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The Power of Positivity in the #ConserveWater Movement on Twitter

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The Power of Positivity in the #ConserveWater Movement on Twitter

Abstract

This poster looks into how authors on social media uses rhetoric to affect the perception and promotion of the #conservewater movement. This study used content analysis and analyzed 100 tweets from the 2018 year looking at who the author of each tweet was, what the tone of the tweet was, the function of the tweet, if there were any attachments and more. The findings gathered were overwhelmingly positive.

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The Power of Positivity in the #ConserveWater Movement on Twitter



Sarah Kubik
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Abstract

This project looks into how the water conservation movement is portrayed on social media platforms like Twitter. By looking at many different aspects of different tweets containing the popular #conserwater, one can see that there are many important takeaways as to how this is one of the more positively represented social movements on Twitter.

Introduction

How does social media use rhetoric to affect the perception and promotion of the #conserwater movement?

Twitter is one of the most used social media platforms coming in at roughly 175 million registered accounts. With all these users that check into social media nearly everyday, they are being influenced with what they see and say. Social media is a huge influence on just about everything in today's twenty first century. It has become a tool for mobilization of anyone who chooses to use it. The use of the hashtag in social media has allowed for social movements organizations to connect with consumers and users. Social media is not hindered by geographical, linguistic, legal or political boundaries in which our culture is designed around. This gives users the capability to create dialogues regarding all manner of social, economic, ethical, cultural, racial, gender and political inequalities with members of previously unreachable communities.

Though social media grants access for users to reach mass audiences, the way in which people interact with each other can vary. Some people might have preconceived ideas on how you are supposed to interact with society on the web and also people may feel morally obligated to stand up or sit back in certain situations they may feel comfortable or uncomfortable in. In the case of social movements on social media, this can affect who interacts with other users and how people interact with other users in conversations.

Literature Review

Social media refers to "Internet based applications that enable people to conduct online communications intended for interaction, community input, and collaboration" (Lindsay 2011). Social media enables the sharing of information from multiple parties despite the distance between the users. It "allows for the global communication of ideals, values and ethics at a near instantaneous rate" (Chapman 9).

The TPB was derived from Fishbein and Ajzen's theory of reasoned action, which states that "people's behavioral intentions are determined by their attitudes toward behavioral outcomes and by their subjective norms" (Lam 1059). The findings of this study are hoping to "suggest that perceived moral obligations have a crucial impact on moral intentions" (Lam 1061).

Methodology

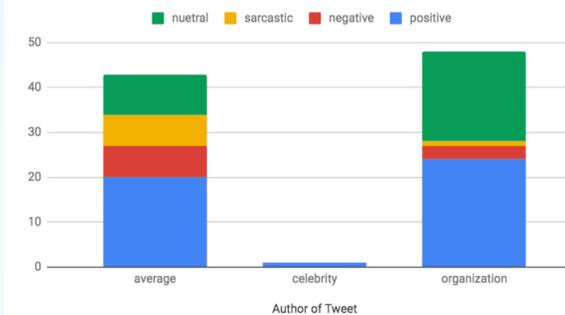
The data for this project was analyzed using content analysis. Because this study will be looking at how the water conservation social movement is being portrayed on a social media site, tweets containing the #conserwater slogan were chosen to be looked at for this study. Because of the wide range of tweets and the numerous amount of data that I could have used for my data set, I narrowed down how I chose the tweets I would be looking at. I broke down the tweets into sections of different ranges throughout the year and looked at every third tweet up to 25 in each category. For the winter season, I looked for tweets ranging from December 21st 2017 - January 21st 2018, for spring March 20th 2018 - April 20th 2018, for summer June 21st 2018- July 21st 2018 and then fall September 23rd 2018 - October 23rd 2018. These dates were chosen because each starts with the first astronomical date to each season and then a month into that season to gather more data.



This analysis looks at the coding in a qualitative way to explore how users on Twitter utilize the platform to share their thoughts on the #conserwater movement. Through coding the 100 tweets, I looked at: the author of the tweet, when it was posted, the message within the tweet, the hashtags used in the tweet, if there were any attachments, and what was the tone and function of the tweet. The data collected will be compared to the Theory of Planned Behavior and why some people may feel obligated to step up and do something. Looking at the rhetoric behind these tweets can reveal some interesting ideas as to how users use Twitter as a platform to persuade other users to join in on the cause and how that may impact modern activism.

Results

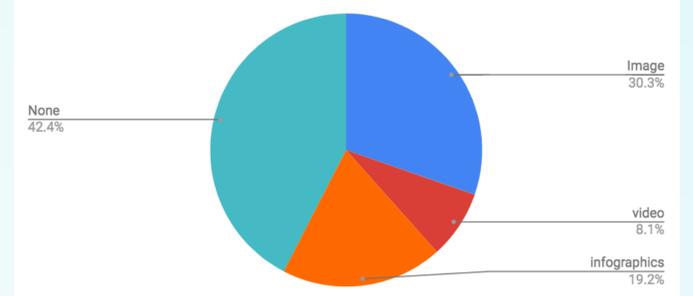
Tone vs Author



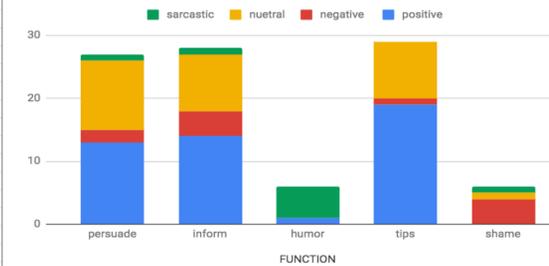
Generally all types of users try to be positive on Twitter with the #conserwater movement. This movement is highly represented in a positive tone on social media to gather viewership. But when looking at who specifically uses what kinds of tone, things get interesting. When looking at what authors specifically use a certain kind of tone, average people will tend to be more edgy with what they are posting and use more sarcastic tones and negative tones than an organization would. This might be because what and how an organization posts about on Twitter can affect how viewers think about the company as a whole. Whereas average people, don't have to worry about upholding a company's image.

Just more than half of users used attachments in tweet to get viewers attention. Those were mostly images like photographs or infographics. The infographics allowed for users to share more in depth analysis of something rather than just typing it out. By using attachments in tweets, authors can impact more people. By using captivating images, users are more willing to stop and look at that tweet because it contains something interesting to look at.

Attachments



Tone vs Function



The functions of tweets varied between persuasion, informing and providing tips at the top. These all are expected when looking at the goals of rhetoric. You want to persuade them by informing them and giving them ideas on how to do so. It was more interesting to look at how tone was used to match up with those functions. The results I got were as expected. Like with a function to shame someone, there is going to be more of a negative tone portrayed or with a humorous function, there might be more of a sarcastic tone used by authors to portray this idea.

Conclusion

After going through all the tweets and analyzing the results I had reviewed, I learned that the water conservation movement is a generally positive movement on social media compared to other social movements against things like animal brutality. The way in which people choose to interact with the social movement on social media was affected by the content of each tweet. No matter who the user was, there was a significant amount of users who preferred the positive route of rhetoric in persuading other users to join in on the #conserwater movement. I also discovered that more than half the time users used attachments in their tweets to gain viewer attention. The whole idea of the #conserwater movement on Twitter is to bring together a community of people who care about the environment and encouraging others in a positive way to step up and join in.