#SCREENTIME2020

SOCIAL CURRENCY: AMPLIFYING MESSAGES THROUGH ENGAGEMENT ANALYSIS

BU

Boston University College of Communication
Division of Emerging Media Studies

JUNE 29, 2020 • 2:30–5:30 PM
ATTENDANCE BY INVITATION ONLY
HOSTED ON ZOOM | PROGRAM

BOSTON UNIVERSITY

Boston University College of Communication
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#SCREENTIME is an annual academic conference in June put on by the graduate students from the Division of Emerging Media Studies at Boston University. The conference will provide a platform for students to showcase their research and to network with peers and professionals working in emerging media.

All Emerging Media Studies students contribute to the annual #ScreentimeBU conference. This exciting conference provides an opportunity for EMS students to present their research in the field of digital communication and society as well as exchange their views with peers and field leaders concerning important contemporary issues. By showcasing the fruits of their research, EMS students share their ideas with the general public and industry leaders. In addition, the conference provides an opportunity for students to develop their public communication capabilities and get input from industry experts in a professional setting.

THIS YEAR'S TOPIC: #Social Currency: Amplifying Messages Through Engagement Analysis. The purpose of the projects presented is to understand how to generate social media engagement by evaluating posts and responses in various contexts including fitness, fundraising, civic awareness, and health.

#SCREENTIME2020   AGENDA | JUNE 29TH

2:30 - 2:35pm   **Introduction**
James Katz & Kelsey Prena

2:35 - 2:45pm   **Welcome Address**
Dean DiChristina

2:45 - 3:05pm   **Keynote Speaker**
Danae Holmes, User Experience Research at YouTube

3:05 - 3:30pm   **Presentation I**
Client: *Boston University Fitness and Recreation Center*
PhD Team Mentor: *Briana M. Trifiro*
Team members: *Bowen Chen, Ke Chen, Rebecca F. Giovannetti, Joel Santaeularia Boquet, Alexis Shore, Cassandra Smith, Yilin Xu, Huashu Yuan, Tori Zhang*

3:30 - 3:55pm   **Presentation II**
Client: *The City of Everett*
PhD Team Mentor: *Sejin Paik*
Team members: *Rebecca Auger, Irene Geng, Erin Iwaskiewicz, Avery Singh, Zheng Song, Yimeng Sun, Faye Wang, Tiffany Wang*

3:55 - 4:15pm   **Break with virtual poster presentation**

4:15 - 4:40pm   **Presentation III**
Client: *Center for Mobile Communication Studies*
PhD Team Mentor: *Sejin Paik*
Team members: *Zhixin Fang, Yuqing Gao, Zhuoer Hong, Wanchun Liu, Lily Liangwen Luo, Fangming Ruan, Canwen Xu, Xuedan Yang*

4:40 - 5:05pm   **Presentation IV**
Client: *Massachusetts Down Syndrome Congress*
PhD Team Mentor: *Briana M. Trifiro*
Team members: *Rachael Dier, Dan Lei, Siyu (Annie) Liu, Paola C. Rivera Kinard, Akanksa Upadhyay, Ruonan Wang, Feiyang Xu, Haoyue Yuan, Zhimin Zhang*

5:05 - 5:25pm   **Award Ceremony**
Presented by EMS faculty

5:25 - 5:30pm   **Closing Comments**
James Katz & Kelsey Prena

#SCREENTIME2020
PRESENTATIONS

» **TEAM 1:**

CLIENT: Boston University Fitness & Recreation Center

PHD TEAM MENTOR: Briana M. Trifiro

TEAM MEMBERS: Bowen Chen, Ke Chen, Rebecca F. Giovannetti, Joel Santaeularia Boquet, Alexis Shore, Cassandra Smith, Yilin Xu, Huashu Yuan, Tori Zhang

ABSTRACT: The present study analyzes Instagram posting behaviors and account demographics as a predictor of post engagement on college fitness and recreation accounts across the United States. This work extends the existing elaboration likelihood model (ELM) literature by understanding how people can be persuaded to engage with social media content through ELM-based variables.

We sought to understand if ELM-based variables such as information richness, personal relevance, and source credibility had an effect on Instagram user engagement. Through a census of all U.S. university fitness and recreation Instagram accounts with student populations from 20-50k, 86 accounts were found. A qualitative content analysis for the first 20 posts from each account (n=1,720) was conducted with the most recent post being no later than March 1st, 2020.

We conducted 2 and 3-way ANOVAs to test the relationships between ELM variables of interest and user engagement. The results demonstrated that while high information richness factors led to a significantly increased user engagement (p<.05), perceived personal relevance and source credibility had no significant relationship with user engagement (p>.05). This study extends communication theory in order to assess the relationship between significant ELM variables on Instagram user engagement in the field of fitness and recreation.

