

**A TOOLKIT FOR BETTER
UNDERSTANDING USER
ENGAGEMENT WITH
ONLINE CONTENT**

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Background

- Toolkit born out of research trying to understand user engagement with national library social media posts.
- Response numbers weren't showing any patterns or statistical relationships with content or theme.
- Conceptual framework behind research Online Information Encountering by Jiang et al (2015).
- Ended up using thematic discourse analysis (Potter and Wetherell, 1987) to better understand what users were responding to in comments and why.
- This lead to the development of a five question framework that forms the basis of the toolkit.

Question One

What is comment responding to?

content, organisation, comment
above, tagging, thread

Question Two

Does the comment match the
content of the post?

Yes, no, partially





Question Three

What emotions or motivations for responding are present?

such as liking content, amusement, asking a question, thought friend would find it interesting, gratitude, responding to comment, sharing relevant memory

Question Four

Is there any other context to the comment?

i.e. is the post liked by others or your organisation? same user as before? has it received a public answer to a question?



Question Five

Is there anything else that affects how the comment could be interpreted?



Beyond Response Numbers

A toolkit for analysing user responses




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BACKGROUND

User engagement with social media posts are often numbers based but this does not always give a full picture of how users are interacting with posts. This toolkit will enable you to analyse user comments to understand what they are really interacting with, such as the content of your posts or other users, and what is motivating users to respond.

WHAT YOU NEED

You'll need the comments in response to the posts, and a spreadsheet for easy analysis. 

HOW TO GET COMMENTS

Comments can be retrieved from your social media accounts in two ways. (Ensure that comments are from a public forum and stored securely with no identifying information.)

- API access (search online for further guidance) can be quicker but more difficult to set up especially since platforms change access requirements constantly.
- Copying the comments manually can be more time consuming but allows you to become familiar with the comments and notice conversations and formatting.

HOW TO FORMAT COMMENTS

Give each comment its own row in the spreadsheet or table alongside the columns in the image below. This enables easy analysis. For further ease of use, use a new table or sheet for each set of comments.

comment	what is comment responding to?	does the comment match the post?	what emotions /motivations are visible?	comment context	anything else relevant?

Examples of codes generated by comment analysis:

- responding to organisation
- responding to content
- matches post
- amused by content
- aware of history around content
- like content
- sharing memory of content
- responding to comment
- comment liked by other users

HOW TO ANALYSE COMMENTS

The framework asks five questions of each of the comments:

1. What is the comment responding to? (such as the content or your organisation)
2. Does the comment match the content of the post? (yes, no or partially eg if a conversation started on topic and then wandered)
3. What emotions or motivations for responding are present? (such as liking content, amusement, gratitude, asking a question, making a joke)
4. Is there any context to the comment? (such as replies or likes to the comment, same user as other comments?)
5. Is there anything else that affects how the comment could be interpreted?

HOW TO REPORT RESULTS

Note trends such as whether users are responding to your content or communicating with you. Do they have emotional connections to the content? Are they showing multiple motivations for responding and showing more involved comments? Are they sharing their opinions? Participating in discussions? Are you responding to your users?

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Toolkit is a product of PhD research funded by the Economic and Social Research Council and supervised by Professor Diane Rasmussen McAdie.



comment	what responding to	does match post?	emotions /movitations	context	anything else they are thinking
Oh, my kind of day! I love gray. Is it my Scottish ancestry??	content	yes	like content, sharing relevant memory	library responded	
Face with tears of joy - probably	comment above	yes	responding to comment, like comment	NLS	
we made postcards with that quote on :-)	content	yes	like content, sharing relevant memory	1 like by library	
had the pleasure of journeying to places I will never visit learned of history and futuristic travel occasionally enjoyed a romance or two and am always going to a new book for another amazing yet to be discovered adventure.	content	yes	like content, sharing relevant memory	3 likes, 1 by library	

comment	what responding to	does match post?	emotions /motivations	context	anything else they are thinking
James Phelps	tagging (content)	not sure	tagged would find it interesting	1 like by library	user tagged commented on post
Frank was never convicted over the robbery, they botched the prosecution but got him over his brawl with Middleton and Hosie up at Reids Flat and his robbery of Mesrs Horsington and Hewitt down at Wombat. They loaded him up on sentences, gave him 32 years in Darlinghurst.	content	yes	aware of history around content, giving further detail	6 likes, 1 by library	
Thay buried itand the betrayer of Ben hall got some Thay spent plenty and the old inn on the escort waythat is still standing below my place was the last cob and co refresh stop before the gold robbery	content	yes	aware of history around content, sharing relevant memory		
At the time of the robbery the stage line was "Ford & Co" (owners John Ford and Phillip Mylecharane). Cobb & Co bought them out early July 1862. That's nit-picking for you Chris! There were also some scurrilous rumours that the coach driver, Jack Fagan, may have been "involved" in the robbery. He went on to work for Cobb & Co, but appeared to "come into money" shortly after.	comment above	yes	responding to comment, aware of history around content	2 likes	
The inn was a cob and co stop but was an inn before that on the road from orange to Forbes I would like to think that the Bush rangers visited this inn the stage coaches stopped there and the inn still sits there in the sun with lots of Story's in its walls I almost bought the pub for twenty grand but the amount of work and money to restore it inside put me of people from Sydney own it now and it's full of junk storage I live above the inn on a hill in this little hamlet and think of the Bush ranging days of Dun Gilbert and Ben hall	comment above	yes	responding to comment, aware of history around content	same as	11

Any questions?

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Thanks for listening!

References

- Jiang, T., Liu, F. and Chi, Y. (2015), "Online information encountering: modeling the process and influencing factors", *Journal of Documentation*, Vol. 71 No. 6, pp. 1135-1157. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JD-07-2014-0100>
- Potter, J., & Wetherell, M. (1987). *Discourse and social psychology: Beyond attitudes and behaviour*: Sage.