacy in design specs • Technical literacy visible and supported in final product(s) *For example, the blog that includes a Frequently Asked Questions section or self-directed.*	35	
Useful Interactivity	Report Final Product(s) Interactive Features Usability Evaluations Reflective Writing	• Mentions of "change" in learning, awareness, or activity • Engagement of students and/or users • Identification with the process and/or products • Reflection *For example, the blog that invites users to DO SOMETHING (like, comment, share, reblog) with the information you've provided.*	40	

Table 3: Evidence and Indicators of Concepts and Values in Projects
This rubric is based on the "Heuristic for Developing Assignments and Evaluation Tools for Useful Civic Web Sites" in the Zoetewey, Simmons, and Grabill piece in *Digital Writing: Assessment and Evaluation*, "Assessing Civic Engagement: Responding to Online Spaces for Public Deliberation" (2013).

Project #3: New Media Activism/Digital Advocacy Video (30%)

Purpose

As a culmination of all the advocacy work you've already done on your cause/issue, you are going to create a video to wrap up your efforts. This video will appeal to a wide variety of audiences, and it should distinguish you as an agent of change. The purpose of the video is to promote, educate, argue, persuade or recruit. With your advocacy video, you want specifically to engage viewers/pique their interest, so show passion, make your case, and use effective visuals.

Instructions

This project is one of the most exciting benefits of participating in the iTeach pilot. You will receive special training on an application (iMovie) that we have made available for students in this class that will help you with this project. The initial iMovie training will be conducted during class time, but if you need additional training (remedial or advanced), you can schedule your own training on campus with anyone in the MediaSpot offices. Some of this training will be offered online for our class. You must use the iPad2 for this project.

Tasks

- Produce a 3-4 minute video promoting the cause or issue in which you're engaged. In the video, you will
    o identify the cause;
    o incorporate references to the history and current status of the issue, including what interested viewers can do to get involved;
    o include music and a variety of visual effects; and
    o show relevant logo(s), web addresses (including your own Twitter handle and blog address – you are promoting the cause/issue, as well as your own efforts).
- Make sure you do not violate any copyright or fair use policies in creation of your video.
- Extensive planning, scripting, and storyboarding will be done on the front end. In addition, there will be extensive revision and editing in the production phase of the video-making. All editorial decisions must reflect your overall purpose (see purpose above).
- Upload the final product to YouTube.
- Finally, write a 750-word reflection "essay" to accompany your submission. This will explain the process, technological struggles and successes you faced, as well as what you hope to accomplish through the creation and dissemination of this video. Your reflection will be a new blog posting, and in it, you will embed the link to the YouTube video.
- Once the blog has been published, you will 1) promote the blog and 2) promote the video (directly from YouTube) on Twitter.

Final Submission

For official submission, email the link to your blog posting to me inside of an email message. Also include the link to your video on YouTube.com in this email message. You will be given a rubric in advance to show how you will be graded. The project will also be included in your final e-portfolio (I'll teach you how to do this using Storify.com), which will serve you in your future professional endeavors. Be sure you have a reliable, two-pronged backup system – jump drive AND hard drive on your home computer – to avoid losing all of your work. iTunes will also be a good backup system for the video clips as you create them.

Learning Objectives

- Demonstrate the critical thinking skills involved in exploring, limiting, and focusing the subject.

- Demonstrate writing style that is appropriate for the audience and assignment.
- Demonstrate an ability to communicate a meaningful thought with brevity and precision.
- Demonstrate competency in tools and technologies of new media.

Rubric for Project #3: New Media/Digital Advocacy Video

Student: **Title of Work:**   **Medium:**

Feature of Digital Project	Comments and Suggestions	Points Possible	Points Earned
Video contains all original content.	You will be provided with an iPad2 and the app iMovie for digital video production. The video will be uploaded to YouTube and linked on your blog.	10	
Video promotes an *idea*, transcending personal narrative for its own sake. The video provokes viewers to think about the idea, not just the writer's experience per se.	Remember the difference between description and analysis/argument. Don't just describe a place, an issue, a series of events. Explain their significance and share your original idea.	10	
Video *explores* an idea, taking the viewer on a journey that reflects the writer's thinking process. The psychic distance is close.	As in an essay, you will avoid stating a "thesis" upfront. Your idea should unfold in a compelling way rather than be bluntly stated at the beginning.	10	
Video includes compelling and appropriate use(s) of *images*—e.g., photos, drawings, video clips, typography, etc.	• If you use photos, make sure they are high-resolution and will not look pixilated in your iMovie. Low-resolution images will look amateurish, especially when you zoom in on them. (Of course, you can use pixilated images for a specific rhetorical purpose.) • When using the Ken Burns effect in iMovie, avoid monotony by varying how long photos stay on the screen and by varying the direction and distance of zooms (e.g., consider "panning" across a photo without zooming at all).	10	
Video includes compelling and appropriate voiceover.	• Record your voice first, so that you can edit the length of your images to match your words. • The tone and pace of your voice should match the tone and pace of your composition—e.g., don't sound cheerful while talking about a sad or heavy topic, don't read too fast out of nervousness, etc. • Remember the rhetorical power of silence—its power to let an image or sentence resonate. Choose pauses carefully.	10	

Rubric for Project #3: New Media/Digital Advocacy Video

Video includes compelling and appropriate use(s) of *sounds* other than your voiceover.	• Keep in mind the sound effects available in iMovie. Also, please consider recording original "foley" sound effects. • Always use sound effects and music for good reason. • To edit images to match music (e.g., the beat), import your music first, then edit your images.	10
Video's style and pacing are compelling and appropriate.	• A slower pace can have a more reflective, contemplative quality. To create this quality using photos, let them stay on the screen longer.	10
Transitions between images (photos, video clips, etc.) are compelling and appropriate.	Abrupt cuts between photos can look unprofessional unless you want to create a disjointed effect. Also, avoid using every transition available, which can look amateurish.	10
Ending is compelling and appropriate. The video is five minutes or shorter.	Take the time limit seriously. This restriction is a major rhetorical challenge.	10
Informs, compels to the point of calling to action.	The exigency of the situation, issue, cause is made clear, and the viewer is called to do something as a response to watching the video…raise or donate funds, join the cause, attend an upcoming event or rally, etc.	10
Additional Comments:		Total: 100

Adapted from Erik Ellis's "Critique Form and Grading Criteria for Assessing Multimedia Essays" in "Back to the Future" from *Multimodal Literacies and Emerging Genres* (2012).