KEY WORDS: *Elaboration Likelihood Model, user engagement, Instagram, fitness and recreation centers, content analysis*

TEAM BIO: Our group is composed of nine Masters students in the Emerging Media Studies Division at Boston University: Alexis, Rebecca, Ke, Jessica, Alex, Cassandra, Joel, Tori, and Bowen. Coming to Boston from around the world, members of this team wanted to participate in a project that was relatable to their Boston University experience. We have loved applying our daily usage of social media to a meaningful research project that both contributes to academic theory and industry development. Diving into this experience with a strong theoretical and academic foundation, this group was able to work together to achieve the diverse expectations of this project.

CLIENT BIO: Our client was the Boston University Fitness and Recreation Center (FitRec). FitRec serves as a space for BU students and other members from the wider Boston community to work out, attend classes such as yoga or dance, play basketball or go for a swim, amongst a variety of other activities. Their high-class facility serves as a year-round spot to meet new people and explore new mental and physical challenges. They aspire to build a stronger FitRec community through user engagement on their social media platforms, specifically Instagram. While they already have an incredibly active Instagram presence, they sought to apply theory-based strategy to enhance their creative content.

» **TEAM 2:**

CLIENT: The City of Everett

PHD TEAM MENTOR: Sejin Paik

TEAM MEMBERS: Rebecca Auger, Irene Geng, Erin Iwaskiewicz, Avery Singh, Zheng Song, Yimeng Sun, Faye Wang, Tiffany Wang

ABSTRACT: In the past ten years, social media has grown as a platform for governmental communication with citizens, especially at the local level. Social media has provided governmental institutions with an inexpensive, accessible resource for establishing relationships of transparency and trust with citizens. Previous studies have developed a number of typologies for categorizing the social media behavior of local governments in terms of the democratic values of transparency, participation, and openness. Other scholars have established that governmental social media accounts also engage in symbolic acts for the

» TEAM 2: (continued)

purpose of social identity building through acts of self-presentation. Our research investigates the effectiveness and defining traits of local municipality social media activities in building stronger relationships with citizens, with a focus on smaller and underserved cities. We used content analysis to identify commonalities between 1100 tweets from the social media accounts associated with 24 gateway cities in the state of Massachusetts collected through Crimson Hexagon as they related to engagement metrics. These metrics include likes, retweets, and the presence of citizen replies. Analyses indicate that typologies identified by previous work have significant interactions on some but not all of our defined metrics. These findings indicate that the volume and manner of citizen engagement varies based on communication typology.

KEY WORDS: *content analysis, local government, social media, citizen engagement*

TEAM BIO: Our team is made up of eight MA students from the Emerging Media Studies program at Boston University including Rebecca Auger, Irene Geng, Erin Iwaskiewicz, Avery Singh, Zheng Song, Yimeng Sun, Fengyan Wang, and Tiffany Wang. We are forever grateful to our team mentor: Ph.D. student Sejin Paik. Group members hail from various countries and backgrounds with a broad range of research and career interests including UX/UI, product research, content creation, marketing strategy, data analysis, media research, and news. Collectively, we share a love for traveling and experiencing different cultures.

CLIENT BIO: The city of Everett is located just north of Boston and is an urban Mystic River community bordering Boston, Malden, Medford, and Somerville. In close proximity to Boston's Logan International Airport, Everett boasts affordable and diverse housing, sustainable construction projects, and the development of accessible waterfront spaces and parks. The city has a long history of industrialism; however, with the arrival of the Encore Casino in 2019, they have started to show potential for a growing tourist community. Today, Everett hopes to improve its social media presence in order to build trust with citizens and solidify its identity as a vibrant, growing community for residents and visitors alike.

» TEAM 3:

CLIENT: Center for Mobile Communication Studies

PHD TEAM MENTOR: Sejin Paik

TEAM MEMBERS: Zhixin Fang, Yuqing Gao, Zhuoer Hong, Wanchun Liu, Lily Liangwen Luo, Fangming Ruan, Canwen Xu, Xuedan Yang

ABSTRACT: The public health officials have announced a stay-at-home protective restriction to cope with the current outbreak of COVID-19 in the United States. Such restrictions have seldom been ordered by most state governments, which poses a challenge to the media and public health officials who need to deliver such a message to the general public. This study investigates people's intention to follow stay-at-home order during the coronavirus pandemic in 2020 by conducting a computational text analysis on 20,000 tweets under the protection motivation theory framework. The paper examines whether self-efficacy, response efficacy and response cost increase or decrease the probability of people's intention to follow stay-at-home order, and the fear appeals also provide us an inspiration to explore how emotions (both positive and negative) affect people's willingness to adopt recommended behaviors. We applied Bidirectional Encoder Representations from Transformers (BERT) and RC Word-Emotion Association Lexicon for content tagging and used Latent Dirichlet Allocation for topic modelling.

