



An Introduction to Tools for Social Media Research

Programme & Abstract Booklet

Registration & coffee (9.30 – 10.00)

Welcome from Chair (10.00-10.15)

Session 1 - Free tools for social media analysis (10.15 – 11.15)

- *Critically engaging with social media research tools* - [Steven McDermott](#)
- *Introduction to NodeXL* - [Wasim Ahmed](#)

Coffee break (11.15 – 11.30)

Session 2 - Developing tools for social media analysis (11.30 – 12.30)

- *Democratising access to social media data – the Collaborative Online Social Media ObServatory (COSMOS)* - [Luke Sloan](#)
- *Doing social media analytics with Chorus* - [Phillip Brooker](#)

Lunch (12.30 – 13.30)

Session 3 - Qualitative social media analysis (13.30 – 14.30)

- *Using Facebook as a research tool* - [Gillian Mooney](#)
- *Developing inclusive and accessible digital methods: engaging critically with your digital toolbox* - [Sarah Lewthwaite](#)

Tea break (14.45 – 15.00)

Session 4 - Image analysis (15.00 – 16.00)

- *Mapping the visual DNA of a brand in social media* - [Francesco D'Orazio](#)
- *How to use R and QGIS to find out tourism hotspots in cities* - Yeran Sun

Closing remarks (16.00 – 16.15)

To book your places please go to the [SRA website](#)

Cost: £115 non member, £95 SRA Member



Session 1 – Free tools for social media analysis

10.15 – 11.15

Steven McDermott, University of the Arts London
- *Critically engaging with social media research tools*

A critical as well as practical introduction to a number of tools (TAGS; Youtwapperkeeper; DMI-TCAT; Gephi; Leximancer; HTTRacker; Issuecrawler) for collecting, archiving, analysing, visualising and disseminating social data collected from Twitter, YouTube and text based data.

Wasim Ahmed, University of Sheffield
- *Introduction to NodeXL*

This presentation will provide a very basic but comprehensive overview of NodeXL, and will be of interest to applied research practitioners as well as those new to social media research.

Network analysis is one method that can be used to analyse social media data. NodeXL is a software application which can be used by social science researchers to analyse data from social media platforms. Network analysis allows you visualize the connections between different groups of users on social media platforms.

NodeXL clusters social media users into different groups by examining the content of posts. NodeXL also produces metrics such as most frequently occurring words, co-words, URLs, domains, and hashtags overall and by group level.

Of practical interest to the delegates will be the simplicity in creating network graphs i.e., point and click functionality as well as the NodeXL graph gallery which contains a host of topics which have already been analysed by social scientists.



Session 2 - Developing tools for social media analysis

11.30 – 12.30

Luke Sloan, Social Data Science Lab, Cardiff University

- *Democratising access to social media data – the Collaborative Online Social Media ObServatory (COSMOS)*

The Collaborative Online Social Media ObServatory (COSMOS) is a software platform developed by a consortium of UK universities and was a collaborative project between the social and computing sciences. COSMOS removes the technical barriers to acquiring Twitter data, visualisation, mapping and data collation. It is free to download for anyone in higher education of the public sector. In this talk we will review the main features of COSMOS drawing on a series of case studies to demonstrate tools and functionality, including demographic identification. We will also reflect on platform sustainability.

You can request a download of COSMOS here: <http://socialdatalab.net/software>

Phillip Brooker, University of Bath

- *Doing social media analytics with Chorus*

This talk will demonstrate Chorus; a free-to-download/use Twitter data collection and analytics package designed to support qualitative social research. The talk will explore a “visual analytics” methodological approach to social media data, demonstrating how the data collection methods and visualisations of Chorus support “visual analytic” techniques. Specifically, we will cover Chorus’ two data collection approaches (query keyword and user-following searches) and complementary analytics modes (event-based and topic-based). The talk will conclude with a look forward to several new features currently in the Chorus development pipeline, commenting on how these might extend the capabilities of researchers in social media analytics.



Session 3 - Qualitative social media analysis

13.30 – 14.30

Gillian Mooney, University of Leeds
- *Using Facebook as a research tool*

This talk outlines a research project where Facebook is used not only as the topic for the research project, but also as a site for data collection, and as a tool for recruitment and communication with participants. Content shared by Facebook users is employed as a means through which to facilitate focus groups and interview sessions, blending more traditional research tools and approaches with the new opportunities afforded by social media.

The presentation will cover the decision-making process that led to Facebook being selected over other social media platforms, some of the ethical issues encountered, and look at the relative advantages and disadvantages of using Facebook in this way. This will be set within the context of an overview of the research as a whole, and conclusions will be drawn about how Facebook might effectively be used for this kind of qualitative work in the future.

Sarah Lewthwaite, NCRM University of Southampton
- *Developing inclusive and accessible digital methods: engaging critically with your digital toolbox*

A growing number of digital tools and media are available to researchers, each offering new affordances for data collection. But there can be a tension between a 'pick-and-mix' approach, and the wider theoretical demands of methodology grounded in a particular paradigm, discipline or theory. This is not a new problem, and methodological 'hacking' has a theoretical lineage in sociology, where it can be known as bricolage.

Using examples from accessibility and her digital disability research, Sarah will introduce and recommend bricolage as practical and conceptual way to negotiate this space. This session aims to equip delegates with an introduction to bricolage and the politics of digital (qualitative) methods, and to raise awareness of issues around accessibility and inclusion. It will introduce free and low-cost digital research tools that allow researchers to observe and capture onscreen activity (for example, on Facebook, Twitter and so forth) whilst using these to stimulate reflection with research participants, to achieve inclusive and insightful internet-enabled interviews.



Session 4 - Image analysis

15.00 – 16.00

Francesco D’Orazio, Pulsar

- Mapping the visual DNA of a brand in social media

Images have come a long way since Kodak democratised photography at the end of the 19th Century. Now with their digitalization, the ubiquity of smartphones and the ‘visualization’ of social media, images are shaping our culture more than ever.

However, there is still a very limited understanding of the visual dynamics of social media and the image analysis toolbox is still largely dependent on text mining and qualitative approaches. The new availability of large bodies of images questions the fitness of qualitative methods and demands approaches that are scalable such as pattern recognition and deep learning.

Whilst exploring the opportunities and challenges of visual social media research, the talk will look specifically at how car brands are discussed on Instagram, how brand values are translated into visual imagery and whether consumer images reflect or distort the identity of a brand so carefully planned and communicated.

Yeran Sun, Urban Big Data Centre, University of Glasgow

- How to use R and QGIS to find out tourism hotspots in cities

This presentation will demonstrate how to use free-to-use softwares R and QGIS to find out tourism hotspots within cities from geotagged images.

Specifically, this presentation will demonstrate 1) how to map geo-tagged images downloaded from Flickr by using QGIS; 2) how to use R to identify clusters of geo-tagged images within a city; 3) how to identify tourism hotspots from those clusters; and 4) map tourism hotspots identified from Flickr images.