Our findings indicate that response efficacy and self-efficacy in PMT has a positive correlation with the probability of people's intention to follow stay-at-home order, whereas response cost has a negative correlation. Furthermore, the negative emotions have a stronger effect on people's willingness to adopt recommended behaviors. Findings also suggest that friendship is one of the topics most associated with positive tweets and bill is one of the topics most associated with negative tweets. In general, humor in tweets increased over time during this quarantine.

KEY WORDS: *pmt, COVID-19, stay-at-home order, social media intent analysis*

TEAM BIO: We are a team of eight Emerging Media Studies Master's students with industry and academic experience in public relations, marketing communication, social media analysis, and data science. The team members come from different provinces in China (Hubei, Beijing,

Jiangsu, Shanghai, Shanxi, Anhui & Hunan). Since Wuhan, Hubei was one of the first epicenters of COVID-19, the impact of the Coronavirus at home motivated them to conduct this study to see people's attitude towards quarantine. During self-quarantine, the team loves to share their favorite food and shop for bubble tea online. Our team members include: Jenny Fang, Yuqing Gao, Zhuoer Hong, Felicia Liu, Lily Liangwen Luo, Fangming Ruan, Aurora Canwen Xu, Xuedan Yang.

CLIENT BIO: Mobile communication is increasing integrated into nearly all aspects of human activity. Founded in 2004, the Center for Mobile Communication Studies (CMCS) became the first academic center to focus on the social, psychological, and organizational consequences of mobile communication. CMCS is always pursuing research on contemporary topics. Today, when we face the historical challenges of COVID-19, CMCS commissioned the team to conduct research with regard to mobile communication in this pandemic.

» TEAM 4:

CLIENT: Massachusetts Down Syndrome Congress

PHD TEAM MENTOR: Briana M. Trifiro

TEAM MEMBERS: Rachael Dier, Dan Lei, Siyu (Annie) Liu, Paola C. Rivera Kinard, Akanska Upadhyay, Ruonan Wang, Feiyang Xu, Haoyue Yuan, Zhimin Zhang

ABSTRACT: Framing theory is a well-established theoretical framework within the communication discipline. Existing literature concludes that certain frames are utilized more frequently than others in news content, specifically the episodic and the human interest/personalization frames. The present study adapts framing theory to study the impact of framing on user engagement on Facebook content, using theoretical frameworks provided by Iyengar (1991) and Semetko and Valkenburg (2000).
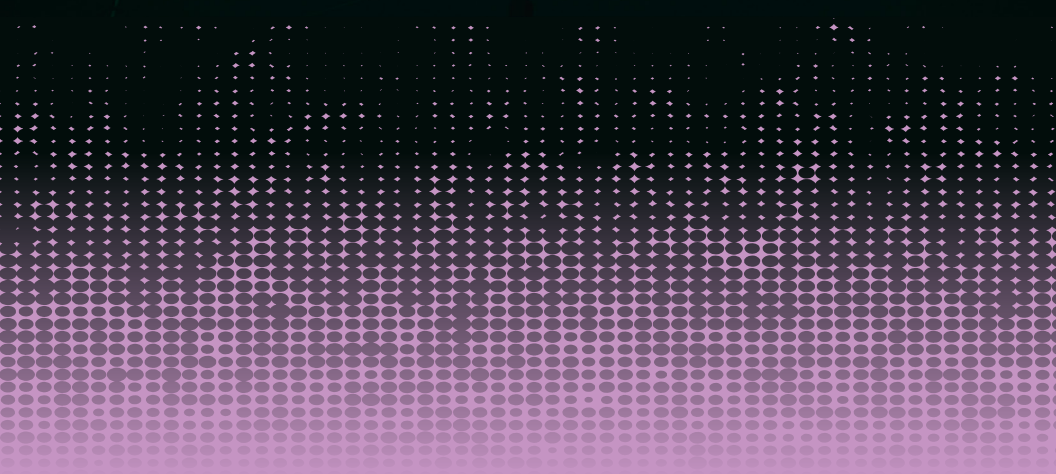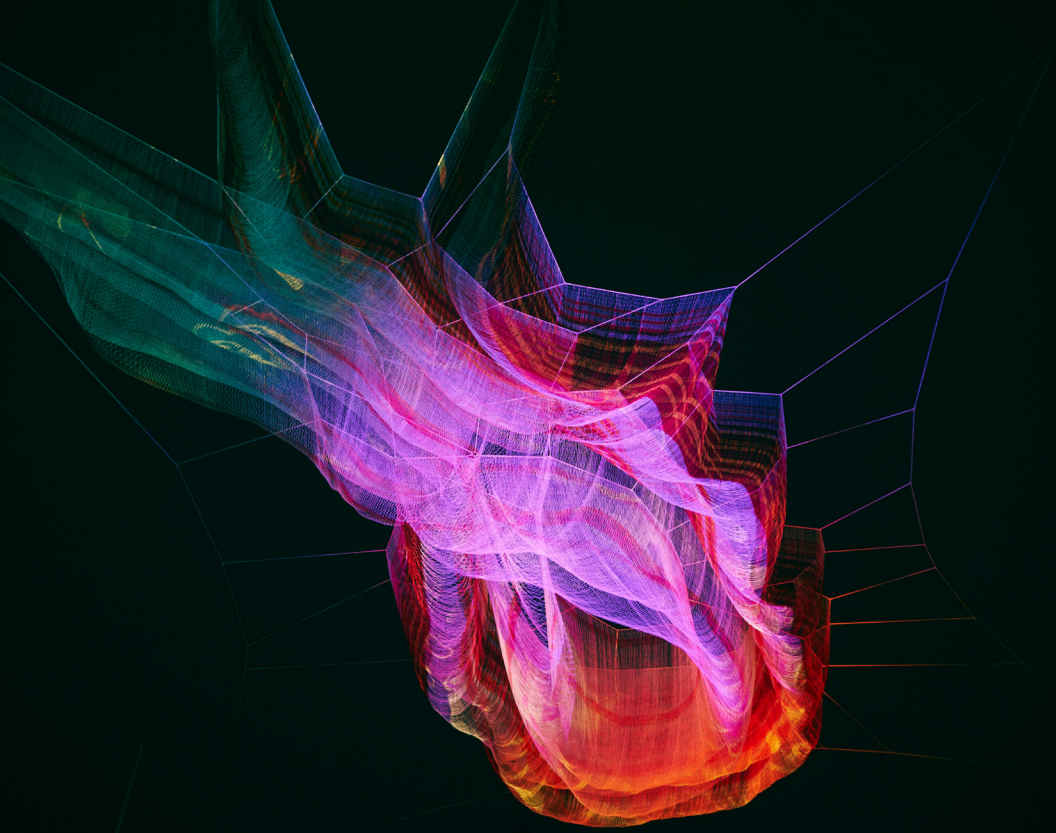
We conducted a content analysis of 1,190 Facebook posts issued by 238 organizations national and local Down syndrome nonprofit organizations. Using the Massachusetts Down Syndrome Congress (MDSC) as a case study, we compared Facebook content generated by Down syndrome nonprofits across the nation. Results demonstrate that Facebook posts issued by national Down syndrome organizations had higher levels of user engagement than posts issued by local organizations. Further, Facebook posts that utilize elements of Semetko and Valkenburg's human interest frame and Iyengar's episodic frame had higher levels of user engagement on Facebook. The Semetko and Valkenburg frames had a significant relationship with tonality of user comments. Regarding the tonality of user impressions, both framing typologies had a significant relationship with the impression left on the posts in our sample. These findings illustrate useful implications for individuals who create social media copy, as they demonstrate that different framing techniques are associated with different levels of user engagement.

KEY WORDS: *framing, social media, Down syndrome nonprofits, Facebook, user engagement*

TEAM BIO: Our team is made up of Emerging Media Studies Master's students at Boston University. We've had the honor of working with the Massachusetts Down Syndrome Congress (MDSC) for our capstone research project, and have been able to combine our diverse skill sets to help them increase their engagement on Facebook. From market research to data collection, to competitive analysis and content curation, our team truly encompasses the depth and breadth of Emerging Media Studies. Though our team is pursuing different career paths, we all hope to work on interdisciplinary and cross-functional teams, much like what this project has offered.

CLIENT BIO: The Massachusetts Down Syndrome Congress (MDSC) originated when parents began gathering in their homes to share information about their children and provide emotional support for one another. After thirty years of growth, the organization has more than 5,000 members. The organization prides itself on its contemporary outlook towards advocacy efforts and strives to create a safe, healthy, and positive community for its members. They acknowledge that raising children with Down syndrome is a complex journey with many hurdles. The MDSC communicates with family and friends of those with Down syndrome, those with Down syndrome themselves or anyone passionate about the community.